

WE PLAYERS AND FORT MASON CENTER FOR ARTS AND CULTURE PRESENT

# BEOWULF

Created and Performed by  
We Players, Rova Saxophone Quartet, and inkBoat

Directed by  
Ava Roy and Shinichi Iova-Koga

Original Score by  
Charlie Gurke and Rova Saxophone Quartet

Created and Performed by

**Rova Saxophone Quartet**

Larry Ochs  
Jon Raskin  
Steve Adams  
Bruce Ackley

**inkBoat**

Shinichi Iova-Koga  
Dana Iova-Koga

**We Players**

Ava Roy  
Charlie Gurke  
Nathaniel Justiniano



## The Production Team

**Moirá McGovern:** Production Stage Manager  
**Hamilton Guillén:** Technical Director  
**Albert Kong:** Assistant Technical Director  
**Maria Chenut:** Costume Designer  
**Allen Willner:** Lighting Designer

**Yoshinori Asai:** Properties Master  
**Rachel Bergquist:** Set Construction  
**Zahra Jangbar:** Costume Intern  
**Ellen Boener:** Directors' Assistant  
**Liam Collier:** Directors' Assistant



# BEOWULF

## Presented by We Players



We Players presents site-integrated performance events that transform public spaces into realms of participatory theatre. We bring communities together, reclaiming local spaces for public discourse and civic celebration through art. Extending the transformative powers of performance beyond the stage, we invite our collaborators and audience to engage fully and awaken to the spectacular world around us.

The company's site-integrated focus and commitment to engage with history and ecology, build community, and use art to foster a personal connection with place has led to unprecedented partnerships with the National Park Service and California State Parks.

Production history highlights include: *Hamlet on Alcatraz*, *The Odyssey on Angel Island State Park*, *Macbeth at Fort Point*, and *Ondine at Sutro*, and many more.

We Players produces performance and engagement programs that are accessible to the diverse population of regular park visitors, and also draw local visitors to park sites specifically to experience our work.

In 2017 We Players celebrates the culmination of our historic 5-year cooperative agreement with SF Maritime National Historical Park, the first of its kind in the nation.

## San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park conserves the nation's maritime legacy through a rich collection of physical resources, and by preserving the skills, stories and folkways of its people. Hyde Street Pier is home

to a fleet of National Historic Landmark vessels which host over 10,000 schoolchildren/year on experiential educational programs. The 1890 *Alma* offers ranger-led sailing programs, and participates in heritage events at communities around the Bay. Flowing, Federal Arts Project murals and sculpture are preserved in the 1930s streamline moderne Maritime Museum. The Maritime Library is a researchers' portal to not only books and periodicals, but the park's extensive archive and object collections- from glass plate negatives to small boats to sailors' handicrafts.





# FORT MASON CENTER FOR ARTS AND CULTURE



Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture (FMCAC) is a nonprofit operating within a Historic Landmark District along the northern waterfront of the San Francisco Bay. Part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, FMCAC hosts an ever-evolving rotation of artistic programming for over 1.2 million annual visitors that includes theater and dance performances, art installations, as well as educational and cultural classes. As part of Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture's commitment to supporting San Francisco's artistic community, FMCAC provides approximately \$2.5 million in annual grants to local arts organizations. These grants allow groups to produce diverse and innovative works at the historic campus.

In addition to the thousands of events that occur each year on campus, FMCAC hosts nearly two dozen nonprofit and arts organizations as permanent residents. These residents receive annual support from FMCAC, allowing them to focus on producing original artistic programming. Current residents include the Pulitzer Prize winning Magic Theatre, City College's Fort Mason Art Campus, BATS Improv, the SFMOMA Artists Gallery and the internationally acclaimed Greens Restaurant.

A pioneer in the reuse of military bases, Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture has been honored by the California Preservation Foundation for its efforts preserving the historic U.S. Army San Francisco Port of Embarkation.

## The Chapel at Fort Mason

For We Players, place is a character. Locations have distinct energies, personalities and even desires. In the poem *Beowulf*, King Hrothgar's great hall of Herot functions as an important cultural institution that provides light and warmth, food and drink - a place for singing, storytelling and safety. The mead hall served as a place of refuge within a dangerous and precarious external world - a world continuously threatened by attacks of neighboring peoples and wild beasts of the great northern forests. The mead-hall was also a place of community, where traditions were preserved and loyalty was rewarded. This is where legends were created and perpetuated, reputations were built, fame broadcast, and history written through the telling of it.

Built during the Korean War, the Fort Mason Center Chapel is one of only two remaining military chapels left in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Ten beautiful stained glass windows, which depict several Army branches, the twelve Apostles and eight Hebrew prophets, line both sides of the aisle. Inlaid wood Army insignias adorn the front of the choir loft. Chaplains of all faiths provided services here for military members and their families until 1997, when the it became part of the Park. We Players introduced to our audience to Fort Mason's chapel with 2015's HEROMONSTER, and we are thrilled to return to this well-crafted space. Our mead hall of Herot, like the chapel, is a sanctuary, a refuge for the tired, and a place for rituals that support community.



# FROM THE DIRECTORS

This story reaches out to us across a vast expanse of time. A story of people and places long past. A story about monsters and heroes, courage and cruelty, darkness and light. A story for our time.

As we approach *Beowulf*, we find ourselves in a moment of political unrest and instability, we are battling monsters of fear and the tyranny of intolerance. Our investigation of this poem has been influenced by our national and global situation. As with so many classic stories, there is always something new to be found because nothing happens in a vacuum; the world provides context. The construction of this piece has involved exploration of power and conquest, individual and collective grief, and quiet acts of courage and fortitude. We feel the presence of a new danger, lurking, close by, ready to strike at any moment. We sense a beast ready to sink its claws into basic human rights and eat away at our shared humanity. We ask ourselves, how do we stay active, productive, willing to face the darkness even as we suffer the pangs of despair? How do we stay committed to truth in a post-truth era? How do we cope with pervasive anxiety?

It is a privilege to make art. A privilege and a necessity. Art is for survival. Art brings us into the presence of beauty. It brings us closer to ourselves, and closer to one another. In the hunt for truth, it is a powerful light to shine in the darkness. When demagogues are trying to define culture and the dominant narrative, trying to keep us shrouded in darkness and shadowed by lies, we must continue as the torchbearers of our stories.

So I thank you for gathering here in our mead hall tonight, and bearing witness. Thank you for investing in art as something essential to culture, to the world you want to live in. Thank you for making art a vital part of your own life. Thank you for joining We Players in yet another historic site, on National Park lands - as together we activate public places as sites of civic engagement and personal belonging. Thank you for sharing your time, your hearts, your minds, and your stories with us. Thank you for helping us to make the light brighter.

-Ava Roy

Recently speaking with Ava, I mentioned that my process usually goes in this order:

**1. BEGIN with the sensory and energetic experience.** Words usually fail to describe this first step. It can be dangerous to name embodied experience as we run the risk of merely enacting the idea, as opposed to living inside of the experience.

**2. Cultivate the feeling or mood triggered by the body-based experience.** To do this, we need to maintain our connection to the body and allow ourselves to notice the effect that the sensate condition creates in our atmosphere, our personal weather pattern.

**3. The creation of images, ideas and concepts.** This is the narrative world, the content. And yet all three steps ARE content unto themselves and often running at the same time (nod to Ruth Zaporah).

In creating BEOWULF, we've been running the opposite way, moving from image/idea/narrative to the moods and physical conditions. We talk a lot and exchange viewpoints that reveal the ways actors/theater based artists, musicians and dancers/physical theater artists might look at the same problem from different angles. In this way, we have expanded our perspectives and priorities to create this work that no singular voice could possibly have produced. This work is ALL of us, for all of you.

-Shinichi Iova-Koga



# NOTES ON MUSIC

How does a play with 9 performers end up with a majority of saxophones?

In 2013 We Players invited the Rova Saxophone Quartet to improvise on and among the boats at Hyde Street Pier. When Artistic Director Ava Roy invited me to program concerts as part of our cooperative agreement with the park, one of my first thoughts was to invite a group of improvisers to explore the sonic space of one or more of the large historic ships at the pier. Rova immediately came to mind, for a number of reasons. I'd been a fan of their music since the mid-nineties, and was excited to hear what would result from these four improvisers sonically exploring these spaces. Plus, the ability of a saxophone (or four) to move through and project through space seemed an ideal fit for this kind of project. The ferryboat *Eureka* was chosen as the ideal site - both for its resonant acoustics, as well its roominess - giving both the performers and the audience the ability to move freely throughout the performance. It was Rova's idea to invite Shinichi Iova-Koga to improvise along with them for this first *Vessels for Improvisation*, as we would come to call it. Rova and Shinichi had collaborated in 2006, and had been looking for an opportunity to work together again. The success of the first *Vessels* led to another performance in 2014, this time augmenting the ensemble with electronic musician John Bischoff, and dancers Dana Iova-Koga and Dohee Lee. These performances also led to conversations about possible future, larger-scale collaborations between We Players, Rova, and inkBoat... And here we are! Co-creators of this production of *BEOWULF*.

In virtually all previous We Players productions, my role as music director and composer has been to write, arrange, and rehearse all the music for each show, occasionally collaborating with actors or musicians on specific pieces of music. For this production, the process has been much more collaborative throughout, and the sonic world of our *BEOWULF* comes in large part from Rova's vernacular, a musical language that, as they put it, "explores the synthesis of composition and collective improvisation". All five of the musicians, as well as the rest of the ensemble, have had creative input into the development of our score. We have each brought in melodies, or structures, or concepts... and we've all been improvising, and will continue to improvise, develop, and explore our sonic world throughout the run.

Charlie Gurke, We Players' Music Director





# THE POEM

This ancient Anglo-Saxon poem may very well be the oldest surviving epic poem written in Old English. While scholars debate the composition date, estimates place it between 975 and 1025CE. The original manuscript survived fire and neglect, and was rescued from oblivion. Its academic value has long been appreciated, but it was JRR Tolkien in his lecture and essay "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" who helped the world appreciate it as a work of art, independent of its value as an historic artifact.

In developing this piece, sources of inspiration have been many- including multiple translations of the original Beowulf poem:

- Burton Raffel's 1963 edition
- Seamus Heaney's 1999 dual language edition
- Howell D Chickering's 1977 dual language edition
- JRR Tolkien's 1926 edition

Other significant sources of inspiration have been drawn from:

- John Gardner's 1971 novel Grendel
- Anne Carson
- Icelandic Sagas
- Joseph Campbell
- Fairy Tales

## Beowulf: A Summary

The poem tells the story of the hero Beowulf, who travels across the sea from his native Geatland to Denmark, where King Hrothgar and his people have long been suffering the torments of the monster Grendel, who hunts only at night and who no one has seen. Many of Hrothgar's greatest warriors have been slaughtered as they slept in the great mead hall, a majestic building called Herot. Beowulf and his 12 companions arrive in Denmark and offer their services to the Danish King. Beowulf swears to rid the land of the beast that plagues the Danes, and to prove his unparalleled strength and courage by killing the monster with his bare hands.

That very night, after much feasting and drinking and telling of tales, when all have gone to sleep, Beowulf stays awake and watchful. Lo! Grendel approaches, knocks down the door of Herot and immediately snatches one of Beowulf's men and devours him. Beowulf springs into action, seizing Grendel's arm with his mighty hands - which are said to contain the strength of 30 men. A great battle ensues, the two locked together as they crash against the walls of the mead hall. At last, Beowulf tears off Grendel's arm and the monster flees. In the morning, the people are in awe of the enormous arm and claw and they celebrate their freedom from the beast. Queen Wealhthow and King Hrothgar bestow abundant treasure on Beowulf and a tremendous celebration - full of feasting, drinking, songs and stories - continues long into the night.

At last, once the last man has fallen asleep, a new monster rises from the depths of the foul lake at the edge of the forest. Grendel's mother emerges from her swampy lair to retrieve the severed arm of her son and to feast upon one of the sleeping thanes. In the morning, Beowulf and his men follow the monster's tracks to the edge of the lake - no ordinary lake mind you - a boiling, bloody lake full of fire-snakes and ferocious creatures. In full armor, Beowulf dives in and sinks to the bottom where he encounters the massive female monster. The battle is savage and Beowulf is nearly conquered, but at last, seizing a magic sword from the wall of the she-wolf's cave, Beowulf slays her and triumphs. He then severs the head of the dead Grendel, lying lifeless in the cave, and swims to the surface with the massive head. It takes four men to carry Grendel's head back to Herot where the people stare in awe and terror at the incredible sight. Queen Wealhthow and King Hrothgar shower Beowulf with lavish treasure and there is much feasting and celebrating.



At last, Beowulf and his men return home to Geatland. After some time, Beowulf becomes king. During his long rule no neighboring tribes dare to attack the Geats, so famous is Beowulf's prowess. Beowulf reigns for 50 years, during which time he neither marries, nor sires an heir.

One day, somewhere in the Geatish kingdom, a slave escapes his master. During this slave's desperate flight, he stumbles into a dragon's cave unawares. Discovering the sleeping beast, he panics and runs away, grabbing a golden cup from the immense pile of treasure as he flees. The dragon awakes and ferociously attacks the people, burning down homes and ravaging the landscape. Beowulf is summoned to slaughter the dragon, which he insists he will do alone. As Beowulf enters the dragon's lair, the young warrior Wiglaf incites his comrades to help their king, as it becomes clear that Beowulf, now an old man, is unequipped to tackle the dragon alone. No one rises to the call, and Wiglaf alone follows his king into the dragon's lair. At last, Beowulf kills the dragon, but the dragon in turn takes his life. Beowulf dies in Wiglaf's arms. News spreads quickly of the great king's death.

The poem ends with a fearful prophecy of dark days to come...

"A gnarled old woman, hair wound Tight and gray on her head, groaned A song of misery, of infinite sadness And days of mourning, of fear and sorrow To come, slaughter and terror and captivity. And Heaven swallowed the billowing smoke."

*Raffel, line 3150-3155*





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MARCH 11 - APRIL 16, 2017





# OUR CAST AND CREW

## **Albert Kong (Assistant Technical Director)**

is a game designer, event producer, and experience artist. As an artist, his work is focused on allowing the audience to be players and treating the world as an unbounded space of play. The site-integrated work of We Players fits in well among the live games he has designed for public space, which have been featured in Oakland Nights Live, the Come Out & Play Festival, and Indiecade. In immersive and participatory theater, Albert has worked with the Vespertine Circus, the Headlands Gamble, the Racket, and Real Escape Game, and created events and installations for Our City Oakland, Lost Horizons Night Market, The Battery, the Rathskeller Club, and OdysseyWorks. He also directed the San Francisco Come Out & Play Festival in 2013 and 2014, during which time he created Sandbox, an open mic for non-digital games. He edits No Proscenium, an immersive theater newsletter for the Bay Area, practices and teaches parkour around the world, and believes that an experience that gets you out of your seat is one that will move you.

## **Allen Willner (Lighting Designer)**

Awards and nominations include: Isadora Duncan Dance Awards for the lighting design of inkBoat's "Line Between", "Heaven's Radio" and Deborah Slater's "Private Life". Nominations for Isadora Duncan Dance Awards for the Visual Designs of Erika Chong Shuch's "51802" and inkBoat's "Cockroach". 2016 TBA Award Lighting Design Nominations for Shotgun Players "Eurydice" and 2013 Theater of Yugen's "This Lingering Life". Bay Area Critics Circle Lighting Design Nomination for The Shotgun Players "Eurydice" and "God's Ear". 2012 Broadway World Lighting and Set Design Nomination for Symmetry Theater's "Patience Worth". Lighting Artists in Dance Awards for inkBoat's "Line Between", Erika Chong

Shuch's "Sitting in a Circle", Laura Arrington and Jesse Hewitt's "Adult." And Scott Wells, Amy Seiwert and Shinichi Iova-. Koga's "Take this Dance and Shove it!"

## **Ava Roy (Producer, Director, Performer)**

is the Founding Artistic Director of We Players. Her unique style of interactive, site-integrated performance aims to highlight the historical and natural treasures of the local landscape and encourage new ways of experiencing and appreciating these places. She is an alumna of Stanford University, where she founded We Players in the spring of 2000. She holds a BA in a self-designed major: Ritual and Performance in Aesthetic Education, 2003. Since 2008, she has pioneered unique partnerships with both the National Park Service and the California State Park system, creating large-scale performances at park sites throughout the Bay Area. Inspired and guided by Shakespeare since her teenage years, Ava has explored many characters from the canon ranging from Juliet to Henry V, Mercutio to Lady Macbeth. In addition to her love of Shakespeare, classic literature, historic sites, crumbling buildings, and majestic natural landscapes, Ava likes espresso, salt spray and sunshine. She is a yoga teacher, a sailor, and in her next life, plans to live in the ocean.





**BRUCE ACKLEY (Soprano, Tenor Saxophones, Bb clarinet)** - Listening was first: Danny Kaye (!), the oboe and English horn, doo wop, 45s. Choir, glee club, always singing. At 15: COLTRANE. Always records. Studied architecture, painting and photography. 1970: first soprano sax. Lessons with Lee Hester, Noel Jewkes, Beth Custer, Ben Goldberg. Improvising constant, I got no rhythm section. Blues, pan-African abstraction. Collaborations with LACY, BRAXTON, ZORN. Bands: Sound Clinic, Twins (with Zorn, Chadbourne, Kaiser), Planet X, ROVA. Actual Size (playing my stuff). Always ROVA. Creating music is like creating any art: nothing is pre-ordained; all aspects of the work are subject to inquiry / discovery / open design. Form follows function, not the other way around. Boulez, Stockhausen, Webern, Ives, Xenakis. More listening, more Rova, more improvisation. Nested in community rich with improvisers harvesting meaning in the moments. Touring, recording, playing nightly is key to understanding and movement. LIFE pertains, music sustains. ROVA: no end in sight.

**Charlie Gurke (Alto & Baritone Saxophones)** is thrilled to be continuing a collaboration with We Players that began in 2010 with *Hamlet on Alcatraz*. Since then, Charlie has composed scores for We Players' productions of *The Odyssey on Angel Island*, *Twelfth Night at Hyde Street Pier*, *Macbeth at Fort Point* (for which he was awarded Theater Bay Area's best original score award), *Ondine at Sutro*, HEROMONSTER, and *Romeo & Juliet*. An active performer and composer in the Bay Area's jazz and latin music scenes, you can hear Charlie with The Electric Squeezebox Orchestra, Candela, Jazz Mafia, and his own groups. gurkestra.com

**Dana Iova-Koga (Co-Creator, Performer)** Dana's first dancing role, at age 4, was a cloud. Almost 40 years later, she's still practicing forming clouds in her body. She attended the North Carolina School of the Arts in High School and graduated with a BFA from NYU's Experimental Theater Wing. At ETW she studied under many stellar dance teachers, including Tamar Rogoff, Mary Overlie and Wendell Beavers. It was during her time there that Maureen Flemming introduced her to Butoh dance. She went on to spend several years in Japan working on Min Tanaka's farm and dancing in dozens of productions under his direction. The time spent farming and dancing in Japan began Dana's exploration in the connection between the dancing body and the non-human natural world. This exploration continues in the annual "Dance on Land" workshops she co-teaches with life partner Shinichi. Dana has been dancing with inkBoat since 2006. She is currently learning a great deal from two masters of improvisation, aka her kids. Dana is honored to be collaborating with the forces of We Players and Rova Saxophone Quartet, who are among her heroes. And as always, she would like to thank her family for their love and support.

**Ellen Boener (Directors' Assistant)** drove from Florida to be a part of theatre flourishing in the Bay Area. TheatreFirst, Journey to the End of the Night, and the incredible We Players have welcomed her to their ranks. Her first production in the Bay was We Players' own *Romeo & Juliet*, on which she served as a Production Intern at both Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park and Montalvo Arts Center. She is a recent graduate of Florida State University where she majored in Theatre, Creative Writing, and International Affairs. She also published two Honors Theses: one on the art of Non-Lingual Communication and a Short Story Collection. Ellen's loves are directing and fiction. Her first novel will hopefully be through its first draft by the time you are reading this! Past directorial credits include productions inspired by everything



from Disney rides (An Evening With, Rogue Productions) to epic explorations of theatre history from *Agamemnon* through *M. Butterfly* (THE911, Florida State University). Her most recent project was a reimagining of Ionesco's *The Chairs* to examine the Syrian refugee crisis. Ellen would like to thank her family and everyone who welcomed her into the Bay Area's theatre community, especially the cast and crew of BEOWULF.

#### **Hamilton Guillén (Technical Director)**

makes his We Players debut with this production. Hamilton is the master electrician for Douglas Morrisson Theatre, and technical director for Pacific Ballet Academy. He has worked as lighting supervisor for The Speakeasy SF, assistant lighting designer for California Shakespeare Theater, and resident lighting designer for Contra Costa Civic Theatre. Additional design credits include The Cutting Ball Theater; Deborah Slater Dance Theater; Sins Invalid; Mills College Dance Department; Theater Bay Area; Marin Academy.

#### **Jon Raskin (Alto & Baritone Saxophones)**

Highlights of Rova founding member Jon Raskin's early career include his '70s participation in new music ensembles directed by John Adams (San Francisco Conservatory of Music) and Dr. Barney Childs (University of Redlands). Before Rova, Raskin served as music director of the Tumbleweed Dance Company (1974-77), was a founding member of the Blue Dolphin Alternative Music Space and participated in the creation of the Farm-an art project that included a city farm, a community garden, Ecology Center, Dance and Theater companies and organized the creation of a city park. Highlights as a member of Rova include composing a collaborative work for SF Taiko Dojo/Rova, working with Howard Martin on the installation work "Occupancy", composing music for Mr. Bungle/Rova, organizing the 30 year Anniversary Concert of John Coltrane's Ascension, performing the music of Miles Davis at the Fillmore with Yo Miles!, the Glass Head Project with inkBoat and the ongoing Electric Ascension Project.


#### **Larry Ochs (Tenor Saxophone)**

In addition to acting as CEO of Rova:Arts since 1986, Ochs currently composes for and leads Kihnoua with vocalist Dohee Lee, Scott Amendola and special guests ("The Sybil's Whisper"- 2012 CD); The Fictive Five with New York-based musicians Nate Wooley, Ken Filiano, Pascal Niggenkemper, Harris Eisenstadt ("The Fictive Five"- 2015 CD); Larry Ochs Sax & Drumming Core ("Stone Shift"- 2009 CD; next CD from Rogue Art in 2017). Current "collective" bands include: East-West Collective with Didier Petit, Sylvain Kassap, Miya Masaoka, Xu Fengxia ("Humeurs" - 2014 CD); Ochs-Robinson Duo ("The Throne" - 2014 CD); Jones Jones with Mark Dresser and Vladimir Tarasov ("The Moscow Improvisations"- 2016 CD); Trio Dave Rempis - Darren Johnston - Larry Ochs (2 releases on Aerophonic ); Trio Cline - Cleaver - Ochs with Nels Cline and Gerald Cleaver.

[www.ochs.cc](http://www.ochs.cc)







**Liam Collier (Directors' Assistant)** is a born and raised New Yorker and recent graduate of Vassar College currently living and working in the Bay Area. He first worked with We Players in August on *Romeo & Juliet* and is delighted to return as a Directors' Assistant for BEOWULF. While he is excited by many aspects of theatre making, his passions lie primarily in directing and teaching. This past summer, Liam taught a two-week devised theatre workshop to a group of ten high school students, which culminated in an original site-specific performance set in the tunnels of Central Park. Liam's favorite directorial credits include *Cat*, a *One Man Mega Musical* (Dixon Place); *The Mayor of Baltimore* (The Experimental Theater of Vassar College); and *Notre Dame de Paris*, an original and immersive adaptation of Victor Hugo's classic novel (Vassar College). He has also performed and directed with Britomartis, a Poughkeepsie-based devised theater ensemble. With Britomartis, he participated in a wide range of performances, including a family drama inspired by Agatha Christie and *The Brady Bunch*; and an adaptation of *Paradise Lost* featuring Beyoncé, balloon animals, and Blink-182.

**Lauren "Loe" Matley (Photographer)**

Among the many hats Lauren wears for We Players, Company Photographer is one of them. BEOWULF will be the twelfth production and beginning of her seventh year with We Players. Each actor, audience member and site location inspires her to capture those special fleeting moments that make going to a We Players production so special. You can see Lauren's work on We Players' website and at her company site: [Rock Shots Photography](http://Rock Shots Photography) [www.rockshotsbylm.com](http://www.rockshotsbylm.com).

**Maria Chenut (Costume Designer)**

After many years in Europe, the Bay Area has welcomed Maria where she quickly connected with the Contact Improv dance community, clown and circus schools, and puppeteers... She has costumed performance projects for Footloose Presents, site specific works with Epiphany Productions and Rhythmix Cultural Works (Island City Waterways), and the critically acclaimed Marin Shakespeare Company's production of *Don Quixote*. She is excited to participate in BEOWULF's unusually collaborative process and loves watching the strange rehearsals. As a visual artist by training, she loves the work process: from the collective brainstorming and research, to the gathering and use of unusual materials in surprising ways, the 3D thinking, all leading to a very hands-on approach to costuming. Her style is a unique fusion of studied aesthetics, going beyond one style or time-period. She helps others get creative by teaching sewing to children and adults at The Sewing Room in Alameda, as well as teaching and engaging in creative play with the Upcycle Alameda collective. [mariachenut.wordpress.com](http://mariachenut.wordpress.com)

**Moira McGovern (Production Stage Manager)**

is a Technical Director, Stage Manager, Web Designer, Graphics Designer, and Freelance Computer Technician who fully believes in the magic of theater. Recently, Moira was the Production Stage Manager for We Players on their site-integrated run of *Romeo & Juliet* (in Petaluma and Saratoga) and for *Evita* with Sonoma Arts Live. Next up, Moira will Stage Manage *The Chaotic Art Of Life*, an original work about our inhibitions around art, love, life and truth. Last year, Moira produced *Beauties and a Breast* - a fashion show to raise money for breast cancer research and worked as Assistant Director on James Jandak Wood's short film, *Shake*, recently accepted into the Beverly Hills Shorts Festival. When she's not backstage, Moira enjoys exploring Sonoma County, screaming her lungs out on a good roller coaster, and supporting live, local theater from the audience. She is grateful to We Players for being a conduit for



opportunities, memories and friendships, and proud to be a part of their innovative, site-integrated approach to theater.

**Nathaniel Justiniano (Co-Creator, Performer)**

is an actor/creator, director and teacher, as well as the founder of Naked Empire Bouffon Company. Since 2001, he has worked as a performer with several California companies including Shakespeare Orange County, Dell'Arte, Cornerstone, Son of Semele, Cuttingball and the Thrillpeddlers. Since 2012, his work with We Players includes appearing in *The Odyssey*, *Macbeth*, *Ondine*, and most recently co-creating/co-directing HEROMONSTER. With his company he creates and performs outrageously physical and grotesquely comic satires derived from today's tragedies. Under his direction, Naked Empire's productions and training program have toured the US and Canada and have been Official Selections at the Toronto Festival of Clowns, Vancouver's Dancing on the Edge Festival, Shotgun's BLAST Festival and Victoria's UNO Fest. Awards for his work include the SF Best of the Fringe Award, the Guardian's Best of the Bay Award, and SF Weekly's Best Puppetry Award. He is a private acting coach, has served as Movement Designer at UC Berkeley, and taught at Solano City College, Sacramento City College, Kinetic Arts Center, and the Clown Conservatory. He holds a BFA in Theatre Performance from Chapman University and an MFA in Ensemble-Based Physical Theatre from Dell'Arte International. [www.nathanieljustiniano.com](http://www.nathanieljustiniano.com)  
On Twitter @nattyjustiniano

**Shinichi Iova-Koga (Director, Performer)**

As Artistic Director and founder of the San Francisco-based performance company inkBoat (since 1998), Shinichi brings diverse artists together to expand and enliven the performance making process. The recipient of 5 "Izzie" awards, inkBoat has toured in North America, Europe, South Korea and Japan, often collaborating with local artists in museums, theaters, studios and site specific locations. Shinichi has co-directed works with Anna Halprin, Ko Murobushi, Sten Rudstrøm, Yuko Kaseki, Takuya Ishide and KT Nelson (ODC). He has co-created performances with music groups Rova Saxophone Quartet and Sleepytime Gorilla Museum. As a guest Director, he has worked with AXIS Dance Company. As a dancer, he has worked as a member of the Russian Dance Theater company Do Theatre, butoh/installation art based TEN PEN CHII in Germany with Yumiko Yoshioka, Hiroko and Koichi Tamano's Harupin Ha, and Larry Reed's Shadowlight Theater.

Today, Shinichi continues his training and development with Anna Halprin (Dance Maker), Ruth Zaporah (Action Theater, which Shinichi is certified to teach), Masayuki Koga (Shakuhachi), Ralph Lemon (Dance Maker), and Jan Nevelius (Aikido). Additional studies include Noh Theater and Qi Gong (with David Wei and Damo Mitchell).

In 2007, he and Dana founded inkGround, a studio in rural Northern California, running an annual summer workshop that explores the relationship of wild nature with dance.

Shinichi is the editor of the book "95 Rituals" and has been teaching dance composition at Mills College since 2009.





### Steve Adams (Alto Saxophone)

Steve is active as a composer and performer on saxophones, flutes and electronics. In addition to Rova, Steve is a member of the Vinny Golia Bay Area Quartet and Large Ensemble, Matt Small's Crushing Spiral Ensemble, and has duos with bassist Scott Walton and electronic musician John Hanes. Steve has performed the premieres of numerous classical compositions, including *Prisoner of Love* by Robert Aldridge for saxophone and piano, and *Passing Time* by Jon Nelson for saxophone and tape. He performed Edmund Campion's *Corail* for saxophone and electronics with the Berkeley Symphony, and at the Ojai Music Festival. Steve is on over fifty recordings, and has six recordings in his name, the latest being *Cookies for Cyrano* with Scott Walton. His electronic works are available on Bandcamp and Soundcloud, both solo and duo with John Hanes. He received a California Arts Council Fellowship in 2000 and a Meet the Composer grant in 1993, and teaches at Mills College. Steve is a graduate of the School of Contemporary Music in Brookline, MA and studied composition with Alan Crossman, Christopher Yavelov and Thomas Oboe Lee, saxophone with David Birkin, and Indian music with Peter Row and Steve Gorn.

### Yoshinori Asai (Properities Master)

is a recent grad from San Jose State University. Originally from Osaka, Japan, his work includes scenic design, installation art, painting, sculpting, and performance art pieces. He is currently working at Berkeley Repertory Theatre as the scenic art fellow. During his time in the states he's collaborated with other performance groups, such as inkBoat in San Francisco and Degenerate Art Ensemble in Seattle, and performers, such as Dohee Lee and Amara Tabor-Smith. He will be back in school to pursue his MFA degree in Fine Art this fall.

## FROM THE MEAD HALL'S HEARTH

Nourishing broth will be served during the performance, made with yeast extract, organic non-hydrogenated palm oil, organic rice flour, organic carrots, organic onions, organic celery, organic parsley, organic turmeric, organic mace, and sea salt.





# ON THE HORIZON

## A Midsummer Night's Dream

**Summer 2017**

Join us in the bright light of summer - it's time for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*!

Journey into a forest full of fairies and lovers with We Players. Artistic Director Ava Roy's new six-person adaptation of this Shakespeare favorite is a dark and hilarious exploration of the complexities of love, our complicated human relationships, and the boundaries between reality and imagination.

We Players is thrilled to work with the San Francisco department of Recreation and Parks for the first time. We will share a dozen delightful performances on the summit of Strawberry Hill - the little island in Stow Lake in glorious Golden Gate Park. Just in time to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the San Francisco Summer of Love!

## King Fool

**Autumn 2017**

First premiered in autumn 2014, this new take on our distilled two-person King Lear features powerful female performers in a fraught mother-daughter relationship.

The mother is the monarch of her story and her imagination chooses the most epic death (Lear's) to emulate in her final hour; her caretaker daughter becomes Cordelia, Fool and a host of other voices, conducting her mother to her last breath. Their story, one of the familiar and familial

forgiveness and love, is played out through the incomparable text of Shakespeare's Lear. The piece invites us to explore our own relationship to mortality, death and loss - and how we might move from fear to acceptance.

Featuring Courtney Walsh (Mercutio in We Players' 2016 *Romeo & Juliet*) as 'Lear' and Artistic Director Ava Roy as 'Cordelia'.

## Summer Music Concert Series

**Gurkestra**

We Players' composer and music director brings together an ensemble of his favorite musical collaborators to perform arrangements and interpretations of music from the past seven (!) years of We Players productions. We'll take trips back to Ithaka and Illyria, to Denmark and Scotland and Verona - with selections ranging from *Hamlet* on Alcatraz (2010) to *Romeo & Juliet* (2016), and everything in between.

**Canciones del Mar**

Our fifth annual concert of sea-inspired music from Latin America, performed aboard the tall ship *Balclutha* at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.



This project was funded in part by these foundations:



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## 2016-17 CONTRIBUTORS

Visionaries, contributing \$25,000 and over

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Advocates, contributing \$500 - \$1,000

Anonymous, Amy Brees, Andrew Gustin, Anna & Alexander Lushtak, Barbara Olekksiwi, Brian & Tracy Haughton, Catherine Sherman, Cheryl Sorokin, Colin Campbell, David Bullard, David Laibson & Nina Zipser, Dr. Peter & Mrs. Ruth Laibson., Jay & Pam Gardner, Judith Wilber, Julian Eldridge, Lauren Dutton & Glen Tripp, Mary Curtis & Michael Miller, Michael & Ruth Anne Grove, Pamela Grove & Gerald Nelson, Ruth Tringham, Scott Montgomery & Marc Rand, Stephanie & Sam Parker, and Suzanne Frappier



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# SPECIAL THANKS

Debbie Degutis, Gabi Linde, Monica Herbert, Ruth Tringham, and all of our wonderful volunteers, Mills College Dance Department, Jordan Battle and Patrick Hajduk at Fort Mason Center for Arts and Culture, Morgan Smith and JR Earnest at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, Dana Taylor, Terry Sullivan, The Douglas Morrisson Theatre, and Covington & Burling LLP.

## WE PLAYERS

### Staff

Founding Artistic Director: Ava Roy  
Managing Director: Lauren Hewitt

Office Manager: Stacy Davis  
Community Liaison: Britt Lauer

### Board of Directors

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THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU



# THE PLAYERS

We Players, in collaboration with:

inkBoat

inkBoat is a physical theatre and dance company founded by Shinichi Iova-Koga in 1998. The company performs in theatres and site-specific locations. Repertory and research integrate the interplay of multiple artistic disciplines and viewpoints, both experimental and traditional, resulting in original performance compositions. Themes and subjects arise from meticulous examination of everyday life, with primary content arising from the body, resulting in both refined and raw expressions. inkBoat derives inspiration from working in wild, natural settings and urban existence. Visit [inkBoat.com](http://inkBoat.com) to learn more.

**ROVA**  
**SAXOPHONE**  
**QUARTET**

The musicians: Bruce Ackley, Steve Adams, Larry Ochs, Jon Raskin.

Rova Sax Quartet's artistic goal has always been, since 1978, to instigate, to challenge, and to inspire. Rova:Arts, formed in 1986, acts as the umbrella organization for the band's many activities.

Rova is one of the longest-standing groups in a music movement that explores the synthesis of composition and collective improvisation and has its roots in post-bop, free jazz, avant-rock, and 20th century new music. Rova draws inspiration from the visual arts, contemporary poetry, and contemporary dance. We listen closely and deeply appreciate both the traditional and pop music styles of Africa and Asia. And then there is the blues, always a big key.

Full details on Rova- early influences, collaborations and commissions, and extensive touring- can be read at on their site at [rova.org](http://rova.org)





[weplayers.org](http://weplayers.org)