

WE PLAYERS PRESENTS

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# ROMEO JULIET

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AT

PETALUMA ADOBE  
**State Historic Park**

# PRESENTED BY

## We Players

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We Players presents site-integrated performance events that transform public spaces into realms of participatory theater. 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 awoken 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*. 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.

## California State Parks

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The mission of the California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity,

protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



Left: Friar Laurence's cell. Right: Vallejo Brand. Photos credit: Lauren Matley.



IN COLLABORATION WITH CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS, WE PLAYERS PRESENTS

# ROMEO & JULIET

AT

PETALUMA ADOBE  
State Historic Park  
SONOMA COUNTY, CA

BY  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
DIRECTED BY  
AVA ROY

PRODUCED BY  
LAUREN D. CHAVEZ AND AVA ROY  
ORIGINAL SCORE BY  
CHARLIE GURKE



AUGUST 12<sup>TH</sup> - SEPTEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2016



This work was developed while in residence at the Lucas Artists Residency Program, Montalvo Arts Center.





# OUR SITE

“The first view of the great valley filled me with emotion. It was a case of love at first site, which better acquaintance would only deepen...nowhere, was there a scene of such beauty and suggestion of everything desirable for man.”

— Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo

It's been an honor exploring this landscape, rich with both native flora and fauna and early California history. The Coast Miwok lived here in abundance for millennia before Spanish (then Mexican and American) contact in the late 18th to early 19th century. They tell of Coyote creating humans on nearby Sonoma Mountain so he would have someone with whom to talk—and, as a result, the “first people” fleeing in animal form into the bush and creek and sky to avoid these new people who so wanted to be with them and to listen. Coyote ends up telling the new villagers the lost stories so they won't be alone, and setting them off on the road that leads down the mountain and goes on forever.

We humans have left many layers of story in our wake. Vallejo and his contemporaries made their mark on the landscape, building this impressive Adobe—the largest privately owned Adobe structure in California—and operating the rancho (primarily for hide and tallow trade) from 1834 - 1846, until the Bear Flag Revolt.



Petaluma Adobe was a center of activity during a time of massive changes in the ways of life for indigenous Californians—of all species. The Native Sons of the Golden West purchased the run-down Adobe in 1910 and the California State Parks interprets the cultural and environmental resources today. The United Anglers of Casa Grande have supported significant rehabilitation of Adobe Creek in recent decades, wise farmers are restoring the health of the land throughout the county, a SMART train will soon zip past carrying Bay Area commuters to the ferries, and questions remain around who belongs here, who has right claim to land and water, and what stories we choose to remember.

— Lauren D. Chavez

## BARarchitects

Above: Alan's Hummingbird by Keith Hansen, courtesy of the artist. Opposite: Composite by Dino Vajraca, BARarchitects.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES



Maria Leigh as Juliet. Photo credit: Lauren Matley.

"This summer We Players relives an ancient story in the eternally new land of California. The summer sun beats down on Verona streets and golden hills alike, turning up the heat on passions bloody and amorous. A nameless feud finds deeper resonance in the history of a land fought over in blood and taxes, by generations searching for a new home for religion, for name, for culture, for nation—a land, like Verona, ruled in the historical moment by pride and passion more than law. And yet, the hope for peace exists. Peace found in the soft moments of blossoming love. Peace found in the undeniable presence and power of the natural world. Peace found in the faith of a Franciscan friar, devoted under a walnut tree. Peace found in the future we all dream comes, hard-won, after..."

— Jocelyn Shratter,  
We Players' Dramaturg, *Romeo & Juliet*



Here in this arid landscape, immersed in the hostile and unsafe place that is the Verona of Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*, we are reminded of the senseless violence that surrounds us today. We live without resolution while we pray for peace, for rain.

At Petaluma Adobe the glory of this golden landscape lends much to our telling of the story. The Friar's quiet haven under the walnut trees is both literally and figuratively the only consistently cool place in our Verona. Elsewhere under the noonday sun the dusty courtyard of the adobe, the sharp, dry grasses of the fields, the ground bees buzzing under our feet—is a place parched and desperate for the cooling, life-giving effects of water. Land and water are the resources that men have fought over here in California for centuries, a battle that continues today. Who claims, who conquers, who wins, who loses? Who belongs? Such questions continue.

The land also fundamentally informs the design of the show—hay bales and rustic wooden benches become set pieces, only metal and wood and leather and linen are allowed in, creatures native to California inspire the masks for the Capulet Ball. These “spirit animals” in turn inform the physicality of characters and reveal to the actors layers of the psyches of the personas they will inhabit. Look for the tracks of coyote, hummingbird, California quail, field mouse, mountain lion, bobcat, blue heron, jack rabbit, and a very special moth...

During our research we learned how the yucca and yucca moth are so interdependent that one cannot live without the other. The fragile insect emerges from its cocoon in synchrony with the blossoming of its partner plant. The creature is so short lived that it does not need to feed, yet its biology insists that



Stevie Thomas as Tybalt. Photo credit: Lauren Matley.

it pollinate one particular flower during its brief existence. Why does Juliet love Romeo? Why does Romeo love Juliet? Yes, there is passion, there is the thrill of the forbidden, there is the ticket to another life—perhaps even the fickle fire of youth as some say... But I trust the moth in this case. She seeks this certain flower because it is necessary to her very existence.

May we each have Juliet's courage to seek our truth and follow our heart, though it may cost us much. Like Romeo, may we allow ourselves to be attracted to the flame and savor the preciousness of its warmth—though life be delicate and fleeting.

Unlike the lovers, may we slow down our perception and find strength in patience. And may we resist the tide of the times through brave daily acts of kindness. In the words of poet Mary Oliver:

Instructions for living a life:

**Pay attention**

**Be astonished**

**Tell about it**

— Ava Roy



Mohammad Shehata as Romeo and Maria Leigh as Juliet. Photo credit: Lauren Matley.



IN COLLABORATION WITH CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS, WE PLAYERS PRESENTS

# ROMEO & JULIET

A T P E T A L U M A A D O B E

**By**  
William  
Shakespeare

**Directed**  
**by**  
Ava Roy

**Produced by**  
Lauren D. Chavez  
& Ava Roy

**Original**  
**Score by**  
Charlie Gurke

## Cast

The Nurse: Jennie Brick

Juliet: Maria Leigh

Antony (*a servant to the Capulets*) // the Apothecary: Claire Haider

Abraham (*a Montague*) // Potpan (*a servant to the Capulets*) // Friar John: Rick Love

Peter: Amy Nowak

Capulet: Libby Oberlin

Benvolio: John Steele, Jr.

Friar Laurence: Rush Rehm

Romeo: Mohammad Shehata\*

Tybalt // the County Paris: Steve Thomas

Mercutio // Prince Escalus: Courtney Walsh

Musicians of Verona: Nick Carico, Ian Cochran, Brent Elberg, Patrick Malabuyo, Aaron Priskorn & Greg Stephens

## Crew

Production Stage Manager: Moira McGovern

Stage Manager & Fight Captain: Britt Lauer

Assistant Stage Manager: Albert Kong

Production Assistants: Alexander Belmont, Liam Collier, Claire Haider, Maya Herbsman,

Rick Love, Lana Richards, Caitlyn Silkey

Dramaturg: Jocelyn Shratter

Costume Designer: Brooke Jennings

Seamstress: Dana Taylor

Leather Artisan: JD Durst

Mask Artisan: Monica Lundy

Mask & Clown Coach: Julie Douglas

Properties Artisan: Megan Hillard

Composer & Music Director: Charles Gurke

Band Leader: Aaron Priskorn

Choreographer: Becky Robinson-Leviton

Fight Choreographer: Benjamin Stowe

House & Hospitality Manager: Lauren Matley

Photographers: Lauren Matley, Jim Norrena, Miller Oberlin

Videographer: Tracy Martin

Poster Art: Olive Mitra

Program Design: Leah Ammon

Graphic Support: Stacy Davis

\* Actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## SPECIAL THANKS

Danita Rodriguez, Vince Anibale, Robert Pickett, and all CA State Parks staff at Petaluma Adobe. Kelly Sicat, Kelly Hudson, Angela McConnell, Lori Wood and all staff at Montalvo Arts Center. We Players' April residency gave us time to create, connect, and form a solid foundation for the work. Andrea Blum, for feeding us so well, and inspiring the menu we serve during the show. Sasha Duerr and her "Soil to Studio" class at California College of the Arts, Dino Vajraca and Earl Wilson at BAR Architects, Friends of the Petaluma River, Malcolm Margolin, Greg Sarris—Tribal Chairman of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Debbie Degutis, Gabi Linde, and the Phleger family. Monica Herbert, Ruth Tringham, and all our volunteers. And to all our hosts for The Capulet Ball and Sword Fights & Sandwiches—Georg Salzner and all the staff at Castello di Amorosa, Rev. Claire Ranna, Anna Sylvestre and The Episcopal Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, Susan Miller-Davis & Jonathan Davis, Anne & Jon Davies, Lauren Dutton & Glen Tripp, Pamela Grove & Jerry Nelson, Diane & Rob Johnson, Malinda Longphre, Ereca Miller & John Shrewsbury, Rebecca & Andy Popell, Kim Sevcik, Dana & Ken Stokes, Jen & Earl Wilson.

## IN KIND SUPPORT

Cowgirl Creamery, Green String Farm, Kent Rasmussen Winery,  
Lagunitas Brewing Company.

This work was developed while in residence at the  
Lucas Artists Residency Program, Montalvo Arts Center.



## COMPANY STAFF

Ava Roy, Artistic Director • Lauren D. Chavez, Managing Director •  
Stacy Davis, Office Manager • Jackie Goneconti Gibbons, Communications Manager  
• Patrick Gillespie, Visual Art Director • Charlie Gurke, Music Director •  
Lauren Matley, House Manager

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Drew Baglino (Treasurer) • Lauren D. Chavez • Susan Miller-Davis • Lisa Nash •  
Jennifer Niedermeyer • Andy Popell (President) • Ava Roy • Dana Taylor (Secretary)  
• Kathleen Taylor (Vice President)



# OUR CAST & CREW

**Jennie Brick** (Nurse) is a veteran We Player and was last seen in her TBA Award-nominated roles as Eugenie and Judge in *Ondine at Sutro*. Working with Ava Roy and this ridiculously talented cast and crew has been an honor for Jennie. She is especially grateful to Ava for her support, kindness, and brilliance. Some of Jennie's latest roles include Yente in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Leonata in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Mattie Fae in *August: Osage County*, Liz in *The Book of Liz*, Luella in *Why Torture is Wrong*, and Silda in *Other Desert Cities*. Jennie has performed with Bay Area theatre companies including Shotgun Players, Contra Costa Civic Theatre, Berkeley Playhouse, TheatreFIRST, Custom Made Theatre, and Town Hall Theatre. In November and December Jennie will be playing Mrs. Potts in Berkeley Playhouse's *Beauty and the Beast*. By day Jennie is a voice-actor and a non-profit finance guru keeping Bay Area non-profits alive one journal entry at a time. Love and thanks to B as always. [jenniebrick.com](http://jenniebrick.com).

**Nick Carico** (Percussion) Nick is a performer, usher and private teacher. He has been accepted into the Berklee College of Music but turned it down to work in the bay area. He currently is studying Jazz at Sonoma State University with an emphasis on drum set and percussion. He is also working at Sonoma State's Green Music Center as an usher. Nick teaches privately in the north bay as a drum set instructor to beginner, intermediate and advanced students. He also has three years experience working with Loud n Clear Music to assist in their Rock Overtime band camp.

**Lauren D. Chavez** (Producer) stumbled across the path of We Players' first performance and has been working and playing with the company since 2001. She is a healer, committed to developing regenerative

resources, resilient communities, and rich culture, while facilitating individual health and the expansion of awareness. She has a BA in Architecture and Urban Design with a dance minor, and a MS in Civil and Environmental Engineering, both from Stanford University. She also has a permaculture design credential and training in primitive skills, nature awareness, advanced connective practices, and various massage modalities. Lauren is passionate about deep listening, remembering the wisdom in our bodies, playing and dancing outside, and fostering healthy relationships. She loves connecting with the gorgeous environment and engaging the layered history and creative people of the Bay Area. After almost a decade of friendship and creative collaboration, Lauren teamed up with Ava in 2009 to establish We Players as a nonprofit. Lauren has forged mutually-beneficial partnerships with the National Park Service and California State Parks, as well as local businesses, nonprofits and community groups. She is currently transitioning out of the Managing Director role in order to focus her efforts on strategic partnerships, producing site-integrated theatre, and developing engagement & education programs.

**Ian Cochran** (Trumpet) A native of North Carolina, Ian Cochran comes to the Bay Area from Chicago where he studied at DePaul University and worked as a freelance musician. Ian is very grateful to be working in the theatre with We Players and has performed recently with Berkeley Repertory Theater, Berkeley Playhouse, Broadway SF, Woodminster Theater and Throckmorton Youth Theater. He is a member of the San Francisco Wind Ensemble, Echo Chamber Orchestra, and is principal trumpet of the North State Symphony. When not performing, Ian

enjoys teaching his private music students, listening to the blues, searching for the perfect ginger beer and spending time with his two year old Boston Terrier, Olive.

**Liam Collier** (Production Assistant) is delighted to make his West Coast debut with *We Players*. A born and raised New Yorker and recent graduate of Vassar College, Liam moved to San Francisco in July to join the Bay Area Theatre scene. While he is excited by many aspects of theatre-making, his passion lies primarily in directing. His favorite directorial credits include *Cat*, a One Man Mega Musical at Dixon Place; *The Mayor of Baltimore* with The Experimental Theater of Vassar College; and *Notre Dame de Paris*, an original and immersive adaptation of Victor Hugo's classic novel. He has also performed and directed for the last four years 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*; a curious midnight romp starring Titania, Peter Pan, and Princess Mononoke; and an adaptation of *Paradise Lost* featuring Beyoncé, balloon animals, and Blink-182.

**Brent Elberg** (Percussion) Brent is a freelance drummer and music teacher in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 2009, he worked in Santa Barbara as a drummer for the Monday Madness Big Band, and was a percussion instructor at Kellogg Elementary. He has worked with *We Players* in the past on *Macbeth at Fort Point* (2014), and continues to perform locally with various different bands. Currently, he teaches piano and drums at Music Land school of music.

**Charlie Gurke** (Composer, Music Director) is a professional saxophonist and composer with extensive experience in jazz, latin, classical, avant-garde, and more. He has been an active member of the San

Francisco Bay Area's music scene for over 17 years and has collaborated with film, theater, dance, and poetry both at home and abroad. Charlie started his musical career in his teens, playing with salsa, jazz, and other ensembles around San Francisco and Northern California. During this time Charlie attended San Francisco's School of the Arts, studying jazz and latin music with Wayne Wallace and Melecio Magdaluyo, as well as participating in UC Berkeley's Young Musician's Program, studying with Dan Zinn and Jack Perla, among others. Charlie moved to New York to attend the New School, where he studied with renowned saxophonists George Garzone and Billy Harper. Upon returning to California, Charlie continued to freelance with jazz and salsa groups, soon becoming one of the most in-demand bari sax players in the area, performing regularly with the Contemporary Jazz Orchestra, the Realistic Orchestra and other Jazz Mafia projects, Mitch Marcus Quintet+13, and numerous freelance salsa and jazz gigs, as well as regular freelance recording with artists such as Omar Sosa, Chow Nasty, The Mother Hips, producer Greg Landau, and many more. In 2007, Charlie completed a Bachelors of Music at CSUEB, where he studied composition with Dave Eshelman and Rafael Hernandez. In 2008 Charlie accepted a graduate teaching fellowship at the University of Oregon, and in 2011 received a Masters degree in Jazz Studies. Now back in the San Francisco Bay Area, Charlie is teaching at Laney College and San Francisco's School of the Arts, performing regularly around the area, and serving as music director and in-house composer for *We Players*.

**Claire Haider** (Antony, Apothecary) is thrilled to be working with such a wonderful ensemble in her second production with *We Players*. A Bay Area transplant from Southern California, Claire was also seen in *Ondine at Sutro* with *We Players* as an ensemble member. Her other local credits



include *Matthew Briar and the Age of Resurrection* (Epic Immersive) and *As You Like It* (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival) as an alternate for Silvius/Jacques/Charles/Oliver with Shakespeare on Tour. Among her past credits are: Agnes in *Agnes of God* (Elite Theatre Company), Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice* (Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company), Banquo/Hecate in *Macbeth* (Ojai Shakespeare Festival), and Antigone in Anouilh's *Antigone* (SENGA Classical Theatre Company). She has trained in an internship with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and had private coaching with Lisa Wolpe. In addition to acting, she has been a teaching artist with San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and teaches American Sign Language and theater to high school students at a preparatory school.

**Maya Herbsman** (Production Assistant) is a Bay Area native who is currently pursuing her BA in Theater with a concentration in Directing from Wesleyan University. In addition to directing, she is a stage manager, actor, producer, playwright, and teacher of acting and improv to children ranging from ages four to seventeen. Recent credits include Anouilh's *Romeo and Jeanette*, Chekhov's *The Seagull*, Mee's *Big Love*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and *Nocturne*, a new, devised work. Maya spent the last two years serving as the Managing Liaison of Second Stage, the country's longest-running student theater company, working to produce close to 30 shows a year. She is spending the summer interning for San Francisco's Z Space and We Players. She is incredibly excited to be making her professional debut with We Players!

**Brooke Jennings** (Costume Designer) is ecstatic to return to We Players with this stunning production of *Romeo & Juliet*. A graduate of UC Santa Cruz's Theater Arts Masters Program, Brooke is an award-winning Costume Designer working in the Bay

Area and New York, including San Francisco Playhouse (*Colossal*, *The Nether*, *Stage Kiss*), Berkeley Playhouse (*Peter Pan The Musical*), We Players (*Capulet Ball*, *HEROMONSTER*, *Ondine at Sutro*), Magic Theater (asst. designer: *A Lie of the Mind*, *Bad Jews*), Virago Theatre (*The Singularity* - New York Premier, 2015, *Crooked*, *Ransom*, TX), Custom Made Theater Company (*Six Degrees of Separation*, *Middletown*, *In Love and Warcraft*, *Grey Gardens The Musical*, *The Crucible*), and Santa Cruz Shakespeare (asst. designer, *Frog and Toad*). Brooke is the 2015 Recipient for Best Costume Design by Theatre Bay Area for her work on We Players' *Ondine at Sutro*, directed by Ava Roy and Carly Cioffi.

**Albert Kong** (Assistant Stage Manager) 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.

**Britt Lauer** (Stage Manager, Fight Captain) is delighted to count *Romeo & Juliet* as her third production with We Players, having

also Stage Managed *Ondine at Sutro* and Assistant Produced *HEROMONSTER*. Certified in Single Sword and Unarmed stage combat, she has relished working in Verona, where the coming together of weapon and combatant is as profound in its potential for destruction as the meeting of lovers is for creation. Britt is also passionate about applying theatrical skills in nontraditional contexts, working in the medical and business industries to help develop and enhance communication and empathy. Britt holds a BA in Theatre with an emphasis in acting from Willamette University and a Semester Credential from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts.

**Maria Leigh** (Juliet) is delighted to return to We Players again after having performed in *The Odyssey on Angel Island*, and *Macbeth at Fort Point* (both in the 2013 and 2014 productions). Regional credits include: Custom Made Theatre Company (*Of Serpents and Sea Spray, Late: A Cowboy Song*); Berkeley Repertory Theatre (*Tartuffe*); The Breadbox - where she is a proud Associate Artist - (*'Tis Pity She's a Whore*); Rapid Descent Physical Performance Company (*Chamber Macbeth, Tartuffe*); HATCH; foolsFURY; San Francisco Theater Pub; Cutting Ball Theater; Ragged Wing; La Tropa; Thunderbird Theatre Company. National and international credits include Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington D.C. (*Tartuffe*) and Centro Estatal de las Artes in Mexicali, MX. With love and gratitude to Hunter (the most outrageous fortune in my life), to my parents (on earth and in heaven), my family (by birth and by choice), and to the Donnas (for a haven away from home).

**Rick Love** (Abraham, Potpan, Friar John) After years of playing guitar in punk rock bands, Rick switched to acting when his second child was born in 1999. Since then, his favorite roles include Guiteau in

*Assassins* (Narrow Way Stage Company), The Hawker in *The Who's Tommy* (Missouri Street Theater), Harold in *The Full Monty* (etc!), Caesar in *Julius Caesar* (Sonoma Valley Shakespeare Company), Brad in *Rocky Horror Show* (Caps Productions), Mark in *The Shadow Box* (Sonoma Community Center), Williamson in *Glengarry Glen Ross* (T@tC), and Seymour in *Little Shop Of Horrors* (T@tC). He is the host of Power Pop radio show ALL KINDS A GIRLS Saturday nights at 9pm on 91.3 KSVY in Sonoma, streaming at ksvy.org. Rick is thrilled to be appearing in his first production with We Players.

**Monica Lundy** (Mask Artisan) Guided by an interest in deepening one's understanding of place, Monica Lundy incorporates natural and historical research into her art practice. Lundy's mixed-media paintings traverse painting and installation, abstraction and figuration. The work is a rumination on the history of place, collective memory and the dispossessed. Through assiduous research of archival materials, she unearths vanished paradigms and reconjures them as haunting historical portraiture. Lundy's best-known paintings commemorate marginalized and disenfranchised populations whose names and images she culls from antiquarian ledgers and compendia: mental-hospital patients, sex workers, prison inmates, a host of lost souls and habitués of the demimondes of yesteryear. In addition to exhibiting in galleries and museums, Lundy has worked closely with the We Players since 2011, doing site-specific work in National Parks, including Alcatraz Island, Fort Point, and the San Francisco Maritime Museum.

**Patrick Malabuyo** (Trombone) is a musician who performs and composes primarily for the San Francisco Bay Area's "Electric Squeezebox Orchestra." He has done freelance work as a trombonist in the area for the past eight years as well as attended



various academic institutions for music such as California Jazz Conservatory and Manhattan School of Music. He also works at ACG Engineers, as a drafter.

**Lauren Matley** (House & Hospitality Manager) Since she was three years old, Lauren has danced, sang and worked behind the scenes in theatre. Lauren graduated in 2009 from UC Berkeley with a degree in anthropology and continues to study the performing arts of many different cultures and traditions. Lauren is also a professional photographer and is passionate about capturing the perfect moment in her event, travel and theatre photography. Her theatre background led Lauren to Ava Roy who offered her a volunteer position guiding the audience around Alcatraz Island for We Players' production of *Hamlet* in 2010. Since then, Lauren has been involved with We Players as a volunteer, lead audience guide, special events coordinator, and now as resident House Manager. Lauren is excited to enhance your experiences with We Players through gracious hospitality!

**Moira McGovern** (Production Stage Manager) is a creative and solution-driven hybrid—one person with multiple and simultaneous careers: Stage Manager/Technical Director/Theater Tech/Web & Graphics Designer/Computer Tech Support. Based in Sonoma, Moira has just finished stage managing Mary-Kay Gamel's original work, *Helen of Egypt*. Earlier this year she was Stage Manager and Technical Director for Teens 'N Training production of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and for the sold-out *Love, Loss and What I Wore* at Andrew's Hall in Sonoma. In May, Moira produced *Beauties and a Breast*—a fashion show to raise money for breast cancer research. Last year, she worked as Assistant Director under James Jandak Wood on *Shake*, a film recently accepted into the Beverly Hills Shorts Festival. She

is grateful to be involved with We Players' innovative, site-integrated approach to theater, and for the friendships and skills sets she's developed along this amazingly beautiful, thrilling, tectonic ride. Go Alfalfa!

**Amy Nowak** (Peter) is thrilled to be making her We Players debut. Favorite past projects include *Much Ado About Nothing* with Theatrefirst, *I Am The Wind and Dark Play* with Do It Live!, and *The Glass Menagerie* with the ACT Apprentice Programme. Much love to Mom, Dad, and Brian, and to Billy Shakes for starting western theater off with a bang and the We Players family for including her on this wild ride.

**Libby Oberlin** (Capulet) Libby last performed with We Players in *Ondine at Sutro* (TBA nomination-Outstanding Ensemble) playing Ondine the Blonde/Violante after her first appearance with the company as Penelope/Siren in *The Odyssey* on Angel Island State Park in 2012. Libby won the Best Individual Performance award from *Sonoma Sun's* Best of Sonoma 2015 for her portrayal of Catherine in Sonoma Stage Work's production of *Proof*. Libby was featured in *Laid Off*, an official selection of the Cannes Independent Film Festival and winner of Best Feature Comedy in the Garden State Film festival. She spent 13 years performing and training in New York City, favorite roles including the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* at Soho Rep and Faith in *Kindertransport* at Provincetown Playhouse. Libby holds a Master's Degree in Educational Theater from NYU and a Bachelor's Degree in Theater Arts from Hofstra University. She has trained with Shakespeare & Company—where she played Tybalt in *Romeo & Juliet*, Upright Citizens Brigade Theater, HB Studios, and Serious Play. She is Education Director for Sonoma Arts Live's Teens 'N Training program and Owner/Education Director of The Theater School in Sonoma, an educational theater studio committed

to guiding young people toward authentic self-expression, safe emotional intelligence, and collaborative discovery (thetheaterschool.com). Endless awe, love, and appreciation to Miller and our Maeve.

**Aaron Priskorn** (Trumpet, Band Leader) has played trumpet for more than two decades, exploring many genres of music, while staying true to his classically-trained roots. Because of his unique sound, he is often sought after as a guest artist and collaborator for many various events/productions throughout the SF Bay area. Aaron is a founding member of 'Lip Service' brass trio and 9 piece brass band 'Sisu BrassLand' where he is bandleader, composer, arranger and trumpet player and recently released *Matka*, an album of his compositions for brass. He can also be heard at Grace Cathedral, Classical Revolution, Green Street Mortuary Band and the rock band, Melvoy. Aaron holds degrees from Mannes College of Music (BM) and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (MM) and also teaches privately in SF. Aaron is excited to work on his third production with We Players!

**Rush Rehm** (Friar Laurence) is Artistic Director of Stanford Repertory Theater (SRT), a professional company that celebrated its 18th season this summer with productions of Naomi Wallace's *Slaughter City* and Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty*. This October SRT presents *Democratically Speaking*, a compilation exploring the idea of democracy in this crucial election year (stanfordreptheater.com). For SRT, Rush has directed *Words and Images to End All Wars*, Brecht's *The Life of Galileo* and *The Exception and the Rule*, Welles's *War of the Worlds* and (with Courtney Walsh) *Moby Dick - Rehearsed*, Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, Beckett's *Happy Days/Oh les beaux jours*, Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class*, Frayn's *Copenhagen*, Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*, Homer's *The Wanderings of*

*Odysseus*, Sophocles's *Electra*, Friel's *Faith Healer*, and Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* (adapted by Amy Freed). He has worked as an actor or director on five continents, with theater companies including Arena Stage, Alliance Theater, Seven Stages, Guthrie Theater, Center Theater Group/Mark Taper, TheatreWorks, Cutting Ball, and Magic Theatre. Previous Shakespearean roles include Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk (*Richard II*), Worcester (*Henry IV, Part I*), Andrew Aguecheek, Malvolio, Othello, and King Lear.

**Lana Richards** (Production Assistant) is a current student at Connecticut College in New London, CT where she studies Theater (with a concentration in directing) and Environmental Studies. She is a Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment Scholar and a Mellon Undergraduate Research Program Fellow. She is an alumna of the National Theater Institute's Advanced Directing Semester. Last summer she was an apprentice at Bread and Puppet Theater Company in Vermont, as well as an intern for the Big Sur Land Trust. She is thrilled to be an intern for We Players this summer, and hopes to continue pursuing work that focuses on the relationship between humans and the environment. Her credits as a director include: *Gnit* (National Theater Institute); *Oleanna* (Connecticut College); *Christopher Durang One-Acts* (Connecticut College); *The Laramie Project* (Carmel High School); *Elephant's Graveyard* (Assistant Director, dir. Caz Liske, Connecticut College). Upcoming: An adaptation of *The Grapes of Wrath* (Connecticut College); *Eurydice* (Connecticut College).

**Becky Robinson-Leviton** (Choreographer) has been obsessed with movement since she the age of two, when her mother had to enroll her in gymnastics because she kept trying to do flips off of the end

of the couch (like a Power Ranger). By the time she found dance at the age of four, Becky was smitten, and since then it has been a 20+ year love affair that has waxed, waned, expanded, and contracted every muscle, mental state, and emotion in her being. Graduating with a BA in Dance from CSULB, Becky is an emerging dancer and choreographer in the SF Bay Area community and has performed with some wonderful local dance and theater companies thus far. These include We Players, Kinetech Arts, Twisted Oak Dance Theater, and 13th Floor Dance Theater. In December 2015, she also had the pleasure of being a RAW (Resident Artist Workshop) Artist at SAFEhouse Arts. However, having an inexhaustible need to move in new ways, Becky has also studied rock climbing, contact improvisation, yoga, acro yoga, physical theater, and aerial dance. She is excited to share her voice and her passion with We Players once again.

**Ava Roy** (Director, Producer) is the Founding Artistic Director of We Players and is dedicated to transforming public spaces into realms of immersive theatre. 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. 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. 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, 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.

**Mohammad Shehata\*** (Romeo) This is Mohammad's debut with We Players. Selected Credits: Seattle Repertory Theatre (*Disgraced*, Dir. Kimberly Senior), Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Crowded Fire Theatre (*I Call My Brothers*, west coast premiere), TheatreFirst, Ross Valley Players, San Francisco Playhouse, and San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Mohammad graduated with a BA in Political Science from University of California, San Diego (UCSD) in 2015, where he performed a variety of stage roles including Vershinin in *Three Sisters*, Edgar in *Lear* by Young Jean Lee, Bottom in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Karl in *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, Wally O'Hara in *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, and Jeremy in *She Stoops to Conquer*. Other credits include Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar*, Harry Roat in *Wait Until Dark*, and Dennis in *Mauritius*. At UCSD he studied acting with Kim Rubenstein, Michael Rudko, Ursula Meyer, and Kyle Donnelly. In 2014 Mohammad won a full scholarship for a summer intensive with the British American Drama Academy where he trained with the likes of John Barton, Fiona Shaw, Julian Glover, Henry Goodman, Jane Lapotaire, Joe Mydell, and directors David Leveaux, Ian Wooldridge, Irina Brown, voice coach John Tucker, and clown teacher Mick Barnfather. He is an ensemble member of the Ubuntu Theatre Project, and has taught acting and Shakespeare with the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival.

**Jocelyn Shratter** (Dramaturg) has worked previously with Santa Cruz Shakespeare, Sidereal Theater, San Jose Repertory Theater, and Rising Phoenix Repertory. She recently completed her MFA in Dramaturgy from Columbia University, with a focus on site-specific and immersive



theatres. She encountered *We Players* as part of her Masters Thesis work, and has been honored to get to work with such a welcoming and unique company once more. Jocelyn was born in the San Francisco Bay Area, and grew up in the Silicon Valley, a place that likes to believe it has only a future, and no past. Consequently Jocelyn has been obsessed with history all her life, and is doubly glad to use this opportunity to dive into the lineage of the land she's from, and engage with the questions and spirit of conflict that face our community in this new era. She is so glad to have had this opportunity, and hopes you enjoy this unique production, and the experience and ideas it engenders.

**John Steele, Jr.** (Benvolio) is an actor, playwright, and tea enthusiast. He attended the BFA program at the University of Oklahoma where he specialized in Playwriting and Shakespeare. Some of his favorite roles have included Macbeth (University of Oklahoma STI), Laertes/Polonius (SF Shakespeare Festival), Jack Rugby in *Merry Wives* (Great River Shakespeare Festival), Ted in *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Summer Repertory Theatre), Czolgosz in *Assassins* (SCV Actors Group), and Matt in *The Fantasticks* (The Upstart Crows). John's plays have been produced at the University of Oklahoma, the KCACTF Regional Festival, Angelo State University, and the Santa Monica Playhouse. This is the third California State Park he has performed in, and hopes to continue to bring theatre to places rich with natural heritage. He would like to thank his mother, sisters, and partner for their endless love, support, and encouragement. Play on!

**Greg Stephens** (Trombone) A Bay Area trombonist and composer, Greg has spent the last several years performing and recording with Tango #9, Ad Hoc Brass Band, Circus Bella Allstars, Big Lou's Dance Party, Mission Delirium,

and Inspector Gadge. He has also played with The Klezmatics, Frank London, Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Lord Loves A Working Man, Allison Lovejoy, Golem, Green Street Mortuary Band, Kugelplex, Eric McFadden, Extra Action Marching Band, and SISU Brassland, among others. Greg attended CSU Northridge, where he studied trombone with Bill Booth. He received his BA from UCSB, where he studied composition with Stephen Hartke. Past performance credits include Berkeley Opera, Berkeley Contemporary Opera, City Summer Opera, and Bella Musica.

**Steve Thomas** (Tybalt, Paris) An actor and improviser from Chicago, Steve recently moved to the Bay Area and is proud to make his West Coast debut with *We Players*. You can also catch him in The Cutting Ball Theater's upcoming *Hedda Gabler* directed by Yuri Urnov this winter. In Chicago, Steve studied with The Second City and worked with Mick Napier at The Annoyance Theater for *The Power of Prom*, and was seen in several shows around the city including *Macbeth*, Qui Nguyen's *Soul Samurai*, new works like Ellie Reed's *The Beecher Sisters*, Julia Weiss's *The Somewhat Gelatinous Blob from Beyond the Grave*, *Residue*, *The Improv Play*, and Chicago Kids Company's *Pinocchio*. Regionally, Steve has performed in *Measure for Measure*, *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Present Laughter*, *The Boys Next Door*, *Reefer Madness*, *Metamorphoses*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, and *Mr. Marmalade*. Steve has studied with Carlson & Hart and Paola Coletto, and was awarded the Theatre Circle Award by Indiana University. [steve-thomas.net](http://steve-thomas.net).

**Courtney Walsh** (Mercutio/Prince) This spring Courtney played the title role in the international tour of *Clytemnestra*: Tangled Justice in Athens and Nafplio, Greece, following performances in Berlin, Amsterdam, Cardiff, Sydney, Auckland, and eight other cities. Recently she starred in

a bilingual production of Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* in Paris and Montpellier, France. Local appearances include San Francisco Playhouse's *Jerusalem*, Sixth Street Playhouse's *The Graduate* and Stanford Repertory Theater's *Moby Dick - Rehearsed*, which she also co-directed, winning Theatre Bay Area Awards for Outstanding Production, Directing and Acting. As a member of the professional acting company of Stanford Repertory Theater, she has appeared for the last nine seasons, most recently in *Hay Fever* (nominated for Best Production by the Bay Area Theater Critics Circle). In 2017 she will appear in *Native Son* at Marin

Theater Company, and next spring will play the title role in *Phedre* at The Cutting Ball Theater. Courtney studied theater at Yale University, worked as an actress in Los Angeles, earned a law degree during a hiatus from acting, and represented children in abuse cases before returning to the stage in 2006. Courtney is also an equestrienne and mother of four. [courtneywalsh.net](http://courtneywalsh.net).

*\* Actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

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# DRAMATURGY

Rancho Petaluma was established in 1834 by Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, with a land-grant of 44,000 acres by the Mexican governor of California. This grant was ostensibly a reward for leadership, but came with a charge to secularize the Solano Mission in Sonoma—part of an effort by the newly independent Mexican government to secularize and claim the land of the Spanish California Missions. Lieutenant Colonel Vallejo marched from the Presidio to Sonoma with his troops, charged to guard his ranch, and keep an eye on the nearby Russian Fort Ross.

Rancho Petaluma was one of many ranchos established from newly claimed or converted Mission lands in California following Mexican Independence in 1831. These were vast estates modeled after that of the Spanish landed gentry, with single families owning huge tracts of land—for Petaluma Adobe, eventually 66,000 acres. The family and ranch were center of life, pride and celebration, vying with competition over boundaries and cattle. The ranchos were owned by Mexican rancheros who brought their families up from Mexico, but staffed largely with former Mission workers. These were usually Native Americans and their Californio mixed-race descendants, whose culture and life had been subsumed by the establishment of the mission, meant to convert and indoctrinate them—a goal subverted by the convenience of cheap forced labor.

Rancho Petaluma served as a working ranch, troop support, and family home, until 1846, when California, lead by immigrants from the US, declared independence from Mexico, and quickly became a US state. Vallejo was imprisoned for his role in the US-Mexico war and

the rancho, commandeered by John C. Fremont, eventually sold. California itself was soon overcome with white Americans, driven by statehood and the Gold Rush.

The Petaluma Adobe ultimately existed for a brief time, but centered on a dynamic historical moment. Existing between wars, land and people passed from one new culture to another, all from different sides of past and present conflicts. The future was uncertain—but all hoping for freedom and happiness.

Here is where we find ourselves with this ubiquitous story of ancient grudge, new mutiny—and two young people with dreams of a better future. Here is where we find a tragedy that ends in hope—hoping it is not false. Here is where we find one of the most famous stories in the world, looking for simpler answers to the ancient conflicts of the land we live in.

— Jocelyn Shratter



Maria Leigh as Juliet and Mohammad Shehata as Romeo. Photo credit: Lauren Matley.



# NOTES ON MUSIC



Aaron Priskorn, Ian Cochran, Patrick Malabuyo, and Nick Carico as musicians of Verona. Photo credit: Lauren Matley.

Shakespeare's England, Verona, Italy, and Alta California all commingle in our *Romeo & Juliet*. These times and places come together in the score as well. Our ensemble of two trumpets, one trombone, and percussion is a nod to the renaissance brass ensembles that would have been heard in both Shakespeare's England, as well as renaissance Italy, but evokes as well the trumpets of a mariachi ensemble.

Beyond the literal worlds of the play and the place, my mind was drawn to musics that are a blend of the old world and the new: Cuban *danzon*, which can trace its origins to English 'country dance', which would become the French *contradanse* and Spanish *contradanza* in the 17th century, spread throughout Spain's colonies in the new world, eventually evolving into the Afro-Cuban *danzon*, popular throughout Cuba and Mexico in the mid to late 1800s and into the 20th century, before it in turn

gave way to the mambo. The bolero—another genre to cross continents, oceans, and centuries, from Spain across the new world—makes its way into our musical landscape as well.

This play has perhaps inspired more composers than any of Shakespeare's other works. From the somber second movement of Beethoven's *String Quartet No. 1* (inspired by the tomb scene), to Gounod's opera, to Tchaikovsky's *Fantasy Overture*, to Prokofiev's ballet, some of classical music's finest composers have written some of their most memorable work with this tragedy of star-crossed lovers in mind.

Enjoy your visit to our Verona, California, tune in to the birds, the drums, the horns, and let the sounds draw your attention about the landscape.

— Charlie Gurke

# MASK MAKING



"She hand-formed the mask of hummingbird as Romeo walked in Montalvo's rose garden, learning how that bird loves. She gilded the frizzled brow of the sphinx moth carefully as Juliet explored what it means to love a flame. And the animals came to rest in the characters' natures, and the characters came and inhabited the animals, and the play was born."

— Lori Wood, Montalvo Arts Center  
Program Manager, Lucas Artists Residency Program

Visual Artist Monica Lundy joined We Players at the April rehearsal intensive at the Montalvo Arts Center to create masks for the various characters in *Romeo & Juliet*. Conceived of as wearable sculptures, each mask was inspired by fauna local to Rancho Petaluma. Via research and conversation amongst the creative team, each character was paired with an animal native to California complementary to their spirit. It was fascinating to watch the performers take on qualities of their "spirit animals" throughout the rehearsal process. Do you notice specific animal influences in their movement? Their speech?



Process photos with Monica Lundy. Credit: Tina Case.

# SOIL TO STUDIO



Lichens and lichen-dyed fabrics. Photo credit: Sasha Duerr.

It was an immense pleasure to collaborate with We Players for our second season—we first collaborated in 2015, using site-collected materials and traditional methods for dyeing the silks used for the sea nymph costumes in *Ondine at Sutro*. As a course in textiles at the California College of the Arts, “Soil to Studio” is a class that is grounded in land-based exploration and evolution of our senses, while creating color palettes inspired-by and drawn directly from our environment.

For *Romeo & Juliet*, Soil to Studio spent a day fully immersing ourselves on-site at Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park to be inspired and informed by the range of plants, animals, and people that have lived on the land throughout history. In collaboration with the stewards of the park, we collected the wind-fall of

black walnut hulls, acorns, and lichen covered branches of native oak, as well as extracting color from the abundance of the Adobe’s borderlines of prickly pear cacti. An ode to the colorful and textural world of California’s past and present, we also drew out deep reds, vibrant fuchsia and purples from cochineal beetle, a native of California and Mexico, and found living on cacti.

These passionate colors saturated felted wool and woven linen with depth and beauty. The sweeping earth tones, neutrals, peach, and striking shades of pink, reds, and purple created for *Romeo & Juliet* are hues hidden in the landscape. Using traditional methods and conscious of an ever-evolving sensory history, we have coaxed forth the creative and colorful story of place.

—Sasha Duerr



# LUCAS ARTISTS PROGRAM



Photo credit: Bahara Emami

This production of *Romeo & Juliet* was developed while We Players were in residence at the Sally and Don Lucas Artists Residency Program (LAP), at Montalvo Arts Center in Saratoga, California.

## Mission and History

The LAP is dedicated to the idea that the arts should be at the center of creative and innovative thinking about the pressing concerns, questions, and controversies of our times. The program offers artists from a range of disciplines an environment conducive to individual and collaborative creative practice. Seeking to stimulate an energetic exchange of ideas between culturally diverse Fellows and across varied artistic fields and scholarly disciplines, the residency has earned international recognition as a model of curatorial practice supporting the development of new and challenging contemporary work.

## LAP Fellows

Prospective LAP Artist Fellows are identified through an international nomination process that ensures support for highly qualified artists with the potential to become major voices in the

next generation of creative thinkers. The residency also seeks to support underserved artists who might not find their way into a residency program. Nominated artists are invited to apply; all applicants are then juried by professionals in their respective fields. The LAP welcomes sixty artists a year into the program. Residencies are offered in all contemporary artistic disciplines including the visual arts, design, literary arts, film, choreography, performance art, music, and the culinary arts. The LAP also welcomes artists' collaborators from overlapping fields, including science and technology.

## LAP Programs

LAP Fellows enjoy unique access to the resources of Montalvo Arts Center, enabling them to present their work to Bay Area audiences. As a creative incubator and presenter, the LAP both supports its Artist Fellows as they create new work and offers them presentation opportunities. These can take the form of new commissions on and off site; exhibitions in Montalvo's Project Space Gallery and on its grounds; and participation in monthly Open Access public programs. Learn more about the LAP and its offerings at [montalvoarts.org/lap](http://montalvoarts.org/lap).

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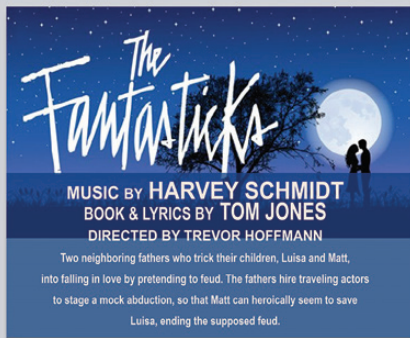
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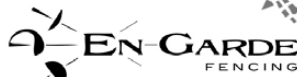
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# ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

We Players connects people with place through the process of making and sharing site-integrated theatre. To ensure all Bay Area residents have the opportunity to benefit from We Players' innovative approach and productions, the company conducts experiential workshops (targeting youth who receive free or reduced price lunch or who have been previously incarcerated), offers extensive discounts to community partners and local residents, and brings groups of underserved youth to its site-based productions, thanks to philanthropic support.

As part of our 2016 *Romeo & Juliet* process, We Players offered a variety of events to engage the public and raise funds for the project:

#### Mask-Making Salons

Dramaturgical presentations, hands-on crafting, and conversation with the creative team

#### The Capulet Ball

Four unique and elegant evenings of performance and celebration

#### Sword Fights & Sandwiches

Afternoon performance, workshop, and social gathering

Through October 2016, We Players will offer *Romeo & Juliet*-related workshops, talk-backs and discounted or free performance tickets to youth and community organizations, or as business team-building events.

**Interested teachers and program leaders should contact [laurend@weplayers.org](mailto:laurend@weplayers.org).**

And as part of our 2016 residency at Montalvo Arts Center, We Players will offer

unique site-integrated performance and educational programming to 600 middle and high school students this October.

**Monday, October 10, 2016**

9:30am and 11:30am

**Tuesday, October 11, 2016**

9:30am and 11:30am

**Interested teachers should contact [learn@montalvoarts.org](mailto:learn@montalvoarts.org).**



Maria Leigh as Juliet. Photo credit: Lauren Matley.

# BEOWULF



Ava Roy and Nathaniel Justiniano in the world premier of *HEROMONSTER*, 2015. Photo credit: Loe Matley.

We Players are thrilled to further our partnership and collaboration with the incredible talents of inkBoat dance theatre and Rova Saxophone Quartet. Nathaniel Justiniano, Artistic Director of Naked Empire Bouffon and a regular collaborator with We Players, will also partner on this project. Natty and Ava began their descent into Grendel's lair with We Players' 2015 production of *HEROMONSTER*, a new devised work with original music by We Players' Music Director, Charlie Gurke.

Charlie first introduced We Players to Rova and inkBoat via "Vessels for Improvisation," performed aboard the historic ferryboat Eureka in 2013 and 2014. Extensive research—including our "Beowulf book club" (led by UC Berkeley scholars of old english and poetry), multiple translations of the text, and intimate workshops investigating the themes of shadow and light—will fuel our continued explorations of the heroes and monsters that live within us all.

Together this band of collaborators from diverse disciplines will create a new, large-scale, site-integrated performance

inspired by the ancient poem *Beowulf*. As ever, the environmental influences of our site will inspire and guide our work. To celebrate the culmination of We Players' five year cooperative agreement with SF Maritime National Historical Park (the first partnership of its kind in the nation!), the production will begin at Aquatic Park alongside Hyde Street Pier, and wend its way through park lands to reach the warm embrace of the historic Chapel at Upper Fort Mason. We are honored to serve as artists-in-residence at the Fort Mason Chapel and to co-produce this work with Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture.

We are grateful for the support of the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the San Francisco Arts Commission. Join us in the spring of 2017, when we will ply the waters of the bay, descend into caves of shadows where ferocious creatures lurk, and gather in smoky mead halls where blazing heroes recount bold feats of guts and glory.

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# JULIUS CAESAR AT FEDERAL HALL

By invitation from the National Parks of New York Harbor, We Players plans to stage Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* at Federal Hall on Wall Street.

In the shadow of our nation's first capital, and today's most powerful institution, We Players will use Shakespeare's poetry to explore power, politics and the rise and fall of empires—ancient and modern—through this powerful pairing of play and place.

Located at the intersection of Wall and Broad Streets, kitty corner from the New York Stock Exchange, Federal Hall is the site of the nation's first capitol, the first presidential inauguration, the first customs house, and is a pristine example of Doric architecture. We Players' immersive production will transform this site into the seat of the most powerful government in history, using The Bard's classic text to activate this dramatic and historically charged site in Lower Manhattan.

Prior to the full-scale production, We Players plans to present a series of panel discussions featuring experts in diverse fields ranging from Shakespeare scholarship to archeology, landscape design to US & Roman history.



Working predominantly in collaboration with the National Park Service, the company's creative process engages dozens of local staff, even more volunteers, and 3-4,000 audience members for each project, while also partnering with a variety of communities that are connected to the project site and themes.

The company needs to raise \$150,000 by the spring of 2017, in order to proceed with the project. Contact development@weplayers.org or call 415-547-0189 if you are interested in sponsoring this work.

The steps and from the steps of Federal Hall National Memorial. Photos credit: Lauren D. Chavez.



