

WE PLAYERS PRESENTS

UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

AT SUNNYSIDE CONSERVATORY



APRIL 18 - MAY 19, 2019



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UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

A NEO-WESTERN LOVE STORY
DERIVED FROM SHAKESPEARE'S *HAMLET*

ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY AVA ROY

APRIL 18 – MAY 19, 2019

THE CAST

HUNTER SCOTT MACNAIR – JACK SPEAR
CHRIS STEELE – HORACE
AVA ROY – AURELIA

THE CREATIVE TEAM

BROOKE JENNINGS – COSTUME DESIGNER
HISTORIC WEAPON & LEATHER CONSULTANT – JD DURST
CHRIS STEELE – FIGHT DIRECTOR
BRITT LAUER – STAGE MANAGER
NICK MEDINA – COLLABORATOR

SYNOPSIS

Undiscovered Country is a neo-western love story derived from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that explores the effect of madness on different types of romantic relationships. Jack Spear is an eccentric old west outlaw. He and his protege Horace rob banks and trains while spouting Hamlet's madcap prose. The two men share everything: stolen loot, cans of beans, the open sky. The play begins during a routine stagecoach robbery, only this time, one of the victims, Aurelia, answers back with Shakespearean dialogue. Jack is immediately smitten with the rich widow. The two keep bumping into each other, and an unlikely romance forms between the two bardolators. Back at the camp Horace starts to get jealous. It's getting harder and harder to deal with Jack's bouts of mania, the occasional visions, the sudden stomping off into the night. As the love triangle grows more complicated, Jack is thrown off balance and hurts Aurelia. Nearing madness, he begs Horace to make peace. United by the man they both love, Horace and Aurelia make unlikely allies. Horace secrets Aurelia to their campout in the woods, where all three find themselves confronting the Undiscovered Country.

THE PLACE

Sunnyside Conservatory's octagonal redwood structure was originally built in 1898 and is surrounded by the hundred-year-old garden, rejuvenated with a thriving collection of drought-tolerant plants, succulents and palms. The building has been completely renovated to become one of the most beautiful hidden sites in San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO RECREATION AND PARKS

The roots of San Francisco's Recreation and Park Department stretch back to the 1870s, when city officials, responding to residents' demands for a large public park, established a Park Commission to oversee the development of Golden Gate Park. Over the years, many more parks were added to the system, and playgrounds, athletic fields, and recreational facilities were developed under the auspices of the Recreation Commission. In 1950, the two commissions were merged, and the modern Recreation and Park Department was born.
sfrecpark.org

PRODUCTION SPONSOR

The Henry L. Hecht Family Fund

COSTUMING NOTES

By the late 1800s, the wide, open range is becoming a memory across the American landscape. Hotly contested private land begins to snuff out the roaring flame of the cowboys' campfire, and the familiar old cattle trails are now lined with barbed wire and "no trespassing" signs. Yet the Cowboy figure would be forever bronzed in popular culture as the ideal of America's origins - heroic explorers rooted in necessity and shaped by the undiscovered country.

Here we find our Horace and Jack caught between the glistening cowboy myth and the tarnished reputation of outlaws. In leather chaps, canvas coats, boots, and wide brimmed hats, Jack and Horace sustain the iconic image of life on the range. Aurelia, a wealthy widow clad in black silks and lace with accessories that might catch the attention of any outlaw, may seem an easy mark but flashes of red in her petticoat suggest a smoldering core.

As the three players chase, recite, and embrace, they shed their layers one by one. As garments fall aside, they relinquish their armor, revealing glimpses of their shared humanity in an otherwise bitter reality. These small acts of rebellion bring the unlikely trio together, as they each charge into the undiscovered country beyond the border of everyday society.

About the audience signifiers

"What is the origin of the paisley print? And why do bandanas have them?"
A small question that lit an incredible path.

The symbol originated along the present day Indian-Pakistani border, referred to as buta or boteh. Many likened its shape to an uncurling date palm shoot, similar to the date palms near our own Sunnyside Conservatory! Shawls started infiltrating Europe in the late 18th century, when Kashmiri princes began including British East India Co. officers in their ritual shawl-giving. By the early 1800s, European desire for paisley had intensified and western imitations came to the forefront. The town of Paisley, Scotland, eclipsed other textile producers thanks to pattern piracy, fast-evolving labor structures, and early adoption of the Jacquard loom. The town's dominance in shawl production explains how the boteh pattern got renamed "paisley" throughout the Western world.

The "Turkey Red" dyeing process would later become synonymous with printed cottons in Scotland, involving madder root and alizarin to fix the dye to the cloth. This combination produced a highly valued color, one that wouldn't fade with sunlight and washing—also known as colorfast. Commonly exported to British colonies, the printed bandana became popular in the United States through political rebellion, with the image of George Washington printed in the center to symbolize independence and solidarity in the states. The versatility of this humble cotton square made its way onto the necks of soldiers, farmers, factory workers, and finally, our cowboys. Protection against the elements and a symbol of reclaimed America, the paisley print bandana has become ubiquitous in western wear and the American aesthetic.

Taking a cue from the paisley printers of the past, I have designed a paisley specifically for We Players in celebration of nearly 20 years of incredible site-integrated performances here in the Bay Area. Printed on organic cotton and dyed using roots and vegetables common in the recipes of the old west, our We Paisley is a small homage to our own expansive journey with you, our brave audiences who time and again travel with us into undiscovered country.

- Brooke Jennings

HISTORIC WEAPONS AND LEATHER

Our two main male characters, Jack and Horace proceed through the action well 'heeled,' as was typical of cowpunchers, rustlers, gamblers, outlaws and lawmen throughout the Arizona Territory of the 1880s.

Horace wears two Mexican Loop holsters of the type that became prevalent after the introduction of the brass cartridge and accompanying cartridge belts which required a larger belt loop. On his right hip is a Colt Single Action Army revolver in a holster with two integral loops above and below a bulge in the main seam and a toe plug which help define this as a "Cheyenne" style holster of the type popularized by saddleries of Cheyenne, Wyoming in the late 19th Century. On his left hip, his Colt six-shooter is held by a replica of a single loop holster with a floral motif based on an original made by N. Porter, Taylorsville, TX.

Jack wears his weapons butt forward, in the military style that allows an easier draw for longer barreled weapons or when mounted. On his right hip is a Schofield, Smith and Wesson in a US Army 1881 pattern holster built to the specifications outlined in Ordnance Memoranda No. 29 of 1885/1891. The two holes on the half-flap allow the holster to accommodate either a SS&W or a Colt. On his left hip is a LeMat "grapeshot" revolver of the type imported by the Confederate forces during the Civil War. Capable of holding 9 rounds, the cylinder revolves around a single smooth bore 20 ga. secondary barrel. It is held by an open toe "California" Pattern holster and cartridge belt that a keen eye might recognize as a replica of that worn by Ed Harris as he enjoys the fruits of the Delos Corporation.

In addition to firearms, both gentlemen carry the essential tool for survival off the land, the Bowie knife.

Look for embedded hints that might reveal the subliminal motivations for each character, who may or may not be guided by an animal totem or other symbolic spiritual energy.

All of the leather work, with the exception of Horace's vintage cartridge belt, was fabricated in San Francisco and available online at ForemastJack.com along with other useful products from Golden Coast Gunleather and ForemastJack Creations.

- JD Durst

THE CAST AND CREW

JD Durst (Historic Weapon & Leather Consultant) was first immersed in Shakespeare at his alma mater, UC Santa Cruz, with the premiere season of Shakespeare Santa Cruz in 1983. Since that time he has lived a life in the theatre throughout the country in towns as diverse as Berkeley, Princeton, Santa Fe and New Haven before settling in San Francisco where he is now a member of IATSE Local 16. Never one to sit by with idle hands, he is always working on a variety of projects from wig making, to replica prop construction, to nautical fancywork to leatherwork. Some of his products (including his new line of utility pouches under the brand of Golden Coast Gunleather) can be found at ForemastJack.com. He feels blessed to have found his way home to the Bard as part of the We Players experience.

Brooke Jennings (Costume Designer) is an award-winning costume designer and teaching artist whose work has been seen in more than 50 productions across the Bay Area. Brooke returns for another collaboration with We Players, having previously designed *Caesar Maximus* (2018), *Roman Women* (2018), *Midsummer of Love* (2017), *Romeo & Juliet* (2016), *Ondine* at Sutro (2015), and *HEROMONSTER* (2015). Other recent credits include *You Mean To Do Me Harm*, *The Effect*, *Entomologist's Love Story*, *Barbecue*, *Colossal*, *The Nether* (San Francisco Playhouse); *Arcadia* (Shotgun Players), *Phèdre* (Cutting Ball Theater), *A Lie of the Mind*, *Bad Jews* (Magic Theatre, asst. designer), *#bros*, *Every 28 Hours* (FaultLine Theater). Brooke is the 2015 recipient of the Theatre Bay Area's Best Costume Design award for We Players' *Ondine* at Sutro. She has received several nominations from Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle, including for her *Caesar Maximus* designs for We Players. She gives many, many thanks to her partner, Cole, for his unwavering support and love.

Britt Lauer (Associate Producer) is thrilled to be working with such a fabulous and talented group and is proud to serve as We Players' Associate Producer. Other We Players credits include: *Caesar Maximus*, *Roman Women*, *Mother Lear*, *Midsummer of Love*, *BEOWULF*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *HEROMONSTER*, and *Ondine* at Sutro. In addition to her work on stage Britt is passionate about applying theatrical skills in nontraditional contexts, working in the medical and business industries to help develop and enhance empathic communication. 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.

Hunter Scott MacNair (Jack Spear) is an actor born and raised in Sonoma Valley. After attending the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City, he continued training at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School where his love for classical works blossomed. *Undiscovered Country* is his second project with We Players after playing Cassius in *Caesar Maximus* last year. Other Shakespeare undertakings include Laertes in *Hamlet* (Marin Shakespeare Company), Orlando in *As You Like It* (Cradle Theatre Company), Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* (Cradle Theatre Company), *Macbeth* in *Macbeth* (Theatre 2020), and Angelo in *Measure for Measure* (Underling Productions). For my childhood confidant and biggest supporter, Ian.

Nick Medina (Collaborator) is a frequent We Players collaborator (*Ondine*, *Midsummer of Love*, *Caesar Maximus*) who just loves Shakespeare a whole lot. He is honored to be a part of the creative team for this Shakespearean rodeo.

Ava Roy 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 and designed her 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.

Chris Steele (Horace, Fight Director) is thrilled to be returning to We Players for their fourth production together. You may have seen them as Casca in *Caesar Maximus*, Benvolio in *Romeo & Juliet*, or Titania/Puck in *Midsummer of Love*, or even around the SF area with Cutting Ball, NCTC, The Speakeasy, SF Shakespeare Festival, Musical Café or Playwrights Center. This is their third professional production as fight choreographer after studying under Matthew Ellis at the University of Oklahoma. Chris is also a professional playwright, makeup artist, and budding drag queen (Polly Amber Ross). They would like to thank Ava for her mentorship and collaboration, this talented cast and crew for such fearlessness and passion, and their family and babefriend for support and compassion.

OUR PARTNERS



FROM WE PLAYERS' ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to Undiscovered Country!

This production is part of a new series of smaller scale works, shows with just 2 or 3 cast members rather than some 15-20, as in We Players' hallmark large-scale productions. When our audiences are on their feet following a performance as it unfolds throughout an expansive environment, we are able to stage moments that imagine the detailed lives of Shakespeare's characters beyond the boundary of the page, just out of reach. Not captured in the written scene, such moments might include a glimpse of a character's inner life in tableau or a private conversation whispered in a corner between characters we may not otherwise see together. In the spiraling shadows of Fort Point, we place Lady Macbeth in chiaroscuro light, repeatedly washing her hands long before the famous Act 5 Scene 1. On the cliffs at Sutro Baths, numerous ondines catch the wind in their silk tresses, suggesting the presence of water spirits in the fog and mist, in the very air around us. Behind trees and crumbling concrete walls on Alcatraz, The Players gossip and murmur about Ophelia and Hamlet while pointing at passing audience members, implicating us in the rottenness of Denmark.

Within the tighter frame of these lustrous conservatory walls, a different type of exploration into such unseen moments is possible. Still we work with the deep and resonant themes replete in all of Shakespeare's canon, still with dedication to the language - but now played out in an intimate roundel rather than against the backdrop of a sweeping vista. We further the imagined lives from visual installations and details in the environment, to consider how the characters might interact with one another in a totally new context. In our *King Fool*, we asked what if Lear and the Fool escaped death and wandered the blasted heath together? In *Mother Lear*, what if the titanic Shakespearean character is the foundation and source for a modern woman living with dementia? In *Undiscovered Country*, Hamlet, Horatio and Ophelia are sources of inspiration and our Jack, Horace, and Aurelia are analogous to, though not synonymous with their Shakespearean counterparts. The text of *Hamlet* becomes the vocabulary with which we craft the new script, and we develop reasons why our characters speak in this vernacular. Sometimes they quote the text, sometimes it flows through them as a natural extension of their own thoughts and voices.

At least six other versions of this cowboy western *Hamlet* lie on the cutting room floor. As we manipulate the text it in turn reveals itself. We investigate the central themes of *Hamlet* and layer in new thematic elements through the re-contextualization. Mental health and madness, solitude and loneliness, the pain of attachment and longing, and the ability to transform oneself over time become prominent. In the rehearsal room together, we make proposals, abandon ideas, and take up new ones. Together we edit and refine, create and discover. We make the work and the work in turn makes us. This is the nectar of the creative process - when we are in this reflexive state of creation and discovery, where we both effort and receive, hammer and shape the thing while simultaneously, it reveals itself. The creative process is itself a journey into unknown territory. The essential equipment we carry in our saddlebags is a love of the language and a cracker jack team of collaborators. Together we set out into the undiscovered country, and today, we invite you to hitch your wagon to our star, and giddyup.

SPECIAL THANKS

Season VIPs

Debbie Degutis, Gary Downing, Guido Imbens

Season Launch Party Volunteers

Ruth Tringham, Nick Dickson, Seth Little, Monica Herbert, Brooke Jennings, Vartika Vaish, Zoltan DiBartolo, Julie Douglas, Micael Bogar, Moira McGovern, Lucas Brown, Madison Worthington, Emily Stone, Jackie Goneconti, Ryan Stelzleni, Willow Baker, Julianna Genevieve Yonis, Giselle Boustani-Fontenele, Chris Steele, Greg Stephans, Margaret Collins, Meredith Fox, and Kristen Wrzesniewski

Volunteer Of The Year

Since the inaugural Volunteer of the Year award in 2016, We Players have made an annual tradition of recognizing one of the super stars in our incredible circle of volunteers for their exceptional energy, effort, time spent, and generosity of spirit.

This year we celebrate Andy Popell as our 2019 Volunteer of the Year. Previous awards have recognized Frieda de Lackner (2018), Monica Herbert (2017), and Ruth Tringham (2016).

And Special Thanks To

JD Durst; Susan McComb; Willow Baker; Giselle Boustani-Fontenele; Rebecca Popell; Phil Ginsburg, Dana Ketcham, Shauna Bogetz of SF Recreation and Parks. Tremendous thanks to all of We Players' amazing volunteers and in-kind sponsors - including Kent Rasmussen Winery and Covington & Burling LLP. Thank you to We Players Board of Directors and Advisory Circle. We Players is grateful to the support of all of our faithful patrons and generous donors, and to the family and government foundations - especially The Henry L Hecht Family Fund - who support our brave new work.

OUR SPONSORS

Many, many thanks to our generous sponsors.

Please stop by their business and let them know you saw them in our program!

Berkeley **YOGA** Center

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ROCK SHOTS PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAUREN MATLEY

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S HOTGUN PLAYERS

ON THE HORIZON

Join us next year in celebrating 20 years of transformative theatre experiences with the We Players 20th anniversary!

Volunteer or donate today
to support our 2020 vision.

Donate online at weplayers.org/donate

We Players is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and
all donations are tax deductible.

Or contact us at Development@weplayers.org to discuss how
your support can go the distance toward making
the best site-integrated theatre possible.

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on" - The Tempest

Early productions at Stanford University

2000 - *Romeo & Juliet*
2001 - *Hamlet*
2001 - *Portrait of a Fool*
2003 - *Twelfth Night (or What You Will)*
2003 - *Jabberwocky* at the Stanford
Mausoleum
2004 - *House of Will*

Our first productions at regional and national park sites

2006 - *The Tempest* at The Albany Bulb
2008 - *Macbeth* at Fort Point

As the first performing artists in residence on Alcatraz Island

2009 - *Iphigenia & Other Daughters* on Alcatraz
2010 - *Hamlet* on Alcatraz
2011 - Alcatraz Symposium on Justice &
Freedom

After Incorporating as a Nonprofit

2011 - *The Odyssey* on Alma
2012 - *Twelfth Night* at Hyde Street Pier

2012 - *The Odyssey* on Angel Island
State Park
2013 - *Macbeth* at Fort Point
2014 - *Macbeth* at Fort Point
2014 - *King Fool*
2015 - *Ondine* at Sutro
2015 - HEROMONSTER at Fort Mason
Center Chapel
2016 - The Capulet Ball
2016 - *Romeo & Juliet* at Petaluma Adobe
2016 - *Romeo & Juliet* at Villa Montalvo
2017 - BEOWULF at SF Maritime & Fort Mason
2017 - *Midsummer of Love* at Strawberry Hill
2017 - *Midsummer of Love* at Kennedy Grove
2017 to Present - *Mother Lear*
2018 - *Roman Women* at The Palace
of Fine Arts
2018 - CAESAR MAXIMUS at The
Music Concourse
2019 - *Undiscovered Country* at
Sunnyside Conservatory

ABOUT WE PLAYERS

We Players' site-integrated performances in public parklands and historic monuments aim to awaken the senses and enliven the spirit. Performances are intimate and interactive, using dynamic in-situ staging and emotional storytelling to activate places and heighten one's sense of self in the world. We bring communities together, reclaiming local spaces for public discourse and civic celebration through art. Transforming local environs into inspired landscapes where classical antiquity and modern truth synthesize, we extend the transformative powers of performance beyond the stage, inviting our collaborators and audience to engage fully and awaken to the spectacular world around us.

We Players' 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, California State Parks, and San Francisco Recreation and Parks. Our performance and engagement programs are accessible to a diverse population of regular park users, and also draw new visitors to discover the park sites in which we work.

Staff

Artistic Director: Ava Roy
Office Manager: Stacy Davis
Associate Producer: Britt Lauer

Board of Directors

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WEPLAYERS.ORG

