

MONTALVO ARTS CENTER IN COLLABORATION WITH WE PLAYERS PRESENTS

ROMEO JULIET

A stylized illustration of a red heart with a blue hummingbird perched on it, set against a textured, aged paper background. The heart is rendered in a vibrant red with blue veins, and the hummingbird is in shades of blue and white. The illustration is positioned centrally between the words 'ROMEO' and 'JULIET'.

AT

VILLA MONTALVO

OCTOBER 6TH - 16TH, 2016

PRESENTED BY

We Players

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 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. 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.

Montalvo Arts Center

Montalvo Arts Center is a member-supported nonprofit organization dedicated to the arts. Our mission is to engage people in the creative process: acting as a catalyst for exploring the arts; unleashing creativity; and advancing different cultural and cross-cultural perspectives. We achieve our mission by

creating and presenting art of all types, nurturing artists, and using our historic Villa, buildings, and grounds in innovative ways. We believe the arts not only elevate the human spirit, but can unite people of diverse backgrounds, enhance our lives, and enrich our community.



Photo credit: Nathan Zanon.

MONTALVO ARTS CENTER IN COLLABORATION WITH WE PLAYERS PRESENTS

ROMEO & JULIET

AT

VILLA MONTALVO
Montalvo Arts Center
SARATOGA, CALIFORNIA



BY
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
DIRECTED BY
AVA ROY

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

OCTOBER 6TH - 16TH, 2016



montalvo
ARTS CENTER

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

FROM MONTALVO'S DIRECTOR



Photo credit: Bahara Emami.

I'm so pleased you're joining us. Whether it's your first or your fiftieth time here, we welcome you! Your support, in the form of your ticket purchase, helps us foster what I like to call the "Montalvo Experience."

What is the Montalvo Experience?

It's inspiring arts education.

Montalvo proudly presents an array of educational performances and curriculum-based arts programs for students of all ages. Take a look at some of our upcoming arts practice classes on page 6. In addition to all we offer on our grounds, we are leading the way in education reform with our Teaching Artist Program: every year, we send professional artists to the classrooms of Silicon Valley elementary schools

to teach kids math, science, and persuasive writing through dance, drawing, cooking, music, and more. Students' rising test scores demonstrate that our methods make a real impact.

It's stimulating public programs.

Concerts, festivals, film screenings, salon-style conversations, theatre performances for all ages. Montalvo is a vibrant cultural force in the South Bay. Check out our upcoming Carriage House Concert Series listed on page 7, and browse future events at montalvoarts.org.

It's fueled by our Sally and Don Lucas Artists Residency Program.

The creative exuberance of our resident artists permeates all we do at Montalvo. The Lucas Artists Residency Program (or LAP), is the oldest in the United States west of the Mississippi, and enjoys international renown. Read all about it on page 5.

It's here for your enjoyment all year long.

We are open to the public 364 days a year. Annually, we welcome nearly a quarter million visitors who come to enjoy our gorgeous grounds—including miles of hiking trails, beautiful gardens, and historic architecture—and view works of art in our exciting outdoor Art on the Grounds program.

If you're a Montalvo member, three cheers for you! Not a member? I'd like to personally invite you to engage in a closer relationship with our dynamic institution. Tonight is a great night to join!

Enjoy the show!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Angela".

Angela A. McConnell
Executive Director

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.

ARTS PRACTICE CLASSES



Montalvo is proud to invite adults to creatively express themselves in the restorative setting of Montalvo's historic grounds. All our sessions are led by established Bay Area-based artists. All skill levels, from the curious novice to the practiced professional, are welcome!

ART OF WINE TOUR & TASTING

Sat, October 15 :: 3-4:30pm :: \$65

Join us for an afternoon of good wine and good company as you go behind the scenes at Conrado Cellars. After a tour of the vineyard and cave led by Paul Conrado himself, enjoy a guided tasting of Pinot Noir, Cabernet, and Merlot paired with gourmet hors d'oeuvres prepared by Culinary Artist Andrea Blum. Plus, at the end of the afternoon, take home a bottle of Conrado Cellars wine.

MINDFUL Ikebana

Sun, November 6 :: 2-4pm :: \$75

Bring your consciousness into the moment as you see, touch, smell, and listen to the beauty of flowers. A centuries-old art form, ikebana calms the spirit, focuses the mind, and teaches the eye to identify the beauty in the myriad details of the natural world. Each participant will learn some of the foundational practices and philosophies of ikebana, and bring home a beautiful and unique arrangement.

CONTEMPORARY FLORAL DESIGN: EAST MEETS WEST

In a relaxed and fun environment, you will be introduced to various floral design techniques, approaching the art form much like a painter does a painting: creating highlights, depth, and adding visual interest by varying sizes, shapes, and colors. These classes are \$75 per person, and are not sequential—so feel free to take one, some, or all of them!

The Basics

Sun, January 8 :: 10:30am-12:30pm

Leaf Manipulation

Sun, February 12 :: 10:30am-12:30pm

Line and Repetition

Sun, March 19 :: 10:30am-12:30pm

Structure

Sun, April 9 :: 10:30am-12:30pm

To enroll, call 408-961-5858 (M-F, 10am-4pm) or visit montalvoarts.org/education!

Montalvo Arts Center presents 2016-17 CARRIAGE HOUSE CONCERT SERIES

WORLD-CLASS CONCERTS IN AN INTIMATE SETTING



OCTOBER

Keiko Matsui
WED, OCT 19, 7:30PM
Premier: \$55 / Reserved: \$50

Acoustic Alchemy
THU, OCT 27, 7:30PM
Premier: \$50 / Reserved: \$45
DON'T MISS BISTRO MONTALVO!

NOVEMBER

Suzanne Vega
FRI, NOV 11, 8PM
Premier: \$45 / Reserved: \$40

Diane Schuur
FRI, NOV 18, 8PM
Premier: \$60 / Reserved: \$55

Nils Lofgren
SAT, NOV 19, 8PM
Premier: \$65 / Reserved: \$60

DECEMBER

Soul 4 the Season
FRI, DEC 2, 8PM
Premier: \$33 / Reserved: \$29

Hymns of Hawai'i:
George Kahumoku, Jr., Uncle Richard Ho'opi'i, and Kawika Kahiaho
SUN, DEC 4, 4PM
Premier: \$49 / Reserved: \$45

Lisa Rock in A Carpenters' Christmas
SUN, DEC 11, 3PM & 7PM (Two Shows!)
Premier: \$36 / Reserved: \$32

David Benoit's Christmas
Tribute to Charlie Brown
Special guest Sara Gazarek
FRI, DEC 16, 8PM
Premier: \$59 / Reserved: \$54
DON'T MISS BISTRO MONTALVO!

JANUARY

Paula Poundstone
SAT, JAN 7, 7PM & 9:30PM (Two Shows!)
Premier: \$55 / Reserved: \$48
DON'T MISS MARTINI MADNESS!

Judy Collins
SAT, JAN 21, 8PM
Premier: \$60 / Reserved: \$55
DON'T MISS BISTRO MONTALVO!

Jim Messina
THU, JAN 26, 7:30PM
Premier: \$65 / Reserved: \$60

FEBRUARY

The English Beat
FRI, FEB 3, 8PM
Premier: \$55 / Reserved: \$49
DON'T MISS MARTINI MADNESS!

Jimmy Webb
SAT, FEB 4, 8PM
Premier: \$45 / Reserved: \$40

Michael Griffiths as COLE – An Evening with Cole Porter
SAT, FEB 11, 8PM
Premier: \$40 / Reserved: \$35

MARCH

The Second City presents We're All in This Room Together
WED, MAR 1, 7:30PM
Premier: \$52 / Reserved: \$47
DON'T MISS MARTINI MADNESS!

Well-Strung
THU, MAR 9, 7:30PM
Premier: \$50 / Reserved: \$45

Spyro Gyra
THU, MAR 16, 7:30PM
Premier: \$58 / Reserved: \$53

Keola Beamer & Jeff Peterson with Moanalani Beamer
FRI, MAR 17, 8PM
Premier: \$48 / Reserved: \$44

Dan Aykroyd, Judy Belushi, and Musical Director Paul Shaffer present The Official Blues Brothers™ Revue
THU, MAR 23, 7:30PM
Premier: \$58 / Reserved: \$53
DON'T MISS MARTINI MADNESS!

Masters of Soul
THU, MAR 30, 7:30PM
Premier: \$55 / Reserved: \$50

APRIL

Louie Anderson
FRI, APR 7, 7PM
Premier: \$48 / Reserved: \$43

Four Bitchin' Babes present Hormonal Imbalance v2.5
THU, APR 20, 7:30PM
Premier: \$48 / Reserved: \$43
DON'T MISS MARTINI MADNESS!

Crystal Bowersox
THU, APR 27, 7:30PM
Premier: \$40 / Reserved: \$35

Herb Ohta, Jr. & Friends present My 'Ukulele World
FRI, APR 28, 8PM
Premier: \$39 / Reserved: \$35

The Doo Wop Project
SUN, APR 30, 7PM
Premier: \$63 / Reserved: \$56
DON'T MISS BISTRO MONTALVO!

MAY

Marc Cohn
MON, MAY 1, 7:30PM
Premier: \$59 / Reserved: \$53

Hot Club of San Francisco presents Meet Me in Paris
THU, MAY 4, 7:30PM
Premier: \$40 / Reserved: \$35
DON'T MISS MARTINI MADNESS!

Bria Skonberg
FRI, MAY 5, 8PM
Premier: \$45 / Reserved: \$40

The Manhattan Transfer
SUN, MAY 7, 3PM & 7PM (Two Shows!)
Premier: \$80 / Reserved: \$75
DON'T MISS BISTRO MONTALVO!

Ann Sweeten
FRI, MAY 12, 8PM
Premier: \$38 / Reserved: \$34

montalvo arts center

BUY YOUR TICKETS TODAY AT

408-961-5858 OR MONTALVOARTS.ORG/CHCS



@montalvoarts

DIRECTOR'S NOTES



Maria Leigh as Juliet. Photo credit: Tina Case.

The Shakespeare canon is a kind of treasure chest—waiting to be unpacked over the course of a lifetime. I played Juliet my freshman year of high school. Changed everything. Sports turned into iambic pentameter in an instant. Flash forward! Spring of 2000, freshman year in college, We Players is born with a beautiful, ragtag array of friends in all the roles—actors cum doctors, engineers, scientists, social anthropologists in training—playing all the parts in, you guessed it, *Romeo & Juliet*. It was set sprawling across the campus from the student union, through pedestrian thoroughfares, under archways, across courtyards, and finally arriving at a collection of iconic sculptures—Rodin's *The Burghers of Calais*. We bit our thumbs and brawled in the cafeteria at high noon, were married in front of the stunning facade of Stanford's Memorial Church, fought to the death in the center of the quad and were buried, by way of red ribbons that tied the dead bodies the sculptures. The audience followed along, growing bigger,

a great parade, and the fire-eyed fury and soaring love story of Juliet and her Romeo swept us along throughout the landscape. The concept and practice of We Players—this transforming of public space into immersive performance venues—ignited.

Zoom into the future once more! Here we are, the fall of 2016. 16 years since the first We Players' performance, our patchwork converted to costumes inspired by the architecture and history of the sites in which we work, our homemade cookies changed into artisanal bites and fine cheeses from local creameries, our shopping cart full of props become a team of talented designers and devoted production crew members, our studious friends respectfully replaced with some of the finest actors in the Bay Area, and our impromptu take over of public spaces grown into unique and very special partnerships with our State and National Parks—and now, with the incredible Montalvo Arts Center.

It is with great honor, humility, and joy that I share today's performance with you, dear audience member. This year marks the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. The works are as vital and relevant as they ever have been, and, I warrant, as they ever will be. It has been a great pleasure to delve back into this familiar story to be nothing less than astonished with the multitude of new perspectives and discoveries packed into this year's exploration of it.

Of course this is always one of the great joys of the rehearsal process—the discovery, the breathing life into it, the responding to what the actors bring, the asking questions, and then more questions, having flashes of insight, and then back on the trail searching again...

And we find so much in the place itself! The majesty of this landscape lends much to our telling of the story. The site becomes another character in the play and a co-director. The space determines how we will move through it and where each moment will take place. Senator Phelan's old home becomes the seat of power for the illustrious Capulet family, the Friar establishes home base in the more humble cottages tucked into the crook of the cool forest. The open space of the newly completed West Lawn becomes the place to see and be seen in Verona. The sure spot to catch some action or trap a cat if perchance you are a Montague hovering on the periphery of the Capulet estate. The surrounding forest becomes a refuge to the fugitive Romeo, a wild place to hold the wild emotions of our distraught lover after he has killed his Juliet's cousin in cold blood. The clean marble lines of the

Temple of Love serve as the Capulet tomb, where ultimately both of our star-crossed lovers will lay their heads, perfectly framed by the white columns as if to showcase even more clearly to the devastated families what their hate has produced - a poisoned picture of true love bleeding out onto the cold stone.

The manicured gardens and lush lawns speak of wealth and abundance of resources—the verdant green singing aloud of water, that precious life-giving commodity. Land and water are resources that men have fought over since time immemorial and here in California, as new wealth tamed the wild landscape, erecting mansions and gardens inspired by the "old world", wealth asserted itself as power. Our relationship to land informs both our daily existence, our survival, as well as our social status and access. Who claims, who conquers, who wins, who loses? Who belongs? Who can afford to live here? Such questions and quests continue.

The land also informs the design of the show—creatures native to Northern 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 inhabit. Personas which will inhabit them. 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 found something stunning about certain species of moths, which inspired Juliet's mask and more. 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 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 chemistry, there is the thrill of the forbidden, there is the ticket to freedom, to another life - perhaps even the fickle fire of youth as some say... But I trust the moth in this case. It seeks this certain flower because it is necessary. The plant and the moth need each other. They simply can not live without.

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.

I hope that during your time here at Villa Montalvo with We Players that you are rewarded for paying attention, that your senses are stimulated and lead you even unto astonishment, that you find something in this story and this place to carry with you. In the words of poet Mary Oliver:

Instructions for living a life:

*Pay attention
Be astonished
Tell about it*

— Ava Roy



Maria Leigh as Juliet and Mohammad Shehata as Romeo. Photo credit: Tina Case.

IN COLLABORATION WITH CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS, WE PLAYERS PRESENTS

ROMEO & JULIET

AT VILLA MONTALVO

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: Brent Elberg, Darren Johnston, Aaron Kierbel, Aaron Priskorn, Greg Stephens

Crew

Production Stage Manager: Moira McGovern
Stage Manager & Fight Captain: Britt Lauer
Assistant Stage Manager: Albert Kong
Production Assistants: Ellen Boener, Liam Collier, Claire Haider, Maya Herbsman, Rick Love, Lana Richards
Dramaturg: Jocelyn Shratter
Costume Designer: Brooke Jennings
Seamstress: Dana Taylor
Leather Artisan: JD Durst
Mask Artist: 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.

OUR CAST & CREW

SPECIAL THANKS

Kelly Sicat, Kelly Hudson, Angela McConnell, Lori Wood, Andrea Blum, Tim Reeve and all the staff at Montalvo Arts Center. We Players' April residency at LAP gave us a solid foundation for the work, and it is wonderful to close our Sweet 16 *Romeo & Juliet* adventure while feeling so well supported in such a special place. Danita Rodriguez, Vince Anibale, Robert Pickett, and all CA State Parks staff at Petaluma Adobe. Sasha Duerr and her "Soil to Studio" class at California College of the Arts, BAR Architects, Friends of the Petaluma River, Malcolm Margolin, Greg Sarris, Debbie Degutis 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 in San Francisco, Susan Miller-Davis & Jonathan Davis, Anne & Jon Davies, Lauren Dutton & Glen Tripp, Pamela Grove & Jerry Nelson, Diane & Rob Johnson, Malinda Longphre, Erecia Miller & John Shrewsberry, 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 Hewitt, 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)

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.

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. While studying Architecture & Urban Design and Dance (BA '03) and Civil and Environmental Engineering (MS '06) at Stanford University, Lauren championed campus sustainability efforts—starting a student group, teaching student initiated courses, and leading efforts for a cutting edge "Green Dorm Project." She worked as a project engineer and green building coordinator for SF-based general contractor Thompson Brooks, Inc. for three years before tying in 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. Now that the company is well established, she is stepping back and taking some time to reflect before refocusing her efforts once again. Lauren has a permaculture design credential and training in primitive skills, nature awareness, advanced connective practices, and various massage modalities. dancingregeneration.net

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) Charlie Gurke (Composer, Music Director) 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 State Park*, *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*, and *HEROMONSTER*. 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

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* 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 KINDSA GIRLS Saturday nights at 9pm on 91.3 KSVY in Sonoma, streaming at www.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.

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, and 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 month, 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*), 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 Yury 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.

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.

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



Courtney Walsh as Mercutio, John Steele Jr. as Benvolio, and Mohammad Shehata as Romeo. Photo credit: Tina Case.

DRAMATURGY

The seasons turn, the year begins to die, and *We Players* creates a new world for an old story. Passion and progress clash in the shadows of old California—and in the shade of the walls of power. The ambitions of those who seek to tame the wild vy with the wild at heart, and we wonder anew at what price love—and what price security.

Paved streets unfurl at your feet, the night broken by electric false stars as we revel at our eternal brilliance—but in the day blood is still spilt in this new civilized age for thirst of power and fear of the future.

Verona's ancient pockets of peace shrink and disappear as control of people and property is fought for with sword and celebration, against the uncertainty of a new age.

Can love survive in such a place, such a time? Can the young find any hope of self-discovery, of control of their own destiny? Can passion submit to order, untamed souls to custom? We watch and hope, even as each step brings us forward, into the unknown and new...

— Jocelyn Shratter



Maria Leigh as Juliet and Mohammad Shehata as Romeo. Photo credit: Tina Case.



Company, *Romeo & Juliet*. Photo credit: Tina Case.

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



"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.

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ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

We Players connects people with place through the process of making and sharing site-integrated theatre. To ensure that all Bay Area residents have the opportunity to benefit from We Players' innovative approach and productions, the company conducts experiential workshops (specifically targeting youth who receive free or reduced 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

And as part of our 2016 residency at the Montalvo Arts Center, We Players will offer unique site-integrated performance and educational programming to 600 middle and high school students in October.

Monday, October 10, 2016

9:30am and 11:30am

SOLD OUT

Tuesday, October 11, 2016

9:30am and 11:30am

SOLD OUT

We Players offers project related workshops, talk-backs and discounted or free performance tickets to youth and community organizations, or as business team-building events. Teachers and program leaders interested in programs related to our 2017 *Beowulf & Grendel* project should contact info@weplayers.org.



Maria Leigh as Juliet and Mohammad Shehata as Romeo. Photo credit: Tina Case.

BEOWULF & GRENDEL



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 U.C. 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 and the National Endowment for the Arts. 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.

ROVA
SAXOPHONE
QUARTET

inkBoat

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.
Photos credit: Lauren D. Chavez.



