

Nuevas Voces

A 10-Minute

Northeastern Illinois University
Department of Communication, Media & Theatre's
Stage Center Theatre and CAPE presents

Play

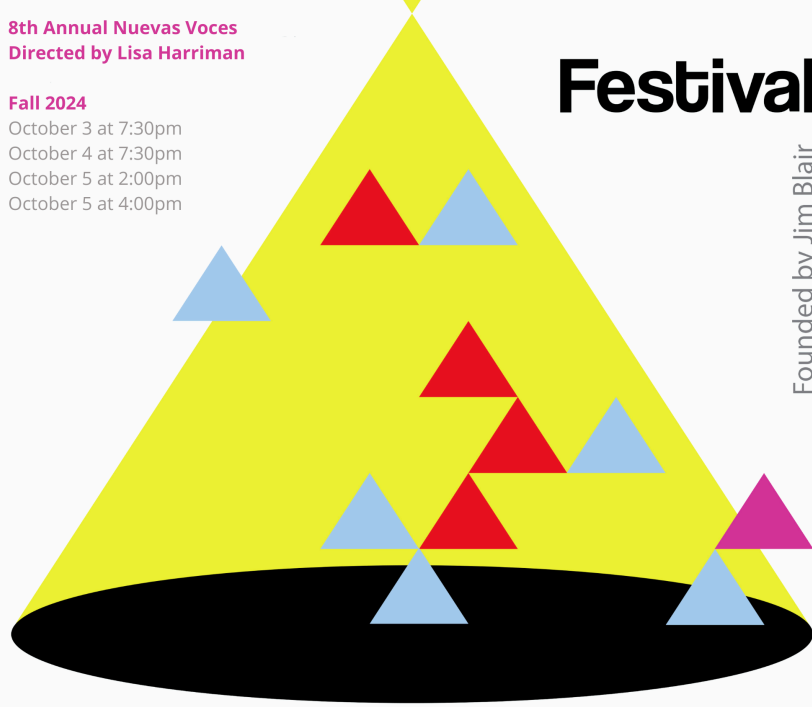
 Northeastern
Stage Center Theatre
Building F
3701 W Bryn Mawr Ave
Chicago, IL 60625

8th Annual Nuevas Voces
Directed by Lisa Harriman

Fall 2024
October 3 at 7:30pm
October 4 at 7:30pm
October 5 at 2:00pm
October 5 at 4:00pm

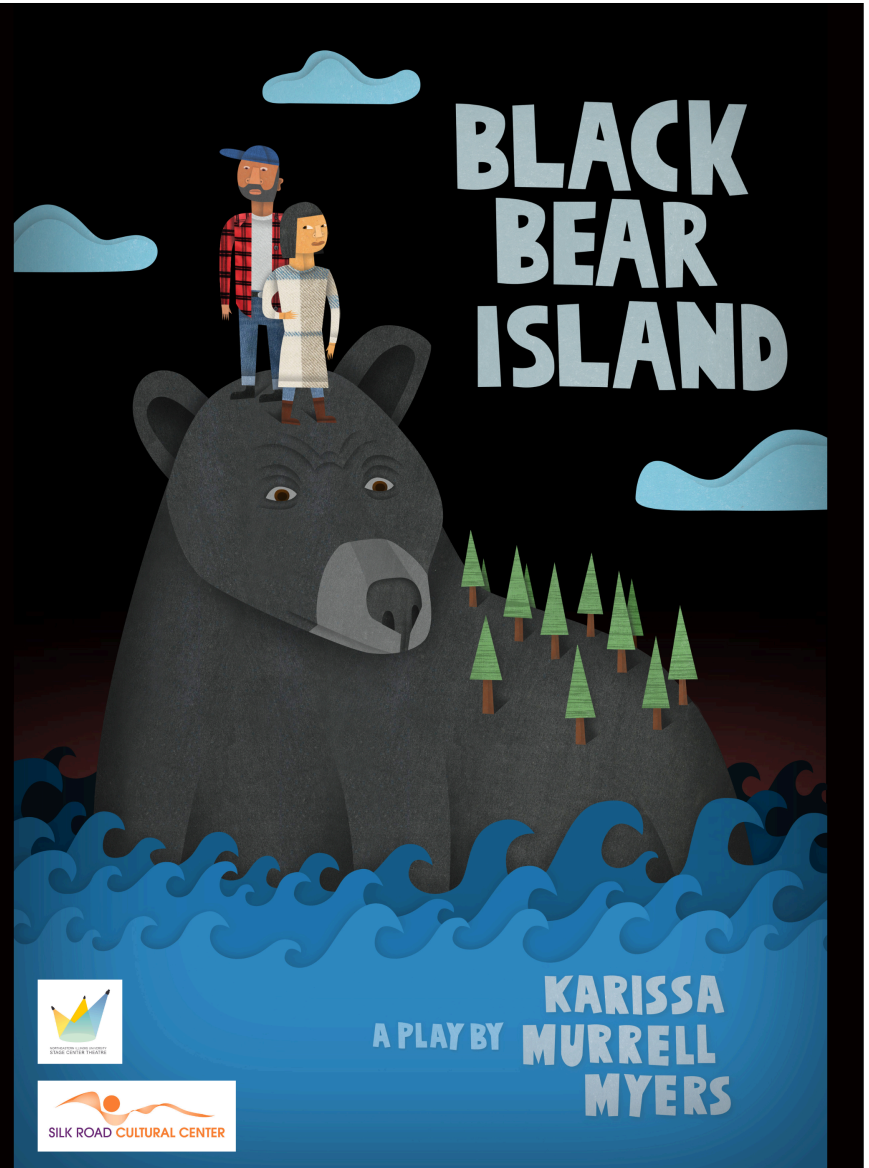
Festival

Founded by Jim Blair



PLAYBILL®

Northeastern Illinois University
Stage Center Theatre in partnership with Silk Road Cultural Center



BLACK BEAR ISLAND

KARISSA
A PLAY BY MURRELL
MYERS



Northeastern Illinois University
Stage Center Theatre & Silk Road Cultural Center

AUTOGRAPHS

presents

BLACK BEAR ISLAND

by Karissa Murrell Myers

Co-Directed by
Dan Washelesky & Jonathan Shaboo

with

Stephanie Shum
Nicolette de Guia
Alexander Attea

Xavier Becerra
Melony Aponte
Alex Chicas

Elizabeth Sacha
Luke Steadman

Scenic Design/TD
Sarah J. Fabian

Lighting Design
Becca Jeffords

Costume Design
Lizz Otto-Cramer

Properties Design
Leslie Hull

Associate Lighting Design
Liz Gomez

Sound Design
Kardo Guerrero

Assistant Director
Sade Cooley

Intimacy/Violence Design
Tristin Hall

Stage Manager
Kelly Bork

Stage Center Theatre
Adam Goldstein, Artistic Director
Sarah J. Fabian, Managing Director

Silk Road Cultural Center
Malik Gillani, Founding Executive Director
Jamil Khoury, Founding Executive Artistic Director

SPECIAL THANKS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to those who have supported this production and partnership with Silk Road Cultural Center.

Interim President Dr. Katrina Bell-Jordan

Interim Provost Dr. Shayne Cofer

The College of Arts and Sciences
Interim Dean Dr. Timothy Libretti

Acting Associate Dean Dr. Kenneth Voglesonger

Acting Associate Dean Dr. Amanda Dykema-Engblade

NEIU Police
Chief Joe Przybyla

Lieutenant Frank Covello

Lieutenant Paul Kruszynski (Retired)

Film / Live Stream
Cyndi Moran, CMT Department Chair

Brian Jacobsen, Live Stream

Brittany Alsot, Archival & B-Roll

NEIU Facilities Management

NEIU Grounds Crew

NEIU Janitorial Team

CAST

Cast Members

Amitra	Stephanie Shum
Warren	Xavier Becerra
Ruby	Elizabeth Sacha
Marjorie	Nicolette de Guia
Girl	Melony Aponte
Boy	Luke Steadman
Dennis the UPS Guy / The Man	Alexander Attea
Finn	Alex Chicas

Production / Creative

Playwright	Karissa Murrell Myers
Co-Director	Dan Washelesky
Co-Director	Jonathan Shaboo
Assistant Director	Sade Cooley
Stage Manager	Kelly Bork
Assistant Stage Manager	Jessica Emmons
Assistant Stage Manager	Preksha Desai
Intimacy & Violence Designer	Tristin Hall
Dramaturg	Yiwen Wu
Scenic Designer / TD	Sarah J. Fabian
Lighting Designer	Becca Jeffords
Associate Lighting Designer	Liz Gomez
Costume Designer	Lizz Otto-Cramer
Assistant Costume Designer	McKayla Johnson
Sound Design	Kardo Guerrero
Properties Design	Leslie Hull
Props Assistant	Bella Cardoza
Props Assistant	Diana Kim
Overhire Technical Theatre Assistant	Ethan Gasbarro
Crew	CMT-T 339: Technical Theatre Production

CAST

Production / Creative (continued)

Theatre Support	CMT Talent/Special Skills Scholarship
Communication, Media and Theatre Department Chair	Cyndi Moran
Artistic Director, Stage Center Theatre	Adam Goldstein
Managing Director, Stage Center Theatre	Sarah Fabian
Production Manager	Susana Acevedo
Theatre Graduate Assistant	Catherine Cable-Barber
Founding Executive Director, Silk Road Cultural Center	Malik Gillani
Founding Executive Artistic Director, Silk Road Cultural Center	Jamil Khoury
Lead Social Media Manager	Tyris Manney
SCT Social Media Manager	Lauren Parr
CMT Social Media Manager	Mary Maxine Arreguine-Casimiro

Understudies

Amitra / Marjorie	Kim Fukawa
Warren / Dennis the UPS Guy / The Man	Faiz Siddique
Girl	Christina Webster
Ruby	Abby Heggem
Finn / Boy	Aiden Mendoza

ABOUT OUR THEATRES AND PARTNERSHIP

SILK ROAD CULTURAL CENTER

Our Supporters

A heartfelt thanks to our generous philanthropic partners whose general operating support makes our return to live theatre possible.

Allstate
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The Siragusa Family Foundation
The Seabury Foundation
Theatre Communications Group

This project is partially supported by a CityArts grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Become a Part of Our Story and Donate Today!

Silk Road Cultural Center
150 North Michigan Ave, Suite 1970
Chicago, IL 60601

312-857-1234
info@silkroadculturalcenter.org
www.silkroadculturalcenter.org



ABOUT OUR THEATRES AND PARTNERSHIP

LETTER FROM SILK ROAD CULTURAL CENTER'S FOUNDERS

Dear Friends, Both Returning and New,

What a joy it is to welcome you to our workshop production of Karissa Murrell Myers' *Black Bear Island*! As we immerse ourselves back into the world of live theatre, our hearts are full of joy, celebrating an extraordinary play and a commitment to innovative models of producing. If communities generate stories, and stories catalyze empathy, then empathy connects people, cultures, histories, and futures. It is this profound piece of wisdom that fuels our passion for what we do.

Our journey from Silk Road Theatre Project (2002) to Silk Road Rising (2012) to Silk Road Cultural Center (2024) represents an ambitious evolution. Think of it as "how to tell stories through multiple mediums." We continue to center Pan-Asian, North African, and Muslim voices, we double down on expanding the American story, and we do so by curating and creating art that is multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, thought provoking, entertaining, and distinct.

A great example of this evolved thinking is our beautiful partnership with Northeastern Illinois University's Stage Center Theatre. What a gift it is to be building a hybrid model of theatre producing that draws upon the talents of professional artists, student artists, and the faculty artists who bridge both worlds. Thank you, Adam Goldstein and Sarah Fabian!

In many respects, NEIU and SRCC are a perfect match. We both serve New Americans (immigrants and the children of immigrants) and champion those who've been marginalized and erased. Our shared values of respect, mutuality, leveraging opportunities, and unleashing potential, are all embodied in this dynamic collaboration.

And how proud we are to be co-producing the work of Karissa Murrell Myers! Karissa is an award-winning, Chicago-based, Filipino American playwright who we've sought to work with for years. To call her prolific and prodigious is an understatement. Watching Karissa's genius unfold through this gothic thriller vindicates the long wait and reminds us again and again why Chicago belongs to playwrights.

A big thanks to the extraordinary community of artists who've brought *Black Bear Island* to life. And an exulted three cheers for Co-Directors Jonathan Shaboo and Dan Washelesky!

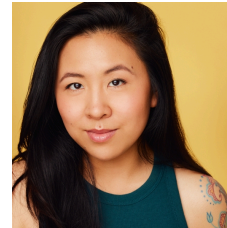
Thank you everyone for your passion, commitment, brilliance, and courage. After four and a half years, we could not have imagined a more triumphant return to live theatre.

With Love and Gratitude,

Malik and Jamil



WHO'S WHO

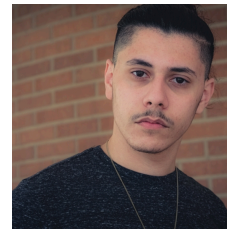


Stephanie Shum

as Amitra

STEPHANIE SHUM [she/her] (Amitra) is thrilled to work with both Karissa and Silk Road Cultural Center again. Select Chicago credits include: *The Crucible*, *Bald Sisters (u/s)*, *The Great Leap (u/s)* (Steppenwolf); *Hummingbird* (Goodman); *Men on Boats* (American Theater Company); *A Story Told in 7 Fights* (The Neo-Futurists); *Revolution*, *The Moors (u/s)* (A Red Orchid); *Mothers* (Gift Theatre); *The Hundred Flowers Project (u/s)* (Silk Road); among others. Regionally: *A Christmas Carol*, *Tiger Style!* (TheatreSquared). She is also an arts administrator and currently serves as Director of Development at A Red Orchid Theatre. Stephanie is a 2023 3Arts Make a Wave grantee, a graduate of the School at Steppenwolf, and is represented by Grossman &

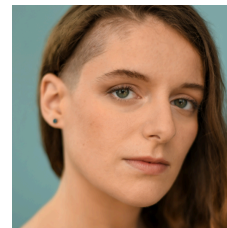
Jack Talent. stephanieshum.com



Xavier Becerra

as Warren

XAVIER BECERRA [he/him] (Warren) is a junior at NEIU majoring in Communication, Media and Theatre with a focus on performance. He has been studying theatre performance for the last six years. Outside of school, Xavier also has interned for the theater district of Chicago and is in an internship program with GMC Chicago, the acting/modeling agency. Previously has been on stage at Stage Center Theatre in the 7th Annual Nuevas Voces 10-Minute Play Festival, *Tiny Beautiful Things* and most recently in *In the Belly of the Whale (or The Jonah Play)*.



Elizabeth Sacha

as Ruby

ELIZABETH SACHA [she/her] (Ruby) is excited to be returning to Stage Center Theatre, where she was previously seen as Dani in *Babel*, Emmy in *A Doll's House, Part 2*, and Pony in *The Realistic Joneses!* She was last seen understudying Dora/Dorph in No Dogs In the Kitchen's *Airswimming*. When not on stage, you can find her hanging from the trapeze or standing on her hands. Follow her on insta [elizabeth.sacha!](https://www.instagram.com/elizabeth.sacha/) www.elizabethsacha.com

WHO'S WHO



Nicolette de Guia

as *Marjorie*

NICOLETTE DE GUIA [she/her] (**Marjorie**) is thrilled to be working on this powerful show with this amazing group of artists. She most recently appeared as The Astronaut in *I Build Giants* with The Plagiarists. She has worked extensively with GreatWorks Theatre on shows including *The Giver* and *Anne Frank: Voices From the Attic*. She has also worked on productions for Lifeline Theatre, Rivendell, Oil Lamp Theatre, Prop Thtr, and Nomad Arts Collective. In addition to her work as an artist, Nicolette spent 15 years in corporate marketing and now owns and runs her own marketing company called N7 Momentum. She is very grateful to Karissa for her commitment to art, advocacy, and most of all for writing this amazing play.



Melony Aponte

as *Girl*

MELONY APONTE [she/her] (**Girl**) is a senior at Northeastern Illinois University majoring in Communication, Media and Theatre with a double minor in Theatre Performance and Journalism. In 2016, she played Julia from Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at Josephinum Academy of the Sacred Heart. In addition, has done stand-in/extra work on Fox's *Empire* and NBC's *Chicago Med* in 2018. At NEIU, she was involved in *Nuevas Voces* in 2019, 2022, and 2023. In 2021, she played the role of Yazmin Ortiz in *Water by the Spoonful* by Quiara Alegria Hudes. She was also one of the 6th Annual Playwriting Contest Winners for *Nuevas Voces Festival Members Only* in Fall 2022. Last fall, she played Astrid in *In The Belly of the Whale (or The Jonah Play)* by Georgette Kelly. In addition, performed a stage reading at Chicago Dramatists. Lastly, a background with stage management and circus street performance with UrbanTheater Company.

ABOUT OUR THEATRES AND PARTNERSHIP



ABOUT SILK ROAD CULTURAL CENTER

Silk Road Cultural Center is an interdisciplinary arts organization rooted in Pan-Asian*, North African, and Muslim experiences. We embrace the arts as a catalyst for connecting people, places, histories, and futures.

At Silk Road Cultural Center we know that representation matters; it shapes perceptions, informs conversations, and influences policies. In our increasingly diverse American society, we view representation as key to having a "seat at the table."

We embrace storytelling in many forms including theatre, film, digital media, music, dance, literature, visual art, and food. At Silk Road Cultural Center, art is both a crossroads and a destination; a sanctuary for healing ourselves, healing our communities, and healing our world.

*We define Pan-Asian as inclusive of all cultures that span the Asian continent, including their diaspora communities.

THE SILK ROAD

"Silk Road" refers to the great trade routes that originated in China and spread westward across Central and South Asia, the Middle East, and into Mediterranean Europe from the 2nd century B.C.E. until the 15th century C.E. These transcontinental caravans resulted not only in trade but also in tremendous cultural interchange among the peoples of the regions; interactions that fostered the sharing of ideas and the fusion of art and aesthetics.

The Silk Road spawned rich traditions of storytelling, primarily oral narrative and epic poetry. As we ourselves are storytellers, we understand the Silk Road as both a geographic polestar and a guiding metaphor for our polycultural worldview

CHICAGO, THE CAPITAL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SILK ROAD

As a crossroads in North America's vast cultural and commercial matrix, Chicago represents a modern-day Silk Road capital. The city's elaborate grid of railways, lake and river waterways, major highways, and well-connected airports, echoes the historic Silk Road's role in powering movement. Chicago also stands as a hub of creative and intellectual dynamo. Its vibrant arts, education, and hospitality sectors make it a crucible for the exchange of ideas and innovation.

ABOUT OUR THEATRES AND PARTNERSHIP



VALUES

- Excellence
- Commitment
- Inclusivity
- Equity
- Intersectionality
- Empathy
- Community
- Curiosity
- Growth

Fall 2023 mainstage workshop production of Georgette Kelly's *In the Belly of the Whale* (of *The Jonah Play*) directed by CMT faculty member Leslie Hull.



Featuring Gren Casas (Jona) and Melony Aponte (Astrid). Photo credit: Sarah Fabian.

WHO'S WHO



Luke Steadman

as Boy

LUKE STEADMAN [He/Him] (Boy) is a senior at NEIU majoring in Communication, Media and Theatre. Luke has done tons of theatre work both inside and out of Stage Center Theatre. He's been working with The Artistic Home, learning advanced Meisner technique and playing a minor role in the world premiere of *Malapert Love* by Siah Bertlatsky at the Den Theatre. This will be Luke's fourth mainstage production at Stage Center Theatre; previously featuring in *Holler River* (Kyle/Jo), *Babel* (Jaime/The Stork), and *Water By The Spoonful* (John/Fountainhead). Luke recently won third place in NEIU's Nuevas Voces 10-Minute Play Festival and Contest for his play *The Interns*. Luke is beyond grateful for everyone involved at Stage Center Theatre. He is thankful to have a place where he can continue to grow and improve his craft, and he hopes the audience enjoys the show! Shout outs to all the friends and family that came out!



Alexander Attea

as Dennis the UPS Guy / The Man

ALEXANDER ATTEA [he/him] (Dennis the UPS Guy / The Man) is a playwright and actor, as well as the Artistic Director of Avalanche Theatre. He helped develop *Black Bear Island* with Avalanche Theatre's Next Draft Series in 2023, so he's thrilled to be working on this amazing script again! As a playwright, his plays have been performed in 15 states, including with The Plagiarists, Platform Productions, Bower Theatre Ensemble, Three Brothers Theatre, Boston University, Illinois State University, and the International Museum of Surgical Science. He was a member of the Spring 2023 cohort of Jackalope Theatre's Playwrights Lab, and was a 2022 Artist-in-Residence at Mackinac State Historic Parks. As an actor, he has performed with Bramble Theatre, Bower Theatre Ensemble, Eclectic Full Contact Theatre, and others. He also plays bass for the band DogBod. Much love to Maddy, the Avalanche team, and everyone in his life who helps him make these dreams a reality.



Alex Chicas

as Finn

WHO'S WHO



Kim Fukawa

as Amitra / Marjorie

KIM FUKAWA [she/her] (u/s Amitra/Marjorie) is a native Chicagoan and has been seen with such companies as Lifeline Theatre, TimeLine Theatre, and The Gift Theatre. She also appears regularly onstage with Babes With Blades Theatre Company where she is an Artistic Affiliate and occasional fight designer.



Faiz Siddique

as Warren / Dennis the UPS Guy / The Man

FAIZ SIDDIQUE [he/him] (u/s Warren/Dennis/The Man) is an actor based in Chicago. This is his first time understudying for Silk Road Cultural Center, and he couldn't be more stoked. After spending the summer completing BADA's Midsummer in Oxford program, Faiz followed up with some recent theatre credits including: *Hatef*ck* (First Floor Theatre), *In the Next Room or the Vibrator Play* (Studio Theatre). Looking ahead, you can see Faiz as Romeo in Midsommer Flight's *Romeo & Juliet*. @iamfaizsiddique



Christina Webster

as Girl

CHRISTINA G. WEBSTER [she/her] (u/s Girl) is a passionate painter and musical theatre performer. She is a freshman at NEIU with a major in Communication, Media, and Theatre and a minor in Psychology. She is thrilled to be part of *Black Bear Island* and hopes to return in the fall for more exciting shows. She has been a part of many other shows such as *Urinetown the Musical*, *Clue*, and *Hairspray*. She has been in choir since the age of four due to her musical history with her family. She started acting around age 12 and has kept pushing forward since. Christina is very grateful for what the CMT department has given her and is very thankful for her cast and crew. She is also very thankful for her parents who push her every day. She believes that everyone should follow their dreams and never be scared to go out there and do what you do because we only live one amazing life.



Abby Heggem

as Ruby

ABBY HEGGEM [she/her] (u/s Ruby) is a student at NEIU majoring in psychology with a variety of interests including writing, filmmaking, and acting. She is excited to be a part of *Black Bear Island*, as this will be her first role acting in theatre.

ABOUT OUR THEATRES AND PARTNERSHIP



Since 1967, Stage Center Theatre (SCT) has produced more than 250 plays on campus in its over 50 years of programming.

Stage Center Theatre is Northeastern Illinois University's resident producing theatre, and provides vital entertainment, enrichment, and social forum to the University and the Chicago area community. Each season, Stage Center Theatre produces a new play festival and contest, full Main Stage productions for all audiences, and Children's Theatre Workshop productions for the Chicago Public Schools audiences ranging from elementary to high school students. Our participants range from Northeastern students, faculty and staff in roles such as actors, stage managers, directors, designers, playwrights and technical production staff.

MISSION

Supporting the mission of Northeastern Illinois University and the pedagogical needs of the Communication, Media and Theatre Department, Stage Center Theatre (SCT) provides a professional application of theatre craft by producing challenging, dynamic and intersectional stories that drive the work of the United States and global theatrical communities. SCT storytelling centers around crucial societal questions, reflects our campus identity, and provides our audience with electric, living experiences that propel conversation, move the soul and enliven the heart. In doing so, SCT endeavors to be an expressive home for campus and community, a safe, diverse, and inclusive artistic environment, and a community beacon that underscores the pursuit of social justice in Chicago theatre and beyond.

VISION

- To become the most inclusive and innovative theatrical educational facility in the city.
- To propel and support the professional theatrical training and artistic awareness of all artists in the Northeastern community.
- To be a space that values process over product and guides Northeastern students to engage industry best practices.
- To become an artistic home that ensures the active representation of, listening to, and advocating for the voices of the underrepresented, marginalized, and invisible.
- To mine the value of productive discomfort in storytelling.
- To build an artistic incubator and platform that emboldens play, ownership, and new traditions.
- To spark meaningful social forum, ideas, intersection, community partnership, collaboration, and action.

NOTES

The Black Bear Inside Us

By Yiwen Wu

In the loud sound of silence inside a forest, Karissa Murrell Myers first had the idea of writing *Black Bear Island*. “Watch out for the bear,” she was told. Then, all of a sudden, the sound of the wind, the movement of the leaves, a crack in the wood—every sound became “the bear.” Even though nothing really happened, the very thought of a possible attack ended up bringing about an eerie and deep-seated feeling of fear, no less intense than the fear in the face of actual violence.

Black Bear Island, as a play, explores how the presence of violence, whether enacted or not, profoundly affects our psyches. Taking place in between a psychological sphere and a natural forest, the play pushes the boundaries between the real and the fantastical. It calls us to ponder the power of our unconscious through languages of nature: as the play goes on, the forest expands and eventually outgrows itself. Meanwhile, memories rewind in full force, and fantasies take over to haunt our senses. In the end, the play forces us to confront our inner black bear, the more emotional and animalistic sides of ours that lie within.

While zooming into the inner worlds, the play also encourages us to see how the very personal is simultaneously social and political and how our ascribed racial and gender identities powerfully shape our expression of feelings. Following the lives of two young lovers growing into adulthood, the play unfolds to reveal the reverberations of cultural identities: how historical ideals of masculinity continue to valorize physical strength and chivalric violence among men while discrediting the power of female rage, especially for women of color.

The black bear, again, can provide us with a vivid illustration of how differences are socially constructed. The public memories of the bears are exceptionally multifaceted, perhaps due to the fact that they are similar to but not humans. Bears, like shapeshifters, continue to take on new meanings in various mediums: since one of the earliest stories of bears, such as medieval epic poem “Beowulf,” bears have been prized as the symbol of chivalric bravery and resilience; in tales such as “The Fisherman and the Bear,” bears are depicted as aggressive and clumsy, but also sweet and caring; most commonly in modern media, however, bears are conceived as these dangerous fantastical beings, even though, in reality, black bears are primarily vegetarian and rarely attack humans. They are a shy and adaptive species but *made* dangerous and fearful by our collective construction of myths and memories. This question of how something so innocent and pure can grow into something violent, too, lies at the core of our play.

Like the ever-changing images of the black bear, the characters in this play also defy simple categorization. They are at once tender and tough. They love. They fight. They forget. They remember. They would not stop finding humor even in the most distressed situations. They are humans. Ultimately, we hope that *Black Bear Island* can provide a space where we can explore a multiplicity of possibilities in ourselves.

WHO'S WHO

Aiden Mendoza

as Finn / Boy



Karissa Murrell Myers

Playwright

KARISSA MURRELL MYERS [she/her] (Playwright) is a Filipino American Chicago-based theatre artist. She serves as the Artistic Director of Bramble Theatre Company. Her plays include *On the Greenbelt*, *Black Bear Island*, *Blood of My Mother's*, *The Red Fortune Cookie*, and *How to Murder*. Her work has been developed and/or produced at Goodman Theatre, Strawdog, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, A Red Orchid Theatre, American Blues Theatre, The Gift Theatre, Silk Road Rising, Avalanche Theatre, Broken Nose Theatre, and Bramble. Karissa received an "Outstanding New Work" Jeff Awards nomination for *On the Greenbelt*, and was featured in American Theatre Magazine's "Theatre Workers You Should Know" and in Newcity Stage's "Players 2023: Who Really Performs in Chicago Right Now". M.F.A. in Performance from University of Hawaii at Manoa, B.A. in Theatre Arts from Boise State University, and graduate of The School at Steppenwolf. Member of The Dramatist Guild. www.kmurrellmyers.com



Dan Washelesky

Co-Director

DAN WASHELESKY [they/he] (Co-Director) is a Chicago-based director/dramaturg who specializes in new play development. They completed their M.A. in Theatre and Performance Studies at Washington University in St. Louis. Dan is the Managing Director of Bramble Theatre Company and previously served as Managing Director of The Passage Theatre. With Steppenwolf Theatre, he assistant directed *Describe the Night* and *The Children*, provided dramaturgical support for *The Rembrandt* and *The Doppelgänger*, and script supervised workshops of *La Ruta* and *Lindiwe*. They have also worked with Avalanche Theatre, Valiant Theatre, St. Louis Actors' Studio, Tennessee Williams Festival St. Louis, First Run Theatre, Eclectic Full Contact Theatre, and (remotely) Dacha Theatre in Seattle. Dan is an advocate of social justice theatre, particularly the Forum Theatre methods of Augusto Boal and David Diamond. They have written and directed three cabarets (and counting) featuring James Gavin.

WHO'S WHO



Jonathan Shaboo

Co-Director

JONATHAN SHABOO [he/him] (Co-Director) Chicago credits: the world premiere of *Layalina* (Goodman Theatre) the world premiere of *Peabody* (Young Peoples Theatre of Chicago). U.S. National tour: *Evil Dead: The Musical*. International credits: *We Will Rock You* (Starvox Ent.), North American premiere of *Julie: After Strindberg* (Untold Wants.), *Greater Expectations* (Second City Toronto), and *The Ministry of Mundane Mysteries* (Outside The March Theatre). Jonathan is a SWANA-Canadian director, and award-winning comedian. Graduate of The School at Steppenwolf, he is a founding member of Bramble Theatre Company in Chicago and will be in the national Broadway tour of *The Kite Runner* starting this spring/summer.



Sade Cooley

Assistant Director

SADE COOLEY [she/her] (Assistant Director) is excited to make her Assistant Director debut at Stage Center Theatre. She is earning her B.A. in Communication, Media and Theatre at NEIU where she made her adult acting debut in the play *Tiny Beautiful Things* by Cheryl Strayed (Letter Writer). Sade is typically behind the scenes directing shows for youth groups around the city of Chicago and Northwest Suburbs, which includes *A Christmas Carol*, and A Collection of Student Scenes, as well as serving as Assistant Director for the hit musical *Rent*. Her love and passion for theatre started young and has continued into her adult life. She is an Ensemble Theater Award Recipient from The Court Theatre at The University of Chicago. When not in class or on stage, Sade works for a special recreation department in McHenry County. In her free time she enjoys listening to music and spending time with family and friends.

WHO'S WHO



Jamil Khoury

Founding Executive Artistic Director, Silk Road Cultural Center

JAMIL KHOURY [he/him] (Founding Executive Artistic Director, Silk Road Cultural Center) is thrilled to collaborate with playwright Karissa Murrell Myers and NEIU's Stage Center Theatre. A producer, playwright, essayist, and filmmaker, Jamil's art focuses on immigrant experiences and questions of diaspora. He is particularly interested in the intersections of culture, national identity, religion, and belonging. Jamil has received The University of Chicago Diversity Leadership Alumni Award, the Community Leader Award from the Association for Asian American Studies, and the Kathryn V. Lamkey Award from Actor's Equity Association, among others. He proudly serves on the Board of Directors for both the Middle Eastern and North African Theater Makers Alliance (MENATMA) and the Consortium of Asian American Theatres and Artists (CAATA) and on the Advisory Board for Say Gay Plays. Jamil recently founded Polycultural Institute, SRCC's think-and-create tank.



Elizabeth Rosner

Director of Development, Silk Road Cultural Center

ELIZABETH ROSNER [she/her] (Director of Development, Silk Road Cultural Center) is passionate about storytelling and arts activism and has been on staff at SRCC since 2020. She earned her Ph.D. in Musicology from Florida State University in 2019, focusing her research on expressions of power, autonomy, and gender within Jola women's musical practices in Senegal. She is also an adjunct faculty member in the music department at Roger Williams University and received a Public Humanities and Arts Curriculum Development Fellowship in 2023. Elizabeth enjoys writing for diverse audiences and blending her academic and creative sensibilities.

WHO'S WHO



Lauren Parr

SCT Social Media Manager



Mary Maxine Arreguine-Casimiro

CMT Social Media Manager



Malik Gillani

Founding Executive Director, Silk Road Cultural Center

MALIK GILLANI [he/him] (Founding Executive Director, Silk Road Cultural Center) is honored to partner with Stage Center Theatre at NEIU. His leadership in arts and education has garnered national acclaim. Most notably, Malik conceived of SRCC's model for creating online video plays, which are now being viewed around the world. He also developed SRCC's education programs, Myths to Drama and EPIC (Empathic Playwriting Intensive Course), and spearheaded their growth from school classrooms to include community-based learning for immigrants and refugees. He is the recipient of the Chicago Community Trust Fellowship Award, the Changing Worlds Award, and the Leader for a New Chicago Award, among others. In the fall of 2019, Malik suffered a stroke, and is currently living with aphasia (a language disorder) and apraxia of speech (a speech disorder). As he continues to recover, Malik is developing a play titled *The Art of Aphasia*, which he hopes to perform in 2026.

WHO'S WHO



Kelly Bork

Stage Manager

KELLY BORK [she/they] (Stage Manager) is majoring in Marketing in the College of Business and Technology at NEIU and is a recipient of the CMT Talent/Special Skills Scholarship. She is thrilled to have had the opportunity to work on Karissa Murrell Myers' *Black Bear Island* and to work with Silk Road Cultural Center as a student. She is grateful for all the hard work and dedication brought to this show by everyone involved. This is the third production that she has been the stage manager for Stage Center Theatre, with the others being *Holler River* and *In the Belly of the Whale* (or *The Jonah Play*).



Jessica Emmons

Assistant Stage Manager

JESSICA EMMONS [she/her] (Assistant Stage Manager) is a senior at NEIU with a major in Communication, Media and Theatre with a minor in Communication. She has previously been a swing in the Spring 2023 production of *Holler River* and an ASM for *In the Belly of the Whale* (or *The Jonah Play*) in Fall 2023.



Preksha Desai

Assistant Stage Manager

WHO'S WHO



Tristin Hall

Intimacy & Violence Designer

TRISTIN HALL [they/them] (Intimacy and Violence Designer) is beyond thrilled to be back at Northeastern! They are a Chicago born and raised actor, Intimacy and Fight Choreographer trained with IDC, SAFD, and BASSC. Previously they have choreographed at Northlight, Steep, Strawdog, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Writers, Bramble Theater, Theater Evolve, Imposter Theatre, The Plagiarists, Raven, and Timeline. Recently they performed as Essence with Herstory Theatre's production of *MIA*. Tristin is also one of the founding members of Gladiator Fight Night and Point Theatre Project. All the love to their family for their constant support!



Yiwen Wu

Dramaturg

YIWEN WU [she/her] (Dramaturg) is an artist-scholar. She is currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago, in the joint program between Theater & Performance Studies and East Asian Languages & Civilizations. Yiwen finds her passion in amplifying Asian voices on contemporary stages, from translations and adaptations of classical works to new plays that explore what it means to be Asian in modern America. Her dramaturgical credits include *Lucy and Charlie's Honeymoon* (Lookingglass Theatre Company), *Akutagawa* (Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival), and *The Chinese Lady* (TimeLine Theatre). Her new play dramaturgy credits include *F*ck House* (Strawdog Theatre Company), *Tomato Tattoo* (APIDA Arts Festival), *Red Fortune Cookie* (Bramble Theatre Company), *Hungry Ghost Festival* (Lifeline Theatre), and *The Feet of God* (TimeLine Theatre).

WHO'S WHO



Adam Goldstein

Artistic Director, Stage Center Theatre

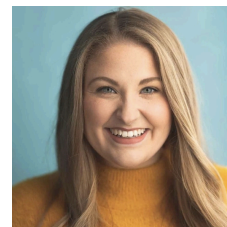
ADAM GOLDSTEIN [he/him] (Artistic Director) is proud to serve as Assistant Professor of Theatre, and as the Artistic Director of Stage Center Theatre in the Communication, Media and Theatre Department at NEIU. Stage Center directing: *Holler River*, *Water by the Spoonful*, *Nuevas Voces 1 & 3*, *High Fidelity*, *Marisol*, the workshops of Dolores Diaz's *Metamorphic* and Alvaro Saar Rios' *Piggsville*; *We'll be Better Later*, *how to hero (or the subway play)*, and *Anon(ymous)* for NEIU's Children's Theatre Workshop. He has directed throughout the Chicagoland area and is a highly sought-after dialect coach. He previously taught at Columbia College Chicago, Northwestern University, and North Central College. Training: M.F.A.- Directing, Northwestern University, B.F.A.-Acting from NYU's Tisch School of the Art



Susana Acevedo

Production Manager

SUSANA ACEVEDO [she/her] (Production Manager) is excited to come back to NEIU, her alma mater, to serve as the 2023-2024 Production Manager and Stage Management Mentor.



Catherine Cable-Barber

Theatre Graduate Assistant

CATHERINE CABLE-BARBER[she/her] (Theatre Graduate Assistant & Front of House Manager) is a current graduate student in the Communication, Media and Theatre Department where she has served as the graduate assistant for the theatre program for the past two years.

Tyris Manney

Lead Social Media Manager



WHO'S WHO



Ethan Gasbarro

Overhire Technical Theatre Assistant

ETHAN GASBARRO [he/him] (Overhire Technical Theatre Assistant) is excited to be back to help out as an overhire for *Black Bear Island*. He previously served in the past couple seasons at Stage Center Theatre as the Technical Director. He is an ensemble member of The Impostors Theatre Co. in Chicago.



CMT-T 339: Technical Theatre Production

Crew

TECHNICAL THEATRE PRODUCTION is a 300-level CMT Engaged Learning Experience-Boundary Crossing course. Students enrolled in Technical Theatre Production gain practical, hands-on experience in all technical areas of theatre for main stage productions, including, but not limited to, scenic carpentry, construction and painting techniques; properties design and construction; costume pulling and alterations; and lighting equipment and electrics.



CMT Talent/Special Skills Scholarship

Theatre Support

CMT TALENT/SPECIAL SKILLS SCHOLARS are an integral part of the programming at Stage Center Theatre. NEIU offers tuition scholarships to qualified students. A limited number of these scholarships are available through the CMT Department. The tuition scholarship exempts the recipient from paying all or a portion of the tuition charge, depending on the size of the scholarship.



Cyndi Moran

Communication, Media and Theatre Department Chair

CYNDI MORAN [she/her] (Department Chair) teaches a variety of media production courses including Introduction to Video Production, Advanced Video Production, and Digital Video Editing, as well as cinema studies courses, such as Documentary Film and The Art of Film and Video. Her documentary work has been seen on the PBS series P.O.V., and in numerous national and international festivals. She has produced TV segments for WTTW and The Sundance Channel, and she has edited independent documentary productions, television shows, commercials, and programs for artists and not-for-profits.

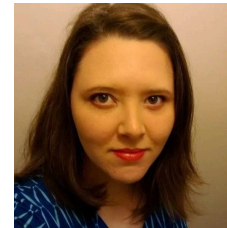
WHO'S WHO



Sarah J. Fabian

Scenic Designer / TD

SARAH J. FABIAN [she/they] (Scenic Designer, Technical Director and Managing Director) is an Associate Professor of Theatre in the Department of Communication, Media and Theatre where they serve as the Managing Director of Stage Center Theatre and Resident Scenic Designer and Technical Director. They coordinate the CMT Talent/Special Skills Scholarship. Sarah previously taught at Northwestern University. Their design work has been seen at Lookingglass Theatre Company, Steppenwolf, Writers Theatre, Nashville Repertory Theatre, and numerous storefront theatres throughout Chicago and across the country. Their work has been recognized regionally by the American College Theatre Festival Region III, nationally by the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts and internationally at the Prague Quadrennial. M.F.A.: Northwestern University. www.joonheepark-scenicdesign.com Love to MBF, CAF and EWF.



Becca Jeffords

Lighting Designer

BECCA JEFFORDS [she/they] (Lighting Design) is excited to join the faculty at NEIU. She is a lighting designer for theatre, dance, performance art, concerts and other live events. While she works nationally, she currently makes her home in Chicago. She has an immense love of storytelling and visual narrative. Her work has previously been seen at Stage Center Theatre as the guest lighting designer for *High Fidelity* and *In the Belly of the Whale (or The Jonah Play)*. Becca received her M.F.A. in Lighting Design from Northwestern University and a B.F.A. in Production Design from Columbus State University, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude. <http://www.beccajeffords.com/>



Liz Gomez

Associate Lighting Designer

LIZ GOMEZ [she/her] (Associate Lighting Designer) is thrilled to be designing with NEIU for the first time. She has worked with a variety of local Chicago theatres since moving here in 2015, and some recent lighting design credits include: *Love Song* (Remy Bumpo), *Wasted* (Free Street Theatre), and *Right to be Forgotten* (Raven Theatre).

WHO'S WHO



Lizz Otto-Cramer *Costume Designer*

LIZZ OTTO-CRAMER [she/her] (Costume Designer) is a full-time instructor at NEIU and resident costume designer at Stage Center Theatre. She earned her MFA from University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Lizz has designed, painted, and created props for numerous theaters across the country. She greatly enjoys working with her students and fellow faculty at NEIU.



McKayla Johnson *Assistant Costume Designer*

MCKAYLA JOHNSON [she/they] (Assistant Costume Designer) is a senior at Northeastern Illinois University pursuing a Communication, Media and Theatre major and a Design, Technology and Management minor with a focus in costume design. She has worked with Stage Center Theater for productions such as *The Revolutionists*, *Holler River*, *Nuevas Voces*, and was the costume designer for *In the Belly of the Whale* (or *The Jonah Play*). She received the Anna Antaramian Excellence in Theatre Award in 2022 for her work on *The Revolutionists* and *Holler River*. She is a recipient of the Northeastern Illinois University CMT Department Talent/Special Skills Scholarship. She will be graduating at the end of the Spring 2024 semester.



Kardo Guerrero *Sound Design*

RICARDO GUERRERO [he/him] (Sound Designer) is a returning alumnus of Northeastern Illinois University, who is excited to embark on his third season as the Resident Sound Designer at Stage Center Theatre. Ricardo graduated in 2021 with a B.A. in Communication, Media and Theatre and a minor in Media. He received the Anna Antaramian Excellence in Theatre Award and the CMT Distinguished Student Award. Ricardo continues to push creative boundaries and steps out of his comfort zone. Some notable work that displays his creativity and soundscape include *In the Belly of the Whale* (or *The Jonah Play*), *Holler River*, and *Babel*. His portfolio includes work at Oakton College's Footlik Theatre on productions like *Smokefall* and at The Edge Theatre, contributing to Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along-Blog. While still in the early chapters of his theatre journey, Ricardo is determined to introduce others to the magic and excitement of this art form, just as he once experienced himself.

WHO'S WHO



Leslie Hull *Properties Design*

LESLIE HULL [she/her/they] (Properties Designer) is a faculty member in the Department of Communication, Media and Theatre where she serves as a mainstage director and resident props designer at Stage Center Theatre. She also acts, directs, coaches, and develops new works in and around Chicagoland with various companies including The Wayword Writers Collective and Typeset Theatre Co., which she co-founded with her partner Conor McShane. Leslie teaches courses in both Communication and Theatre working with the CASEP Education Cohort, and more recently CASA working with students in STEM. She is a proud member of Actor's Equity. B.F.A.: University of Michigan - Flint. M.F.A.: Michigan State University.



Bella Cardoza *Props Assistant*

ISABELLA "BELLA" CARDOZA [she/her] (Props Assistant) is a sophomore at NEIU and is her debut at Stage Center Theatre. Growing up, she always did children's theatre in elementary school, especially musical theatre and dance. She hopes to major in Communication, Media and Theatre, but also minor in Communication. During her freshman year last year, she discovered her love for journalism when she joined the NEIU Independent as she writes reviews for TV shows, movies, and books. She would like to give a special thanks to her mother who has guided her on how to navigate NEIU, Leslie who has been willing to answer any questions she has, Sarah who has been nothing but kind to her, and everyone else at the play who have been guiding her as this is her first time participating in a stage production behind the scenes as she was often on stage acting back at her old all girls high school.



Diana Kim *Props Assistant*