

MFA DRAMATIC WRITING YEAR 3
NEW WORKS
FESTIVAL
PLAY PROJECT

EVERYTHING YOU
ALWAYS WANTED
TO KNOW ABOUT
CHINESE PEOPLE
BUT WERE
AFRAID TO ASK
BY FEI KAYSER

BEIJING
ROYALS
BY CHLOE
LUTING HUANG

YOU ARE
THE BLOOD
BY ASHLEY ROSE
WELLMAN

McClintock Theatre | May 1, 2016

USC School of Dramatic Arts 2015/2016 SEASON

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Master of Fine Arts in Dramatic Writing

The USC School of Dramatic Arts' Master of Fine Arts in Dramatic Writing (MFADW) is an intensive, intimate three-year program presented in association with the USC School of Cinematic Arts. A mentor-based, practicing literary arts program within an elite research university, the MFADW is designed to mine the literary potential of the artist in the hope of preparing the artist to engage meaningfully in global society and the profession. Underlying the program is the belief that literary art in the theatrical context is central to human existence, and aids in illuminating the human condition which is the source and the destination of all writing. The program aims to help the student utilize his or her innate artistry to build excellence.

The program is the only one of its kind located in a region where all spheres of arts and entertainment intersect – the City of Los Angeles, the preeminent site of opportunity for today's dramatic writer.

The USC MFADW approaches dramatic writing through its critical roots in playwriting and then investigates beyond this foundation into adaptation, screenwriting, television writing and multimedia. Included are production opportunities as well as a four-phase New Works Festival that includes readings, workshops, concert presentations, and professional transition.

New Works Festival Year Three is a spring event offering concert readings of graduating students' works utilizing professional directors, actors, and dramaturgical responders.

Led by distinguished faculty who are working artists, the MFADW program also offers visiting artist master seminars, literary management internships, and professional observerships.

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT CHINESE PEOPLE BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

By Fei Kayser

Directed by Mark Majarian

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

Jack Li

Jaime Barcelon

Deputy Finance Minister Li

Tohoru Masamune

Gloria

Giselle Gilbert

Lasse

Julian Yuen

Rainy

Rosie Narasaki

Mrs. Li

Esther Chae Von Zielbauer

Young Grandfather Li

Ryun Yu

Mario Cozzi

Rob Nagle

Brett

Randy Guiaya

Village Elder

Chil Kong

Vladimira

Nina Harada

TIME: 1950's — now

PLACE: China

Stage Manager Jennifer Caspellan

PLAYWRIGHT'S BIO

Fei Kayser is a USC International Artist Fellow who writes about the ways that Chinese people both collide against and celebrate their rapidly changing country and the world. Tradition and history-laden culture are matched against a newer, faster society and its evolving expectations. There is excitement in this drama that plays out in the new China — in its challenges and triumphs — which form the narratives and fabric of Kayser's work. Kayser was born in Xi'an, Shaanxi, and lived in China, America, Canada, and the United Kingdom, before settling in Beijing. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Yale University with distinction in her major of theater studies, with a concentration in playwriting. Her writing has been honored with a number of awards, prizes, and fellowships, including the Elga Ruth Wasserman Award in Women's and Gender Studies, the Henry S. McNeil Fellowship, and a Hedgebrook Writing Residency, among other distinctions. In addition to writing drama for the stage, Kayser has written for China Central Television, China Daily, and interactive media. She is a sought after collaborator on screenplays, with credits on projects spanning the genres of deep science fiction, Chinese fantasy, and historical drama. She has advised Chinese film companies both small and established, and she was a founding member of the screenwriting program at Naga Film, Beijing, serving as the senior consultant to its board.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Mark Majarian has been a professor of theater at Cypress College for 35 years. He has served as Circuit One Coordinator for Region VIII of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival from 1993-1997. He received his B.A. in Theater from Pomona College and his M.F.A. in Directing from UCLA. He studied for nine months in Poland in 1974 under the mentorship of Josef Szajna and Jan Skotnicki. In 1991 he completed a sabbatical at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles where he worked with the Taper's New Works Festival for two seasons. He has been the Artistic Director for 16 New Play Festivals at Cypress College and he has worked with guest, professional, playwrights in residence such as: Oliver Mayer, Associate Professor of Dramatic Writing at the USC School of Theatre, Paula Cizmar, USC Assistant Professor of Theatre Practice, Alice Tuan, Annie Weisman, Hilly Hicks, Mickey Birnbaum (Penn USA finalist 2006), Cody Henderson (winner of the 2002 OC Weekly award) and Robert Glaudini.

BEIJING ROYALS

By Chloe Luting Huang

Directed by Laurel Ollstein

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

Landun

Tohoru Masamune

Bili

Ryun Yu

Sisi

Nina Harada

TIME: 2014

PLACE: Beijing, China

Stage Manager Simon Chau

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

"There have to be moments when you glimpse something decent, something life-affirming even in the most twisted character. That's where the real art lies. See, I always suspect characters who are painted as lovely, decent human beings. I would always question where the darkness lies."

—Martin McDonagh

I've met a film producer in Beijing, summer 2014. He told me that he was the bastard son of a high-ranking official. What interested me was that he did nothing but talked all day every day, and he could still live a very comfortable life in Beijing. Nobody could prove his identity, even though he insisted that he came from royal blood. This was the person who inspired me to write this play. With this play, I intended to create an absurd world that underlines the "masking" culture in modern China — it seemed that everybody was constantly wearing a mask in order to thrive and survive. At the end of the day, I wanted to tell a story about connection, about how people, with unredeemed desperation and trauma, fought their way to lose their masks and made real connection with one another.

PLAYWRIGHT'S BIO

Born and raised in Guangzhou, China, **Chloe Luting Huang** is an awarded writer for plays, screenplays and short stories. She graduated from Bowdoin College in 2013 in English and Theater. Though her first language is Chinese, Ms. Huang started her creative writing career in English. Her works include *Hedda Gabler in China*, *Clean the Bloodstain Before Sunrise*, etc. Her awarded short story *A Man Named Sherlock* was published in 2013. Her play *Hide And Seek No More* received a staged reading at The Pasadena Playhouse as one of the "Greenhouse" projects in 2014 and was produced at USC, April 2015. She got signed by one of the world's leading entertainment agency Creative Artists Agency (CAA) in Summer 2015. She is now collaborating with several major Chinese film companies on film projects, including Edko Films Ltd. Easy Entertainment, etc. Her new play *Beijing Royals* will be translated into Chinese and produced at Drum Tower West Theatre in Beijing.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Laurel Ollstein is an award winning playwright, director and teacher with a production record in major cities including New York, San Francisco, Minneapolis and Los Angeles. Most recently she directed Alice Tuan's play *HIT* at LATC. Her recent works are — *Unhappily Married in Valencia*, a modern farce about marriage, and *They Promised Her The Moon*, about the almost first female astronaut, Jerrie Cobb. Laurel teaches writing at UCLA, University of Redlands and OTIS College of Art and Design. For more information — laurelollstein.com.

YOU ARE THE BLOOD

By Ashley Rose Wellman

Directed by Elina de Santos

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

Shelby Boden

Katie Peabody

Ben Boden

Julian Yuen

Linda Boden

Sybyl Walker

David Boden

Rob Nagle

Sylvia

Giselle Gilbert

TIME: Right now.

PLACE: Seattle and Mercer Island, Washington.
Somewhere in Texas.

Stage Manager Meredith O'Gwynn

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

"And love is just our own kind voice that we whisper into our own blood."

—Zachary Schomburg in his poem "The Animal Spell"

We all have something that lives in our own blood. Crouching. Lying in wait. Bad bad things. It could be an appetite for viciousness. Or an attraction to chaos. Or a looming and worsening addiction. Or a fear of turning into the people that raised us. Or an apprehension about what we're really capable of.

So, what do we do? Do we try to block it out? Try to numb it out? Try to seek it out? Try to laugh at it?

The "something" in my own blood is what made me write this play.

Sometimes the carnage is bloodless. Sometimes we have to mourn for the ones that survived.

PLAYWRIGHT'S BIO

Ashley Rose Wellman is a Los Angeles playwright and USC Dramatic Writing MFA candidate. Her play *That Long Damn Dark* was a Semifinalist for the 2016 O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, and has received readings and workshops at Pasadena Playhouse, the Play Lab at the 2015 Last Frontier Theatre Conference, TossPot Productions/Cyrano's Theatre Company, and the 2015 USC New Works II Festival. Her play *Gravidity* was awarded a USC production grant and workshop, a reading in the 2013 LFTC Play Lab, a workshop production at the University of Alaska Anchorage, and was featured as an evening production at the 2014 LFTC. Her play *Living Creatures* received a student workshop production at USC and a reading at the 2014 LFTC. Five of her one-act plays have been produced by USC's Brand New Theatre including *Obsolete Children*, *Oral*, *The Bear Stage*, *And Only the Moon Howls* and *Carnivores From Different Shores*. Her thesis play *You Are The Blood* will be read in the Play Lab at the 2016 LFTC.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Elina de Santos, Co-Artistic Director, Rogue Machine Theatre, World premieres; *Nice Things* (Vince Melocchi), *Dirty Filthy Love Story* (Rob Mersola), *Razorback* (John Pollono) and *Yard Sale Signs* (Jennie Webb), West Coast Premieres; *Bhutan* (Daisy Foote), *Vivien* (Rick Foster), *Stop Kiss* (Diana Son) and *Falling* (Deana Jent). WC Jewish Theatre, *New Jerusalem* (David Ives) & *Broken Glass* (Arthur Miller.) For Pasadena Playhouse, west coast premiere of *Vincent in Brixton* (Nicolas Wright.) Odyssey, LA Premiere, David Mamet's *Speed the Plow*, Clifford Odets' *Awake & Sing!*, and Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*. Pacific Resident Theatre: Odets' *Rocket to the Moon*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Tennessee Williams' *Orpheus Descending* — LADCC Awards for performance, direction and production and LA premiere of Albee's *A Delicate Balance*. Ark Theatre, *A Doll's House* (Ibsen), LA Weekly Direction. Production and Ensemble nominees. Regional: *Orphans* (Lyle Kessler), ICT, *Romeo & Juliet*: *Circus Verona*, DWT, Ovation Nomination, *Awake & Sing!*, Berkshire Theatre Festival & Pittsburgh Public. LADCC Career Achievement, Directing 2012.

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BLOOD

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NEW WORKS
FESTIVAL PLAY PROJECT

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 Velina Hasu Houston

Festival Supervisor
 Alex Rehberger

Casting
 MFA Dramatic Writing Faculty

Assistant Stage Manager
 Sophia Pesetti

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*For Everything You
 Always Wanted To Know
 About Chinese People
 But Were Afraid To Ask*

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 Els Collins
 Velina Hasu Houston

For Beijing Royals

Sharon Wellman
 David Bridel
 Molly McGraw
 Sheldon Epps
 Seema Sueko
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For You Are The Blood

Laurel Ollstein
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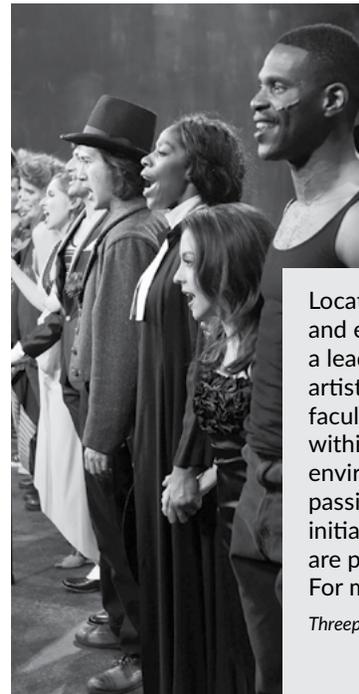
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Located in Los Angeles, a city synonymous with artistic innovation and excellence, the top-ranked USC School of Dramatic Arts is a leader in dramatic arts education. The School uniquely blends artistic training in a conservatory environment with world-class faculty artists and the full academic experience found only within a major research university. This close-knit, supportive environment offers students the freedom to explore their artistic passions. Through programs of the highest caliber, as well as initiatives that provide access to professional experience, students are prepared for leadership in every facet of dramatic arts. For more information, please visit dramaticarts.usc.edu.

Threepenny Opera | 2015/16 SEASON/PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ



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