

SDA PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE 2020/21

April 23 & 24, 2021

SDA Virtual Stage

USC School of Dramatic Arts

presents

New Works Festival Year 2 | Playwrights Workshop

Presented in Association with Los Angeles Theatre Center/Latino Theatre Company

Breaking Barriers

By Katrina D. RiChard

Directed by Susan Dalian

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in alphabetical order)

Empress Christian

Tamara

Zyaire Clemes

Ryan

Ben Larson

Blake

Alyse Marie

Mercedes

Julia McGowan

Sarah

Xavier Valdez

Skylar

PLACE

South Side of Chicago

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The show runs 75 minutes without intermission.

STAGE MANAGER

MJ Adamson

VIRTUAL HOUSE MANAGER

Bessie Lebeda

VIRTUAL TECH LEAD

Arturo Fernandez, Jr.

STAFF TECH LEAD

Joseph Shea

SPECIAL THANKS

The program directors and SDA Career Center for coordinating, and Raul Staggs Casting for assisting, in the Phase 3 casting of MFA graduate actors and SDA alumni.

From Katrina D. RiChard: Susan Dalian, my Director and Dramaturg, the Cast and Crew of *Breaking Barriers*, Dr. Hasu Houston, the USC MFADW Faculty Morgan Park High School Family, and Family and Friends.

WARNING

Please be advised that this production contains mature language.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

Dear Viewer,

A wise person once said, "If we get public education right, everything else will follow. But if we get it wrong, not much else will matter."

It is my hope that this play begins a necessary conversation amongst our students, their teachers and parents, and community stakeholders at large. We must band together to overcome the ills that plague our society in order to secure the future the next generation so rightly deserves and it must start in our educational institutions.

Whenever I've felt as if I'm faced with an insurmountable task, I remember an African Proverb that says, "How does one eat an elephant? One bite at a time". Welcome to Ms. RiChard's Table. Bon appetit.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The kids are alright. Right?

When I first read Katrina D. RiChard's play *Breaking Barriers*, I was excited to see teens featured as the main characters. When adults are present, teens hold back words. In their peer groups they talk with candor. Katrina has deftly captured this in her wonderfully written dialogue, where teens engage in the deep talk of understanding how the merger of two different schools will color their personal futures. In the pulse of the moment she tackles the themes of racism, gender identity, and friendship. Her hope is this play becomes something that is performed by students during a high school class period. Then theater becomes a tool — a way to open up a conversation very much on the mind of today's youth.

Art for change. Maybe the kids will be alright.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Susan Dalian Directing credits: *Iseult et Tristan* by Pia Wilson at La Mama Experimental Theater, *Villains* by Marquis Ewing at LA Writers Center. Other directing credits: *Token* by Bernardo Cubria, *The Honeycomb Theory* by Garrett Mercer (AMMO Theatre Company), *Henry VI Part 2*, *Richard III* (Santa Cruz Shakespeare), *Waiting* by Aja Houston (Inkwell Theater's Development Lab), Sierra Classic Theatre: *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She has appeared in plays at regional theaters along with roles in film and television. Directors Lab West 2019, Boston University, BFA, Baltimore School for the Arts. www.susandalian.com