

Towson University Theatre Arts MFA Presents

VARIETY SHOW The MUSICAL PLAY

by Theresa
COLUMBUS

with additional material by

IZAAK COLLINS

CLIFF DOBY

MYLES HAMILTON

CATLIN WEAVER

JACOB ZABAWA

Thursday, MAY 12

thru

Saturday, MAY 14

8 PM

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Theatre
Arts

Towson University Center for the Arts
Studio Theatre, CA 3060
TUBoxOffice.com

Towson University Department of Theatre Arts MFA Presents

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Director's Note

This cast has had many discussions of what “devising in theater” means, which can be so many things, but we can agree is an experimental, collaborative act. I started this process with the theme of the poetry of conversation and an interest in exploring different performance forms. In workshops before rehearsals began, each performer generated writing working with collaboratively created parameters.

The rehearsal process involved elements of devising both in the writing and direction of the play. The cast developed their pieces in conversation with me and the other performers in the rehearsal space. I wrote the in-front-of-curtain pieces for the play, and the opening “Songs in Boxes” with our composer, and the cast created the choreography. “Final Song” was created by everyone in the cast offering an idea for a way the song could be written, and then using parts of everyone’s ideas and writing to create the song together.

Thank you to the cast, crew, designers, and my thesis committee, who brought so much joy and belief to the act of making.

*** This production contains material recommended for mature audiences.**

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For a complete listing of events at Towson University, please visit events.towson.edu
If you would like to share a comment on this production, please e-mail theatre@towson.edu

Variety Show the Musical Play

Opening by Theresa Columbus with music by Ruby Fulton

Songs in Boxes by Theresa Columbus and Ruby Fulton, choreography by ensemble

Large Plants by Theresa Columbus- Performed by Cliff Doby and Caitlin Weaver

Computation Frustration by Jacob Zabawa - Performed by Ensemble with Francisco Benavides

Tattoo of her Vagina by Theresa Columbus- Performed by Caitlin Weaver and Izaak Collins

Your Friendly Parasites by Myles Hamilton

John- Cliff Doby

IT- Izaak Collins

IT2- Myles Hamilton

Mrs. J- Caitlin Weaver

Backup singers- Jacob Zabawa and Francisco Benavides

Maturity by Theresa Columbus- Performed by Myles Hamilton and Jacob Zabawa

Suitcases and Baskets by Theresa Columbus- Performed by Ensemble and Francisco Benavides, with Izaak Collins playing guitar

Conversation about Lorraine O'Grady by Theresa Columbus- Performed by Myles Hamilton and Caitlin Weaver

Identity Party Politics by Cliff Doby- Performed by Cliff Doby as C O'Grady, and Ensemble

Creek Song by Theresa Columbus- Sung by Caitlin Weaver, cuddled by Cliff Doby

Second Breakfast by Izaak Collins

Izaak Collins as himself,

Myles Hamilton - Hustle

Caitlin Weaver - Bustle

Ensemble

Performance Art vs. Theater by Theresa Columbus- Performed by Izaak Collins and Jacob Zabawa with sign-announcing by Cliff Doby and Myles Hamilton

Piece by Caitlin Weaver- Performed by Caitlin Weaver and ensemble

Final Song By Izaak Collins, Theresa Columbus, Cliff Doby, Ruby Fulton, Myles Hamilton, Caitlin Weaver, and Jacob Zabawa

“Ensemble” refers to the five main writer/performers: Izaak Collins, Cliff Doby, Myles Hamilton, Caitlin Weaver, and Jacob Zabawa.

Meet the Creative Team



Francisco Benavides

Francisco Benavides is an actor/ writer/photographer based in beautiful Baltimore. After disappearing in a house fire 6 years ago under mysterious circumstances he has resurfaced for the explicit purpose of appearing in this show. He previously appeared in *Red is Real* (Towson MFA show, Balt.), *A Horse By The Tail In The Night* (Submersive

Productions, Balt.), *Vikings of Muchasnota* (Exposed Brick Theater, MN), and lastly wrote his first full length, *El Grillo Gris y la Familia Ordinaria*, as part of the *Horticulture Playwrights Workshop*. In his free time, you can find him developing film in his bathroom and playing with his sweet pibble Farolito.



Izaak Collins

Izaak Collins is a performer and teaching artist from the Baltimore area currently enrolled in Towson's BFA Acting program. Some favorite devised roles include the Host of Baltimore Rock Opera Society's *Space Kumite* and the Actor in *Welcome to The Art*, a dance piece co-created with Kristi Schaffner for CCBC. Some of Izaak's biggest passions include getting jobs, doing work, and affording to live. He'll graduate next spring.



Theresa Columbus

Theresa Columbus's creative focus for over 25 years has been in Milwaukee, WI and Baltimore, MD, where she has been organizing as well as writing, directing, producing, touring, and performing in plays, solo pieces, and films. She collectively founded Darling Hall in Milwaukee where she was a member of the "Tingle Troupe,"

a group of four women who hosted many variety shows called *Tingle Showcases*. She also wrote, directed, and toured the musical *Chaza Show Choir*, and co-directed a film version available on Netflix, she means on YouTube. In Baltimore she helped to initiate and organize two shows called *Kidult: The Kid and Adult Show!* which emphasized collaborations between various artists and kids. In addition, she organized events including a stage called "Cool Water Theater" at Baltimore's large outdoor art festival, Artscape, and performance art showcases at the Whole Gallery, a live/work collective artist space where she resided for 3 years. Her interest in the variety stage also recently led her to experiment with this trope in the production of *8 Short Plays* which she co-directed at the Mercury Theater in Baltimore in 2019. She wrote the script and lyrics for this musical play, and performers created four acts throughout the piece.



Cliff Doby

Cliff Doby is an interdisciplinary art-ivist who is thrilled to be sharing the stage with the talented cast and crew of *Variety Show the Musical Play* at his alma mater. Doby earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice in 2015 from Towson University, where he also minored in Theatre. He is an executive member of The Oven Theatre Company, an award-winning Baltimore-based collective that devises original works centered around social justice issues. He currently works as a Senior

Paralegal at the Murthy Law Firm, which specializes in employment and family-based U.S. immigration. He would like to thank Theresa Columbus for creating the opportunity and space to collaborate with everyone involved in the process of creating this show. Doby would also like to give a special thank you to all his family, friends, and colleagues who are invaluable supporters of all his artistic endeavors!



Nicolette Le Faye

Virtually as soon as they had gained the motor skills necessary to dress themselves, Nicolette Le Faye began creating costumes. Piecing together whatever they could from their preschool wardrobe and anything else they got their hands on, they would transform into myriad characters, often provoking the disgust of their peers. Today, their work is inspired by folklore, kitsch, trash,

theatrics, nature, and shiny things, and seeks to defecate on expectations associated with sex, gender, and class. They will graduate with honors in June from the Community College of Baltimore County with a totally useless degree in psychology. They plan to transfer to a university next spring to study costume design and will continue to embrace their destiny as a slut for glamour. A jerk of all trades, Nicolette is also a writer, actor, ballet dancer, trapeze artist, and visual and performance artist. They like a lot of stuff. Sometimes they make music (poorly).



Ruby Fulton

Composer and musician Ruby Fulton writes music which invites listeners to explore non-musical ideas through sound. Her musical portfolio includes explorations of mental illness, Buddhism, philosophy, psychedelic research, addiction, and chess strategy; and profiles of iconic popular figures like the artist Jean-Michel Basquiat and musicians

Syd Barrett and Whitney Houston. She has collaborated on interdisciplinary projects with thinkers and makers in the sciences and literary, movement and visual arts. She teaches composition and music theory at the University of Idaho Lionel Hampton School of Music.



Myles Hamilton

Myles Hamilton is a Senior at Towson University and is in his second year in Towson Universities BFA acting track. This is his second Towson Production and his first on stage performance for Towson University. Myles would like to thank his family, friends, and professors for supporting and teaching him along the way.



James Alfred Johnson

James Alfred Johnson (he/him) is a Maryland raised, Brooklyn-based performance artist, designer, and creator. He's been an international corporate live events and theatrical professional for over a decade. Jamie's practice centers on the subtle joys of curiosity coupled with the power found in sincerity and vulnerability. Find him online @thejarj



Lauren Kane

Lauren Kane is so hyped to be a part of *Variety Show the Musical Play* and work with Theresa again that she can't stop watering her plants!! She is a Baltimore based stage manager, production manager and pet sitter who also works full time with some top grade humans at *Human Being Productions*. Past credits include *Lurid Happenings* (Baltimore Rock Opera Society), *In Threes* (Mercury Theatre), *Trial In the Woods* (Mercury Theatre), *Life? Or Theatre?* (Annex

Theatre), *Red Velvet* (Chesapeake Shakespeare Company), *The Fantastics* (Chesapeake Shakespeare Company). She has also stage managed and performed in many Fluid Movement water ballets and has been an assistant production manager for *Artscape* and *Light City*.



Mika J. Nakano

Mika J. Nakano is a visual artist, performer, schoolteacher, curious human. She enjoys foraging, illustrating the world around her, and is grateful to be part of this fantastic colorful world of *Variety Show the Musical Play*.



Caitlin Weaver

Caitlin Weaver is wildly grateful to be a part of the creation of *Variety Show the Musical Play* with some of the loveliest, most creative theatre artists. Past credits include *See Also* (Submersive Theatre), *Love and Information* (FPCT), *Lizzie* (Guerrilla Theatre Front), *Welcome to Shakesville* (BROS), *Company* (Stillpointe Theatre), *Mesmeric Revelations of Edgar Allen Poe*

(Submersive Theatre) and *Office Ladies* (Acme Corp.). She has a BFA in Acting from right here at Towson University and is happy to call Baltimore her home.



Jacob Zabawa

Jacob Zabawa is a Baltimore-based theater artist and intrepid member of the city's COVID-19 Mobile Vax team. Any similarities between Jacob's frustration with online communication on the job and zayr piece issss... ;p Recent acting performance credits include Submersive Productions (Collective Member): *rECHOLlection* (Ensemble), *See Also* (Attendant); Horticulture Playwrights Workshop: *El Grillo Gris y la Familia Ordinaria* (Javier); Mercury Theater:

Timon of Athens (Painter, Cupid, Senator, Flaminius); *Feral Woman: In Threes* (Ray, Sherwin, Mom). Jacob thinks ya'll all cute and thanks u for coming to the show!

Production Crew

Stage Manager: Lauren Kane
Musical Composition and Sound Effects: Ruby Fulton
Lighting & Sound Design: James Alfred Johnson
Scenic Design: Mika J. Nakano
Scenic Design Faculty Advisor: Daniel Ettinger
Costume Design: Nicolette LeFaye
Choreography: Ensemble
Technical Direction: Anthony Rosas
Light Board Operator: Sydney Tulp
Sound Assistant: Allison Clendaniel
Deck Hands: Mawou Djelhi Yahot, Charles Dickinson, Julia Creutzer
Production Admin: Sydney Tulp
Poster Design: Izaak Collins
Poster Design Advisor: Katie Simmons-Barth
COFAC Marketing Director: Michele Alexander
Photography: Katie Simmons-Barth
Videography: Andrew Shenker, Christy Brooks

Special Thanks

Tavia La Follette
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Christy Brooks
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Skye Fort
Megan Lovely
Anna Mwalagho
Irene Columbus
Katina Columbus
Elena Versenyi
Katie Simmons-Barth
Allison Clendaniel
Rae Red
Sarah Jacklin and the cast of *8 Short Plays*
Megan Livingston
The Tingle Troupe
Brandon Ingle
Mukwae Wabei Siyolwe
Stages Music Arts
Julie Potter
Alizon Santamaria
Ada Pinkston
Valeska Populoh

