ACT CONTEMPORARY THEATRE

NW2 NEW WORKS NORTHWEST

SECOND ANNUAL FESTIVAL

October 30 - November 3, 2024

Bullitt Cabaret

2024/25 SEASON SPONSORS

4 CULTURE

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THANK YOU!

SUPPORT NEW WORKS

A LETTER FROM ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE SHANA BESTOCK

con·tem·po·rar·y
kən’tempə,rerē

adjective

belonging to the present;
a person existing at the same
time as another

What does it mean to be a Pacific Northwest playwright creating new work? I like to look at the definition of “contemporary,” and its implications for belonging and co-existence. Artists who make contemporary plays are filled with longing for something only this present moment can provide, and with the desire to share this moment in collaboration and community.

The Pacific Northwest’s unique landscape influences and is influenced by the culture and individuals who call this region home. To be a Pacific Northwesterner doesn’t necessarily mean you are from here, or that your story is about here. It means you belong here.

I’m PNW born and raised. I love how this landscape is woven into my DNA, and how I continually relearn it. I share the region with people whose ancestors are indigenous to these lands, and people who have recently moved here from across the world. The region reminds me of theatre—the way artists and audiences are continually coming together and breaking apart to form and re-form new work, and how we call the theatre our home.

New Works Northwest is an opportunity to come together and make theatre here, now, together—theatre that will blaze a trail to the future and invite more and more to experience this belonging. What you'll see onstage is a high level of artistic rigor and craft matched by a fierce commitment to play and explore. These funny, complex, cathartic plays challenge expectation and invite new perspectives, stories, and audiences. These are plays with teeth and traction, and I'm excited to lift them up into our cultural conversation.

There is a clear hunger in our community for more opportunities to engage with new work. I see this as an expression of our need for a place to belong. We hunger to see local artists honored and amplified, for the kinds of entertaining and unexpected discoveries that staged readings bring, because these creative adventures solidify our sense of community and artistic home.

I'm proud of ACT's leadership in creating space for new works, and proud to belong to a community that values and supports theatre that is audacious, engaging, and wholly contemporary. Thank you for playing a part in making it happen. Welcome to NW² and enjoy the show!

-Shana Bestock, ACT Artistic Associate

SOLO ACT

a monologue slam

Wednesday, October 30 at 7:00pm

An electric evening of **hot-off-the-press monologues** from 15

local playwrights on the theme "The Choice." From poignant to punchy, complex to cathartic, these pieces explode with energy, emotion, and enthusiasm.

FEATURED PLAYWRIGHTS

(in order of performance)

Monique Hebert
Marcus Gorman & Kiki Penoyer
JW Marshall
Aleks Merilo
Tommer Peterson
Kate Danley
M Yichao
Rebecca Tourino Collinsworth
Pamela Hobart Carter
Vanessa Miller
Anamaria Guerzon
Tess Berger
Rachel Chin
Stacy D. Flood
Shanna Allman

CAST & TEAM

Alegra Batara – Actor
Brittany Rupik – Actor
Chip Sherman – Actor
Amy Thone – Actor
Lindsay Welliver – Actor

Jasmine Lomax – Director
Lindsay Welliver – Director
R. Hamilton Wright – Director

Ben Hunter – Musician

Ian Smith – Stage Manager

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Rain City Projects

REFUGEE RHAPSODY

by Yussef El Guindi

directed by Anita Montgomery

Friday, November 1 at 7:00pm

CAST & TEAM

Newsha Farahani – Sakinah
Ayo Tushinde – Jenny
Alan Garcia – Fouad
Jarron A. Williams – Richard/Waleed
Morgan Claire Roberts – Emily

Hazel Rose Gibson – Stage Manager

Born in Egypt, raised in London and now based in Seattle, Yussef El Guindi's work frequently examines the collision of ethnicities, cultures and politics that face Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans. His most recent production, *Hotter Than Egypt*, was staged at ACT Contemporary Theatre (World Premiere), Marin Theatre Company, and the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. A previous ACT World Premiere, *People of the Book*, will be staged this Fall in NYC at Urban Stages and be directed by former ACT Artistic Director John Langs. Bloomsbury/Methuen Drama has published *The Selected Works of Yussef El Guindi*, and Broadway Play Publishing Inc. published a collection of short pieces entitled *In A Clear Concise Arabic Tongue*. He is the recipient of several honors, including the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award, Colorado's Henry Award, American Blues Theater's Blue Ink Playwriting Award, Seattle's *The Stranger* Genius Award, *L.A. Weekly*'s Excellence in Playwriting Award, Seattle's Gregory Award, and the Middle East America Distinguished Playwright Award. In 2023, he was selected to be a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in the U.K.

ANITA MONTGOMERY, DIRECTOR

Anita Montgomery (she/her) is a Seattle based director, dramaturg, and speech coach. In 2016, she founded Art in Communication, a resource for public speakers. From 2002-2015, Anita served on the artistic staff at ACT Contemporary Theatre, where she created the Young Playwrights Program (YPP), ran the literary department, and fostered several new play development partnerships. Anita teaches Dramaturgy in the MFA program at the University of Washington. She has had the pleasure of working as dramaturg and/or director on over 30 new plays by professional playwrights across the country. Favorite directing credits include the world premiere of *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* at ACT, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* at the Pendragon Theatre in upstate NY, and *Ghosted*, an original touring show for high school students on mental health issues, a collaboration between Seattle Children's Theatre and Kaiser Permanente. Anita is proud mama of Haze (24) and Gabe (17).

UHURU

By Gloria Majule

directed by Faith Bennett Russell

Saturday, November 2 at 4:00pm

CAST & TEAM

Arlando Smith – Mshale
Patrick Tolden – Sprite
Chris Clark – Henry
Melanie Hampton – Frannie

Hazel Rose Gibson – Stage Manager
Gloria Majule – Dialect Coach

Gloria Majule is a storyteller born and raised in Dodoma, Tanzania. She seeks to tell stories that bring multiple black voices together from across the world, and are accessible to black audiences no matter where they are. She writes for and about Africans and the African diaspora. Gloria has been commissioned by Audible and Atlantic Theater Company. Her canon includes *My Father Was Shot in the Back of the Head* (Finalist: Relentless Award, O'Neill, Seven Devils, Orchard Project), *Culture Shock* (Winner: Leah Ryan Prize, Finalist: O'Neill, Alliance/Kendeda, BAPF), *Uhuru* (Finalist: Blue Ink Award, Premiere Stages, BAPF), and *Fifteen Hundred* (Finalist: Seven Devils). Her work has recently been developed at Alley Theatre, The Black and Latino Playwrights Celebration, Vassar's Powerhouse Theater, The New Harmony Project, Seattle Public Theater and The New Group. She was a guest speaker for the Courageous Art Panel at Starbucks, and the President's Tea at Vassar College. Gloria graduated summa cum laude from Cornell University with a BA in Performing & Media Arts and Spanish, and was the first African woman to receive an MFA in Playwriting from Yale School of Drama.

FAITH BENNETT RUSSELL, DIRECTOR

Faith Bennett Russell (she/her) has been a part of the Seattle theatre tapestry for over 40-plus years serving as an actor, director, teaching artist, choreographer, and playwright, as well as a theater consultant and acting coach. She is excited to be a part of ACT Contemporary Theatre's New Works Northwest Festival for the second time and thankful to be a part of helping to bring new plays to life. She was last seen earlier this year on the Intiman Theatre stage in their production of *The Lion Tells His Tale*, written by Seattle playwright Ms. Vida Sneed. Past directorial favorites include: *In The Heights*, *Until The Flood*, *Pipeline*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Crowns*, *Once On This Island*, and *Hairspray*. Faith is a Brooklyn, New York native who tries to live up to her name at every opportunity. Shoutout to everyone who is trying their best, hoping for the best, while trying to bring light into this world through the Arts. Ashe.

LEGACIES: A GHOST STORY

by Amontaine Aurore

directed by Bretteney Beverly

Saturday, November 2 at 7:00pm

CAST & TEAM

Varinique Davis – Cashew
Shaunyce Omar – House Guest
Calder Shilling – Jim Crow
Tim Gouran – Bull
Anjelica McMillan – Dindi

Kelly Karcher – Jane Crow **Kait Mahoney** – Stage Manager

Amontaine Aurore is a storyteller, playwright, actor, director, producer, and performance artist. She is committed to presenting stories that illuminate multiple perspectives and explore human complexity. Amontaine's plays have been produced in Seattle, New York, Maryland, and abroad. Her solo play, *Free Desiree*, was named as one of the Best New Plays of the New York Fringe Festival by *Indie Theater Now. Don't Call it a Riot*, her play about Seattle activism, was a finalist in the Bay Area Playwright's Festival and premiered in Seattle in 2018. Amontaine has received artist grants from Artist Trust, 4Culture, the Puffin Foundation, and the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture. She's been a writer-in-residence at Hedgebrook Writers' Retreat and the Seattle Public Library. Amontaine's play, *The Ever-Expanding Moment*, which received a workshop at ACT Local, had a 3-week run in September at CAM Annex, a new performance and arts space in Seattle's Belltown. Amontaine is a 2024 Jack Straw Writing Fellow and is currently working on an autobiographical novel.

BRETTENEY BEVERLY, DIRECTOR

Bretteney Beverly (she/her) serves as the Associate Artistic Director at Taproot Theatre. She recently directed *My Lord, What a Night* and *Sister Act* at Taproot. Additionally, she served as Associate Director of *Once on This Island* at Village Theatre. Favorite theatre credits include *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *'Night Mother*, *Grease*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *Crowns*, *An Octoroon*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Flyin' West*, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *Bus Stop*, *Macbeth*, and *A Woman of No Importance*. Favorite directing credits include *Everybody*, *How to Write a New Book for the Bible*, *Grease*, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf*, *R & J*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Fantasticks*, *Crimes of the Heart*, and *Always...Patsy Cline*. In her off time, she enjoys spending time with family, friends, and her adorable pit bull, Boss Lady.

UNDERWATER WEATHER

By Holly Arsenault,
in collaboration with ACT's Young Core Company
directed by Sunam Ellis

Sunday, November 3 at 4:00pm

CAST & TEAM

Alphie Alloway – Uncle Lewi
Sally Calvo – Leo
Nasirah Canada – Svet
Salem Curtis – Ephoney
Emmett Driscoll – Cash
Enza Fammartino – Dove
Ellie Getman – Beamo
Sylvie Kelderman – Hen
Micah Bao Thi Le – Leif
Aly Martin – Grandma Pik, Interviewer
Archer Mohr – Mika
Lillian Morris – Mill
Lukas Sera – Prince
Kate Sorrell – Cassandra
Jacob Stowe – Grey
Ariadne Taw – Benny

Ian Smith – Stage Manager
G Rosen – Assistant Stage Manager

Holly Arsenault is a Canadian-American playwright living in Scotland. Her plays include *Undo* (Theatre Puget Sound Gregory Award winner for Outstanding New Play, American Theatre Critics Association Steinberg Award nominee, Princess Grace Award finalist, Seattle Theatre Writers Award for Excellence in Local Playwriting), *The Cut*, *The Manor*, *The Great Inconvenience* (Theatre Puget Sound Gregory Award nominee), *Marvelous*, *Court* (Ivoryton Playhouse Women's Playwriting Festival winner), and *24 Pictures of a Pilot* (Heideman Award finalist). Her work, which often looks at families (chosen, circumstantial, and biological) and the complicated women who hold them together, has been produced in Seattle, Chicago, Detroit, New Jersey, and Boca Raton. She is currently enrolled in the MFA playwriting and screenwriting program(me) at the University of St. Andrews. Holly is an alum of the Seattle Rep Writers Group and a member of the Dramatists Guild of America. She also spent 11 years as the director of TeenTix, an organization radically dedicated to youth empowerment and arts access. She remains a proud board member of TeenTix. More at hollyarsenault.com, on Instagram @funnywithsadparts, and at teentix.org

SUNAM ELLIS, DIRECTOR

Sunam Ellis (she/her) graduated from the University of Washington's Professional Actor Training Program (PATP) in 2015. Since then, her local directing work includes projects with Seattle Children's Theatre, Prathidhwani, The Seagull Project, University of Washington, and Seattle University. Sunam has also performed in productions and readings with ACT, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Seattle Public Theatre, Sound Theatre, Seattle Rep, Theatre22, The Horse in Motion, ArtsWest, and The Seagull Project.

HOME

By Naghmeh Samini

directed by Parmida Ziaei

Translated by Hossein Nazari & Ghazal Ghaziani

Co-presented with Seda Iranian Theatre Ensemble

Sunday, November 3 at 7:00pm

CAST & TEAM

Azadeh Zanjani – Roya
Newsha Farahani – Parniyan
Parsa Kaffash – Hamoun
Pooria Manouchehri – Azad
Roan Tierney – Mahan
Sahra Tabibzada – The Woman
Ramin Khoie – The Man

Kait Mahoney – Stage Manager

Naghmeh Samini is an award-winning playwright from Iran. Samini received her BA in Drama and MA in Cinema both from the University of Tehran. She is a PhD Holder in Drama and mythology. More than twenty of her plays have been staged in Iran, France, India, etc. Samini has also written several screenplays. She has been a Professor at the University of Tehran since 2005 and an affiliate Professor of UW since 2019. She has also run several workshops in Iran and abroad. As a researcher, she has published three books about A Thousand and One Nights, Drama and Mythology in Iran, and Japanese Cinema. She has also published over 30 plays and articles. Some of her awards and achievements include: Best Book of the Year in Iran for *Myth's Theatre: An Archetypical Approach to Iranian Dramatic Literature* in 2009, winner of Best Playwright in the Second Playwright's Forum Festival in 2008, and winner of the Best Dramatic Adaptation in 2023. Her recent play, *The Forgotten History of Mastaneh*, directed by herself and produced by Seda Theatre (which she is a co-founder of), was acclaimed by audiences in Seattle.

PARMIDA ZIAEI, DIRECTOR

Parmida Ziaei (she/her) is an Iranian multidisciplinary artist and designer based in Seattle. She is the co-founder of Seda Iranian Theatre Ensemble alongside the playwright of *Home*, Naghmeh Samini. Parmida has been a scenic and production designer with many Seattle theaters, including ACT Contemporary Theatre, Village Theatre, The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, ArtsWest, Taproot Theatre, and Seattle Public Theater. When not designing, producing or directing for theatre, Parmida performs and choreographs as a movement artist and serves as a consultant and curator for various arts organizations including Base and ArtsWA. Parmida has been the recipient of multiple residencies including the 2022 Northwest Creator Residency at Village Theatre. parmidaziaei.com

ACT CONTEMPORARY THEATRE
2024/25 SEASON
All the joy.
All the drama.
All Seattle.

THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Written & Composed by Jason Robert Brown
Directed by Shermona Mitchell
February 8 - March 16, 2025
A Co-Production with The 5th Avenue Theatre

By Andrew Lee Creech
Directed by Tyrone Phillips
April 26 - May 11, 2025

GOLDEN

FEATURED IN THE FIRST NEW WORKS NORTHWEST FESTIVAL!

SEATTLE SHAKESPEARE

TWELFTH NIGHT

By William Shakespeare
Directed by Annie Lareau
June 7 - 22, 2025
A Seattle Shakespeare Company and ACT Contemporary Theatre Joint Production

SAVE WITH A 3-PLAY SUBSCRIPTION!

Packages start at $108 for all 3 shows!

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

ACT has renewed our commitment to our mission, values, culture, and the creation of New Works. We lay them out here to invite conversation and hold ourselves accountable.

OUR MISSION

ACT is a contemporary theatre where artistic ambition and civic engagement unite.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ACT Contemporary Theatre acknowledges that the land on which this theatre stands is part of the ancestral homelands of the **Muckleshoot**, **Suquamish**, **Duwamish**, **Snoqualmie**, and **Tulalip** peoples along the waterways of the **Salish Sea**. We honor the **29 federally recognized sovereign nations** within the state of Washington as well as the many other unrecognized peoples in this area.

As we gather and strive to share stories of our world with joy and clarity, **we honor with gratitude the original stewards and storytellers of these lands — past, present, and future**. We value the immense contributions, sacrifices and **resilience of Indigenous People here**, and fully **acknowledge** the profound multi-generational impact that colonization has had on Native people everywhere, including ongoing disparities, racism, and political and social **INVISIBILITY**. **To heal, we need truth and understanding that everyone actively participates in, together**.

Please consider taking action to support Indigenous communities. Support Native-owned businesses, Native artists, and Native causes. Donate your time, energy, and money to support Native people, and contact your local elected representatives. This land acknowledgement is one small act in recognizing the importance of continuing to care for the land and our important relationship with the original people of this place we all call home who are still here. We are all in relationship to each other.

OUR VALUES

We are people-led and art-centered.

We believe in creating a safe space in which to do dangerous work.

We depend on each other for clear, honest, and responsible communication.

We believe that the building of excellent art is risky and joyful, and takes time.

We strive to ensure that artistic trust is baked into the way we work.

WE BELIEVE

ACT STATEMENT OF VALUES AND COMMITMENTS

ACT believes in the power of theatre to change lives. For too long, the lives of our institution has focused on have been predominantly white and able-bodied. We acknowledge that ACT has worked inside biased systems that have continued to center only a small group of our global community. We want our art to be joyful and our work to have a spirit of adventure, so we commit to building thoughtful guardrails to bolster an environment where we can all be brave and buoyant together.

Developed by the Staff, Core Company, and Trustees of ACT Contemporary Theatre, this statement of values and commitments was created to ensure the well-being of artists, collaborators, board members, and staff to engage in the spirit of an ever-improving process.

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Seattle's favorite holiday tradition returns for its 49th year!

November 29 – December 27

GET TICKETS!

"Comic genius"

- The Atlantic

The Dina Martina Christmas Show

with Chris Jeffries, musical director

December 6 – 24

GET TICKETS!

THANK YOU!

As ACT celebrates its 59th season, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for you – our dedicated, inspired, and consistently curious ACT donors. The stories you see on our stages this season are only made possible through the generosity of our community. **You are vital to our success!**

ACT gratefully recognizes all donors of $1+ in alphabetical order.

Click here to view a complete list of donors who have given in the last 12 months.

We are incredibly grateful to our Institutional Partners who power audacious theatre and bold New Works.

Click here to view a complete list of Institutional Partners and learn more.

Thank you to the volunteers who have donated their time and talents.

Click here to view a complete list of volunteers and learn how to get involved.

NEW WORKS IN FOCUS

Through community contributions, ACT is investing in the theatre of tomorrow. Our 2024/25 Season includes two World Premiere productions of plays featured in 2023's inaugural New Works Northwest festival – *Mrs. Loman is Leaving* by Katie Forgette (premiered in October 2024) and *Golden* by Andrew Lee Creech (coming in May 2025). To workshop, green-light, and stage these productions in under a year shows our commitment to New Works is stronger than ever.

What does it take to bring a New Work from the page to the stage? ACT nurtures new plays at every step of the creative process, from readings, artistic mentorship, workshops, and rehearsals, all the way to fully mounting a World Premiere.

Donor generosity is essential to bring New Works to life.

Make a gift today to directly support the art, artists, and New Works on ACT's stages. Click below to make your donation.

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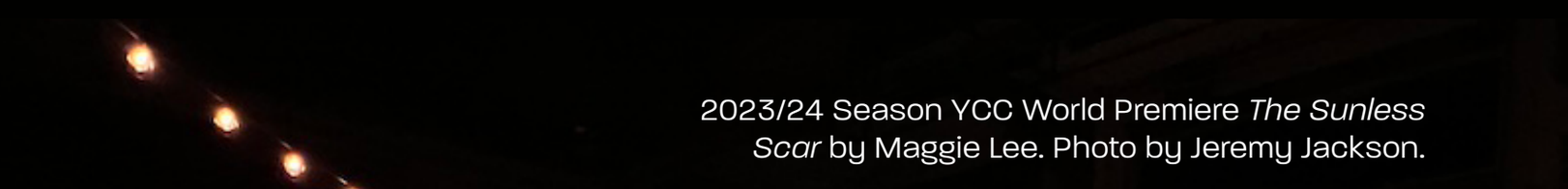

2023/24 Season YCC World Premiere *The Sunless Scar* by Maggie Lee. Photo by Jeremy Jackson.

WAYS TO GIVE

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Click here to easily donate online or visit give.acttheatre.org/encore25. If you'd prefer to make your gift via mail, donation envelopes are available in the lobby.

Questions? *Contact our Development team at development@acttheatre.org.*

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Join our Monthly Giving program and make a lasting impact with convenient recurring donations. Your consistent support helps ACT innovate and thrive, month after month. **Season-long Partner Circle benefits** — like Tech Talks — begin at just $9/month. **Click to learn more.**

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Double the impact of your donation! Many employers offer matching programs, turning your contribution into an even greater force for good. Check with your employer to see if they'll match your generosity.

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Whether it's through Donor Advised Funds, EFT, private foundations, or stock transfers, we're here to help you support ACT in the way that's easiest for you. **Click here to learn more**.