

DEPARTMENT OF THEATER & DANCE

NEW  
PLAYS

ENSEMBLE  
ENSEMBLE  
ENSEMBLE  
ENSEMBLE

Nov. 6th | 7:30 PM | Goel - Actor's Lab

PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Thank you for being here! We're finding something together. What is it?!

Hadley Camilus, Associate Dean of Multicultural Affairs, speaks about the New Plays Ensemble as an **Opportunity**, and I hear Lauren Josef, Chair of Theater & Dance, say **Experiment**. And I'm like: **Yes, let's collaborate! I'm in!**

I hear the ways these intentions + the voices of the twenty students who have shared the Actors Lab space this term are calling for conversation and creation. The genesis for New Plays Ensemble was within a New Play Reading Series led by former Theater Instructor Sarah Ream in collaboration with Hadley Camilus. Their work together was born from a shared desire to expand the existing curriculum with greater diversity of voices and stories being read and performed at Exeter. Joining the Theater & Dance Department this fall with a background in acting and new play development, I'm sharing in that vision. And I'm asking how we can open up the invitation and commitment even more. **How do we take that impulse in me or you that says: Yes! I'm in! and make it real, concrete, practical – you know, that thing we try to do in theater – breathe into it, give it life.**

***We're striving to develop the New Plays Ensemble as an inclusive, equitable space that centers the work of BIPOC playwrights and LGBTQ+ playwrights and also honors the individual identities and interests of the students within the group. We do this together. In community.***

We've been reading both published + unpublished pieces from living playwrights. Embedded within our rehearsal process has been a **Guest Artist Series**. Playwrights have visited with us for conversations via Zoom, during the week that we've been exploring their plays. We've been able to talk about writing and new play development as a dynamic, collaborative process. **We heard playwrights speak about their families, their communities and why they make art.** And conversations with playwrights are happening on campus, too. An exciting artistic collaboration is emerging between Sinna Oumer and Dr. Sahar Ullah, a playwright and new instructor in the English Department. Sinna will perform two pieces from Dr. Ullah's the *Hijabi Monologues* tonight!

We'd like you to know that some of the material we're sharing is intense, with characters who are hurting, volatile, violent. Several pieces reference our world's oppressive, painful past and unconscionable present. We've had some challenging conversations and complicated decisions about how to read, how to stage, what to perform. There are notes in the program that identify scenes with potentially triggering content. Please feel free to come and go from the performance, as you wish. Please talk with folks after the show and share your responses. *We want to hear your voices.*

I'm thinking about playwright Brian Granger sharing with us about how he writes characters for his mother and grandmother. I'm remembering Brian talking about their love of sci-fi and pop-culture and musicals, about growing up in Ohio and using both he and they pronouns. They smile as they tell us about identifying as Black and gay and religious and an artist. Brian's laughing with us, like: *"Yeah! Those things can all intersect! They do!"* There's pain and joy and love in Brian's voice and eyes all at the same time.

On the stage tonight, we're trying to give voice to Brian's words and the words of many other playwrights. *Thank you for being with us. ♥*

**Blythe de Oliveira Foster**



# ENSEMBLE MEMBERS



Stellan  
Aalto



Niall  
Bardorf



Dissandou  
Becolli



Rodrigo  
Camara  
Moreno



Lianny  
Camilo



Dada  
Grochalova



Aidan  
Hanson



Nia  
Harris



Charlie  
Knight



Alysha  
Lai



Avalon  
Marlin



Priya  
Nwakanma



Sinna  
Oumer



Kairene  
Ramirez



Jacqueline  
Subkhan-  
berdina



Catherine  
Zehner



Ava  
Zhao



Yifei  
Zhao

*Stage Manager*

# SELECTED WORKS

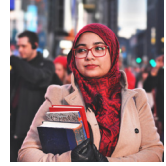
About trigger warnings: Individual scenes with potential triggers are indicated below. Please feel free to quietly leave and return, according to your needs.

## **“I’m Tired” from the *Hijabi Monologues***

**By Sahar Ullah**

Sinna Oumer

\* Trigger Warning: Profanity



## ***Herstory or About Miranda***

**by Javier Antonio González**

Act I, Sc. 4 – Lianny Camilo and Niall Bardorf

Act I, Sc. 6 – Yifei Zhao and Rodrigo Camara Moreno

Act II, Sc. 3 – Kairene Ramirez and Jacqueline Subkhanberdina



\* Contextualization: *Herstory or About Miranda* was conceived collaboratively by a group of artists determined to create community through theater during the isolation of the pandemic. Investigating gendered imprisonment, colonialism and magic in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, the piece stages wildly different versions of the character of Miranda across centuries and asks what political power emerges if we listen to the often-silenced stories of women’s relationships with each other.

## ***King of the Yees***

**by Lauren Yee**

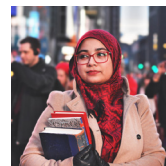
Catherine Zehner and Alysha Lai



## **“The Story about the Really Quiet, Subdued, Shy, Not Very Sociable Hijabi” from the *Hijabi Monologues***

**by Sahar Ullah**

Sinna Oumer



## *Sojourners*

by Mfoniso Udofia

Dissandou Becolli and Priya Nwakanma



## *Ironbound*

by Martyna Majok

Charlie Knight and Dada Grochalova



## *Hir*

by Taylor Mac

Excerpt from Final Scene –  
Avalon Marlin, Aidan Hanson and Charlie Knight



\* Trigger Warning: Profanity; References to substance use, PTSD, sexual assault, war violence; Staged Violence, Staged Vomiting

\* Contextualization: Taylor Mac’s personal pronoun is *judy* and describes this as a “personalized pronoun for someone whose gender (professionally and personally) is constantly changing.” In the introduction to *Hir*, *judy* proclaims the style of this play as Absurd Realism. We have been trying to find this quality in our staging and acting. The play is a brutally absurd, heartfelt critique of white, heteronormative family life in late-stage capitalism.

## *Oedipus El Rey*

by Luis Alfaro

(from *The Greek Trilogy of Luis Alfaro*)

Rodrigo Camara Moreno



\* Trigger Warning: Profanity, Implied Violence, Threatening Language

## *Electricidad*

by Luis Alfaro

(from *The Greek Trilogy of Luis Alfaro*)

Lianny Camilo and Kairene Ramirez



***Tomorrow is Another Lady Day***

**by Brian Granger**

Nia Harris, Charlie Knight, Dada Grochalova

\* Trigger Warning: Profanity, Referenced Racial Violence, Racist and Misogynist Language



***Blooming***

**by Hee-won Kim**

Catherine Zehner and Alysha Lai

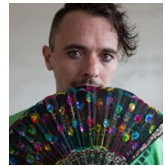
\* Contextualization: Blooming is a dark comedy about impossible sibling connections, mental health and a desire to have a room of one's own in a world where boundaries between love and sacrifice are not always clear. The siblings are visited by penguins, doctors, a jade turtle and remixed characters from Korean folklore, including Princess Bari.



***L'intrigo Del Lupo Mannaro***

**by Nico Grelli**

Jacqueline Subkhanberdina and Stellan Aalto



***Billy Elliot***

**by Lee Hall**

**(Based on the Film by Stephan Daldry)**

Niall Bardorf



***Fairview***

**by Jackie Sibblies Drury**

Priya Nwakanma



# SPECIAL THANKS

BIG Shout Out to our Amazing Stage Manager: Ava Zhao! THANK YOU. Thank you also for coming up with such a great cover image for this program. / Thank you to the first ever New Plays Ensemble honorary group members: Rowan Flanagan and Amara Nwuneli!! / Thank you Melissa Schultz! We appreciate you!! / Thank you Hadley Camilus & the Office of Multicultural Affairs / Thank you Sahar Ullah / Thank you Lauren Josef, Rob Richards, Jake Josef, Tony Reed, Allison Duke, Amberlee Darling, Samm Wesler, Hana Bartsova / Thank you Amanda Bailey and Rob Phillips and Facilities!

# RESERVE YOUR SEATS FOR OUR UPCOMING PRODUCTIONS



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"She Kills Monsters: Young Adult Edition" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

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