



RADIO

A quirky and timely tale set in the digital age about the universal struggle to stay connected.

T O D A Y  
I S M Y

# Birthday

By **SUSAN SOON HE STANTON**  
DIRECTED BY **CAT RAMIREZ**

**APRIL 28 - MAY 22, 2022**  
**OPENING NIGHT MAY 4**

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## A NOTE FROM DIRECTOR CAT RAMIREZ

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What does it mean to be at home with yourself? Throughout this artistic process and the past two years, I've asked myself this question. Since 2020, everyone I know has reckoned with a personal homecoming in one way or another, and *Today Is My Birthday* is a play about that reckoning. It delves into the after-effects of having your life turned inside out. The play's grief, isolation, and longing are told through a lens that feels all-too-familiar in its contradictions. Time simultaneously moves with the blink of an eye and in slow motion. Space roots firmly in reality while also tumbling into projected worlds. Characters reach out for community with one hand and push them away with the other. They stumble, say things they don't mean, and struggle to identify and ask for what they need.

When I think about the times that I've felt most fiercely independent and grounded in myself, those are the times I have felt most connected to the people around me. It is impossible to be at home with yourself without knowing and valuing your beloved community. In March 2020, a show I was working on and deeply tied to was indefinitely postponed a few blocks from this theater. It feels apt to return to directing in-person theatre in Philly with *Today is My Birthday*. I can't think of a more fitting cast and creative team to work with. Amongst these incredible artists are longtime collaborators, art crushes, and mentors, and I'm honored to create this story with them.

Cat Ramirez, Director



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# TODAY IS MY Birthday

Written by **SUSAN SOON HE STANTON**

PRODUCED BY  
**theatre exile**

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## CAST

**\*Stephanie Kyung Sun Walters** ..... Emily  
**Joseph Ahmed** ..... Kurt, Sebastian, DJ Loki, Grandpa Z, Dr. Johannes Connection,  
Amazingpresence83, Harumi, Landon, Richard  
**\*Daniel Kim** ..... Dad, Bill Tapia  
**\*Rachel O'Hanlon Rodriguez** ..... Hailma, DJ Solange, Goddess Sweet Leilani,  
Generic Female Voice, Hostess  
**Twoey Truong** ..... Mom, Mrs. Kobayashi, Joyce, Mrs. Asuncion

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## CREW

**Director** Cat Ramirez

**Set Designer**

You-Shin Chen

**Sound Designer**

US

**Production Manager**

Janet Embree

**Technical Director**

Scott Cassidy

**Master Electrician**

Julia Franco

**Board Op**

Casie Weaver

**Lighting Designer**

Calvin Anderson

**Props Designer**

Avista Theatrical Services

**Stage Manager**

Nic Labadie-Bartz\*

**Assistant Technical Director**

Kat Larson

**Audio Engineer**

Nat Merrill

**Costume Designer**

Ariel Wang

**Dialect Coach**

Tyler Elliot

**ASM/COVID Safety Manager**

**Wardrobe**

Lian Brody

**Assistant Director**

Max Segarnick

**Scenic Charge Painter**

Claire Leithner

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TODAY IS MY BIRTHDAY is presented by special arrangement with United Talent Agency



\*Member of Actors' Equity Association,  
the Union of Professional Actors and  
Stage Managers in the United States.

## NOTE FROM PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Thank you for being part of Theatre Exile's 25th anniversary season and helping us celebrate the first full season in our new space.

*Today is my Birthday* is a perfect play to mark this year. Written by Susan Soon He Stanton, known for her compelling work as the staff writer for HBO's blockbuster hit, *Succession*, *Today is my Birthday* is a story of Emily, a woman trying to break free from her own seclusion. Her simultaneous desire and struggle to connect as she tries to emerge from isolation made this play feel so timely to me.

I imagine that I am not alone in relating to that feeling. Humans are social animals drawn to live in communities. Since we've been separating ourselves to be safe, as we re-emerge and return to those groups, we are struggling with the part of ourselves that has learned to associate closeness with danger.

I am fortunate to have a bubble of close family and friends. However, over these past two years, I've missed the casual chats on the street, the quick cuppa-something to catch up, and of course, the conversations that you can only have in a theater after the show with the strangers (aka new friends) with whom you just shared a unique moment.

If you're reading this, you've chosen to bring theatre and those conversations back into your lives. Thank you for your bravery and for sharing yourselves with us. The journey is not over yet, but there is safety in numbers.

Thank you for joining us as we all emerge from Exile.



Deborah Block, Producing Artistic Director

## THEATRE EXILE'S 2021-2022 SEASON IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY

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## CAST & CREW

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**\*Stephanie Kyung Sun Walters** (Emily, she/her) is a Barrymore nominated actor and national playwright. She's a proud member of Actor's Equity, a playwright with American Theatre Group's PlayLab, and is Lead Artist of the Philadelphia Asian Performing Artists' Playwrights Project. Stephanie was last seen in *Cowboy vs. Samurai* (Hedgerow Theatre) and *Man of God* (InterAct Theatre). Her play *Half of Chopsticks* was part of Boise Contemporary Theatre's inaugural BIPOC Playwrights Festival and her plays *Acetone Wishes* and *Plexiglass Dreams* will be featured at the Great Plains Theatre Conference in June. Her regional acting credits include *Orbiter 3* (Peaceable Kingdom, Barrymore Nominated for Best Supporting Actress in a Play), InterAct Theatre Company, Philadelphia Asian Performing Artists, Applied Mechanics, Walnut St. Theatre, & Delaware Theatre Company. Stephanie is a proud graduate of Bucknell University and recently received her MFA in Writing for Screen and Stage at Point Park University.

Love to Mom, Dad, Mel, & Dave.



**Joseph Ahmed** (Kurt, Sebastian, DJ Loki, Grandpa Z, Richard, Dr. Johannes Connection, AMAZINGPRESENCE83, Harumi, Landon, he/they) is a Philadelphia-based theater artist whose work sashes over into dance, circus, and interactive performance. They are a co-founder and worker-owner of the interactive performance company Obvious Agency. His solo performance, *Half Magic*, was developed through Philadelphia Asian Performing Artists' Mini-Residency program. Most recently, they were seen in *Backing Track* (Arden Theatre Company) and *QvK* (Philadelphia Artists' Collective). As a director, actor, and more, he has worked throughout Philadelphia with companies such as First Person Arts, Almanac Dance Circus Theatre, Tribe of Fools, the Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival, Asian Arts Initiative, the Philadelphia School of Circus Arts, and Team Sunshine Performance Corporation. He holds a BFA in Theater Arts from Boston University. Learn more and connect at [www.josephahmed.com](http://www.josephahmed.com).



**\*Daniel Kim** (Dad, Bill Tapia, he/him) is an actor and stand-up comedian who has appeared across the country. While in Los Angeles, he played the villainous Judge Turpin in the award-winning production of *Sweeney Todd* (East West Players, the nation's oldest Asian American theater.) Dan also played family friend Stan on Margaret Cho's sitcom *All American Girl*. In addition, Dan was a member of the Warner Bros. Comedy Writing Workshop. In Philadelphia, Dan most recently played the role of Atung in *The Chinese Lady* (Interact Theatre). In addition, Dan

## CAST & CREW

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appeared in *Tiger Style*, the inaugural production of Philadelphia Asian Performance Artists (PAPA). At the South Camden Theatre (NJ), Dan played the role of Wong in both the premiere and revival of *Fortune Cookies*. Dan was also a founding member of the performance group *Asians Misbehavin'* (NY & Philly Fringe Festivals, WYBE-TV), as well as the *Edge of the World* ensemble (NAATCO, LaMama). Dan has performed stand-up comedy at clubs in Chicago (Zanies, Comedy Cottage), New York (Improv, Gotham Comedy Club), and Philadelphia (Comedy Cabaret). Love to Doris, Melody, Maple, and Lolly!



**\*Rachel O'Hanlon-Rodriguez** (Hailma, DJ Solange, Goddess Sweet Leilani, Generic Female Voice, Hostess, she/they) is thrilled to make their Theater Exile debut. Rachel is a Philly-based actor, poet, organizer, trauma-informed teaching artist, and facilitator. They are the Operations Associate of Spiral Q and serve as a member of the Artistic Squad of Delaware Shakespeare. Rachel has spent the last decade working with theater companies throughout the region such as Power Street Theatre, Die Cast, The Hum'n'Bards, Philadelphia Young Playwrights, Simpatico Theatre Company, The Wilma Theater, the Arden Theatre, EgoPo Classic Theater, and the International Performing Arts for Youth. Rachel received her Master's in Theater from Villanova University. Follow Rachel's creative journey on Instagram @the.inter.section or at [www.rachelohanlonrodriguez.com](http://www.rachelohanlonrodriguez.com).



**Twoey Truong** (Mom, Mrs. Kobayashi, Joyce, Mrs. Asuncion, she/they) is a Philadelphia-based theater artist originally from Salina, Kansas with an MFA in Theater Performance from the University of Southern Mississippi. Recent theatre credits include *A Queer Christmas Carol* (Hum'n'bards Theatre Troupe), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare at Stoneleigh), *Phaedra's Love* (Svaha Theatre Collective), *Marie Antoinette* (Curio Theatre Company), and *Cymbeline* (Revolution Shakespeare). Twoey would like to thank Cat Ramirez and Theatre Exile for this opportunity.



**Susan Soon He Stanton** (Playwright) is a playwright, television writer, and screenwriter living between New York and London, originally from 'Aiea, Hawai'i. Awards and honors include Leah Ryan FEWW, Kilroys' List 2015-2017. She is an inaugural recipient of the Venturous Playwrights Fellowship with the Lark, and an inaugural recipient of the Lark's Van Lier Fellowship. She is a two-time Sundance Institute's Theater Lab Resident Playwright.

## CAST & CREW

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**Susan Soon He Stanton, contd.** Writing groups and residencies past and present include New Dramatists, Playwrights Center Core Writer Fellowship, the Dorothy Strelsin New American Writers Group at Primary Stages, Public Theater's Emerging Writers Group, SoHo Rep Writer-Director Lab, The Women's Project Lab, P73's Interstate 73, Berkeley Rep Ground Floor, MaYi Playwrights Lab, The Civilians R&D Group, Hedgebrook, One Coast Collaboration, and more. Susan is a producer/writer HBO's *Succession*, for which she has won a WGA and Peabody Award. Upcoming television work includes HBO/Sister Picture's *THE BABY*, Amazon's *Modern Love*, Amazon/Annapurna's *Dead Ringers*, Hulu/Element Pictures/BBC's *Conversation with Friends* adapted from the novel by Sally Rooney, as well as several projects in development. Susan holds a BFA from NYU Tisch's Dramatic Writing program and an MFA from Yale School of Drama, where she received the Audrey Woods Fellowship and the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Scholarship.



**Cat Ramirez** (Director, she/he/they) is a Philly-based theater director and performance producer. Recent collaborations include Villanova University, Temple University, Asian Arts Initiative, Simpatico Theatre, Philly Young Playwrights, Phoenix Theatre, Lxs Primxs, InterAct Theatre Company, and Hedgerow Theatre Company. Cat currently serves as the Creative Director for Philadelphia Asian Performing Artists (PAPA) and as the Staff

Producer for the Bearded Ladies Cabaret. They usually aim to make the last sentence of her bio sound deep and meaningful, but right now they just really want to cook all of their friends breakfast sandwiches. Much love to Mom, Dad, Matt, Pete and William for their continued support and inspiration. [catramirez.com](http://catramirez.com)

**You-Shin Chen** (Set Designer, she/her) is a USA-based Taiwanese scenic designer for live performance and film. As a theater practitioner and collaborator, she is committed to diversity and humanity. You-Shin centers humans, both the characters and the viewers, and their experiences in her process of creating a three-dimensional space. She is always curious about human behaviors within a given space. She thinks about how both tangible and intangible elements shape space, and how those elements have an effect on the human psyche. Her design for *Eclipsed* (Lewis Center for the Arts) is featured in the USA exhibition at the 2019 Prague Quadrennial. She is the recipient of the 2019 Daryl Roth Creative Spirit Award at The Lilly Awards, as well as a Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Scenic Design in 2020. Some of her favorite credits include *Wolf Play* (Soho Rep), *Mlima's Tale* (St. Louis Rep), Troy Anthony's *The Revival: It Is Our Duty* (The Shed, NYC), *Walden* (TheaterWorks Hartford), *SKiNFoLK* (the Bushwick Starr & National Black Theatre), *UGLY & The KILL ONE Race & Wednesday* (Raja Feather Kelly & the feath3r theory), and *Mrs. Murray's Menagerie* (ArsNova). She is currently teaching at Muhlenberg College. Member of USA829. [www.youshinchen.com](http://www.youshinchen.com)



## CAST & CREW

**Calvin Anderson** (Lighting Designer, he/they) is a lighting and projection designer as well as production manager. They have a strong pull towards the devised, the radical and the risky, while leaning towards projects with heart and trust. Favorite projects range from dance and theater to live music, opera, cabaret and drag. Career highlights include designing *The Method Gun* (Wesleyan University), *Late Night Snacks 2019* (Bearded Ladies Cabaret/ Philadelphia) *Oscar at the Crown* (The Neon Coven/ NYC), *Orchid Receipt Service* (Mirror/Fire Productions/ NYC), *Old Man and the Sea* (Pittsburgh Playhouse, PA) and *Flipzoids* (Generator Theater/ Alaska). Calvin was the Lighting Director for *Ailey II*, and Production Manager for *Do You Want a Cookie?* (Bearded Ladies Cabaret/ Philadelphia). He is the resident lighting & projection designer for FJK Dance in New York and has had the privilege to tour the world over with various projects. Calvin is Production Manager for The Bearded Ladies Cabaret. They are an educator, mentor, and proud member of Wingspace Theatrical Design and United Scenic Artists Local 829. #blacklivesmatter. [www.candersondesign.com](http://www.candersondesign.com)

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## CAST & CREW

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**Ariel (Liudi) Wang** (Costume Designer, she/her) is a freelance Costume Designer and Makeup Designer. She came to the US from Beijing, China for graduate school and achieved her MS in Communication Management and MFA in Costume Design at Temple University. Her recent credits include Costume Designs for *Babel*, *Among the Dead*, and virtual production of *D-Pad* (Theatre Exile), *The Chinese Lady* (InterAct Theatre Company), *Sunset Baby*, *Ready Steady Yeti Go* (Azuka Theatre), *Natural Shocks*, *Cry It Out* (Simpatico Theatre), *The Weir*, *Medea* (Hedgerow Theatre), *A Hundred Words for Snow* (Inis Nua Theatre Company), *Original devised play In America: That is to Say Nowhere*, at Rowan University, and *Our Town*, *The Odyssey* (Temple University). See more of her design works at [www.arielwangld.com](http://www.arielwangld.com)

**US** (Sound Designer, they/he) has a crush on fashionable sneakers, well-cultivated herbs, low lactose cheese, and science fiction novels written by black femme authors. They are a Wilma Hothouse company member, Bearded Ladies Associate Artist, curator, teaching artist, performer, writer, and sound designer. They have been acknowledged by a few accolades and nominations here and there. They are also an emcee and original member of the band ILL DOOTS, seen on theater stages throughout the Philly area as well as music venues across the country. Their recent double album "The Mess/age" is available everywhere; follow @ILLDOOTS because there is more to come!

**Avista Custom Theatrical** (Props Designer) owned by Jennifer Burkhart and Amanda Hatch, was founded in 2007. Avista specializes in prop construction, upholstery, drapery, and other soft goods construction, and maintains a 10,000 square foot rental warehouse in Norristown. Avista's prop master and design work has been seen locally at Opera Philadelphia, Azuka Theatre, Drexel University, Temple University, Maukingbird Theatre, EgoPo Classic Theater, Theatre Exile, Iris Nua Theater, and Kimmel Center Education Department. Avista is especially grateful to be back in the theater scene this year after 18 months of sewing face masks and dog accessories! [www.avistacustom.com](http://www.avistacustom.com)

**Tyler Elliot** (Dialect Coach, he/him) Theatre credits include, recently: *The Weir*, *Cowboy v. Samurai* (Hedgerow), *Romeo and Juliet* (Lantern Theater Company) *Twelfth Night* (Powell House) *Diary of Anne Frank*, *Dot* (People's Light), and *Candles* (PYP, World Premiere). He would like to thank his family for their love and support and Theatre Exile for their kindness, care, and commitment to storytelling and authenticity. NaĐu me ka haĐahaĐa and mahalo.

**Janet Embree** (Production Manager, she/her) has managed productions at Lantern Theater Company, Opera Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Ballet, and Philadelphia Artists Collective, among others. She spent several years at the University of the Arts where she taught and managed productions in theater, dance, and music. She also does professional upholstery for the stage and screen; one of her favorite projects can be seen in the 2018 Grammy Awards.

## CAST & CREW

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**Nic Labadie-Bartz\*** (Stage Manager, they/them) is a freelance stage manager based in Philadelphia. In addition to their work with Theatre Exile, they are an associated artist with Applied Mechanics, and work regularly with them, The Bearded Ladies, and Nichole Canuso Dance Company. They have also worked with Pig Iron Theatre Company, Headlong, Ninth Planet, New Paradise Laboratories, Orbiter 3, Cursed Church Theatre, Stephanie Blythe, MJ Kaufman, Mary Tuomanen, Annie Wilson, Michael Kiley, Suli Holum, and Martha Stuckey, among others.

**Lian Brody** (Assistant Stage Manager & COVID Safety Manager, they/them) is excited to work on their fourth production with Theatre Exile! They have stage-managed for Philadelphia Young Playwrights, Temple University Theaters, and Philadelphia Theatre Company's now-disbanded ActOut Summer Camp program where they got their start in theatre working on devised projects with Philadelphia teens in 2013. Lian is interested in new plays, devised work, queer theatre, and drag artistry. When not working as a stage manager, they can be found drawing up tattoo designs and attending or performing in local drag shows. Thanks to Addy, Ollie, Jamie, and Kimba for their endless love and support!

**Max Segarnick** (Assistant Director) is a student of the Brind School of Theater Arts at UArts. This is his Exile debut! Recent endeavors: *Crimson Lit* (Polyphone), *I and You* (Resilience Theatre Group), Pippin (UArts). Thanks to Cat & Deb for the opportunity!

**Julia Franco** (Master Electrician, she/her) is a Delaware County based electrician. Recent credits: *Life is a Dream* (Master Electrician: EgoPo Classic Theatre at Theatre Exile), *Other World* (Show Carpenter: Delaware Theatre Company).

**Nat Merrill** (Audio Engineer, she/they) is a sound and technology designer and engineer excited to be working on their second show with Theatre Exile! Based in Philadelphia, they have been sound designer for productions at Bryn Mawr, Haverford and Swarthmore, including *Fucking A*, *Riot Antigone* and *Cabaret*. Professionally, they have worked with New Century Theatre Company in Seattle and the Williamstown Theatre Festival. A recent graduate of Haverford College with a major in physics, they researched and wrote a thesis on acoustics in performance halls with RWTH Aachen University in Aachen, Germany. They are also a singer and composer.

**Deborah Block** (Producing Artistic Director) has been a consistent figure in the Philadelphia arts community for over 30 years as a director, dramaturg, producer, curator, choreographer and educator. Deborah has been with Theatre Exile since 2006 and assumed the position of Producing Artistic Director in 2013. Prior to that she was one of the founding organizers of the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe (now FringeArts) and was the program director for ten years. She received her MFA at Temple University where she taught for nine years. She has sat on many local and national panels. For Theatre Exile she has directed *Extreme Home Makeover*, *Babel*, *Among the Dead*, *Sing the Body Electric*, *Guards at the Taj*, *Smoke*, *Red Speedo*,

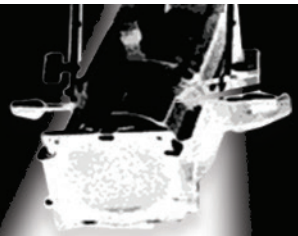
## CAST & CREW

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*Cock, The English Bride, Gruesome Playground Injuries, Iron, Hunter Gatherers, dark play or stories for boys, Roosters* and collaborated on *Hearts & Soles*.

**Theatre Exile** is dedicated to enhancing the cultural experiences of Philadelphians through the staging of works that engage the imagination. Founded in 1996 by Joe Canuso and Trish Kelly, Theatre Exile was created by a group of artists that explore the complexities of the human condition packed with Philadelphia grit and passion. Exile is the first Philadelphia organization to produce such powerhouse playwrights as Tracy Letts, Lucas Hnath, Annie Baker, Rajiv Joseph, Rona Munro, and Hansol Jung among others. In 2016, Exile was named most fearless theatre by Philly Currents and Best Theatre Company by Philadelphia Magazine. Exile received 92 Barrymore nominations, with 19 awards. In 2017, Theatre Exile left their home to begin a new phase in Exile's life. Following her idea to create a new home in their old location in South Philadelphia, Deborah Block with the Board of Directors collaborated with Center City Development and Cecil Baker + Partners, and created a vision for a new theatre that honors the art and maintains Exile's goals of working in an intimate and flexible environment. They produced their first play in the new theatre in February 2019 and moved their office to the new space in April 2019.

**Actors' Equity Association (AEA)** was founded in 1913 as the first of the American actor unions. Equity's mission is to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 40,000 actors, singers, dancers, and stage managers working in hundreds of theatres across the United States. Equity members are dedicated to working in theatre as a profession, upholding the highest artistic standards. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions and provides a wide range of benefits including health and pension plans for its members. Through its agreement with Equity, this theatre has committed to the fair treatment of actors and stage managers employed in this production. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. For more information, visit [www.actorsequity.org](http://www.actorsequity.org).



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Barbara Watson  
Thom Weaver  
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Adrena Williams  
John Wind  
Sisi Wright  
Karen Wrigley-Haak  
Tomoyo Yamada  
Sarah Yeung  
Bob Young  
Caroline Young  
Anita Zippert

## THEATRE EXILE TEAM

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Deborah Block .....	Producing Artistic Director
Anne Marie Cammarato .....	Grant Writer
Denise Cavaliere .....	Director of Individual Giving
Edgimo.com .....	Web Design
Janet Embree .....	Production and Facilities Manager
En Route .....	Marketing
Nikki Hagedorn .....	Graphic Designer
Blake Hastings .....	Production Crew
TS Hawkins .....	Education Director
Randi Alexis Hickey .....	Patron Services and Associate Operations Manager
Brianna Horocofsky .....	Intern/Production Crew
Jill Knittel, MSN, RN, CIC .....	Health & Safety Advisor
Sebastienne Mundheim .....	Producer and Project Manager, Out of Exile Program Director
Andrew Nelson .....	IT Specialist
Matt Pfeiffer .....	Artist-In-Residence
Darnelle Radford .....	General Manager
Carolyn Schlecker .....	Operations Consultant
Max Segarnick .....	Intern/Assistant Director
Autumn Valdez .....	Bookkeeper
Casie Weaver .....	Production Crew
Jasper West .....	Production Crew

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Shirley Lockwood  
Brett Ashley Robinson  
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## SPECIAL THANKS

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Alex Burns & Quintessence Theatre Group, Doug Smullens, Ben Levan & 1812 Productions,  
Dave Nenko, Tanya Hagan, Alexandra Espinoza, Bearded Ladies Cabaret,  
Troy Martin-O'Shia, Nick Embree

## HEADLINE

# theatre exile EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

## **WORKSHOP 3** CENTERING COMMUNITY VOICE

(for Actors/Performers/Writers) with Sabriaya Shipley

\*Professional Development Certificate provided to attendees.

**DATE** Saturday, June 4th, 2022, 12 to 1:30 p.m.

## **WORKSHOP 4** CENTERING COMMUNITY VOICE

(for Directors/Stage Managers/Dramaturgs/Choreographers)

with Cheyenne Barboza

\*Professional Development Certificate provided to attendees.

**DATE** Saturday, June 18th, 2022, 12 to 1:30 p.m.

theatre exile presents

## rADicAl ImAgInAtIoN

(and other sorted pandemic musings);

a Paper Wings event featuring original works  
written by students from Fanny Jackson Coppin  
and Franklin Learning Center!

**FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 2022 - 7 PM**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2022 - 2 PM**

**TICKETS ARE FREE, and donations are encouraged.**

Presented virtually.

Find out more at [Theatreexile.org](https://Theatreexile.org)