COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
THEATRE

THE OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II CENTER FOR THEATRE STUDIES

COLUMBIA MFA DIRECTORS

2014
A Message from the Head of Directing

I am delighted to introduce you to six talented young directors who are completing their third and final year of graduate training in stage direction in the Theatre Program at Columbia University School of the Arts. In their final year, the directors create a fully produced show in a downtown Manhattan or Brooklyn venue. These thesis productions represent an opportunity for you to experience their final projects at Columbia before they embark into the greater theatre world. What unites the six productions is the directors’ shared love for theatre as a vital art form. I know that you will find their work as courageous, theatrical and necessary as I do. May I introduce you here to Tara Ahmadinejad, Carl Cofield, Scott Ebersold, Sina Heiss, Eric Powell Holm and Mei Ann Teo. I am proud of each and every one.

— Anne Bogart
Tara Ahmadinejad is a Brooklyn-based director, originally from Philadelphia. Her recent projects include adaptations of *The Cherry Orchard*, *A Man’s a Man*, and *The Fizzles*, Jasper Johns’s book of Beckett’s prose-poems. She is artistic director of the group Piehole, with whom she continually re-investigates the process of collaboration and collective authorship. Her work has been performed in theaters, galleries and hotel rooms in NYC, Philadelphia, Prague, and Providence. She has received grants from Brooklyn Arts Exchange, the Mental Insight Foundation, and Puppeteers of America. Tara recently assistant directed Jay Scheib’s adaptation of *Platonov*. Currently, she is developing her thesis, *Old Paper Houses*, which combines poetry by Bernadette Mayer with research on 1840s utopianism to ask: how do people believe in things?

“I weave together unlikely source materials, textures, and media to create original theater experiences that celebrate complexity and engagement. My goal is to incite audiences to uncover meaning, beauty, and humor in unexpected places, like a shopping mall or your jacket pocket.”

I incite audiences to uncover meaning in unexpected places, like your jacket pocket.
Carl Cofield is a New York City-based director. His recent productions include the world premiere of the critically acclaimed *One Night in Miami* by Kemp Powers (NAACP, Los Angeles Ovation Award nomination) and the *Tuskegee Airman Project* for CUNY York College.

Carl is interested in bringing stories of underrepresented people to the forefront, and exploring how classics can be reinvestigated through a multicultural lens.

Coming up, Carl will assist Molly Smith at Arena Stage in the world premiere of *Camp David* by Pulitzer Prize winner Lawrence Wright.

He graduated from the New World School of the Arts and received his BFA from the University of Miami. His work as an actor has been seen at Manhattan Theatre Club, Arena Stage, McCarter Theatre, The Shakespeare Theatre, Berkeley Rep and many more.

From *One Night in Miami* (June 2013).

Scott Ebersold

Scott Ebersold is a New York-based theatre director. His recent credits include Orestes by Euripides translated by Anne Carson, Anton Chekhov’s Three Sisters, Bertolt Brecht’s Baal, and a devised piece The Calmative based on the writings of Samuel Beckett and Nancy Cunard. Other notable credits include the silent concerto, for which he won FringeNYC’s Outstanding Director Award, and Children at Play by Jordan Seavey, named one of The Advocate’s Top 10 Gay Plays. Scott has recently assisted Tina Landau on Zinnie Harris’s The Wheel at the Steppenwolf Theatre, starring Joan Allen. He will soon be assisting John Doyle at City Center and Classic Stage Company.

“The text of a play is a blueprint for a soon-to-be-revealed world. By unlocking the text I animate a new, fully realized universe that layers movement, music, design, and innovative technology into a communal experience. I want to embrace the tension between art and entertainment to expose our quest for identity and belonging in times of personal, cultural, and socio-political adversity.”

www.scottebersold.com

I want to embrace the tension between art and entertainment to expose our quest for identity and belonging.
Sina Heiss is an Austrian director and performer.

Her work is characterized by a strong conceptional, multidisciplinary approach. It explores the threshold between life and the stage and celebrates the art of simply being, everyday beauty and serendipity.

Recent productions include Chekhov’s *Platonov* and Churchill’s *Far Away*. Her original work has toured Austria, Germany and Italy. This past year Sina worked with Big Dance Theatre in New York and Toneelgroep in Amsterdam and is currently directing a production of Dürrenmatt’s *The Physicists* with an international team.

She works in between. Spaces. Bodies. Cultures. She dreams. She realizes. Ideas. Concepts. Big, small, extraordinary, weird. Her art is: colors, movement, noise. Sometimes silent. Delicate. Fragile. Sad. Other times loud, edgy, uncomfortable. There can be smiles... and laughter. Provocation is good. So are honesty, love, secrets, experiments. Theatre is a laboratory. Space is a playground. Problems are challenges. There are no categories. And no mistakes. Everything is possible. Everything can be thought.

www.sinaheiss.at
Eric Powell Holm directs, teaches, acts, writes, makes music, and co-founds art collectives like Shakespeare On The Cape, The Strange Capers, and The Wild Plan; he’s also an ensemble member with Vintage Theater Collective in Chicago. Since moving to New York, he has played extensively with physical-musical ensemble 3 Sticks, led the performance series Sunset Rooftops, co-created the immersive triptych Silent Film, and directed The Brechovians’ new adaptations of Chekhov and Brecht in repertory. He has assisted or shadowed with Randy Reyes, Tina Landau, Peter Brosius, Joe Dowling, and Tarell Alvin McCraney’s radical edit of Antony and Cleopatra—co-produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company, GableStage in Miami, and The Public Theater.

“I believe in honest storytelling, live music, and poetic theatricality—I try to make play instead of work. I push against status quo strategies that no longer serve the art-form, things like proscenium architecture, the fourth wall, ticket-sale obsession, and cruel directors.”

Eric Powell Holm

I believe in honest storytelling, live music, and poetic theatricality.


OPPOSITE: Rise and Fall (September 2013), with Toni Ann DeNoble* and Marianna Caldwell*. Photo by Kelly Klein.
Mei Ann Teo

Mei Ann Teo is a Singaporean theatre/film director based in New York and working internationally. Deemed “stunning” by The Scotsman (*Middleflight*), and “truly polished, meaningful and entertaining” by The New York Times (*Lyrics from Lockdown*), her work has toured the US and at festivals worldwide including the Shanghai International Experimental Theatre Festival, Belgium’s Festival De Liege, and the Montreal World Film Festival. For seven years, she helmed a drama program at Pacific Union College that focused on original ensemble creation. She continues this work, rooted in personal and communal history, in factories, universities, and remote villages in China.

Mei Ann instigates innovative collaborations, making new work that illuminates our humanity. She locates theatre as a powerful medium for fostering empathy and transformation. With globally diverse training and history, her perspective is multicultural and multidisciplinary.

Upcoming work includes assisting Robert Woodruff in Romania, devising documentary-based music theatre, and directing the staged adaptation of an exiled Chinese writer’s prison memoir.

www.meiannteo.com

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Upcoming Shows in 2014

January 22–25

The Physicists
by Friedrich Dürrenmatt
Directed by Sina Heiss

The Connelly
220 East 4th Street

February 12–15

The Seven
by Will Power
Directed by Carl Cofield

The Connelly
220 East 4th Street

March 5–8

Wake
Conceived and Directed by Mei Ann Teo
Libretto by Christopher Chen
Composed by Jon Bernstein and Marnie Breckenridge

The Connelly
220 East 4th Street

March 26–29

Old Paper Houses
Created by Piehole,
with texts by Bernadette Mayer
Directed by Tara Ahmadinejad

The Connelly
220 East 4th Street

April 16–19

A Bright Room Called Day
by Tony Kushner
Directed by Scott Ebersold

The Connelly
220 East 4th Street

May 7–10

Vestige
Created by 3 Sticks
Music and lyrics by Andrew Lynch
Choreography by Katie Melby
Directed by Eric Powell Holm

Cloud City
85 N 1st St, Brooklyn
About the Program

The MFA Theatre Program at Columbia is international, collaborative and interdisciplinary. Named in honor of Oscar Hammerstein II, it is defined by its location in New York City, a global capital of theatre, and by the extensive network of Columbia alumni who run prestigious Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theatres; direct and perform in Tony- and other award-winning productions; work in every level of the professional theatre world; and teach, mentor and engage with students on an ongoing basis. Columbia Stages is the producing arm of the Oscar Hammerstein II Center for Theatre Studies.

About the School of the Arts

Columbia University School of the Arts awards the Master of Fine Arts degree in Film, Theatre, Visual Arts and Writing and the Master of Arts degree in Film studies, and offers an interdisciplinary program in Sound Arts. The School is a thriving, diverse community of artists from around the world with talent, vision and commitment. The faculty is composed of acclaimed and internationally renowned artists, film and theatre directors, writers of poetry, writers of fiction and nonfiction, playwrights, producers, critics and scholars. Every year the School of the Arts presents exciting and innovative programs for the public including performances, exhibitions, screenings, symposia, a film festival and numerous lectures, readings, panel discussions and talks with artists, writers, critics and scholars. For more information visit, arts.columbia.edu.

Visit: ColumbiaStages.org for tickets and up-to-date information.

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* after an actor’s name indicates a Columbia University MFA actor.
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