COLUMBIA STAGES

MFA DIRECTORS 2016

Celebrating 50 Years Columbia University School of the Arts
THE OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II CENTER FOR THEATRE STUDIES
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 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 the 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 Shayok Misha Chowdhury, Tatiana Pandiani, Benita de Wit, Marc Atkinson, Sara Rademacher, and Michael Scholar, Jr. I am proud of each and every one.

Anne Bogart
All director photos by Matthew Dunivan Photography.
“I seek to activate the forgotten sacred muscles coiled up in ordinary bodies.”

Shayok Misha Chowdhury is a queer Bengali director and playwright. Born in India, he acquired a taste for sour rice-cakes and the seaside before moving to Massachusetts where, in a hometown rehearsal, he received his mission from a medicine man with too many Harley Davidson tattoos. Co-founder of The Lonely Painter Project, Shayok Misha creates original, interdisciplinary works for the stage. Through performance, he seeks to activate the forgotten sacred muscles coiled up in ordinary bodies. Recent projects include: Make, a song-cycle rooted in African-American hymns and the rising action of breadmaking; a devised adaptation of Chekhov’s The Bet; and Inhume, reimagining Genesis. He has written and directed three new musicals; the most recent, The Optics of Dying Light, premiered as his thesis at HERE. A Fulbright and Kundiman fellow, Misha has been published in Hayden’s Ferry, Portland Review, AALR, and elsewhere. He was a soloist on the Grammy-winning album Calling All Dawns and performed in concert at Carnegie Hall.

shayokmishachowdhury.com
“My work juxtaposes live music, dance, and text to create theatre for a wide range of audiences, events that remind us of our humanity, aliveness, and joy.”

Tatiana Pandiani is a director and choreographer from Buenos Aires. She grew up itinerantly traveling North and South America, during which time she discovered her love of dance and music. Her work is inspired by María Irene Fornés, Pina Bausch, Frida Kahlo, Bob Fosse and Astor Piazzola.

Most recently, she assistant directed *The Glass Menagerie*, directed by Sam Gold at Toneelgroep Amsterdam. Prior to that, she assisted at Lincoln Center, Soho Rep. and Repertorio Español. Her work has been seen at The Bridge, La Micro, Truant Arts, Wertheim Performing Arts, MicroTheatre Miami, The Koubek Center, The Rose Theatre (UK) and The Hangar. Tatiana is also a choreographer and works in film, having recently worked on a digital campaign for TECHO.

In the future? Chekhov, Strindberg, other modern classics, collaborations with choreographers and composers, new South American plays, and a new musical based on Rubén Darío’s short stories.

tatianapandiani.com
Benita de Wit is a New York-based director originally from Australia. She likes to devise theatre in unusual spaces, making imaginative and highly theatrical work that is also deeply intimate.

New York work has included Audrina, a serialized drama performed over four episodes in a New York City apartment, and her collaboration with installation artist Gabe Barcia-Colombo on an immersive experience in the New York Public Library that inducted audience members into The Secret Society of Forbidden Literature. Benita recently assisted Gregory Mosher on Antigone in the World, a project performed in schools and community centers in Kenya and South Africa to start conversations about the plight of young women.

Her thesis project, Undrown’d: Seeking Asylum, uses Shakespeare’s The Tempest and first hand accounts from refugees to tell the story of a father and daughter awaiting processing in an immigration detention center.

benitadewit.com

“Stories speak to a place deep inside us that logic and reason can’t get to.”
Marc Atkinson is a director and designer from Catalonia, England and Ireland. After graduating from Trinity College Dublin, Marc co-founded Sugarglass Theatre. Productions include the Irish premiere of Philip Ridley’s *Tender Napalm* (Project Arts Centre) and a Dublin Fringe performance based on Hesse’s *Steppenwolf* (Cultural Highlight of 2012, *The Irish Times*). Marc co-created a production of Beckett shorts for International Human Rights Day in Ireland (International Happy Days Festival) and Bulgaria. They were also performed at the residence of the President of Ireland. Recent NYC projects include *Besieged*, an original production exploring obsession and isolation in contemporary cities, and Martin Crimp’s *Attempts on Her Life*.

Recently, Marc was a directing intern for Ivo Van Hove, and Assistant Director for No’s *Knife*, performed by Lisa Dwan at Lincoln Center. Marc’s thematic interests include the politics of cultural memory; the manipulative power of language; and isolation in a globalized world.

Marc is a Tuckerman Scholar, Shubert Scholar and recently received the Jennifer Johnston Directing Award. marcatkinson.ie

“I believe in a theatre that is visibly and audibly part of national and international conversations. A theatre that asserts the power of liveness in our digital times.”
“Everyone deserves human connection. Everyone deserves theatre.”

Sara Rademacher is a Theatre Director interested in expanding cultural accessibility through innovative methods and new work. She believes wholly that in order to represent life, one must live it, and that the Theatre should be as diverse as the world it reflects. Some of her recent credits include: *The Snow Maiden of Appalachia*, a new opera by Andrew Austin; two developmental productions of *These Mistakes*, by Samantha Cooper; *Yet Un-Named*, a collaboratively devised show about a real life 1950’s adoption; and Edward Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*.

She has Assistant Directed for Anne Bogart (SITI), Juliette Carillo (Seattle Rep), Alison Narver (Seattle Rep), Gary Gisselman (Guthrie Theatre), Risa Brainin (Mixed Blood Theatre), Sam Helfrich (Virginia Opera) and others. Sara is the Co-Founder of Elements Theatre Collective and is currently working for the National Theatre Conference. Her upcoming thesis production of *The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer* will open in New York in April 2016.

sararademacher.com
Michael is the Founding Artistic Director of Canada’s award-winning November Theatre, with whom he worked on the World English Premiere and tour of *The Black Rider*; the cult punk musical *Hard Core Logo: Live*; Hive 3’s *Ana* for the 2010 Cultural Olympiad; and Caravan Farm Theatre’s collective modern morality play *Everyone*. Michael was Artistic Associate of The Globe Theatre (Canada), where he directed David Greig’s *Midsummer (a play with songs)* and programmed a season of their Sandbox Series. Michael has directed productions for Medicine Show Theatre (NY) and various Canadian regionals, including The Arts Club Theatre, Gateway Theatre, and Persephone Theatre. He recently completed directing internships with Robert Wilson on *La Traviata* (Austria), and with Robert Lepage on a new French production of *Quills* (Quebec). Michael has been nominated for the Jessie Award (Vancouver) for “Best Direction,” received the Canadian AEA Emerging Artist Award, and the JBC Watkins Award from The Canada Council for the Arts to pursue his Directing studies.

novembertheatre.com

“Theatre is my church. It is where I go to explore larger ideas communally, through story and song.”
THESIS SHOWS IN 2015–2016

The Optics of Dying Light
Written by Shayok Misha Chowdhury
Directed by Shayok Misha Chowdhury
OCTOBER 21–24 HERE ARTS CENTER 145 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS

1989
Devised by Tatiana Pandiani with music by Soda Stereo, Sumo, Virus, Abuelos de la Nada, and others.
Directed by Tatiana Pandiani
FEBRUARY 17–20 THE CONNELLY 220 EAST 4TH STREET

Undrown’d: Seeking Asylum
Devised by Benita de Wit with music composed by Gemma Peacocke
Directed by Benita de Wit
MARCH 9–12 THE CONNELLY 220 EAST 4TH STREET

All director photos by Matthew Dunivan Photography.
Outlying Islands
by David Greig
Directed by Marc Atkinson
MARCH 30–APRIL 2      THE CONNELLY      220 EAST 4TH STREET

The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer
by Carson Kreitzer
Directed by Sara Rademacher
APRIL 20–23      THE CONNELLY      220 EAST 4TH STREET

Baby Fat: Act I
A Screeching Weasel Rock Opera
Music and Lyrics by Ben Weasel
Libretto by Ben Weasel
(after Victor Hugo and Francesco Maria Piave)
Directed by Michael Scholar, Jr.
JULY 20–23      LA MAMA EXPERIMENTAL THEATER CLUB      66 EAST 4TH STREET
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; it also offers an interdisciplinary program in Sound Arts. The School is a thriving, diverse community of talented, visionary and committed artists from around the world and a faculty comprised of acclaimed and internationally renowned artists, film and theatre directors, writers of poetry, fiction and nonfiction, playwrights, producers, critics and scholars. In 2015, the School marked the 50th Anniversary of its founding. In 2017, the School will open the Lenfest Center of the Arts, a multi-arts venue designed as a hub for the presentation and creation of art across disciplines on the University's new Manhattanville campus. The Lenfest will host exhibitions, performances, screenings, symposia, readings, and lectures that present new, global voices and perspectives, as well as an exciting, publicly accessible home for Columbia’s Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery. For more information visit arts.columbia.edu.
VISIT
ColumbiaStages.org
for tickets and up-to-date information.

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