

FSU

ASOLO CONSERVATORY
FOR ACTOR TRAINING
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

presents

EXIT,
pursued by a
BEAR

By Lauren Gunderson
February 6 - March 8, 2026
Presented in the Cook Theatre



MISSION STATEMENT

For over 50 years, the FSU/Asolo Conservatory and Asolo Rep have been linked in a unique collaboration that combines a classical academic training program with a professional regional theatre company. It is one of the last remaining conservatory programs in the United States, offering a sophisticated combination of graduate classroom training with professional performance opportunities at Asolo Rep.

www.asolorep.org/conservatory

WELCOME



JAMES FRAZIER, EdD, MFA

Dean

*College of Fine Arts
Florida State University*

On behalf of the College of Fine Arts at Florida State University, I wish you a warm welcome to the FSU Center for the Performing Arts, home to the Asolo Repertory Theatre, the Sarasota Ballet, and our graduate program – the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training.

Our enduring partnership with the Asolo Rep and our ties to Florida's Cultural Coast continue to be a source of immense pride for our College, and our deep connection with Sarasota's robust arts community remains stronger than ever.

This season, we are incredibly excited to welcome back Marcus Denard Johnson (MFA Acting '08) as director of the Conservatory, after a great year as interim director. With his wealth of experience as an actor, director and educator, we are confident that he will continue to bring an exciting new energy to the Conservatory, while continuing to provide the world-class education and performances they're known for.



**MARCUS DENARD JOHNSON
MFA, MSED**

Director

*FSU/Asolo Conservatory
for Actor Training*

On behalf of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training, I would like to extend a note of thanks for your continuous and unwavering support to our program, and for your support towards me last season as interim director.

As a proud FSU/Asolo Conservatory alumnus, I have a deep understanding and appreciation for the partnership between Florida State University and Asolo Repertory Theatre. It has been a catalyst for amazing performances and professional training.

As a professional training program, with an elite faculty that have worked nationally and internationally, our job is to help hone the craft of our student-actors. What you will see on our stage is not just the highest level of experimentation, but the highest level of professional actor training. We invite you as an audience to be entertained, engaged, and enlightened, knowing that you will receive a professional theatrical experience.

We look forward to seeing you in the Cook Theatre this season, where the play is still the thing!

CLASS OF 2027



BRANDON BILLINGS Originally from Colorado, Brandon is beyond excited to share the stage with his cohort in their second year of training. Recent local credits include Understudy for *Anna in the Tropics*, *Good Night, Oscar* (Asolo Rep) Colorado Credits: *Romeo & Juliet* (Shakespeare in the Wild,) *The River Bride*, *Noises Off* (Arvada Center), *The Cherry Orchard* (Miners Alley Performing Arts Center), *The Inheritance*, *The Hombres*, *The One-Act Play Goes Wrong*, *Fireflies* (Vintage Theatre).



ALAN KIM is excited to be on the Cook stage as a second-year student at the FSU/Asolo Conservatory. Recent work includes: *Peter Pan*, *Wolf Play* (Rec Room Arts), *Los Pecados de Iberia* (Stages), *King Lear*, *Cymbeline* (Houston Shakespeare Festival), *Falstaff*, *Romeo et Juliette* (Houston Grand Opera), *Peerless* (Human Race Theatre), *Cinderella*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Rent*, *South Pacific* (Theatre Under the Stars). He owes this all to his family. IG: @alan.dhk

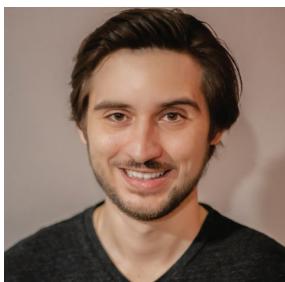


JACQUELYN MORALES is beaming to be performing on the Cook stage. She is coming from California where she received her BA in Theater Arts from Cal Poly SLO. Some of her favorite undergrad credits include *Twelfth Night* (Viola), *Company* (Joanne), and *An Iliad* (Poet). Regional credits include *Steel Magnolias* (Shelby) at SLO Rep and the World Premiere of *Dulce* (Abuelita) at PCPA. Jacquelyn wants to give a warm thank you to all educators that have helped her get "Forward, onward, upward!"



CORRIE OWENS is a graduate of Shakespeare & Company's month-long intensive and earned her BA in Theatre Education from Hampshire College. Recent credits include Christina U/S in *Dancing at Lughnasa* with Asolo Repertory Theatre, *Petrushka and the Caterpillar* and *As You Like It* with Theater in the Open, *In the Garden of Z* at NH Theatre Project, and *Macbeth* and *A Christmas Carol* at The Players' Ring Theatre. She hopes you enjoy the show!

SECOND-YEAR ENSEMBLE



JAMES AUSTIN RIDLEY is excited to make his Cook stage debut. Seen before at the Indianapolis Fringe Festival in **Check Your F*%&^ing Email**. A second-year student at FSU/Asolo Conservatory, he looks forward to engaging with Sarasota's vibrant arts community. IG: @austinrid



EDGARDO SOLORIO is a second-year in the FSU/Asolo Conservatory MFA acting program, hailing from the San Francisco Bay Area. He most recently appeared as Max (U/S) in *Good Night, Oscar*, and Eliades/Ensemble (U/S) in *Anna in the Tropics*, both with the Asolo Repertory Theatre. Before traveling to Florida, he played Prince Charming in *Cinderella* (African American Shakespeare Company) and other notable roles. Enamored by the support of family, friends, and mentors. Thank you!



DANI TREVÍÑO is a Tejana actress. Selected acting credits include: *Anna in the Tropics*, *Good Night, Oscar* (Asolo Rep), *A Beautiful Day in November...* (The Public Theater of San Antonio), *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *Men on Boats* (TXST), and *My True Crime Story* (VH1). “Entonces venimos a trabajar. Dios me dio este talento y esto es lo que hago. A mi gente: Mi respeto, adelante todos unidos. Que viva la raza y que el amor gane. Dios bendiga.” | Joshua 1:9 | @danitrevinoo



KATRIANA VÉLEZ is a Puerto Rican actress and journalist. She most recently served as an understudy in *Anna in the Tropics* and *Good Night, Oscar* during Asolo Rep's last season. For a second consecutive year, she participated in the Puerto Rican and International Theater Festival, playing Fabiola in *El Olor del Popcorn*. In a previous edition of the same festival, she co-produced *Fefu and Her Friends*, in which she also performed as Cecilia. Her screen credits include the Netflix series *Neon*. Special thanks to Candu Management! IG: @Katrianaalex

CLASS OF 2028



MYA BARBER is thrilled to make her FSU/Asolo Conservatory debut! The Tallahassee native holds dual University of Kentucky degrees in Theatre and Human Communication, plus a Musical Theatre certificate. She loves working as a performer/director for The Missoula Children's Theatre each summer. Mya thanks her family, friends, and God for their endless support, love, and guidance. www.iammyabarber.com



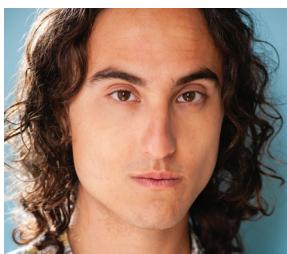
D'ZYRE JONES is a first-year MFA student at the FSU/Asolo Conservatory. A Syracuse native and Howard University alumna, she also trained with the British American Drama Academy. Her journey—from grassroots organizing to corporate America— informs her purpose-driven artistry. Guided by faith and community, she sees theatre as sacred ground. Previous roles include Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Mary in *Laughing Stock*.



RICARDO CIONI GARCIA is an actor and filmmaker with work in five languages and over 20 awards in 8 countries, including the Emmy-winning *What If* and the short *I Loved To See You*. Educated in Brazil, China, and Canada, he received the Ficmonterrey Full Scholarship at Vancouver Film School, and now pursues the FSU/Asolo MFA.



PAUL HOLOVCHENKO is honored to become part of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory. Highlights include leading roles in *The Forest Song* (Lukash), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Judas), *The Road Back* (George Rahe), and *Three Sisters* (Vershinini). He also served at the Kharkiv Academic Drama Theatre. In Germany, he co-authored and performed in performative theatre in Hamburg and worked at the Hamburg State Opera.



CHARLIE LAVARONI (she/they/he) is a first year MFA at the FSU/Asolo Conservatory. As a bi-coastal actor they have proudly worked with: Shakespeare & Co., SFBATCO, Livermore Shakes (SPARC), Pac Rep, SF Shakes, and Big Idea Theatre. Some of their favorite recent credits include: Puck (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*); Clown (*The 39 Steps*); Nell Gwyn (*Charlie and Nell*); and Touchstone (*As You Like It*). www.charlielavaroni.com

FIRST-YEAR ENSEMBLE



ARMANDO GONZÁLEZ NARANJO (he/him/she/her) is a Costa Rican actor, born in the Dominican Republic, with roots across Central America. He holds a Bachelor's in Business Administration and is pursuing his MFA in Acting at the FSU/Asolo Conservatory. Passionate about sharing underrepresented Central American stories, Armando brings versatility, discipline, and authenticity to stage and screen.



EMELIE O'HARA Regional Theatre: *Henry VI Parts 2 & 3*, *Midsummer Nights Dream* (Colorado Music Festival); *Romeo & Juliet* (Redhouse Arts Center); *Hamlet*, (Colorado Shakespeare); *Little Women* (Cincinnati Shakespeare); *Sense and Sensibility* (Arvada Center); *Becket* (Drive Theatre); *Love's Labour's Lost* (UnMasqued); *Macbeth* (Sierra Rep). Film: "Don't Blink," "Stained Glass Windows." TV: Starz, USA, Lifetime. International: Kerry Tribe's Critical Mass, London.



EREN PAGAN-OVERMYER (they/them) is thrilled to be joining the FSU/Asolo Conservatory! Previous credits include *The Book of Silence*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Tempest*, *Private Lives*, *Clue*, and *On The Town* (WMU), *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (Commonwealth Shakes), and *Man and Moon* and *Taproot* (Queer Theatre Kalamazoo) BFA: Western Michigan University. Much love to my partner and our pets! Erenpaganovermyer.com.



ARIA RAYES is a storyteller & singer/songwriter who is overjoyed to be making her FSU/Asolo Conservatory debut! She recently graduated from Azusa Pacific University with her BFA in acting and is currently working towards her MFA at the Conservatory. Her heart goes out to her support system. To her professors & directors, thank you for dedicating your lives to the pursuit of truth. IG: @ariarayes



LIA RODRIGUEZ is incredibly excited to make her FSU/Asolo Conservatory debut. She has been in productions of *Clybourne Park*, *The Mousetrap*, *Necessary Targets*, *Passage*, and *The House of Bernarda Alba*. She has done voice work in the animated film *Anpanman: Twinkle Princess Vanilla of the Land of Ice Cream* and has received her BFA at Florida International University.

CLASS OF 2028 *continued*



BIANCA UTSET is a Miami-born actress and proud alum of Florida International University. She's a board member of absurdist theater company LakehousRanchdotPNG and enjoys writing and developing new plays in her free time. Bianca is thrilled to join the FSU Asolo Conservatory's Class of 2028 and is excited to continue growing as an artist in Sarasota's vibrant and inspiring community.

GUEST ARTIST



JAMIE SAUNDERS (they/them, she/her) is honored to return to the Conservatory as a guest artist, after graduating from the program in 2022. Some favorite theatrical credits include *I'm Gonna Marry You, Tobey Maguire* (Dingbat Theatre Project), *Fun Home* (Sarasota Players), *Eurydice* (Theater at Monmouth), *She Kills Monsters* (ThinkTank Theatre TYA), and *Our Town* (Asolo Rep). Aside from acting, they love scrap-booking, practicing yoga, dancing outdoors, writing plays and poetry, visiting museums, playing ukulele, and figure modeling. Jamie is a proud Alumnus of Girl Be Heard, New York State Summer School of the Arts (School of Theatre), Pace University (BA), and Florida State University/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training (MFA). Major love to their friends and family.
www.jamiesaunders.me

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I was so happy when Marcus Johnson, FSU/Asolo Conservatory Director, contacted me about directing *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*. I am always thrilled to hear from Marcus. We worked together before at Hope Rep in Michigan, where I directed *Natural Shocks*, also by Lauren Gunderson. I said yes, intrigued by the play's dark, underlying themes. And it is funny as all get out.

I have visited these themes before not just in *Natural Shocks* and *Exit/Bear*, but on other projects in my 30+ years of theatre. I've always been drawn to the dark side of human behavior, digging at why we treat others as we do, both good, bad, and everything in between. As storytellers and theatre artists, that's what we do (and I mean from every aspect of theatre): from designing the set in which the characters live, or costumes they embody, or choreography danced as an extension of those stories, or the stage management that keeps all these plates spinning in the air.

Theatre artists have done it for centuries, mirroring back to our communities the joy and heartbreak of the human experience, reminding us that besides the capability of being good, we are also flawed, enraged, hateful, empathetic, funny, compassionate, redemptive, and everything else. We are reminded to do our best.

Exit, Pursued by a Bear takes us on a crazy journey of revenge and friendship. And you get to laugh along the way. Thank goodness for that. My sincere gratitude to Marcus for bringing me to FSU/Asolo Conservatory to work with this amazing production team and these very generous and talented actors. And finally, thank you, our audience, for joining us

~ Michelle M. Aguillon, Director, *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*

FSU | ASOLO CONSERVATORY

PROUDLY PRESENTS

EXIT, *pursued by a BEAR*

FEB 6 - MAR 8, 2026

Written by Lauren Gunderson

Directed by Michelle M. Aguillon

Intimacy/Fight Director.....	Jason Paul Tate*
Dialect Coach.....	Patricia Delorey
Production Manager/Lighting & Scenic Designer	Christopher McVicker ‡
Production Stage Manager/Props Design.....	Fiona Coffey
Costume Design	Jordan Jeffers
Sound Design	Rew Tippin
Resident Hair/Wig and Makeup Design	Michelle Hart



* A member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society,
a national theatrical labor union.



UNITED
SCENIC
ARTISTS

‡ FSU/Asolo Conservatory operates under an agreement with
the United Scenic Artists Local USA 829, IATSE Local 412

◊ Guest Artist

THE CAST

2ND YEAR CONSERVATORY CLASS OF 2027

Nan Carter.....	Corrie Owens
Kyle Carter.....	Austin Ridley
Simon Beaufort.....	Alan Kim
Sweetheart/Peaches/Superkyle	Jamie Saunders ♦

THE CREW

1ST YEAR CONSERVATORY CLASS OF 2028

Assistant Stage Manager	Charlie Lavaroni
Backstage Crew	Paul Holovchenko/Armando González Naranjo
Costume Crew	Bianca Utset/Ricardo Cioni Garcia
Light Board Operator.....	Eren Pagan-Overmyer
Sound Board Operator.....	D'Zyre Jones
House Manager	Aria Rayes
Box Office	Emelie O'Hara/Mya Barber

THE SETTING

A small, musty 1-bedroom house in the North Georgia mountains

Exit, Pursued by a Bear is a dark comedy that contains mature content and themes that may be distressing for some audience members including:

- Mentions of physical and psychological abuse
- Depictions of blood and an animal carcass
- Strong language, including homophobic slurs

CREATIVE TEAM

MICHELLE M. AGUILLO - (Director) (she/hers) is a Boston-based theatre artist. Directing include *Dance Nation* (Brandeis University); *The Kitty Knox Plays* (world premiere, Plays in Place); *Yellow Face* (Footlight Club); *In the Heights* (Firehouse Theatre); *Appropriate* (Hovey Players); *Hold These Truths*, *Natural Shocks* (Hope Rep); *Middleton Heights* (world premiere), *Dracula – A Feminist Revenge Fantasy*, *Really*; *Fences*; *Joy Luck Club*; *Disgraced*; *True West*, (Umbrella Stage); *Vietgone* (Company One); *Proof* (Central Square Theater); *Elephant Man* (O4FXSake Productions); *Passion* (Theater Uncorked). Also the Annual Asian American Playwright Collective of Boston Playfest (producer) and *Learning How to Read by Moonlight* (world premiere, dramaturg, Chuang Stage/Company One).

FIONA COFFEY - (Production Stage Manager/Props Design) Fiona Coffey is delighted to be working with the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for her second season. Born and raised in Sarasota, Fiona has been working in professional theatre in the Sarasota area for 8 years. Most recent stage management credits include *The Curious Savage*, *The Chinese Lady*, and *The Winter's Tale* at the FSU/Asolo Conservatory, *That Must Be the Entrance to Heaven*, The Modern Works Festival, *Westminster*, and *OAK* at Urbanite Theatre as well as *Godspell* and *The Little Prince* at Penobscot Theatre Company. Favorite design credits include: *The Curious Savage*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *RENT*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, and *The Wolves*.

PATRICIA DELOREY - (Dialect Coach) Asolo Rep favorites include: *Knoxville* (world premiere), *Silent Sky*, *Cabaret*, *The Cake*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Ragtime*, *Rhinoceros*, *Roe*, *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, *The Great Society*, *Josephine* (world premiere), *All The Way*, *West Side Story*, *Sotto Voce*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *The Innocents* (world premiere), *Bonnie & Clyde* (world premiere). Other credits include *Judith* (world premiere Urbanite Theatre), *Pitmen Painters* (American Stage Theatre), *The Smuggler* (Urbanite Theatre), Studio Six's production of *Plasticine* (The Baryshnikov Arts Center), *Saturday Night Fever* (Royal Caribbean International Cruises), *Stone Cold Dead Serious* (world premiere ART), and *Nocturne* (world premiere ART).

MICHELLE HART - (Resident Hair/Wig & Make-up Designer) Hart designs for Asolo Repertory Theatre and FSU/Asolo Conservatory. Other credits: Sarasota Ballet, Palm Beach Drama Works, freeFall Theatre, Urbanite Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, West Coast Black Theatre Troupe, Banyan Theatre, Ruth Eckerd Hall, Venice Theatre, Dorset Theatre, Barrington Stage and Open Stage Theatre. She has also done hair and/or make-up for Joan Rivers, Doris Roberts, Martin Short, Jane Russell, Arlene Dahl, Soledad Villamil, Jane Pauley, Richard Dreyfuss, Castille Langdon, Christopher Higgins, Justin Long, Paul Downs. Music videos "Second Chance" by Shinedown, "Reverse Cowgirl" by T-Pain. Film and television: *The Loyalists*, *Lady of the Manor*, *Paradise, FL*, and *The Real Stephen Blatt*.

JORDAN JEFFERS - (Costume Design) is a freelance costume and wig designer based in Sarasota, Florida. He has designed and built shows throughout the southeast regional theatre industry, including *Cadillac Crew* (Studio @620), *Man of La Mancha* (Piedmont Opera), *Joan of Arc:Trial at Rouen* (Piedmont Opera), *Little Shop Of Horrors* (Studio Theatre TDS), *Nollywood Dreams* (freeFall), *Green Day's American Idiot* (American Stage), *Jacob Marley's A Christmas Carol* (American Stage), *Angel Street* (Studio Theatre TDS), and *Sense and Sensibility* (FSU/Asolo Conservatory). He is currently serving as the Assistant Costume Shop Manager for the Asolo Repertory Theatre in Sarasota, in his fifth season. Prior, Jordan traveled internationally installing and managing Broadway titles such as *Jersey Boys*, *Rock of Ages*, and *Kinky Boots*. Jordan has a BFA in Design from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Jmjeffers.com

CHRISTOPHER MCVICKER - (Technical Director/Resident Designer/Production Manager) received his degree from George Mason University. He relocated to the Sarasota area in 1996 and has worked at most of the local theatres. He is a member of the Local IATSE 412. Locally, he has won lighting design awards for *Into the Woods* and *A Little Night Music*. He has three beautiful kids that have taught him patience, understanding, and the ability to thrive without sleep. Thus, in lieu of sleep, he stays awake at night grooming his novel for which he is currently seeking a publisher.

JASON PAUL TATE - (Movement & Intimacy Director) Tate is a director, choreographer, and performer who is thrilled to be a more permanent fixture at the Conservatory as its new full-time professor of movement. Recent credits include *Newsies* at Tuacahn Center for the Arts, *Romeo and Juliet* at Shakespeare & Company, and *Jesus Christ Superstar* at Asolo Rep. Additional credits include PAC-NYC, the Public, Metropolitan Opera, Ars Nova, Classic Stage, BAM, A.R.T., Old Globe, Geffen, Ordway, Great Lakes, Idaho Shakes, Virginia Stage, Westcoast Black Theatre and The Lost Colony. Tate is a proud member of SDC, AEA, and currently serves as Vice President of the SAFD. jasonpaultate.com

REW TIPPIN - (Sound Designer) is delighted to be designing for the FSU/Asolo Conservatory again! His most recent work was *Next To Normal* for the 10th anniversary of Significant Productions. He often works with Urbanite Theatre, including recent shows *Spaceman*, *The Sound Inside*, and *Judith*. He is the Resident Sound Designer for the Theater at Monmouth in Maine, for whom he recently designed *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson*, and *Eurydice*. Further credits include work for the Oakland Ballet in California, the Gretna Theatre in Pennsylvania, and the Denizen Theatre in New York. Really, he's just a hitherto untaxonomized large feline.

THANK YOU

WHERE DOES YOUR CONTRIBUTION GO?

The FSU/Asolo Conservatory exists thanks to your support of the partnership between Florida State and Asolo Rep. Your gift can benefit many different areas of need. We are grateful for all of your help!

A gift to the FSU/ASOLO CONSERVATORY will help cover annual needs such as visiting artist workshops, production expenses, and capital expenses like upgrades to the Cook Theatre.

Contributions to ASOLO REP in support of its partnership with the Conservatory cover the students' assistantship stipends and the London Study Semester.

Our 2025 FSU Great Give was a Great Success!

Your incredible generosity directly supports our students' hands-on learning in the 2025/2026 production season. We are so grateful for the support from our students, faculty, staff, alumni, board members, families, and friends!

Thank You to our Great Give Donors!

Florence Ashby

Ronald Banyay

Terry Brackett

**Brad Brock
& Robyn Brock**

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**Peter Collins
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in honor of Maurice & Jack**

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ASOLO CONSERVATORY FOR ACTOR TRAINING

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

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* *in memoriam*

SPECIAL THANKS

SUPPORT OF FREE STUDENT MATINEE TICKETS FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS

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The Charles L. Huisking Jr. and Lillian Huisking Guest Artist Fund

Asolo Rep supports each FSU/Asolo Conservatory student with an assistantship that allows them to immerse themselves totally in their studies and performances. Once you become a Benefactor, you enter into a whole new relationship with the theatre and the graduate students. The FSU/Asolo Conservatory MFA program continues to be one of the best in the country because of the support of the community. Please consider joining the Benefactors and become a part of the journey of these young artists.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT ANGEL HISSOM:
ANGEL_HISSOM@ASOLO.ORG | 941.351.9010 EXT. 4706**

THANK YOU



RON BANYAY



**JODY BERESFORD AND
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** in memoriam*

THANK YOU



DR. R. PAUL URBANICK



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Mi Amor

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MARCUS DENARD JOHNSON

Director

*FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training
Play Analysis*

ANDREI MALAEV-BABEL

Head of Acting

First-Year Acting

JONATHAN EPSTEIN

Second-Year Acting

PATRICIA DELOREY

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JASON PAUL TATE

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CHRISTOPHER MCVICKER

Technical Director / Production Manager

FIONA COFFEY

Production Stage Manager

KERRY WILSON

Assistant to the Director

LISA BEGGY

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FSU COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

For more
information,
please contact:

DR. JAMES FRAZIER

Dean, College of Fine Arts

DR. BRAD BROCK

Director of the School of Theatre

info@conservatory.fsu.edu

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