

# AMERICAN DREAMS

CREATED BY LEILA BUCK & TAMILLA WOODARD

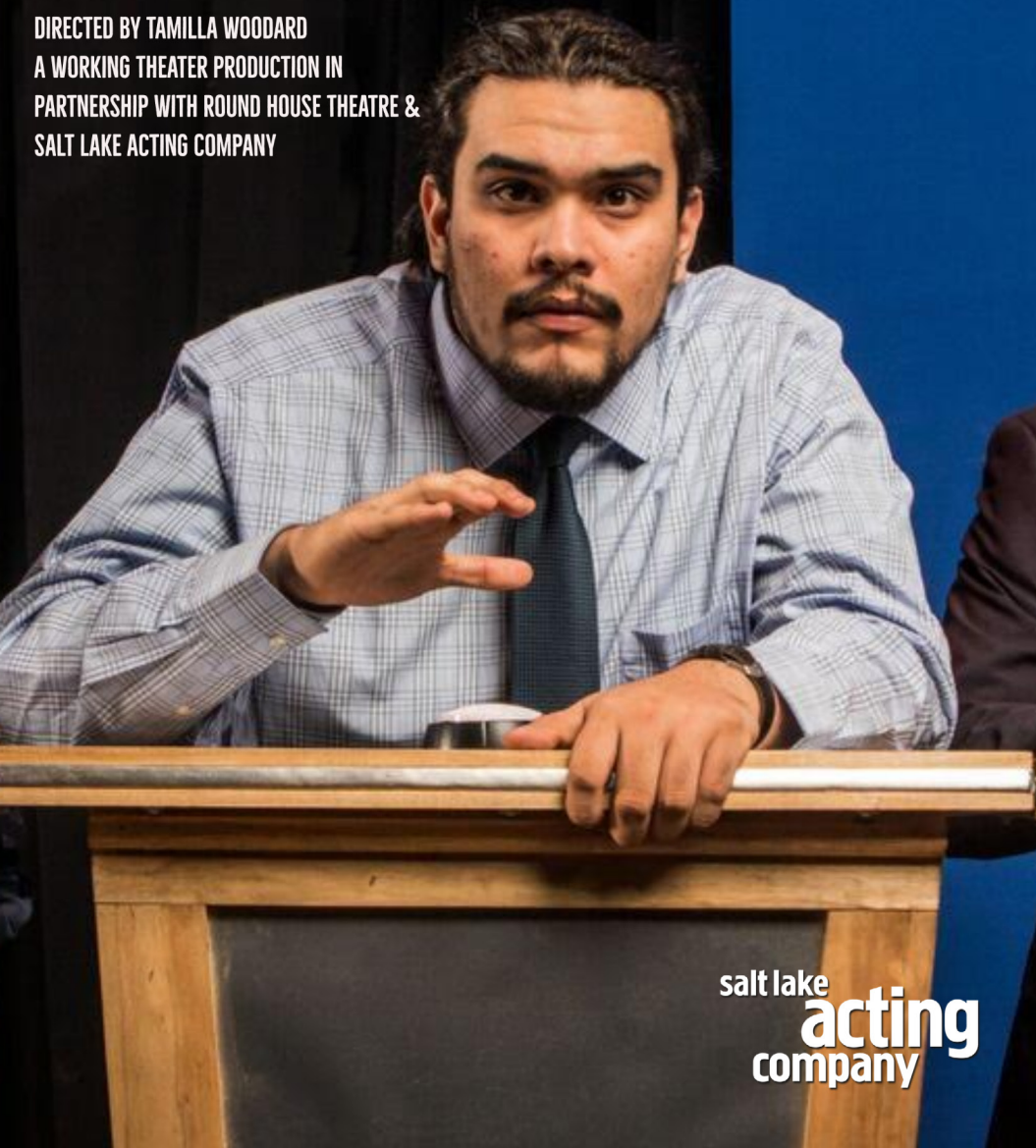
WRITTEN BY LEILA BUCK

DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH  
JENS RASMUSSEN, OSH GHANIMAH,  
& IMRAN SHEIKH

DIRECTED BY TAMILLA WOODARD

A WORKING THEATER PRODUCTION IN  
PARTNERSHIP WITH ROUND HOUSE THEATRE &  
SALT LAKE ACTING COMPANY

A LIVE STREAMING  
EXPERIENCE  
OCTOBER 14-18



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# WELCOME



“Salt Lake Acting Company is honored to be a co-presenter of American Dreams. During this unprecedented time, we have been aching for an opportunity to bring exciting new theatrical works to our audiences, and this one-of-a-kind partnership with Working Theater and others, speaks to the resilience of the artistic spirit and the power of collaboration.”

~Cynthia Fleming | Executive Artistic Director



**We are on stolen land.** Salt Lake Acting Company's Warehouse sits on the traditional and unceded land of the Ute, Paiute, Goshute and Shoshone Tribes. We recognize the historic and enduring relationships between Indigenous people and their ancestral territories, and honor the Indigenous stewards past, present, and future of this land. This acknowledgment is a small example of our dedication to anti-racist practices, expressed in solidarity with those working to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism and white supremacy.

# AMERICAN DREAMS

Written by **Leila Buck**

Directed by **Tamilla Woodard**

Created and developed by Leila Buck and Tamilla Woodard with Jens Rasmussen  
in collaboration with Osh Ghanimah, Imran Sheikh and the company  
A Working Theater Production

*Video Design*  
**Katherine Freer**

*Virtual Performance Design*  
**ViDco**

*Scenic Design*  
**Ryan T. Patterson**

*Costume Design*  
**Kerry McCarthy**

*Sound Design*  
**Sam Kusnetz**

*Lighting Design*  
**Stacey Derosier**

*Graphic Design*  
**the watsons**

**With Ali Andre Ali, Leila Buck, India Nicole Burton, Jens Rasmussen,  
Imran Sheikh, Andrew Aaron Valdez**

*Production Stage Manager*  
**Colleen McCaughey**

*Assistant Stage Manager*  
**Carolina Arboleda**

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Working Theater (Mark Plesent and Tamilla Woodard co-Artistic Directors, Laura Carbonell Monarque, Managing Director) is the lead producer for the virtual production of AMERICAN DREAMS in partnership with Round House Theatre, Salt Lake Acting Company, HartBeat Ensemble, The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, University of Connecticut, Free Center in association with Charter Oak Cultural Center, Hartford Stage, TheatreWorks Hartford and Marin Theatre Company.

AMERICAN DREAMS was co-commissioned by Arizona State University's ASU Gammage and Texas Performing Arts at the University of Texas at Austin, with support from the JKW Foundation.

AMERICAN DREAMS was first produced by Raymond Bobgan for Cleveland Public Theatre in 2018

# ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION STAFF

*Production Manager*  
**Lory Henning**

*Assistant Sound Designer*  
**Mike Deyo**

*Technical Operator*  
**Nitsan Scharf**

*Technology Consultant*  
**Ryan Holsopple**

*ViDCo Virtual Design Team*

**Jared Mezzocchi, Andrés Poch, Tori Schuchmann, Taylor Verrett, Kiana Vincenty**

*Consulting Producer*  
**Amanda Cooper**

*Digital Media Management*  
**Coryn Carson, Jens Rasmussen**

*Production Photographer*  
**Cherie B. Tay**

*General Press Representative*  
**Miguel Nelson Mendiola, Holly Garman**

## SPECIAL THANKS

Raymond Bobgan and the team at Cleveland Public Theatre; Michael Reed and Colleen Jennings-Roggensack; Wendy vanden Heuvel; Dr. Bryan Brayboy and Delanna Studi; Handan Ozbilgin and Stephen Hitt at LaGuardia Performing Arts Center; Sophia Salguero-McGee and the Center for Ethnic Racial and Religious Understanding at Queens College; T Paul Lowry, Wes Calkin, and Merit Glover; Brenton Sullivan, Christopher Hisey, Joshua D. Brown and Lynna Metrisin; Rasha Zamamiri Ahmad Maksoud, Monte Bezell and Varín Ayala; Jason Drevenak; Alex Corona, Nabeel W Rae, Mohammed Othman; Justine Williams, Henrik Cheng; Tommy Kriegsmann; Pierre Bejjani; Global Cleveland; Cathy Zimmerman; Coop's Microcreamery; En Garde Arts; Adam Abel; Hala and Stephen Buck.

## aesthetic supporters

**Engaging and enriching the community through brave, contemporary theatre.**

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# CAST OF CHARACTERS

In order of appearance

<b>BREE</b> .....	<b>India Nicole Burton</b>
<b>SHERRY</b> .....	<b>Leila Buck</b>
<b>CHRIS</b> .....	<b>Jens Rasmussen</b>
<b>ADIL</b> .....	<b>Ali Andre Ali</b>
<b>ALEJANDRO</b> .....	<b>Andrew Aaron Valdez</b>
<b>USMAN</b> .....	<b>Imran Sheikh</b>

Actors & Stage Managers are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the US.

The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national labor union.

The Video, Lighting and Sound Designers of this production are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 of the IATSE.



# IN THE ROOM

## WITH PLAYWRIGHT LEILA BUCK



In 2016, Tamilla Woodard and I started dreaming about how to create something that would invite audiences to engage with what it means to them to be and to become a citizen of this country. Tamilla's ideas, feedback, research, and words are woven through every moment of this piece, and she has been an incredibly inspiring and committed collaborator and co-creator.

Jens Rasmussen has been with us since the beginning, and offered feedback, ideas, language, and research integral to the development of each character and the entire production.

The original stage version first came to life thanks to Sophia Salguero-McGee and the Center for Ethnic, Racial and Religious Understanding at Queens College, where Monte Bezell, Ahmad Maksoud, Jens Rasmussen and Rasha Zamamiri improvised with us and brought that very first seed to life.

Our next huge lift came from Handan Ozbilgin Bromley and Steven Hitt's Rough Draft Festival at La Guardia Performing Arts Center, who gave us our first full workshop of the piece, with Varín Ayala, Osh Ghanimah, Jens Rasmussen, Imran Sheikh, and myself.

Raymond Bobgan saw our workshop at LPAC and committed immediately to bringing it to Cleveland. He and his CPT staff and community went above and beyond to give us time, space, and support to develop the seed that Raymond saw into the world premiere at CPT. Their dedication to creating, developing, and producing work by, with, in and for so many communities is moving and inspiring, and has been a huge part of our process.

Much of the original stage play was generated through improvisations with our actors. Imran Sheikh's research and improvisation skills were essential to creating the character of Usman and his journey. Osh Ghanimah's improvisations became essential parts of the character of Adil, and Ali Andre Ali has given generously of his time and talent to bring that character to life. Andrew Aaron Valdez helped develop the character of Alejandro, and U.S. Army Veteran Jason Drevenak was a key consultant in that process. India Nicole Burton helped create the character of Floor Director in Cleveland, and BREE in this online version. Brenton Sullivan, Christopher Hisey, Joshua D. Brown and Lynna Metrisin were wonderful collaborators in creating the world of the play with us in Cleveland. Sam Kusnetz' sound, T. Paul Lowry's projection design, Ryan Patterson's scenic design, Wes Calkin's lights, Kerry McCarthy's costumes along with Colleen McCaughey's stage management and Merit Glover's support were critical parts of bringing the original world to life.

# IN THE ROOM

This online version is a huge and brand-new experiment in process, created in deep and ongoing collaboration with Tamilla Woodard, and with our designers and company. This online tour would not have been possible without the tireless work of Tamilla Woodard, Jens Rasmussen, and our incredible tour producer Amanda Cooper. No words can possibly express my gratitude for their indefatigable commitment to sharing this play with as many people as possible all over this country.

Last but not least -- immeasurable thanks to you, our audience members, for being our final collaborators. Your participation is essential to this production, and the reason we created it. Our hope and intention since the beginning of this journey has been to create opportunities for people across the U.S. and beyond it to engage with what it means to us to be(come) better neighbors and citizens. While this moment in our nation and the world feels pivotal in so many ways, we believe that engaging with ourselves and each other about what it means to us to be good neighbors and citizens, and who we choose to believe, protect, and welcome into our hearts, communities and dreams will continue to be essential to our survival and healing for generations to come.

To share reflections, responses, questions or recommendations of organizations and actions supporting voting rights, immigration rights, Indigenous rights, or other ways of being good citizens, please email [feedback@americandreamsplay.com](mailto:feedback@americandreamsplay.com).



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# WHO'S WHO



**Leila Buck (Playwright/Co-Creator/"Sherry")** is a Lebanese American playwright, actor, facilitator and educator who has performed and developed her work and others at/with the Public, NYTW, Culture Project, BRIC Arts, Brooklyn Museum, En Garde Arts, Cleveland Public, Cal Shakes, Mosaic Theater at Arena Stage, and the Wilma (Barrymore Award). She has performed and taught theatrical tools for literacy, conflict resolution, and intercultural engagement to youth, educators, aid workers, UN delegates and others across the U.S., Europe, China, Australia and 11 Arab countries. Her play 1001 Nights (A Retelling), commissioned by Cal Shakes and co-written with director Evren Odcikin, was selected for the 2020 Kilroys List. She is a TCG/Fox Fellow, a member of the Public's inaugural Emerging Writers Group and the Lark's Middle Eastern American writers group, a Usual Suspect with NYTW, and teaches Creation and Representation in U.S. Theater at NYU. [www.leilabuck.com](http://www.leilabuck.com).

**Jens Rasmussen ("Chris"/Co-Creator/Co-Developer)** is a founder of BECHEL PROJECT and a performer, collaborator, and producer of the American Dreams Tour. He has devised and designed movement for ensembles across the country. OFF BROADWAY & NYC: Underland, 59E59; I Came to Look for you on Tuesday, La MaMa ETC; Seen By Everyone, HERE; REGIONAL: Skin Tight (Acclaim Award) & Gruesome Playground Injuries (League of Cincinnati Theatres Award) Know Theatre; Conference of the Birds, Folger Shakespeare Theatre (Helen Hayes Recommended); Merchant of Venice, Milwaukee Rep. He also teaches movement and playmaking at universities across the country. Proud AEA and SAG-AFTRA union member. [www.jensrasmussen.info](http://www.jensrasmussen.info)



**Ali Andre Ali ("Adil"/Co-Developer)** is a Palestinian/Irish-American actor and musician based in New York. As an actor he has worked regionally and with numerous New York based companies. Some of his recent credits include P\*ssyc\*ck Know Nothing (Target Margin Theater), 10,000 Balconies (TheatreSquared), and Eh Dah? Questions for my Father (Next Door at NYTW). His TV credits include Ramy and Dead on Arrival. As a musician he writes and performs with his music duo fajjr+ali. Their debut EP eleven90 was released in 2019 and is available on all major streaming platforms. [www.aliandreali.com](http://www.aliandreali.com). | @aliandreali





# WHO'S WHO



**India Nicole Burton (“Bree”/Co-Developer)** is an actress, director, playwright, and producer. She graduated from The University of Akron in 2011 with a BA in Theatre Arts with an emphasis on performance. India is also a founder of Ma’Sue Productions, an African American theatre company where she was also co-artistic director until 2015. Some of India’s regional acting credits include Julius Caesar (Portia), Karamu House Inc; Bootycandy (Young Black Mother &

Ensemble) Convergence Continuum; An Octoroon (Dido) Dobama Theatre; Orlando (Orlando) New World Performance Lab; and American Dreams (Bree) Cleveland Public Theatre 2018 production. India was awarded The National New Play Network Producer in Residence Fellowship for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons at Cleveland Public Theatre. India is currently workshopping her original piece entitled Panther Women: An Army for the Liberation. Panther Women is a devised piece written and directed by India in its first workshops.



**Imran Sheikh (“Usman”/Co-Developer)** Theatre: Off-Broadway: Confidence and the Speech. Regional and NYC: American Dreams (Cleveland Public Theatre), Disgraced (Milwaukee Rep, Florida Rep), The Invisible Hand (ACT/ Artists Rep), I Like to Be Here (New Ohio), The Myth Project (Noor Theatre), Carousel of Progress (Queens Theatre), Brahman/i (Crowded Fire), Disconnect (San Jose Rep), The Girl with Her Hands in the Sand & Radio Mara Mara (FringeNYC), A Midsummer Night’s

Dream (New York Shakespeare Exchange), Why We Left Brooklyn (Blue Coyote). Television: Guy Code (MTV, Comedy Central), Blue Bloods (CBS), Big Dogs (Amazon). Film: Romeo & Juliet, Origin of Fantasy. Eternal thanks to Leila, Tamilla, Jens, and cast and crew! @imransheikhinfo

**Andrew Aaron Valdez (“Alejandro”/Co-Developer) (he/him/his)** is a Chicax educator, administrator, poet and theatre artist from Donna, Texas. Andrew is a C.A.R.E. Teaching Artist at Cleveland Playhouse, educator for the Indigenous



Cultures Institute, Steering Committee Member of the Latinx Theatre Commons, a 2019-2020 Americans for the Arts Arts & Culture Leaders of Color Fellow, a 2019-2020 Cleveland Public Theatre Premiere Fellow and a 2020-2021 Artist in Residence at the Julia De Burgos Cultural Arts Center. Andrew

is a Terry Foundation Alumni and received his bachelor’s degree in Fine Arts - Theatre Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. @drewzymandias www.andrewaaronvaldez.com

# WHO'S WHO



**Tamilla Woodard (Director/Co-Creator)** is the new co-Artistic Director of Working Theater, former BOLD Associate Artistic Director at WP Theater, and the co-founder of PopUP Theatrics. She also served as the Associate Director of Hadestown on Broadway. Recently named one of 50 Women to Watch on Broadway, Tamilla is a graduate of Yale School of Drama, where she currently teaches. Last season her work included the Lucille Lortel nominated *Where We Stand* by Donnetta Lavinia Gray for WP Theater and Baltimore Center Stage, Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* at American Conservatory Theater and direction and co-conception of *Warriors Don't Cry*, a Co-production of The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts and TheaterWorksUSA.

**Colleen McCaughey (Production Stage Manager)** is a stage manager, performer, and singer. She holds a Bachelor's degree in both Theatre and Political Science from Allegheny College. From 2013-2015, she worked in New York City as a stage manager for various theatre companies including The Play Company, The Flea Theater, and Lincoln Center, while serving as the Administrative Associate for Dixon Place Theater. She has served as a performer and stage manager at Cleveland Public Theatre (CPT) since 2015, in addition to her role as Associate Director of Development. She was the production stage manager for the 2018 world premiere of *American Dreams* at CPT.

**Carolina Arboleda (Assistant Stage Manager):** Off-Broadway: *Fandango For Butterflies* (And *Coyotes*) (EnGarde Arts), *What To Send Up When It Goes Down* (The Movement Theatre Company), *Novenas For A Lost Hospital* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater), *She Calls Me Firefly* (Parity Productions & New Perspectives Theatre Company.) International: Festival de Teatro Alternativo, Festival de Mujeres En Escena Por la Paz. She is delighted to be collaborating for the first time with the Working Theater.

**Katherine Freer (Video Design)** is a multimedia designer, filmmaker, organizer, and educator. Her artistic practice lives at the intersection of story, technology, and civic engagement. It is rooted in joy, curiosity, mutual learning, and the pursuit of justice for all living beings. Katherine is a core collaborator of All My Relations Collective and a proud member of Wingspace Theatrical Design and United Scenic Artists 829. She is an adjunct professor at University of the Arts (Philadelphia) and Teaching Artist with Roundabout Education. Frequent collaborators include: Ty Defoe, Ping Chong, Steve Broadnax

# WHO'S WHO

Ill, Kamilah Forbes, Talvin Wilks, and Tamilla Woodard.

**ViDCo (Virtual Design Collective) (Virtual Design):** is a collection of designers innovating new ways to tell stories and create communities online. Using virtual platforms, ViDCo generates entirely live performances with heightened design elements that bridges Theatre, TV, and cinema tricks into a new online hybrid form. We strategize to use the strongest elements of every discipline to inspire the artistic community to use their tools while we provide them the platforms to tell their stories. We are turning COVID around...literally. ViDCo is: Jared Mezzocchi, Andrés Poch, Tori Schuchmann, Taylor Verrett and Kiana Vincenty.

**Ryan T. Patterson (Scenic Design)** holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Akron and a Master of Fine Arts in Technical Theatre from Kent State University. Ryan has been the Technical Director and Scenic Designer for Porthouse Theatre and Cleveland Public Theatre. Ryan has also done SFX work for the Cleveland Cavaliers. In addition to being an Assistant Professor Ryan currently serves as the Technical Director and Facilities Manager of The University of Mount Union's Giese Center for the Performing Arts. Fun fact: Ryan has performed six total hip transplants on cadavers.

**Kerry McCarthy (Costume Design)** received her Master of Fine Arts in Costume Design in 2016 from Kent State University. Since then, she has worked in Northeast Ohio

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as a freelance costume designer and technician. In addition, she is a member of IATSE Wardrobe Local 883 in Cleveland. Kerry has most recently worked for Cleveland Public Theatre, Beck Center for the Arts, Malone Opera, Oberlin Summer Theatre Festival, Utah Shakespeare Festival, and Porthouse Theatre. She is very grateful for the opportunity to work with the American Dreams team again, especially during a time when so many theatre artists are unable to work.

**Sam Kusnetz (Sound Design)** is a sound designer, projection designer, composer, photographer, stage manager, and all-around theatrical problem solver working in and around New York City, and across the country. Favorite sound designs include the world premiere of *When We're Gone* at Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma, *Frost/Nixon* and *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* at Portland Center Stage, and *La Ruta* with Working Theater. Associate designs include *The Price* on Broadway and many off-Broadway shows at Lincoln Center, Second Stage, New York Theatre Workshop, The Public, The Atlantic, SoHo Rep, Cherry Lane, and others. Sam is a proud member of United Scenic Artists, and the founder of Team Sound, a creator of theatrical tools.

**Stacey Derosier (Lighting Design)** Credits include: *Here We Are* (Theater for One), *School Girls, Or the African Mean Girls Play* (Berkeley Rep), *All the Natalie Portmans* (MCC Theater), *Stew* (Page 73), *How to Load a Musket* (Less Than Rent), *The Copper Children* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), *Men on Boats* (Baltimore Center Stage), for all the women who thought they were Mad (Soho Rep), *White Noise* conceived by Daniel Fish (NYU Skirball), the bandaged place (NYSAF Powerhouse), *Playing Hot!* (Pipeline Theater Company), *The Climb* (Cherry Lane - Mentor Project), *Mies Julie & Dance of Death* (Classic Stage Company), *Novenas For a Lost Hospital*, *No One is Forgotten*, *Lewiston/Clarkston* (Rattlestick Playwright's Theater), *The Revolving Cycles Truly & Steadily Roll'd* (Playwright's Realm) & was the 2018 Lilly Award recipient of the Daryl Roth Prize. [www.staceyderosier.com](http://www.staceyderosier.com)

**the watsons (Graphic Design)** the watsons are a creative collective based in new york. they exist to build lasting relationships between great brands and the people they benefit. while their focus is branding and design, they adopted the 'creative collective' moniker because when partners jennifer williams, paul oreifice, and maggie monteith hung their shingle in 2003, they broke from the conventional agency model in which all clients paid for all services and created a core team of the best art directors, writers, and strategists they knew — with brilliant freelancers at the ready. their client roster is as

# WHO'S WHO

diverse as it is deep, including grand central terminal, boston children's hospital, whole foods market, and more. the watsons have won more than 60 creative awards—including three emmy nominations — and have been written up in the new york times, the wall street journal, paste, out to launch, brand new and the dieline. but their proudest accomplishment is the fact that more than 90% of their growth has come from client referrals, with the most commonly expressed sentiment being “the watsons just get us”.as avid theater lovers, the watsons are thrilled to partner with working theater in support of their mission.

**Lory Henning (Production Manager)** worked with Blue Man Group in various roles for over 20 years. Her directing credits include the NY Times reviewed Kitty and Lina, and Shrinkage, by Manuel Igrijas, both produced at manhattantheatresource, and Jen + Liz in Love, by Jesse Weaver, presented at the New York International Fringe Festival. In 2018, Lory produced, directed, and designed Recreating Keiter, by Cindy Keiter at the Lion Theater on Theatre Row. She occasionally works as a technical director (No One Is Forgotten, by Winter Miller), producer (honoressentialworkers.com), and often as an event stage manager (TED, UN World Oceans Day, Pulitzer Prize Awards).

**Mike Deyo (Assistant Sound Design)** assistant/associate sound designer for off-broadway theatre, as well as a seasoned production



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# WHO'S WHO

audio. Mike's credits include: Lights Out, A Strange Loop, Fat Kid Rules the World, A Woman of the World, The New Englanders, Assassins, Emojiland, Sanctuary City.

**Actors' Equity Association ("Equity")**, founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 51,000 professional Actors and Stage Managers. Equity fosters the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages, improving working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Actors' Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. #EquityWorks

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**Working Theater** believes the transformative experience of live theater should not be a luxury, but a staple. As a Drama Desk and AUDELCO award winning Off Broadway company now in its 36th season, Working Theater continues its mission to produce theater for and about working people -- the essential workers of any city or town -- and to make play-going a regular part of our audiences' cultural lives. By making productions relevant, accessible and affordable regardless of geography or socio-economic status, Working Theater strives to always acknowledge the city's diversity while seeking to unite us in our common humanity. Working Theater is under the leadership of Co-Artistic Directors Mark Plesent and Tamilla Woodard and Managing Director, Laura Carbonell Monarque. [www.theworkingtheater.org](http://www.theworkingtheater.org)

**Round House Theatre** is one of the leading professional theatres in the Washington, DC area, producing a season of new plays, modern classics, and musicals for more than 40,000 patrons each year at our theatre in Bethesda. Round House has been nominated for 197 Helen Hayes Awards and has won 37 including four Outstanding Resident Play Awards and the Charles MacArthur Award for Original New Play in 2016. Round House's lifelong learning and education programs serve more than 5,000 students each year at its Education Center in Silver Spring, in schools throughout Montgomery County, and at our Bethesda theatre. For tickets and information: [www.roundhousetheatre.org](http://www.roundhousetheatre.org)

**Salt Lake Acting Company** (SLAC)'s mission is to engage and enrich the community through brave contemporary theatre. Founded in 1970, SLAC is a not-for-profit 501(c) 3 professional theatre dedicated to producing, commissioning, and developing new works and to supporting a community of professional artists. SLAC has been nationally recognized by the Shubert Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Edgerton Foundation, among others. For tickets and information: [www.saltlakeactingcompany.org](http://www.saltlakeactingcompany.org)

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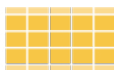
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2020/2021

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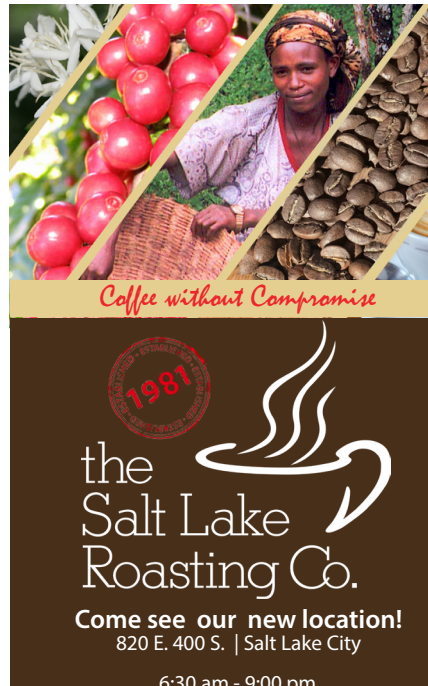
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# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

## Send letters to voters



Vote Forward and Salt Lake Acting Company are working together to increase civic participation by sending letters to voters during the run of AMERICAN DREAMS!

Writing letters to voters is one of the most effective ways to help increase election turnout in 2020. And you can do it right from home!

It takes two minutes and one stamp, and meaningfully increases the odds that the recipient will vote. A concrete action you can take, no matter where you live, to get unlikely-to-vote fellow citizens to the polls.

Learn more at <https://votefwd.org/saltlakeactingcompany>



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