

odyssey

THEATRE ENSEMBLE

ELEPHANT SHAVINGS



August 25 - October 1, 2023

Odyssey Theatre Ensemble presents
the World Premiere of

The logo for the play 'Elephant Shavings' features the title in a white, stylized, serif font against a solid black rectangular background. The letters are bold and closely spaced, with some unique flourishes on the 'L' and 'S'.

Written and Directed by Ron Sossi

The Ensemble

Denise Blasor* Diana Cignoni Jack Geren
Jeff LeBeau Cameron Meyer Giovanna Quinto

Set Designer Jan Munroe

Costume Designers Denise Blasor & Juliette Blasor

Lighting Designer Jackson Funke

Sound Designer Christopher Moscatiello

Video Designer Fritz Davis

Stage Manager Katie Chabot

Rehearsal Stage Manager Andrew Blahak

Assistant to the Director Severine Larue

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



The Odyssey is supported in part by a grant from the City of Los Angeles,
Department of Cultural Affairs, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission
and The Shubert Foundation Inc.

The Odyssey was recently awarded grant funding through LA County's Creative
Recovery LA initiative which includes funding for arts relief and recovery, creative
works and jobs for artists, career pathways for youth and marketing.

CAST

(in order of appearance)

LIZZIE Diana Cignoni
JILL Giovanna Quinto
PETER Jack Geren
SAM Jeff LeBeau
ERIN Cameron Meyer
PEARL Denise Blasor*

Setting: A Theatre. Time: The Present.

Running Time: 2 hours & 10 minutes.

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission.

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Setting forth on this adventure, I fully recognized the inherent folly of it all. How to do a play of “ideas” and debate in this escapist age? How to portray the internal life of a solo character and her search for “awakening”? How to appeal to a general audience, many of whom will have no initial interest in the subject, and at the same time, to those already committed to certain spiritual practices. How to find an audience, in both cases, open to these existential ideas? How to find a middle ground between not too technical and not too simplistic?

But “Fools rush in...”. I’m an old codger with probably very little time left “to strut and fret my hour upon the stage,” so if not now, then when?

Elephant Shavings represents a response to over 60 years of “spiritual” adventures. It’s not a play about religion, but rather about the quest to discover one’s true nature... and the nature of life itself. Does it have a meaning? Does it have a purpose? How do I fit into the whole? And who is this “I”? How about destiny versus free will? These all seem to be questions that go beyond the boundaries of organized religions, but are central to our very existence.

The play draws 80% from true anecdotes and experiences, as well as the teachings of a number of extraordinary beings. To them I am most grateful.

As I began writing, I was awakened nightly, inundated with memories of events, teachings and experiences... far too many to be incorporated in any reasonable theatre piece. The very first rough draft probably would have run six or seven hours! As it is, the performance you will see you tonight/today is rather a brief overview and consideration of a few of these ideas. I’m hoping that this will not just be a “niche piece,” but rather one which might have larger appeal. But then again, “Fools rush in...!”

Wishing you a happy experience.

Ron Sossi, August 25, 2023

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



DENISE BLASOR Pearl/Costume Designer

Denise is a Puerto Rican actor, stage and film director, designer and podcast writer/director/actor and producer. Favorites include directing and performing in the political musical film *Calle De La Resistencia* (best film finalist, Puerto Rican Critics Association), directing and designing stage revival at Odyssey Theatre of Fefu and *Her Friends* (KCRW/LA Times Best Play world premiere of Stephanie Walker's *The Abuelas* at the Antaeus Theatre, and *The Madres* at Skylight Theatre/Chicago's Victory Theatre, directing, designing and performing in *Wild in Wichita* at LATC/BFA and directing and designing *Cristo Vive* at the Orpheum Theatre. At the Odyssey Theatre, Denise has designed costumes for plays including *Yacobi & Leidental*, *The Greeks*, *The Tempest*, *Lysistrata Unbound* and *The Unseen Hand*. She won Best Latino podcast for her bilingual productions of *Tonantzin Guadalupe*, *Twelve Children Stories*, written by Juliette Blasor, as well as new bilingual adaptations of *The Nutcracker* and *Christmas Carol*, executive produced by Rene Heredia.



DIANA CIGNONI Lizzie

Diana is a German-American filmmaker who got a start in acting at an early age, working at the HB Studio in New York. She later moved to Los Angeles where she studied with teacher Charlie Laughton, Al Pacino's life-long mentor and friend, while performing in award-winning productions of plays by Bertolt Brecht, Samuel Beckett and most recently starring in Harold Pinter's *A Kind of Alaska* and Brian Friel's *Faith Healer* at the Odyssey. It was in Los Angeles that she developed into a thoughtful independent writer and filmmaker, and her work has been recognized in multiple film festivals in the United State and Europe. Diana has also directed documentaries and fashion videos, including short films for *Port Magazine*, *Playboy*, *FHM Collections* and the *Goethe Institute of Los Angeles*. @diana.cignoni www.dianacignoni.com



JACK GEREN Peter

Jack (formerly known as Ron) is originally from Oakland, CA and has lived the last couple decades in Venice, CA. Jack found his love for acting at American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, as well as the original Actors Gym here in Los Angeles. Jack is a member of the Pacific Resident Theatre in Venice, where he has had the lead in multiple productions, including Ben in *What We're Up Against*, Eddie in *Fool for Love*, Lee in *True West* and many others. Jack is known for many TV and film roles, and was recently featured in a spot for Cigna alongside Ted Danson. He has also recently directed and starred in his first film, entitled *Love You Brother*, which is currently making the festival rounds. Jack is thrilled to be involved in his very first production here at The Odyssey.



JEFF LEBEAU Sam

Jeff is thrilled to be back at The Odyssey in the premiere of Elephant Shavings. His Stage work includes American LaRonde and The Few (Pacific Resident Theatre), Dance Of Death and Steambath, both directed by Ron Sossi, The Gary Plays (Open Fist), The two-character play Years To The Day (Stage Raw Best Actor nomination, BHP-Sky-light Theatre Co., LA and 59e59 NYC, Edinburgh fest UK); The Sea-Farer, director Pamela Moller Kareman (SchoolHouse NY); Burning in China, a solo show directed by Caleb Deschanel, JohnDrew/Guild Hall NY, Poway Arts, NYC Fringe); and Hurlyburly, directed by David Rabe (Geffen Playhouse). Film and TV work include Grant Wilson in Treason (Amazon Prime), as well as many films and TV guest spots. Voice/Narration: Dreamworks, Discovery channel, and an Emmy Award for narration of The Great Storm. Jeff is an alumnus of Cal Arts, a member of The Road and Pacific Resident Theatre companies and Detroit Street Films/Station House. Special thanks to Ron Sossi, Beth Hogan, Sally Essex-Lopresti, Heather Cunningham and all at the Odyssey.



CAMERON MEYER Erin

Cameron is honored to be a part of Elephant Shavings. Recent theatre credits include Letters from Ukraine (Barnsdall Gallery Theatre), Sex With Strangers (Beverly Hills Playhouse), and the world premiere of Unseen Shepard, about the life and work of Sam Shepard, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland. Cameron has appeared in several popular television shows, including Snowfall (FX), Truth Be Told (Apple TV+), Melissa and amp; Joey (ABC Family) and Criminal Minds (CBS). Her recent film credits include Twisted Date (Tubi) and the upcoming western, This Bloody Country. Her voice-over credits include the horror podcast, The Burned Photo (QCODE Media), available on Apple podcasts. She trains at the Beverly Hills Playhouse. Thanks to Ron Sossi, Sally Essex-Lopresti, the Odyssey and this amazing cast. Special thanks to her family and her reps for all of their support. More info at www.cameronmeyer.com



GIOVANNA QUINTO Jill

Born and raised in São Paulo, Giovanna (Gio) is a Brazilian actress based in Los Angeles since 2017. Gio majored in performing arts at CAL University in Rio. In her home country, Gio is known for her series regular role as Denise, in the show Zé do Caixão (Space Channel), as well as for her several guest star roles on TV Globo, in shows like Os Trapalhães, Malhação, A Força do Querer, Justiça, Mister Brau and Entre Tapas e Beijos. While in school, she developed her knowledge of physical theater and Butoh dance, performing with renowned international artists such as Tadashi Endo (MAMU Butoh Center, Germany), Odin Teatret (Denmark), Julio Adrião (Potlatch Theater, Italy), Yael Karavan (Karavan Ensemble, U.K), John Mowat (Chapitô Theater, Portugal) and The Lucid Body House (NYC). Gio is so excited to have her debut in the American theater world, giving life to Jill in Elephant Shavings! IG: @iamgiovannaquinto

RON SOSSI

Writer/Director/Odyssey Artistic Director

Ron received the LA Weekly Career Achievement Award in 2013. He has also received the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Margaret Harford Award for “demonstrating a continual willingness to experiment provocatively in the process of theatre” and the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Ron Link Award for “consistent quality of direction.” Recent OTE directing projects include Faith Healer, The Dance of Death, Beckett5, My Sister, Oedipus Machina, Theatre in the Dark (LA Weekly nomination Best Production of the Year), Way to Heaven (LA Weekly and LADCC nomination for Best Production of the Year), Adding Machine: A Musical, The Arsonists (LA Weekly nomination for Best Direction) Sliding Into Hades (Best Production of the Year, LA Weekly), Kafka Thing!, Far Away and The Threepenny Opera. Ron has led the Odyssey throughout its 54-year history.

JAN MUNROE

Scenic Designer

Jan has been involved with new work as a performer, writer, choreographer and designer since early studies with Marcel Marceau and Etienne Decroux. A founding member of the Mystic Knights of the Oingo-Boingo, original work includes Alligator Tails (LA Weekly award; best solo show, 1984), Nothing Human Disgusts Me (L.A. Weekly Award; best solo show, 1992), Little Monsters (For 27 TVs and 5 actors) and most recently I Don't Know, I Know with Tony Abatemarco, done in the Thresholds of Invention series at the Odyssey. He is a recipient of 11 Drama-Logue and L.A. Weekly awards, An Ovation award, 2 NEA Theatre fellowships, a Rockefeller Playwrights fellowship and a C.A.C. New Genre fellowship. As an actor he has appeared in all mediums. Recent design projects include The Vibrator Play and A Midsummer Night's Dream (Open Fist Theatre), A Hit Dog Will Holler (Playwrights Arena/Skylight Theatre co-production) and John O'Keefe's All Night Long (Open Fist Theatre).

JACKSON FUNKE

Lighting Designer

Jackson is an LA-based designer specializing in theatre, dance and opera. LA credits include Ate9 Dance Company (Off to a Good Start) and Heidi Duckler Dance (Body of the People, 37th Annual Gala). Other regional credits include Connecticut Repertory Theatre (Replay, 4.48 Psychosis); Playhouse on Park (Bandstand, Pippin (Broadway World Regional Award)); Newfangled Theatre Company (PRIMAL, Liquid Light Show, Gary, Helen, and Peter); Jackdonkey Productions Theatre Co. (Dock Work); and The Matchbox Theatre (All of the Garden, Moulin Rouge). jacksonfunke.com @jackson.funke

JULIETTE BLASOR

Costume Designer

Juliette is a writer, composer and performer of the award-winning podcasts Twelve Children Stories, Tonantzin Guadalupe, Cristo Vive and her new adaptation of A Christmas Carol. As a costume designer, prop-master and mask-maker she has designed for the Odyssey Theatre, Bilingual Foundation for the Arts, Civic Light Opera, Hermosa Beach Playhouse, as well as for film and TV. She started composing music as a teenager and her first professional job was composing the score for the play, He Who Gets Slapped starring Bud Cort for LADiversified Theatre Company. Other theatre productions include The Three Sisters, Cooking, No Exit, Pedro Infante y la Suegra Triunfante, Angels, Wild in Wichita, Lost Child, Cristo Vive. She is an artist, therapeutic arts program workshop designer and thanatologist certified counselor in trauma, death and bereavement.

CHRISTOPHER MOSCATIELLO

Sund Designer

Christopher is an award-winning sound designer, composer, music editor and music director for theater, television and film, and he is the resident sound designer at Rogue Machine Theatre. TV highlights include The Walking Dead, Human Target, Eureka, Psych, Caprica, The Cape and Trauma. He has scored series and specials for National Geographic and The Discovery Channel, ZDF Germany, specials and promos for HBO, BBC, Animal Planet, MSNBC and The History Channel. Theater highlights include The Kennedy Center, The Smithsonian Institution, The Shakespeare Theatre, Signature Theatre, Roundhouse Theatre, Rogue Machine, A Noise Within, Antaeus Theater, Odyssey Theatre, Skylight Theatre, Fountain Theatre, Road Theatre and Pacific Resident Theater, and he served as assistant conductor for the national tour of The Phantom of the Opera.

FRITZ DAVIS

Video Designer

Fritz is a Philadelphia native who moved to Los Angeles in 2000 and began his career in the local 99-seat theater scene. Over 20 years later, with hundreds of productions to his credit, he is now the owner and principal designer at Davis Multimedia, an audio-visual rental company catering to theatrical production needs. His multidisciplinary skill set includes video projection mapping and design, theatrical sound design, photography, videography and editing, as well as foley, live audio and video mixing. He is also a certified FAA 107 drone pilot. Your questions and comments are most welcome at fritzdavisstagetech@gmail.com

KATIE CHABOT

Stage Manager

Katie is beyond thrilled to be making her Los Angeles and Odyssey debut with Elephant Shavings! Katie is a graduate of Vanderbilt University where she received degrees in education and theatre. Favorite stage management credits include The Last Acorn and Other Winning Plays (Florida Studio Theatre), What the Constitution Means to Me (Florida Studio Theatre), A Little Night Music (Stagedoor Manor), Dogfight (Vanderbilt University), and Blues for an Alabama Sky (Vanderbilt University). Special thanks to Ron Sossi, Beth Hogan, Andrew Blahak, her family's endless support, Emma, Jason, and all at the Odyssey.

ANDREW BLAHAK

Rehearsal Stage Manager

Andrew is new to stage-managing in Los Angeles, and excited to get his first full show with Odyssey under his belt. He previously worked with Odyssey as assistant stage manager for the production of Picnic and filled in as a temporary stage manager for the premiere production of Sandra Tsing Loh's Madwomen of the West. Andrew graduated with a bachelor's in theatre from Arizona State University, where he focused on stage management and directing. When not working as a house or stage manager, he spends his time writing, creating worlds for his Dungeons and Dragons games, and absorbing as much media as time allows. He is excited to continue his career with the Odyssey and looks forward to doing more work in town. You can follow his current and upcoming projects at Andrewblahak.com.

CONNOR MOODY

Assistant Stage Manager

Connor is a theater enthusiast. She made her stage-managing debut at The White Bear in Kennington, London and continued to work as a lighting and sound board operator around London for two years. Since moving to LA, she's worked as a stage-hand for Deaf West's Oedipus at the Getty Villa, Metamorphoses and A Christmas Carol at A Noise Within and as a lighting and sound board operator for Warrior Queen at The Colony, Naomi Grossman's American Whore Story at The Skylight Theatre and most recently, Sandra Tsing Loh's Madwomen of the West at the Odyssey. She's excited to continue her work with the Odyssey and to continue making great theater!

JOHNNY HAGAN

Assistant to the Costume Designers

Johny (He/They) is a current student studying costume design at Los Angeles City College. Past credits include co-designing and heading the wardrobe crew for Kinky Boots at LACC, designing The Flood with the Theatre Movement Bazaar, also at LACC Theater Department, heading the wardrobe crew for Melancholia at LATC, as well as the 2023 Kennedy Center American Center Theatre Festival in which Melancholia won first place. This is Johnny's first production with the Odyssey and they are very excited to be making their debut!

BETH HOGAN

Producer

Beth is the associate artistic director of the Odyssey, staff producer and has acted in over 30 Odyssey productions.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Stage Manager Connor Moody
Master Carpenters Leonard Felix, Jan Munroe,
Diogenes de Prat Gay, Danny Felix
Scenic Artist Chris Bell
Master Electrician Danny Felix
Light Crew Rob Fox
Publicist Lucy Pollak
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Photography Kayte Deioma

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

August 25 - October 1, 2023

Every Saturday at 8pm, Sunday at 2pm

Friday on Sept. 1, 8, 22, 29 at 8pm,

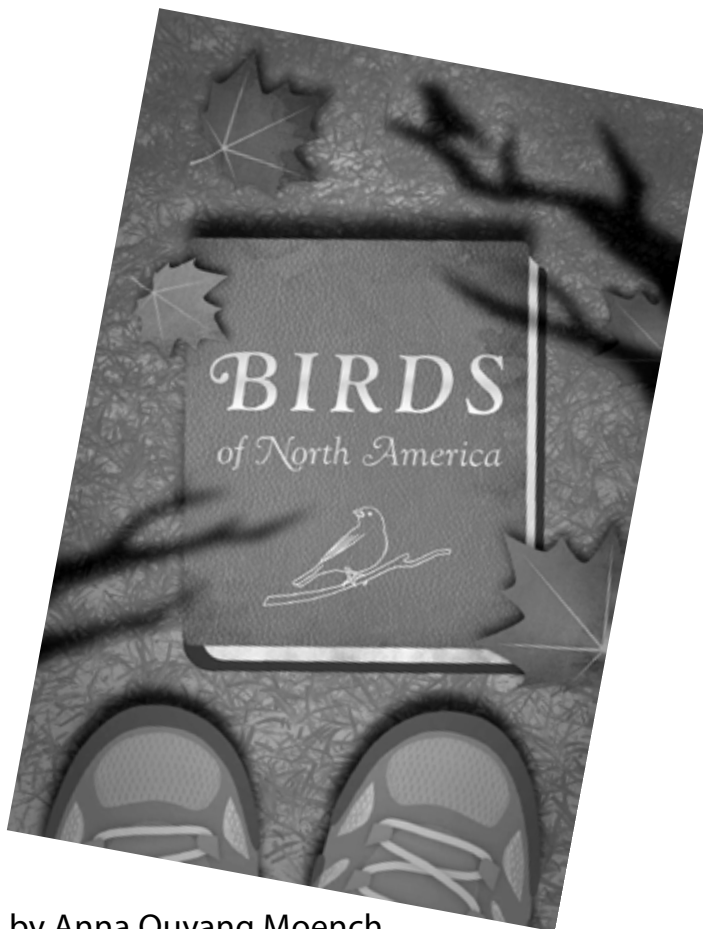
Wednesday on August 30, Monday on September 18

Wine Night Fridays

(Enjoy complimentary wine & snacks with the cast after the show)

NEXT UP at the Odyssey

September 22 – November 19, 2023



Written by Anna Ouyang Moench

Directed by Peter Richards

Starring Arye Gross and Jacqueline Misaye

We are thrilled to announce that the Los Angeles premiere production of *Birds of North America* will land on the Odyssey stage this autumn. The play takes a close look at the relationship of a father and daughter over the course of a decade as they struggle to understand more about themselves, each other and the changing world around them.

Reservations and information at odysseytheatre.com or call our box office at 310-477-2055 ext. 2

ODYSSEY STAFF

ARTISTIC

Artistic Director Ron Sossi
Associate Artistic Director Beth Hogan
Literary Manager Sally Essex-Lopresti
Dance Festival Curator Barbara Mueller-Wittmann
Thresholds of Invention Curator Tony Abatemarco
Music Festival Curator John Snow
Student Outreach Director Beth Hogan

PRODUCTION

Technical Directors Danny Felix, Leonard Felix
Master Electrician Danny Felix
Production Assistant Rob Fox
Production/Box Office/House Management Assistants Andrew Blahak,
Rogelio Douglas III, Gabriel E. Jimenez Montes

ADMINISTRATIVE

Box Office Manager Heather Cunningham
Business Manager Alyssa Lopez, Ana Sanchez
Social Media Director Katy Yates, Jessica Kwen
Publicist Lucy Pollak
Facility Manager Juana Gomez
OTE Web Designer Nicole Jaffe
OTE Graphic Designers Peter Simpson Cook, Luba Lukova, Yuri Ogita

Special Thanks

Josh Le Cour, Los Angeles City College Theatre Department, Sandy Bainum,
Jenine MacDonald, Frier McCollister, Christopher Sepulveda

Volunteer Office Staff: Julie Lebow, Dolores Plevnik, George Wiedem
Volunteers: Tina Azad Pour, Sylvia Chicas, Ginger Christie, Jason Detamore, Dr Bob
Kerns, Phyllis Soltz, Yun Xiao

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As a not-for-profit organization, our work is only possible because of charitable donors like you. A gift of any size goes a long way toward supporting the Odyssey's bold and exciting productions.

THANK YOU for helping us sustain our community of inspired audiences and artists. Together we do great things! odysseytheatre.com



310-477-2055 ext. 2, or odysseytheatre.com
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2023 SEASON

MISSION

With a 53-year history as one of Los Angeles' most adventurous companies and a pioneer in the intimate theatre movement, the Odyssey continues to offer world-class live theatre experiences in its three-theatre complex. Whether it be an original new play, a bold re-envisioned classic, or something hot off the international theatre circuit, the Odyssey strives to be provocative, mind-bending and emotionally potent. As an artist-run venture, this unique company is always multicultural in both intent and practice, serving the wonderfully diverse ethnic mix of the Los Angeles community... both of artists and audiences.

SUPPORT US

We are so grateful to have you in our family. Thank you for supporting the Odyssey and making live theatre part of your life. Give a gift today and help us to continue to produce ambitious work, support daring artists and maintain low ticket prices.

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