

Open Fist Theatre Company Presents
*In the Next Room, or
the vibrator play*
by Sarah Ruhl



Directed by Lane Allison
March 18th - April 23rd • OpenFist.org



presents

IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY

Written by Sarah Ruhl
Directed by Lane Allison

Featuring:

Bryan Bertone • Spencer Cantrell • Christopher Carver • Stephanie Crothers
Monazia Smith • Dionna Veremis • Alexander Wells* • Jennifer Zorbalas

Scenic Design
Jan Munroe

Costume Design
Mylette Nora

Lighting Design
Sarah Schwartz

Sound Design
Marc Antonio Schwartz

Properties
Ina Shumaker & Bruce Dickinson

Asst. Lighting Design
Fiona Jessup

Scenic Painting
Stephanie Crothers

Production Stage Manager
Jennifer Palumbo*

Publicist
Lucy Pollak

Produced by Martha Demson



This production is made possible in part by a grant from the California Arts Council



This presentation is supported, in part, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the LA County Dept of Arts & Culture



Mission

Open Fist Theatre Company is a self-governing community of theatre artists who believe in the transformative imperative of inclusive and collaborative theatre. Dedicated to expanding social awareness through art, we seek, through diverse voices and artistic visions, to celebrate difference, nurture empathy and advance social change.

Board of Directors

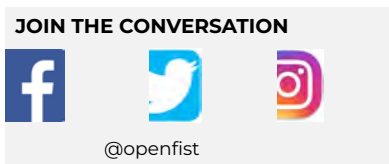
Martha Demson, Richard Michael Knolla, Christopher Lore, Schuyler Mastain, Charles Otte, Malhar Pagay, Katie May Porter, Catie Saralegui, Ina Shumaker

Company Staff

Artistic Director..... **Martha Demson**
Associate Artistic Director / Co Production Manager..... **Amanda Weier**
Managing Director..... **Katie May Porter**
Co Production Manager / Facilities Manager **Art Hall**
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Associate **Carmella Jenkins**
Literary Manager..... **Barbara Schofield**
Marketing & Social Media Manager **Debba Rofheart**
Membership Manager..... **Beth Robbins**
Financial Director **Richard Michael Knolla**
Education Director **Laura Richardson**
Outreach Director **Dionna Veremis**

Our Members

Hetty Abbott, Lane Allison, Christine Avila, Bryan Bertone, Phillip William Brock, Sandra Kate Burck, Spencer Cantrell, Christopher Cappiello, Stephanie Crothers, Carlyne Crotty, Martha Demson, Bruce Dickinson, Prescilia Esparolini, Lori Gambero, David Girona Jr., Art Hall, Laura James, Carmella Jenkins, Caroline Klidonas, Richard Michael Knolla, Tim Labor, Elizabeth Lande, Sherry Larson, Dylan Maddalena, Derek Manson, Ben Martin, Schuyler Mastain, Angel Miguel, Jan Munroe, Jennifer Palumbo, Rod Menzies, Heather Mitchell, Amy Moorman, Scott Mosenson, Ethan Niven, Tom Noga, Jason Paige, Stevie-Jean Placek, Katie May Porter, Tina Preston, Laura Richardson, Anna Laurie Rives, Beth Robbins, Scott Roberts, Debba Rofheart, Jade Santana, Judith Scarpone, Barbara Schofield, David Shofner, Ina Shumaker, Casey Sullivan, Janine Venable, Dionna Veremis, Amanda Weier, Alexander Wells, Ann Marie Wilding, Jennifer Zorbalas



IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY

Cast of Characters

Catherine Givings Dionna Veremis
Dr. Givings Spencer Cantrell
Sabrina Daldry Stephanie Crothers
Annie Jennifer Zorbaldas
Leo Irving Bryan Bertone
Elizabeth Monazia Smith
Mr. Daldry Christopher Carver (3/17-4/3)
Alexander Wells* (4/8-4/23)

Special Thanks: Matthew Richter, Robert Greenfield & the Prop House at Warner Brothers

"In the Next Room, or the vibrator play" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.

www.concordtheatricals.com

Original Broadway Production by Lincoln Center Theater New York City.

IN THE NEXT ROOM or the vibrator play was originally commissioned and produced by Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkeley, CA Tony Taccone, Artistic Director / Susan Medak, Managing Director. IN THE NEXT ROOM or the vibrator play was developed at New Dramatists.



* Member, Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. This production is presented under the auspices of the Actors' Equity Los Angeles Membership Company Rule.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I believe Ruhl has captured lightening in a bottle with this script, using the backdrop of the patriarchal 1880s to explore how the advent of the incandescent light bulb and subsequent invention of the vibrator unintentionally sparked an indelible awareness of the varied and rich complexities of repression due to one's gender, ethnicity, class, education, and sexual identity and how it began to illuminate a path for change. When electricity came into the world and inventors got to thinking about which household items should be prioritized for an electric upgrade, I think it's very telling that the machines used to treat hysteria were not only in the top ten, but the top five - behind the sewing machine, fan, kettle, and toaster - and the buzz they created was felt around the globe and is still reverberating today.

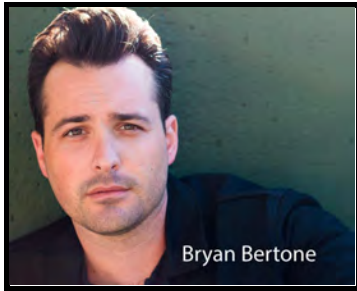
"If you want to find the secrets of the universe think in terms of energy, frequency, and vibration." ~ Nikola Tesla

-- Lane Allison, March 2022

For Ms Allison's interview in Broadway World click below:

<https://www.broadwayworld.com/los-angeles/article/BWW-Interview-Director-Lane-Allison-Cathartically-Inspired-By-Sarah-Ruhls-IN-THE-NEXT-ROOM-OR-THE-VIBRATOR-PLAY-2022-0314>

The Cast



Bryan Bertone (Leo Irving)
Previous Fist credits include: *EARLY AND OFTEN, SHORT ENDS, FOOTE NOTES, WELCOME TO YOUR ALTERNATIVE REALITY, UNDER MILKWOOD, ALL*

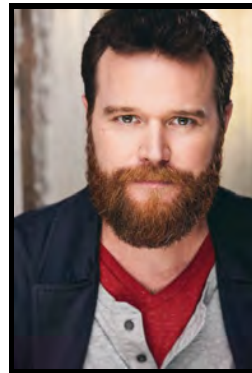
NIGHT LONG (as Polar Bear, his most poignant work yet), *LAST CALL, NEVER SWIM ALONE* and *GHOSTS*. Other favorites include -- Los Angeles: *CLOSER, ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD, A FLEA IN HER EAR, IT'S A LIVING, THE FIRE ROOM, THE FOUR OF US, LIGHT UP THE SKY*. San Diego: *HISTORY BOYS, THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED*. Orange County: *THE LION IN WINTER*



Spencer Cantrell (Dr Givings)
Spencer Cantrell is a native of Muscle Shoals, Alabama. He began acting in college at the University of North Alabama and moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in entertainment. Since then he has

appeared on stage in many productions. Most notably as George in "Of Mice and Men" and Brian Epstein in the world premiere of "And Now its all This". He can also be seen performing standup comedy in various rooms around Los Angeles. Sometimes the microphone doesn't work and there is less than ten people, so it becomes more like a support group than a show. For more information on that you can follow his Instagram @shakesbandit .

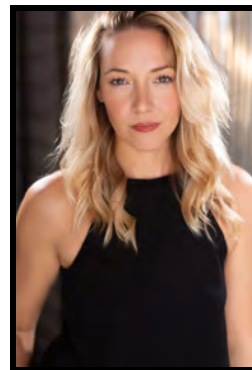
Spencer has been a member of the Open Fist Theatre Company since 2019 and is beyond thrilled and grateful to be back performing on stage.



Christopher Carver (Mr. Daldry 3/18-4/3)) is incredibly honored to be treading the boards again after nearly a decade-long hiatus from live performance. His last foray into theater was the 2015 Hollywood Fringe Festival when he directed his original, full-length, one-act play, *No Ex'p Required*. He's also appeared in multiple TV shows

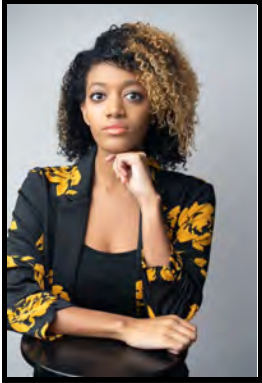
and commercials over the years, having most recently co-starred in an episode of *Coyote* for Paramount+, and has plans of staging his new play, *Red Rock Requiem*, in the not-to-distant future. He'd like to thank the Open Fist Theater, Lane Allison, and the entire cast for inviting him to come play.

www.christophercarver.com



Stephanie Crothers (Sabrina Daldry) has been a member of the Open Fist Theatre Company since 2013 (fun fact: she auditioned for the Fist with a monologue from one of Sarah Ruhl's other works). She is beyond grateful to be living her longtime dream of tackling a Sarah Ruhl play and the challenging and fulfilling role of Mrs. Daldry. Stephanie

recently appeared on the Open Fist stage as Judy in last year's 2021 West Coast Premiere of "The Soldier Dreams" and the crowd-pleasing 2018 production of Dylan Thomas' "Under Milkwood." Her commercial credits include brands like Toyota, DirectTV and AT&T. When not acting, you'll find Stephanie selling homes by the beach in the South Bay and painting in her art studio with her dog, Polly Jean. Stephanie also contributed to this production as a scenic painter. Please see her designer bio for more info.



Monazia Smith (Elizabeth) is Army Brat turned LA-based actress. She received her Bachelor's of Fine Arts in Acting in 2017, and has been working in local LA theatres and on camera ever since. She continues to train in acting and is even certified in stage combat. Monazia is very proud to be making history at Universal Studios Hollywood

as the first Black person to perform as Master of Ceremonies in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. She's happy to return to Open Fist Theatre since her reading with "The Last Call". She has also appeared on screen in "Psycho Party Planner" (Lifetime) and "In Ice Cold Blood" (Oxygen) as well as on stage in the original musical, "Tesla the Musical". Monazia considers herself very fortunate with the life she has and thanks God for every opportunity to do what she loves and impact those around her.

"I'm not trying to change the *whole* world. Just someone's world. That would be enough."



Dionna Veremis (Catherine Givings) Growing up in Michigan, Dionna spent much of her childhood performing in local productions before touring

internationally with The Young Americans. She carries the collaborative, playful spirit from that foundation into her acting work, and is delighted to find it here at Open Fist. She is co-creator and plays Avery Stevens, a perfectionist juggling app dating and the bar scene in *On the Rocks*, currently in film festivals and being pitched as a sitcom pilot. Favorite theatre roles include *Rocky Horror* (JANET), *Barefoot in the Park* (CORIE), *Steel Magnolias* (SHELBY), and her first OFTC show, joining the extension of *deLEARious* as CORDELIA. She is a graduate of the Meisner program at Elizabeth Mestnik Acting Studio, and additional training includes Musical Theatre, Shakespeare & Improv.



Alexander Wells (Mr Daldry 4/8-4/23) has appeared in numerous critically acclaimed stage productions in Los Angeles. His first appearance with Open Fist Theatre Company was in the *Rorschach Festival* in 2020. With Son of Semele Ensemble: *Love and Information*, *Slaughter City*, and Sarah Ruhl's *Melancholy Play*, *Our*

Class and one-man show, *A Very Short History of the Second World War*. With Classical Theatre Lab: Pinch in *The Country Wife*, Duke in *The Comedy of Errors* and directed *The Drag* by Mae West. The New American Theatre: *The Three Sisters*, *Taming of the Shrew*. He won an *LA Weekly* Award for Best Male Comedy Performance for *Fatboy*. Alex has also performed with New Jersey Shakespeare Festival.



Jennifer Zorbalas (Annie) is originally from Anacortes, Washington. Since proudly becoming an Open Fist Member in 2019, she appeared in the company's productions of *DANCING AT LUGHNASA* and *ANNA IN THE TROPICS*. Other stage productions include *FOUR DOGS AND A BONE* (Shanley) *RICHARD III* (Shakespeare) *THE NERD* (Shue), *COME*

BACK LITTLE HORNY (a premiere by Laura Richardson, with Second Story Theater). On Television, she played the versatile and unassuming member of R. Paul Wilson's con-team in *THE TAKEDOWN*. Additionally she is Co-writer/producer/star of an award-winning web series, *THE MOP AND LUCKY FILES* currently streaming on the new indie platform, Seed and Spark. Jennifer looks forward to every minute spent with her family and pets, takes being an auntie very seriously, and is an avid sourdough bread baker and potter.

The Creatives

Sarah Ruhl (Playwright)

Sarah Ruhl is an award-winning American playwright, author, essayist, and professor. Her plays include **The Oldest Boy, Dear Elizabeth, Stage Kiss, In the Next Room, or the vibrator play** (Pulitzer Prize finalist, 2010); **The Clean House** (Pulitzer Prize finalist, 2005; Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, 2004); **Passion Play** (Pen American Award, Fourth Freedom Forum Playwriting Award from the Kennedy Center); **Dead Man's Cell Phone** (Helen Hayes Award for Best New Play); **Melancholy Play; Demeter in the City** (nine NAACP Image Award nominations); **Scenes From Court Life; How to Transcend a Happy Marriage, For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday; Eurydice; Orlando**; and **Late: a cowboy song**. Her plays have been produced on Broadway and across the country as well as internationally, and translated into fourteen languages. Originally from Chicago, Ms. Ruhl received her M.F.A. from Brown University, where she studied with Paula Vogel. She is the recipient of a Helen Merrill Emerging Playwrights Award, a **Whiting Writers' Award**, a **PEN Center Award for mid-career playwrights**, a **Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award**, and a **Lilly award**. She is a member of 13P and New Dramatists and won the MacArthur Fellowship in 2006. She teaches at Yale School of Drama and lives in Brooklyn with her family.

Lane Allison (Director)

Lane Allison is originally from the Northshore of Chicago, has called LA home for over a decade and is a proud member of The Open Fist. During these pandemic times, Lane has kept busy acting in writer/director Jay Alverez's new film *Something is More Than One Thing* (due for tentative release in 2023) and co-starred as Riley on ABC's *The Rookie*, as well as on HBO's *Generation* and *Perry Mason*. She also took to the zoom-verse acting in Open Fist's annual Pop-Up in *Well, Well, Well* directed by Sean George and also directed Mary Lyon Kamitaki's *Fuck That I Wanna Be Famous* for Open Fist's New Look Festival. In the "before times" Lane's last in-person theatre acting role in 2019 was playing Maggie in *Dancing at Lughnasa* directed by Barbara Schofield at The Open Fist and during that same season she

had the immense honor of directing the world premiere of Anne Kenney's *Last Call* and directing, adapting, and performing in the Annual Political Pop-Up in "American Hamlet". Other credits at OFTC include directing, co-writing, and performing in the short play *I in 5*, covering the "Me Too" movement within OFTC's 2018 Annual Political Pop-Up, playing Anne Hathaway in the musical *DeLEARious* directed by Ron West, along with a variety of roles in the sketch based comedy *Welcome to Your Alternative Reality* directed by Catherine Butterfield and Ron West. During the 2015 Hollywood Fringe Festival, Lane originated multiple roles dubbed as The Guide/The Others in Dean Farrell Bruggeman's *Only the Moon Howls* at the Actors Company and as Beth in Christopher Carver's *No E'xp Required* at The Complex Theaters, East. As a previous member of The Production Company in LA, she performed in several productions, including being a part of the ensemble of Jennifers in Jennifer Sorenson's *I Fart in My Sleep* and played Babe in the musical *Working*, directed by August Viverito. Lane also assistant directed under David Youse on Ed Graczyk's *The Blue Moon Dancing* and directed their second stage production of Craig Lucas's *Blue Window*. Lane wrote, directed, co-produced and starred in the web series pilot *After Pluto* available on YouTube. And during the pandemic, she wrote, directed and performed *Six Feet of Social Distance* (a parody of *Spoonful of Sugar* from *Mary Poppins*), *Million Excuses* (a parody of Lady Gaga's *Million Reasons*) and *Living Trump Free* (a parody of *Somewhere That's Green* from *Little Shop...*) which can all also be viewed on YouTube. For more info please visit: [IMDb.me/laneallison](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1045144/) or LaneAllison.com and you can also follow her on Instagram @thelaneallison Lane would like to thank her husband and soulmate, Mark, for his unyielding love, encouragement, and support - LiLo my dearest!

Jan Munroe (Scenic Design)

has been a member of OPEN FIST for the last decade during which time he appeared as SHU-FU in GOOD WOMAN OF SZECHUAN, a vampire in MAD FOREST and a ghost in John O'Keefe's GHOSTS. He also directed and designed O'Keefe's DON'T YOU EVER CALL ME ANYTHING BUT MOTHER and ALL NIGHT LONG for OPEN FIST as well as designing/building Playwrights'Arena's A HIT DOG WILL HOLLER at the Skylight. As an actor, he has

appeared numerous times on TV (This Is Us, Criminal Minds, Brooklyn 99), in movies (A Few Good Men, Catch Me If You Can, Ford V Ferrari) and on stage. He is currently in the cast of *DETAINED* at the Fountain Theatre. His early childhood memoir *THE DEMENTIA COOKBOOK: What I remember before I forget* (available at LULU.COM.) was published in June, 2021. He is a recipient of eleven L.A. Weekly and Drama-Logue awards, an Ovation award, two NEA Theatre fellowships, a CAC "New Genre" fellowship and a Rockefeller Playwright's fellowship.

Sarah Schwartz (Lighting Design)

Sarah Schwartz is a lighting and projection designer based out of Los Angeles California. She grew up in the Pacific North West and received her undergraduate degree from Southern Oregon University, located in the scenic town of Ashland Oregon. She relocated to southern California to get her MFA at San Diego State University and moved north to LA post graduation for work. Sarah spent the past year working for Lux Machina in LA, working in the exciting world of virtual production and live broadcast using all kinds of exciting technology; including the Unreal Engine, Disguise, Vive Pro and more. Currently she is freelancing as a lighting designer in the world of live broadcast and concert lighting. She is always looking for new and exciting creative opportunities!

Marc Antonio Pritchett (Sound Design)

Marc Antonio Pritchett is a working Actor, Director, Fight Coordinator and Session Singer in the Los Angeles area. He is also one of the Artistic Directors at Sacred Fools Theatre Company. Recent sound/music credits include *The Mousetrap* at Theatre Palisades, *The Latrell Show* at IAMA Theatre, *The Play You Want* at the Road Theatre, *Sweat and Cry It Out* at the Chance Theatre, *An Octoroon*, *The Children* and *Detained* at the Fountain Theatre. He is represented by Nucleus Talent Management. For additional info visit: www.marcantoniopritchett.com

Mylette Nora (Costume Design)

Mylette Nora is a recipient of the NAACP Theatre Award for best costumes, is listed in the honors edition of The Cambridge Registry of Who's Who Among Executive and Professional Women, and

works world wide on television, film, and stage. She was seen nightly on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno and now weekly on "Jay Leno's Garage". The famed artist Synthia St. James noted Mylette as being the inspiration for her world renowned painting "Ensemble" which graced the cover of the best selling novel "Waiting To Exhale" by Terry McMillan. Mylette designs doggie wear, FromTheHeartDoggieWear.com as well as heirloom dolls, "My Mind's Eye."

Bruce Dickinson and Ina Shumaker (Props Design)

Began designing props and set pieces for the Open Fist Theatre Company over 20 years ago. Specializing in creating realistic fake foods and period set dressings, some of their favorite past shows include: James Joyce's *The Dead*, *Doo Doo Love* and *Dancing at Lughnasa*. *Carpe diem*.

Jennifer Palumbo (Stage Manager)

Jennifer is absolutely delighted to be back at Open Fist following the abrupt shutdown of 2020, and grateful to be part of this project with these amazing designers, artists, and storytellers! OFTC credits; *SOLDIER DREAMS*, *RORSCHACH FEST*, *NEIL SIMON'S MUSICAL FOOLS*, *DANCING AT LUGHNASA*, *LAST CALL*, *ALL NIGHT LONG*, *UNDER MILK WOOD*, *DeLEARious*, *THE GARY PLAYS*, and *MAD FOREST*. Career highlights: *THE COLOR PURPLE* with Greenway Arts Alliance; Katori Hall's *THE MOUNTAINTOP* at The Matrix, and at MLK50 in Memphis, TN, with Hattiloo Theatre; *SUPPLIANT WOMEN* at the Getty Villa with Rogue Machine.

Martha Demson (Producer/Artistic Director)

Highlights of Demson's award-winning career with the Open Fist Theatre include: As a producer: *Neil Simon's Musical Fools* (Simon, Swann, West); *Anna in the Tropics* (Cruz); *All Night Long* (O'Keefe); *The Cosmonaut's Last Message to the Woman He Once Loved in the Former Soviet Union* (Greig) LA Weekly Production of the Year; *How to Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients* (Visniec) also in New York and Edinburgh. As a director: The Ovation Award-winning *PAPA* (deGroot); *Casanova* (Congden), *Abingdon Square* (Fornes), *Escape from Happiness* (Walker), *The Existents* (Taylor); *Dear John Mayer* (Shoshana Bean / Eydie Faye); *BOTH: A Hard Day's Silent Night*. Education: Yale University and Sanford Meisner's 2-year master class.