



# OLD CLOWN WANTED

Written by **Matei Visniec**

in a new adaptation by **Jeremy Lawrence**

Directed by **Florinel Fatulescu**

STARRING

**Alan Abelew José A. Garcia Beth Hogan**

SCENIC DESIGNER

**Jeff Rack**

COSTUME DESIGNER

**Amanda Martin**

LIGHTING DESIGNER

**Bosco Flanagan**

SOUND DESIGNER

**John Zalweski**

PROP DESIGNER

**Josh La Cour**

PRODUCED BY

**Ron Sossi**

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**Rodica Fatulescu**

STAGE MANAGER

**Izaura Avitia**

*Old Clown Wanted* runs from September 22 through November 4, 2018



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

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.



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## CAST

(listed in order of appearance)

NICCOLO.....Alan Abelew  
FILIPPO ..... José A. Garcia  
PEPPINA .....Beth Hogan

*Old Clown Wanted* is performed without an intermission.

Running time: 90 minutes

### **A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT**

The world as seen from on top of the clown's nose. . .

*Old Clown Wanted* is a play which has accompanied me like a lucky star in my wanderings across Europe from the East to the West, during my passage from one world to another, from Romania to France, from my mother-tongue to French, as I searched for a new identity. I began writing it in Bucharest in 1986 and finished it in exile in Paris in 1987.

Since then my play about the three old clowns looking for work has been staged in some 15 countries: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Denmark, Russia, Poland, Moldavia, Turkey, Brazil, Argentina. . . One could say that everywhere in the world there are these ancient clowns, worn down by life, marginalized, at the end of their rope, who nevertheless are determined to deliver one last message to humanity. . . In Romania, after the fall of communism in 1989, the play was frequently produced, and right now it is playing at the National Theatre in Bucharest.

Why did I write this piece about clowns? No doubt, because I love clowns. Because in my youth I was so touched by a film of Fellini's which was called "The Clowns," what else? Because my childhood was spent in a city without color in the depths of Romania, and the only moment all year when life had any sparkle was when the circus came to town. Sadly for only a few days, but the arrival of the circus turned everything upside down and inside out; the clowns made us forget the banality of the dictatorship.

In the end, I wrote this play because for me the clown is the embodiment of one who laughs when one cries and cries when one laughs. The King makes a buffoon of the clown who in turn makes the King the butt of his jokes. The clown, is the fool who speaks the truth. The pitiless mirror of what exists in the moment and the childlike echo of the times gone by. . . .

But sadly the clowns are not always like that. . . . Because the clowns can sometimes, as in my play, as in life, tear each other apart, becoming three pathetic gladiators who kill each other over a little classified ad. . . . It's this cruel side of life which so interests me, the side that sometimes transforms us into vicious clowns, moronic clowns compelled to strut about, to perform in the great social comedy, playing into the hands of the machine conceived for the purpose of humiliating us, of dehumanizing us, of killing us.

And then I believe that today, when so many of the grotesque buffoons, around the world find themselves sitting on high at the summit of power, my play about the clowns also has political connotations. . . .

I am very happy that Florinel Fatulescu, who has mounted many of my plays in both the United States and Romania, and who knows my universe of signs and symbols perfectly, has chosen *Old Clown Wanted*. I thank the entire team at the Odyssey Theatre, which has thrown itself into this cultural adventure in creating this production of *Old Clown Wanted*. And thanks as well to my translator, Jérémy Lawrence, who knows so well how to transfer emotion from French to English.

Every time that you play the show in Los Angeles, in Paris I will put on my clown nose to feel close to your energy and the emotion of your playing out this play, and to applaud you with all my heart despite all the distance between us.

— Matei Visniec, September 22, 2018

## **WHO'S WHO**



### **ALAN ABELEW**

*Niccolo*

Alan is a KOAN member at the Odyssey Theatre: *Oedipus Machina*, *Theatre in the Dark*, *Ionescopade*, *Sliding Into Hades*, *Threepenny Opera*, *Mary Barnes*, and *Kvetch*. At the Mark Taper Forum: *Henry IV, Part 1* and *The Devils*. World tour: *Mike Kelly's Beat of the Traps*. Film: *Infection*, *Bullitface*, *Don't Be a Menace, Cocktail*, *Julia Max's Distortion*. TV: *E.R.*, *General Hospital*, *Cagney & Lacey*, and *Happy Days*. Award for the Best Supporting Actor and an Emmy for his work on PBS. Recently Alan has performed in *Beckett's* and

*Arsenic and Old Lace* (Odyssey), and he will next be seen in Julia Max's short film, *The Colonies*, and Diana Cignoni's film, *Lulu*.



### **JOSÉ A. GARCIA**

*Filippo*

Jose is a graduate of USC and the Drama Studio London at Berkeley. He has appeared in several stage productions, including *Metcalfe* (Frida Kahlo Theater), *Brown Buffalo* (Company of Angels), *Unmasking Hercules*, (Teatro MOZ), *Pinata Dreams*, *Brown and Out 3* (CASA 0101), *Death of a Salesman*, *Othello*, *Salome* (Mosaic Lizard Theater), *Los Illegals*, *For All Time* (Cornerstone Theater), *A School for Wives* (Knightsbridge Theater), *The Cave Dwellers*, *Poe: Out of his Mind* (24th Street Theater), *Dormez-Vous*, *Cervantes' Interludes* (Stages Theater), *Women of Guernica*, *The Servant of Two Masters* (Fountain Theater), *Journey to Comala*, *Yerma*, *Fuenteovejuna* (Bilingual Foundation of the Arts), and *Fallujah* (Theater East). Jose's film and television credits include: *Ruby Booby*, *The Disappearance of Garcia Lorca*, *El Heladero*, *General Hospital*, and *The Bold and the Beautiful*. A member of SAG/AFTRA, Jose has also recently appeared on Fox Network's *Gang Related*, and has been seen in commercial spots for Miller Lite, Budweiser and El Torito.



### **BETH HOGAN**

*Peppino*

Beth is an original member of the Odyssey's KOAN unit, and was last seen at the Odyssey in *Beckett's* with her fellow KOAN members, Diana Cignoni, Norbert Weisser, Sheelagh Cullen and Alan Abelew. *Beckett's* was directed by the Odyssey's Artistic Director, Ron Sossi.

### **MATEI VISNIEC**

*Playwright*

Matei was born in Romania in 1956. From an early age, he discovered literature as a space dedicated to freedom. He draws his strengths from Kafka, Dostoevsky, Poe, Beckett... He loves the Surrealists, the Dadaists, absurd and grotesque theatre, surrealist poetry, fantastic literature, magical realism, even the realist Anglo-Saxon theatre. He loves everything except Socialist Realism.

Visniec studied philosophy at Bucharest University and became an active member of the so-called Eighties Generation, who left a clear stamp on Romanian literature. He believes in cultural resistance, and in literature's capacity to demolish totalitarianism. Above all, Matéi Visniec believes that theatre and poetry can denounce manipulation through "great ideas," as well as brainwashing through ideology. Starting in 1977, Matei wrote drama; the plays were much circulated in the literary milieu, but were barred from staging. In September, 1987, Visniec left Romania for France, where he was granted political asylum. He started writing in French and began working for Radio France Internationale. At the present time, Visniec has had many of his works staged in France, and some thirty of his plays written in French are published (*Actes Sud-Papier*, *L'Harmattan*, *Lansman*, *Non Lieu*, *L'Oeil du Prince*). His plays have been staged in more than forty countries. In Romania, after the fall of Communism, Matéi Visniec has become one of the most frequently performed playwrights. In the United States, the work of Matéi Visniec has been represented in New York, Chicago, New Jersey, San Francisco, Seattle and Los Angeles. *How to Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients* was first produced in March, 2000, at The Open

Fist Theatre Company, Hollywood. *The Chekhov Machine* was produced in February, 2005, at The Open Fist Theatre Company.

## **JEREMY LAWRENCE**

*Translator*

Jeremy is an actor, playwright and lyricist. His original plays have been produced by the Northlight Theatre in Chicago, the Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo, Theatre 40 here in Los Angeles and have been received workshops at the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. With the late Dan Gerrity, he adapted the novel *Meloby Jones*, the production of which, with the late Ron Link directing, won the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Production and the Drama-Logue Award for Best Playwriting. His adaptation of Berlin cabarets between the wars, *Cabaret Verboten* has received productions across the country, in New York, Los Angeles in London and Sweden. Currently he is performing in his award-winning one-man queer Weimar Berlin, cabaret, *Lavender Songs*. A special benefit performance will be presented at Congregation Beth Chayim Chadashim here in L.A. on the 11th of October before the show returns to New York. He was commissioned by the State University of New Mexico to create a one-man show about Albert Einstein. *Albert in Wonderland* subsequently received four productions. His one-man Tennessee Williams shows in the playwright's own words have received international acclaim. He has previously translated four other plays by Matej Visniec He is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild of America.

## **FLORINEL FATULESCU**

*Director*

Florinel comes from Romania, where he studied theater-directing and received numerous national theater awards for his daring and innovative style. Since 1987, when he moved to Los Angeles, he has directed critically acclaimed productions, including *The Suicide* (Drama-Logue Award for direction), *The Dragon*, *Don't Blame the Bedouins*, *Christopher Columbus* (Drama-Logue Award for direction), *The Servant of Two Masters*, *The Emigrants*, *The Chairs* (Drama-Logue Award for direction), *The Lesson* (LA Weekly award for best comedy direction), *Jack or the Submission*, *Woman As Battlefield*, *Le Pere Noel Est Une Ordure* (in French), *Three Sisters*, *The Devils*, *The Chekhov Machine*, *Talk Show from Hell*, *Perchance to Dream*, *Cervantes' Interludes*, and *Diablogues*. In 2000 he directed the world premiere of Matei Visniec's *How To Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients* for The Open Fist Theatre Company in collaboration with The Catherine Popesco Foundation for the Arts. The production was also presented in New York and at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Florinel recently directed Tennessee Williams' *A House Not Meant to Stand* at Teatrul Mic and *How To Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients* at The National Theater of Bucharest, Romania.

## **JEFF RACK**

*Scenic Designer*

Amazingly, this is Jeff's first time designing for the Odyssey, and he is happy to be a part of this production. Jeff has won or been nominated for multiple Ovation Awards. He has designed over three hundred shows and is the resident set designer at Theatre 40. He is the co-creator of Unbound Productions and their popular, immersive Halloween show, *Wicked Lit*. Jeff is directing two new plays, *Martians*, *an Evening with Ray Bradbury*, which he co-wrote with Charlie Mount, opening in September, (for more information check out [GoFundMe/Martians](http://GoFundMe/Martians)); and in October, *Villainy*, about serial killer H.H.Holmes, both at the Whitefire Theatre in Sherman Oaks. Jeff is also involved in production design, sculpting and EFX work for the film industry, having worked on *Planet of the Apes*, *Armageddon*, *Flubber*, **Con-Air** and Universal Studios' *Back to the Future* ride. Jeff teaches set and film production design at FIDM.

## **AMANDA MARTIN**

*Costume Designer*

Amanda is a native of Long Beach with a Masters of Fine Arts in costume design and technology from Cal State University Long Beach. She earned her BFA in theatre design from Abilene Christian University and has worked in several theatres across state lines, including the Vineyard Theatre in New York City, Music Theatre Wichita in Kansas, the Abilene Shakespeare Festival in Texas, and The Long Beach Playhouse, Pacific Resident Theater (PRT), and Rogue Machine. This is her second time designing at Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, having designed last year's *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and she is excited to be back.

## **BOSCO FLANAGAN**

*Lighting Designer*

Bosco has designed lights for theatre on four continents, winning awards from Edinburgh (Best of Fest), to New York (Fringe Festival award) and Los Angeles (LA Weekly awards). He currently designs in L.A., and his work continues to take him all over the world. Recent work includes: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Snow Geese* for ISC in Griffith Park, *The Happiness Project*, *Harlequino*, *1984* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* (World Tours) for the Actors Gang. *Naked*, *Tempest Redux* for the Odyssey Theatre (2017 Stage Raw Award for Light Design), and *Mine Eyes Have Seen* and *Bog Of Cats* for Theatre Banshee. *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* for Wallis Annenberg, *Lysistrata Unbound* for the Odyssey Theatre and *Titus Andronicus* and *Midsummer Nights Dream* for ISC in the Park.

## **JOHN ZALEWSKI**

*Sound Designer*

John is happy to be back at The Odyssey for his second collaboration with Florinel since *The Chekov Machine* at Open Fist thirteen years ago. John's worked at the Goodman, the Guthrie, Portland Center Stage, South Coast Repertory, Humana Festival, Perseverance Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Lewis Family Playhouse, Disney Hall, Geffen, Center Theater Group, Broad Stage, Wallis Annenberg, Rattlestick, Redcat, and with other companies in Los Angeles, including Latino Theater Company, Boston Court, Evidence Room, Antaeus, Padua Playwrights, Actors' Gang, to name a few. Awards include seven LA Stage Alliance Ovation Awards, seven LA Weekly Awards, three Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards, and ten Backstage Garlands. Recent work includes the hit *Destiny of Desire* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival 2018. *Hold These Truths* at Arena Stage in DC; *What Happened When* at Atwater Village; *Belleville* at Pasadena Playhouse; *Ripe Frenzy* at Greenway Court, *Time Alone* at the Belle Reve Theatre Company and *Jack Benny* with Padua Labs. Upcoming: *Vietgone* at East West Players and *Macbeth* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2019.

## **JOSH LA COUR**

*Prop Designer*

Josh is the Odyssey Theatre's production manager and received his BFA in theatre arts and BBA in business administration from Loyola Marymount University. Recent Odyssey works include costume and property design for *Lysistrata Unbound*, scenic charge and property design for *Bad Jews*, and property design for *Freud's Last Session*. He recently completed his run as scenographer for Tanya Barfield's *Bright Half Life*, directed by Dana Resnick at Loyola Marymount University.

## **IZAURA AVITIA**

*Stage Manager*

Izaura is a recent graduate of Loyola Marymount University with a major in theatre arts, as well as a previous intern at the Odyssey Theatre Ensemble. Her stage management credits include *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Abridged), *Lord of the Flies*, *Okay*, *Fati's Last Dance*, *Virago Alala* and *happy*. She would like to thank the Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, most especially Josh LaCour, for the opportunity to once again work in a creative and collaborative environment.

## **RODICA FATULESCU**

*Assistant Director*

Rodica composed original music and served as assistant to her husband, director Florinel Fatulescu on *The Suicide* (Drama-Logue Award for original music), *The Dragon*, *Don't Blame the Bedouins*, *Christopher Columbus*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *The Emigrants*, *The Chairs*, *The Lesson*, *Jack or the Submission*, *Woman As Battlefield*, *Three Sisters*, *The Devils*, *Talk Show from Hell*, *Perchance to Dream*, *Cervantes' Interludes*, *How To Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients*, *Dialogues* and *The Chekhov Machine*.

## **RON SOSSI**

*Producer/Artistic Director/Founder of the Odyssey Theatre Ensemble*

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 *The Dance of Death*, *Beckett's*, *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 49-year history.

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 Scenic Artist .....Jeff Rack  
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- TALK BACKS give audience members a chance to discuss plot, character, themes or any other questions directly with the artists with a post-show Q+A from the stage.  
Talk Backs are scheduled for Wednesday, October 3, Friday, October 19 and Thursday, November 1  
Bringing a group? Call the box office to schedule a Talk Back by calling Mark at 310-477-2055 ext. 2
- WINE NIGHT FRIDAY (*the third Friday of every month*) FREE with the price of admission. Socialize with other audience members, artists and staff throughout the season at our monthly Friday wine night and late-night nosh.
- TIX FOR \$10 performances are on Saturday, September 29, Friday, October 12 and Wednesday, October 24



*Blacktop Highway*, a gothic horror screenplay'd on one man's body pits theater and cinema against each other in an hysterically funny and disturbing dialectical tennis match between live performance and mediatized image. And as the title suggests, Fleck indeed does play all the parts – screenwriter, narrator, commentator / critic and all other characters, both human and animal in a tour-de-force that probes into the dark depravities of a strange family living in a dilapidated house along the coast of Maine.

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