

# Director's Casebook



Book by Michael John LaChiusa and George C. Wolfe  
Music and lyrics by LaChiusa

Spring 2020

Senior Project

**Jesse Desrosiers**

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## INTRODUCTION

Hello! Welcome to my directing casebook for the production of *The Wild Party* planned for the Spring of 2020. I served as producer and director for this production, which was scheduled to run April 24-26 in a found space – my living room. This production was meant to serve as my senior project for my BA degree in Theatre from the University of Florida. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, I had no choice but to cancel the production. This casebook is being submitted in lieu of my director’s book.

I begin with my production proposal. I went through many versions and variants of concept proposals – first submitting the production to Florida Players. In my proposal, I broke down my production team, artistic concept, budget, and more. Throughout the proposal, I used inspirational images to convey the physical and emotional aesthetic of my artistic vision for the production. A full compilation of my artistic inspiration photos can be viewed through this Google Drive link: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1-VC1PH3gY8my8ghnzDrM7Ks-D6ObnrSK>.

I broke my inspiration research into conceptual chunks: the 1920s period, the protagonist Queenie and antagonist Burrs, the societal issues addressed i.e. race, sex, and the American dream, and lastly, the party itself, which functions almost as a character all its own. I sought to represent each category with a mix of images period photos, contemporary art representing relevant emotions and struggles and abstract art which – to me – stirred emotions which I related to those characters/themes. For Burrs, sharp edged cubism and scenes of chaos & violence dominated. For Queenie, the more emotional style impressionism dominated; along with modern feminist iconography and portraits alluding to jealousy. For race and the party, I drew inspiration from Harlem Renaissance art, which is period and thematically relevant. The party serves as the meeting point for all characters/themes and is therefore the most energetic, chaotic, and revealing.

My proposal to Florida Players was not accepted due to the unusual nature of the found space. I moved on to self-producing the production under the guidance of Dr. Colleen Rua (she's da best). With the shift to independent producing, much of the production team dropped and I raced to fill those empty spots. The final version of the production team can be viewed on the Contact Sheet. I was fortunate to find talented peers to eagerly fill those roles and got to work moving the show forward.

Casting was a long process which consisted variously of Facebook & word-of-mouth advertisement, video auditions, and live & video callbacks. I was lucky to have had a dedicated assistant director, Sam Johnson, by this point to help me through the process. I work best when I'm able to discuss my thoughts with another person with a qualified opinion that I can trust. In addition to the traditional casting process of Florida Players (which much of our process was modelled on) we looked to new student organizations which might have been interested such as vocal performance and cultural groups. A casting call which was created for this purpose is provided in this casebook, as well as a vocal callback side sample for the role of Black, and the final cast list.

Filling the production team was also a gradual process. Once most design positions had been filled, we were still in need of a stage manager. The SM call I posted online and in the School of Theatre and Dance is provided here as well. We were lucky to find an experienced stage manager, Pia Nair, who eagerly helped organize and support the project.

We held four design meetings over a month and a half – meeting minutes from Design Meeting #2 are provided as a sample in this casebook. Over this period, we found sponsors at SoTD, the Hippodrome Theatre, and elsewhere who volunteered resources, rehearsal space, and other support. We worked with the design team to flesh-out design concepts, plan ahead for working in a non-traditional venue, and prepare for rehearsals to begin. A scenic design mock-up of the performance space in my living room is included in this casebook.

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, I decided with my production team that it would be best to cancel the production. I go into how we came to this decision in the reflection. In that section, I also look back on challenges and successes I experienced throughout the project.

# The Wild Party

Book by Michael John LaChiusa and George C. Wolfe  
Music and lyrics by LaChiusa

**VAUDEVILLE!**

**A DAZZLING DISPLAY**

**OF**

**HETEROGENEOUS SPLENDOR**

DESIGNED TO EDUCATE, EDIFY, AMAZE, AND UPLIFT



Production Proposal  
Spring 2020

Jesse Desrosiers

## Production Team

**Director:** Jesse Desrosiers

Asst. Artistic Director – Florida Players  
(239) 257-8543 | JesseGDesrosiers@gmail.com  
Asst. Director, SoTD, *Jesus Moonwalks...*  
(Dr. Colleen Rua), 2020  
Director, FP, *Speech & Debate*, 2018  
\*Full directorial resume available on request

**Asst. Director:** Sam Johnson

(352) 817-4231 | sleighj14@gmail.com  
Director, FP, *Posner's Walk – NW Festival* 2019  
Director, Riverwood, *Quaking Aspen*, 2019

**Producer:** Leah Vicencio

(239) 738-8265 | leahvicencio@gmail.com  
Dramaturg, SoTD, *Jesus Moonwalks...*, 2020  
Producer, *24 Hour Plays: Nationals*, 2019

**Dramaturg:** TBD

**Stage Manager:** TDB

**Asst. Stage Managers:** TBD

**Music Director:** TBD

**Choreographer:** Maria Garcia

BFA Dance  
(786) 626-4891 | Garciamaria007@icloud.com  
Harn Choreographer in Residence  
Choreographer, BFA Dance Showcase, 2019



**Asst. Choreographer:** Will Smyack  
BFA Dance

(561) 699-7324 | Wsmyack@ufl.edu  
Featured Choreographer, *Wild Honey Tales II*,  
2019  
Choreography 1st place winner, "Move to Miami"  
by Enrique Iglesias, 2019

**Sound Designer:** Julia Schack

Technical Director – Florida Players  
(561) 866-6055 | j.schack@ufl.edu  
Sound Designer, SoTD, *Rough Magic*, 2019  
Sound Designer, SoTD, *Between...Crazy*, 2018

**Lighting Designer:** Jordan Lindquist  
BFA Lighting Design

(727) 415-7667 | jordan.lindquist@ufl.edu  
Lighting Designer, SoTD *Hills on Fire*, 2019  
Lighting Designer, SoTD, *Agbedidi*, 2018

**Scenic Designer:** Matthew Augustin  
BFA Scenic Design

(321) 215-5836 | m.augustin@ufl.edu  
Scenic Designer, FP, *12 Angry Jurors*, 2019  
Asst. Scenic Designer, SoTD, *Pippin*  
(Peta McKenna), 2019

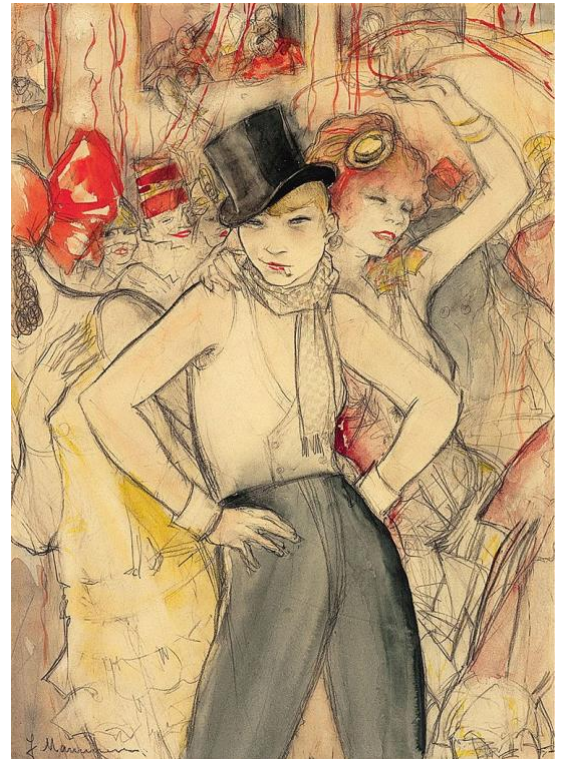
**Costume Designer:** TBD

**Props Master:** TBD



## Synopsis

LaChiusa's *The Wild Party* is based on the 1928 Joseph Moncure March poem of the same name. The 1920s prove to be a rough time for Queenie, a Vaudevillian chorus girl, and her violent lover Burrs, a Vaudevillian performer. When things start to get violent between them and Queenie pulls a knife on Burrs, Burrs suggests that they throw a party and invite all their friends to calm the fire. Queenie agrees and the party appears, complete with a collection of their rough and tumble chums: Queenie's rival and friend, an "ambisexual" drug addicted young man, a washed-up boxer, a black brother/lover duo, a diva, an ingenue, a lesbian actress and her morphine addicted girlfriend, and a mysterious escort who catches Queenie's eye. The party slowly deteriorates from passion and pleasure-filled to its sobering tragic end. Illusions are stripped away as the guests find themselves back in the reality of who they are and what they're facing in this world masked in glamour.



## Character Breakdown

**Queenie:** Female. Traditionally white, though I would like to cast her as a woman of color. A fading, dissolute vaudeville dancer. Beautiful and tragic, she hides her true self behind a "mask of snow." She possesses a child-like innocence and purity, as well as fiery confidence. She uses her sexuality to gain the favor of men (and women), but this flirtatious nature ultimately leads her lover Burrs into a jealous rage; the consequences of which Queenie is left alone to suffer. Belter – low E to high G.



**Burrs:** White male. A minstrel performer in vaudeville. Queenie's violent, unpredictable, abusive, jealous, and controlling boyfriend. A tour de force role. He is tortured by his past and drowns his sorrows in sex and gin. He possesses unrestrained jealousy, which leads him to his tragic end. To high A with scat / improv.



**Jackie:** Male. An upper-class playboy, addicted to excesses of all sorts, including sex, booze, and cocaine. Striking, flirtatious, and bisexual. On the outside a charming extrovert, he has a vicious nasty streak. A – high A.



**Madelaine True:** Female. A famous stripper and a lesbian. Tough but vulnerable. She is desperate to find love but naïve in her desperation. Low belter. Low G – C.

**Sally:** Female. Madelaine's new girlfriend, a heavy-lidded heroine addict and a lost soul. Soprano to high A.

**Eddie:** Black male. An aging boxing champion. A womanizer and abuser of all women, particularly his "white trophy blonde" wife Mae. He feels he gave up his career to be with her and deeply resents her for this. Low A–High A

**Mae:** White female. Eddie's (possibly overweight) trophy wife, an ex-chorus-girl friend of Queenie's. Tragi-comic - a seemingly willing victim of circumstance. Mae feels she gave up her career for Eddie and deeply resents him for this, though she convinces herself she is happy in the relationship. Belter / mix to high E flat.

**Nadine:** White female. Mae's 14-year-old kid sister. Wants to sing on Broadway. Eager kid who wants to play with the adults. High belter with great mix-sop notes to an E.



**Oscar & Phil D'Armano:** Ideally Black but possibly any ethnicity. May be cast gender-bent. "Brother act." They are accomplished entertainers (a la the Nicholas Brothers) and lovers. They live to entertain and function as two halves of one whole until jealousy shoves a wedge between them. One tenor to a (very) high C, one Baritone to a high A both with scat / improv.

**Dolores:** Older female of exotic, vaguely Latin origin. An ageless, driven, eternal, ferocious performer. She is desperate to return to the stage and relive the glory of her past. Alto. low E (a lot down at this end) to high G (one long extended).

**Gold & Goldberg:** White males. Jewish theatre producers looking to move uptown. Comic characters who get caught up in the whirlwind of the party. They are selfish in their endeavors, but never explicitly ill-wishing of the other party goers. An interesting foil to the others. They also face anti-Semitism present at the time and contemplate the meaning of identity in America. Gold - low B to very high C sharp Goldberg - low B to high A flat.

**Black:** Male. An enigmatic loner who arrives at the party with Kate and falls in love with Queenie. Smooth-talking, confident, strikingly handsome, suave, cool. A guardian angel. To a high F sharp.

**Kate:** Female. Queenie's best friend and worst enemy, a dagger-tongued panther, formerly a chorus-girl, now a would-be star. Sexy, sexual, confident, wild, and flirtatious. She cares about Queenie, but ultimately is most concerned with her own wants and needs. Belter to a D.

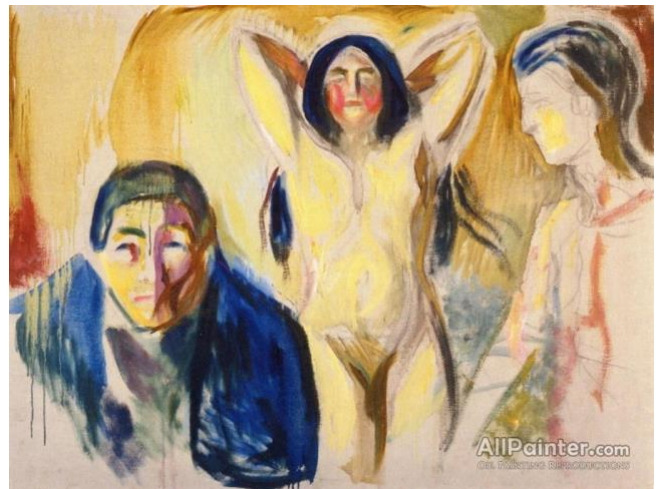




## Themes & Ideas

### *Relationships, Jealousy, and Abuse*

The party is defined by drinking, dancing, argument, and assault. Characters use each other for a thrill without regard to their humanity & dignity. Partners (and most of the characters come in pairs) are fiercely protective and jealous for attention. This stems from a very vulnerable place – the need to feel wanted. As Kate explains to Queenie, love is nothing but finding a little bit of comfort and keeping hold of it – a distraction from their painful world. When that comfort is found solely in the uninterrupted attention or devotion of a partner, the seeds for resentment are already sown. When perceived betrayal occurs, this seed sprouts into anger and violence. Through this unhealthy process, the search for love leads to a cycle of abuse several characters find themselves trapped in. This production asks audiences to recognize this cycle of abuse and encourages them to reflect on abuses they may have become numb to in their own lives. They are urged to address these problems instead of letting them fester and grow like Queenie did, leading to the production's tragic end.



### *Race & Racism*

Race is a critical element of this musical and is central to parts of the story. Burrs, originally written to perform in blackface (which this production will not do) is a minstrel performer. This informs his performance style and also informs the audience from the very beginning how evil he is at his core. While Eddie is abusive towards Mae, he views her as his “white trophy blonde.” This is a middle finger to a society that tells him a black man should not be with a white woman. The issue lies in his lack of respect for her, as he sees her as a statement and not a person in her own right. Of particular interest to me is that Queenie was originally written to be played by a black woman, though the original production cast a white woman instead. I am very interested to see how the Queenie/Burrs dynamic changes with a minstrel player in a relationship with a black woman in the 1920s. All of these complicated relationships around race are an opportunity to open a dialogue on how things have changed in the past century and, more importantly, how things have not.



### *Wearing the Mask*



Every character has something they deeply want and will do almost anything to get – and this determination is tested throughout the party. Whether it be sex, comfort, attention, or fame, the party-goers will do whatever it takes to get what they are desperate for. Many resort to putting on a metaphorical mask – pretending to be someone they are not in the hopes of impressing those around them. Queenie (wearing her “mask of snow”) lets on to no one but Black about her insecurities and fears. Nadine acts mature in the hopes of being accepted by the adults around her. “Wearing the mask” is something we all do every day to some extent, but this production shows the profoundly negative effects doing so can have on an individual. Surrounded by people – they aren’t quite friends – everyone still manages to feel isolated and alone. In putting on the mask, they only further distance themselves from their hopes, dreams, and lovers.

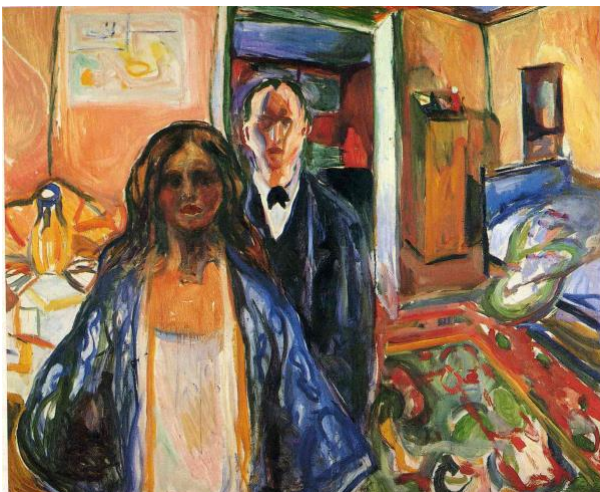
### *The American Dream*

The American Dream is represented in the hopes and dreams of each of these characters: to be respected, to be successful, to find love, to have control. Every character sells their soul as they strive desperately towards a goal they know deep down they will never achieve. This emotional dissonance drives them to drink, violence, and reckless sex and partying. This speaks to the constantly-out-of-reach American Dream. For most Americans, but particularly for those marginalized in society (like the Black, Jewish, female, and queer characters in this production) it is nothing more than empty promises and broken dreams. The promise of a better future keeps us going, but the emptiness of that same promise keeps us from ever progressing.



### Why This Show Now?

(Benefits to Florida Players, its members, the University of Florida, and the Gainesville community)



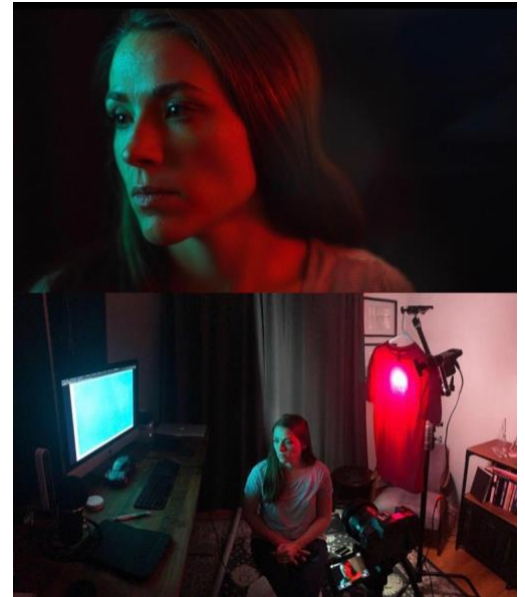
I see this show as a way to engage the audience in discussion on race, sex, sexism, abuse, the lies we tell ourselves and others, and more. As I mention in my discussion on themes, this musical provides a powerful look at the evils seen as normal in the past such as blackface and spousal abuse. Through this production (whose serious themes are made all the more powerful by contrast with its many happy, fun, and engaging moments) audiences are confronted with these issues and forced to consider if we have really grown as a society as much as we would like to believe. Much room is left for the actors to explore the many topics touched on. There is a great deal of freedom for actors to engage with themselves, each other, and the audience. With the issues of identity, rape

culture, and structural racism at the forefront of discussion in the theatre community, on campus, and in the country at large, it is imperative that we use art to provide a forum for thought and discussion.

## Concept & Artistic Vision

The musical is very much set in the 1920s, so designs will be inspired by that period. I have found in my research that I am very much drawn towards impressionist and cubist paintings, as well as art from the Harlem Renaissance to express the emotions, themes, and concepts of the production. The impressionism demonstrates the tenderness and fragility of each character underneath the masks they wear. The cubism expresses the violence and wildness of the party and its attendees. The Harlem Renaissance art expresses the liveliness of the party and is a nod to the racial undertone of the musical.

The scenic design will focus largely on set dressings, as the whole lower level of the house will be made to look period (as to immerse the audience in the experience). Much will be scavenged, pulled, and found through programs like the repurpose project. Costumes will remain largely period. It is important to note that the classic “flapper” look was popular mostly only among the wealthy, which the main characters are not by any means. The style therefore will be cheaper, dirtier, and more open to creative interpretation. Lighting will be very creatively implemented. Practicals will be used extensively both to immerse the audience and because traditional light fixtures aren’t practical for the space. An example of how non-traditional lighting can be used to theatrical effect is provided to the right.



It is my goal to fully immerse the audience in the party. To achieve this, I propose to hold this production in the living room of my home. It is spacious and has plenty of playspace and can comfortably seat approximately 30 people. This would include only one row of seating along three of the room’s walls. This leaves the fourth wall, as well as the middle space (thrust area) for playspace. On this fourth wall is an archway leading into the kitchen. This archway would act as a proscenium arch, under and behind which scenes not in the living room could be played. These scenes behind the proscenium would play into the 20s style of the show and would be played as vignettes. Further, scenes set on the fire escape would take place outside one of the windows (to be opened by an actor).

To further immerse the audience and expand the depth with which actors can create their characters, I will encourage actors to develop relationships and plot points for their characters not explicitly written in the script. Some of these will then actually be played during the performance. In doing so, there will always been action happening for every character; some offstage, some onstage. This casual aura of discussion and action will enhance the immersive atmosphere of the production and simulate the ambiance of a real party.



## Personal Response

I initially wanted to direct *The Wild Party* when I first listened to the song “Gin/Wild”. Its high energy, jumps from scene to scene, and potential for exciting dance and unique staging – all with the chorus ominously chanting in the background – was a musical combination I couldn’t resist. I love the show as a whole because of its authenticity of style. The music is directly inspired by the actual music of the 1920s. Further, each character has their own arc, which is minimized in Lippa’s *The Wild Party* (another musical based on the same poem). This gives the actors a fuller character experience to pull from and allows for more complex, dynamic relationships.

I am also drawn to *The Wild Party* by the exciting opportunity of producing this show in a space so well-suited to its content (it takes place in the living room of Queenie and Burrs after all); as well as the creative experimentation that will go into immersing the audience in the party. Further, the educational opportunity of staging a full production in a non-traditional space is a challenge I am eager to tackle with the extremely capable team I have assembled.

From an emotional standpoint, I found myself struck by the cycles of abuse Queenie, Mae, and Kate (among others) find themselves in. Reflecting on a toxic relationship I recently got out of, I “wore a mask” to please my ex and allowed myself to get hurt over and over; convincing myself that I was in the wrong. I lost a bit of myself trying to make someone else happy. It was a long, uncomfortable process to re-teach myself that I can be confident, independent, and happy. I hope audiences are able to reflect on the pain suffered by the women of *The Wild Party* and avoid having to endure it themselves.



## Rehearsal Plan

### Week 1

Explore dramaturgical/historical analysis of the show. Develop character utilizing the text, the original poem, Laban movement analysis, and personal exploration. We will develop relationships and establish the general mood of the show. To develop these relationships, actors will be asked to exist in some rehearsals as if they were their characters. We will also begin to learn music.

### Week 2

Finish learning music. Begin exploring blocking & learning choreography.

### Week 3

Continue to explore blocking and learn choreography. By the end of this week, all scenes will have been touched on. We will explore the tracking of characters in between their speaking scenes, as well as their through-motivations, unscripted conversations on the side, etc. to give the party dimension.

### Week 4

Solidify music and choreography. Explore intentions and relationships of scenes in more depth. If we haven’t already, we will learn fight & intimacy choreography. This week I hope to begin holding occasional rehearsals at the venue to adjust to the unique space & explore it naturally.

### Week 5

Blocking will be solidified this week. Problem areas and actors’ concerns will be addressed. Runs will be held.

### Week 6

Run show, work problem spots, run show, exercises, etc.



## Unusual Technical Requirements

Due to the venue being a non-traditional space, most light fixtures will be practicals (controlled by the actors) e.g. lamps, flashlights, etc. Some traditional fixtures may be used and would plug directly into the wall. The FP LED moving lights may also be used and controlled by the FP ETC Nomad.

Due to the same constraint, speakers will need to be rented or borrowed. This has been taken into account in the proposed budget. My producer also plans on doing additional fundraising.

## Budget Breakdown

\*Because the venue would be free, more funds are available for (and have been distributed to) the design budget.

<b>Department</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>A SNAKE WAS HIT BY A CAR. A WOMAN PICKS HIM UP, FEEDS HIM, AND GETS HIM BACK TO HIS FULL STATE OF HEALTH. BUT THEN HE BITES HER INJECTING HER WITH HIS DEADLY VENOM. ON HER DEATH BED SHE ASKS, "AFTER ALL I DID, WHY ME?" THE SNAKE REPLIES, "YOU KNEW I WAS A SNAKE WHEN YOU PICKED ME UP."</b>
Scenic	\$200	
Properties	\$130	
Sound	\$150	
Lights	\$200	
Costumes	\$250	
Stage Management	\$20	
Contingency	\$50	
<b>Estimated Design Budget</b>	<b>\$1000</b>	
Licensing Estimate	\$2750 (\$275 per performance)	
Scripts Estimate	\$400	
Music Rental Fee Estimate	\$350	
Musicians' Payment Estimate	\$500	
<b>Estimated Total Costs</b>	<b>\$5000</b>	

Rights and scripts at: <https://www.rnh.com/show/113/The-Wild-Party>

## Conflicting Commitments

I have no conflicting commitments. Other commitments which will not conflict include being on the Florida Players executive board, working at the Hippodrome Theatre, and directing *Peter and the Starcatcher* with MMT Gainesville (this is a youth theatre production which rehearses only once a week). I am assistant directing ...*And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi* with the UF SoTD, but this show will close before rehearsals for the Spring musical would begin.

## Additional Notes

Blackface will NOT be used in this production. I plan to use make-up that is referential to minstrel makeup without actually presenting it. Blackface is not necessary to get the racial point of the production across. Instead of using blackface, I plan to dramaturgically inform the production and cast with the practices of minstrelsy. I would like to use this as a springboard to discuss



## Contact Sheet

### Production Team

Position	Name	Phone	Email
Director	Jesse Desrosiers		
Asst. Director	Sam Johnson		
Directing Advisor	Colleen Rua		
Stage Manager	Pia Nair		
Music Director	Alexander Diraviam		
Choreographer	Molly Heyner		
Scenic Designer	Jesse Desrosiers		
Lighting Designer	Alissa Shea		
Costume Designer	AK Womack		
Sound Engineer	Jesse Desrosiers		
Sound Designer	Jesse Desrosiers		
Asst. Sound Designer	Gloria Halsell		
Props Master	Andrea Lopez		
Dramaturg	Courtney Walsh		
Publicist	Kaylie Heyner		

### Actors

Position	Name	Phone	Email
Queenie	Valeria Jubes		
Burrs	Joseph Meisner		
Kate	Amanda Barwick		
Black	Zachary Gropper		
Dolores	Virginia Marie		
Mae	Noa Friedman		
Eddie	Daniel Nuñez		
Nadine	Allison Newell		
Jackie D'Armano	Jake Rotz		
Phil D'Armano	Uli Otero		
Oscar	Alfred Torres		
Madeline True	Karine Dieuvil		
Sally	Briana Weller		
Gold	Armand Ercoli		
Goldberg	Dylan Probert		

**LOOKING TO CAST PEOPLE OF ALL GENDERS, RACES,  
AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS IN A STUDENT MUSICAL –  
NO THEATRE EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**



This is an independently produced production for a student senior project. The production will be an immersive experience for the audience and will be site-specific (in a non-traditional performance space). A plot synopsis and character descriptions are below.

To audition, please record and submit an audition video to [thewildpartygnv@gmail.com](mailto:thewildpartygnv@gmail.com) **no later than 8pm this Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>**. The video should include your name, a 16-bar cut of you singing a song of your choice, and an (optional) 1 minute monologue. The material should show-off your talent and can come from TV, movies, theatre, or another source.

Rehearsals will be in the evenings 5 days a week starting the second week of March. Performance dates are April 24-26. We are flexible with any conflicts you may have. Please note that these roles are unpaid, as this is a student production.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email  
[thewildpartygnv@gmail.com](mailto:thewildpartygnv@gmail.com).

Start

8 <sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup>

ther's trapped in - side: Tell me - - who rolls you cig -

Sxs Rds, Tbn + Tpts

12 <sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup>

ar - ettes and keeps - - you sat - is - fied? Tak - in'

15 <sup>16</sup>

care of the la - - - dies I take

Sigs

Alto Sxs, Tpts

*mf*



17 3 18

care \_\_\_\_\_ of my - self. \_\_\_\_\_

Stgs

Vibes Sxs (div.)  
3

19 20 21

Black's glad to send you where \_\_\_\_\_ you want \_\_\_\_\_ to go. \_\_\_\_\_ And

Sxs, Tbn

Slowly (colla voce)

A tempo

22 23 24

ba - by it's your par - ty. What more \_\_\_\_\_ you wan - - - na know? \_\_\_\_\_ What more \_\_\_\_\_

Sxs Br, Stgs

Bs Cl, Vibes

Stop

25 26 27 28

- you wan - - na know? — What more? —

Vamp

*cue to continue:*

**BLACK:** "...the way her hand folds on her hip."

29 30

Alto sax noodle "silky"

F#m9 EMaj9

31

32 33

Black likes the way that she burns — to - night, — Gin - ger and smoke and —

Sxs, Tbn + Tpts

34 35

sex. Black like the way that she likes —

Pno + Sxs 3 Sxs, Tbn



LACHUSA'S  
**The Wild Party**  
DIRECTED BY JESSE DESROSIERS

**APRIL 24-26 - THE GREENHOUSE**

Queenie

**Valeria Jubes**

Burrs

**Joseph Meisner**

Dolores

**Virginia Marie  
Martinez**

Kate

**Amanda Barwick**

Black

**Zack Gropper**

Jackie

**Jake Tomé Rotz**

Mae

**Noa Friedman**

Eddie

**Daniel Nuñez**

Nadine

**Allison Newell**

Oscar D'Armano

**Alfred Torres**

Phil D'Armano

**Uli Otero**

Madeline True

**Karine Dieuvil**

Gold

**Armand Ercoli**

Goldberg

**Dylan Probert**

Sally

**Briana Weller**

# SEEKING A STAGE MANAGER AND ASSISTANT SMs



This is an independently produced production for Jesse Desrosiers's senior project (he is also the producer and director). The production will be immersive and site-specific. A plot synopsis and character descriptions can be attained by request to [thewildpartygnv@gmail.com](mailto:thewildpartygnv@gmail.com)

We are looking to fill our stage management team. All positions are available and no prior experience is necessary – A stage management advisor will be available for anyone interested without prior SM experience.

Rehearsals will be in the evenings 5 days a week starting the second week of March. Performance dates are April 24-26. We are flexible with any conflicts you may have.

To apply for the position or to ask any questions you may have, please email [thewildpartygnv@gmail.com](mailto:thewildpartygnv@gmail.com).



## **The Wild Party Design Meeting #2**

Date: February 17th, 2020

Time: 6:00 pm – 6:31 pm

Location: The Greenhouse, 124 NW 27th Terrace

Prepared by: S. Johnson

Attendance: P. Nair, S. Johnson, A. Novak, M. Heyner, A. Shea, , A. Lopez, J. Desrosiers, G. Halsell, C. Walsh

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### **6:00 pm – 6:02 pm: General Updates (P. Nair)**

- still waiting on actors' conflicts to make rehearsal schedule.
- still no budget; will hear back from grants by the end of spring break.

### **6:02 pm – 6:06 pm: Introduction to space (J. Desrosiers)**

- Hearing back from grant by end of spring break
- Hippodrome is allowing us to pull costumes, set, props, etc.: Designers make lists so that we can arrange a time to go and investigate
- SoTD: pending
- Rehearsals will be at Hippodrome lower level (first two weeks), rehearsal room for rest of time
- Waiting to hear back about licensing show
- Bubble Machine?

### **6:06 pm – 6:09 pm: Scenic Design (J. Desrosiers)**

- Viewing of S. Lewis' initial ground plan/drawings
- 20-25 seats? Still to be determined

### **6:10 pm – 6:11 pm: Lighting Design (A. Shea)**

- incorporating color while maintaining period lighting
- possibility of string lights (currently being used for Eurydice)
- LED Strip Tape (FP just bought some)
- Looking at capabilities of space post-meeting

### **6:11 pm – 6:23 pm: Costume Design (A. Womac)**

- Pull from the Hipp, SoTD, AK's high school in Virginia
- Themes of sex, wealth (and lack thereof), Cold v. Warm, Race, etc.
- Pairing characters (thematic consistency): accents and undertones
  - Queenie and Burrs: Red or contrast (black and off-white?) (J. Desrosiers likes offwhite for Queenie, but is worried that red to represent Burrs' anger is too on the nose)
  - Kate and Black: pinks, tans, beige
  - Eddie and Mae: Blue?
  - Nadine: Green/Blue-green
  - Oscar and Phil: grey (hooray for ambiguity!)
  - Dolores: Purple!
  - Gold/Goldberg: Gold?

- Madelaine/Sally: opposition with Queenie's costume
- Gradual Loss of Clothing, Contrast in Wealth
- Hair: Queenie in a wig? (provided by A. Womac)
  - Chest hair?!
  - Blue hair?

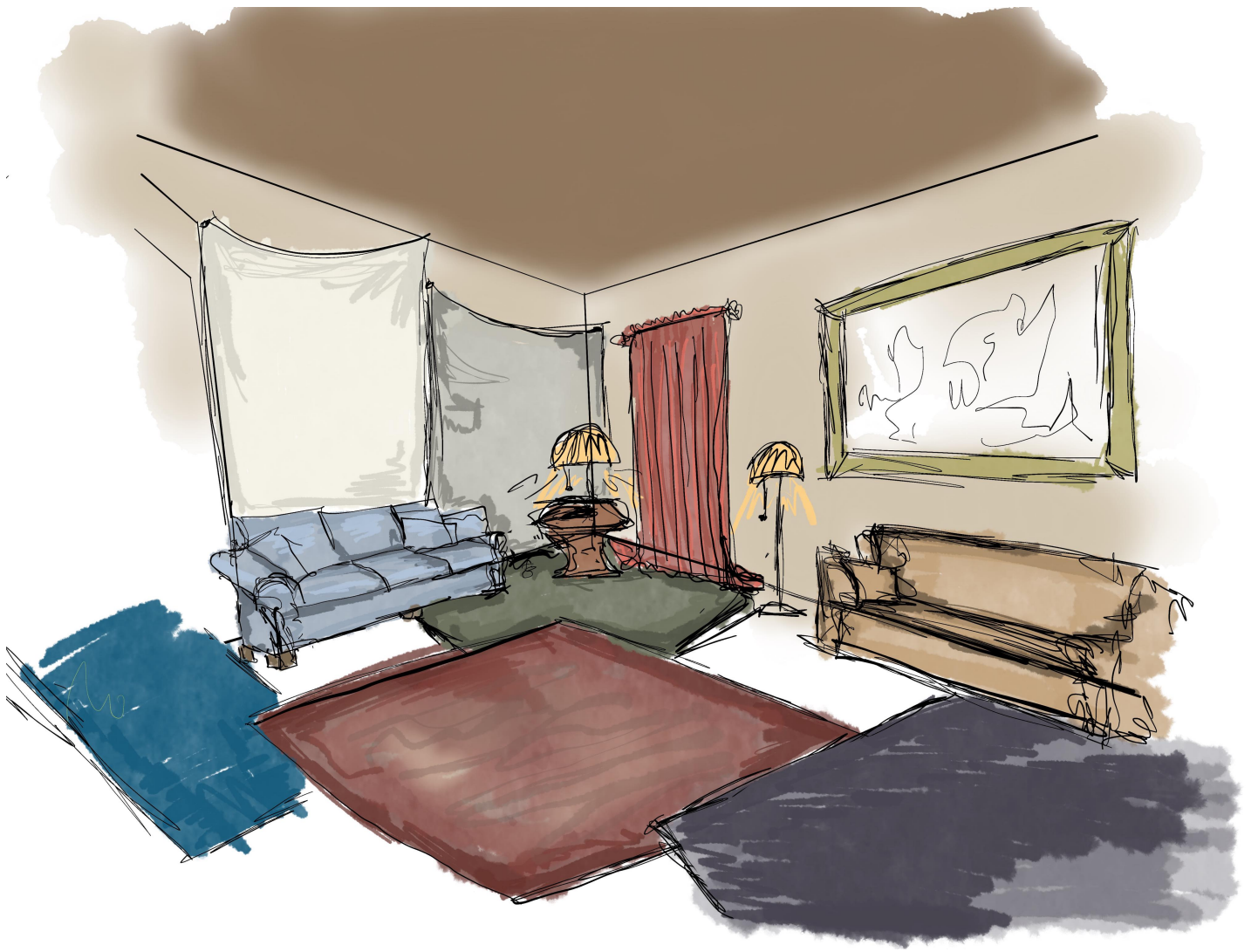
**6:23 pm – 6:27 pm: Sound Design (J. Desrosiers and G. Halsell)**

- Live sound-- Gloria is programming sound and sharing design responsibilities with Jesse
- No Microphones
- QLab can handle multiple speakers at once! Wowza!
- Incorporation of live sounds into score

**6:27 pm – 6:31 pm: General Questions/Discussions**

- How Scandalous?
- Probably no nudity!
- Bras and underwear are the minimum! (unless actors actively want to be undressed)
  - Period undergarments perhaps?

**6:31 pm: Meeting Adjourned**



## REFLECTION

Independently producing this production was a seriously tiring process. The production suffered near-continuous losses in funding, space, support, and personnel. Gathering and holding the production team together, securing space for rehearsals, and other producing responsibilities (on top of directing duties e.g. casting, maintaining an artistic vision, etc.) was a challenge to manage professionally and to handle personally. I found myself problem-solving for issues I'd not even had to consider before and searching for partners who could help make the show possible. I oftentimes felt like I was carrying the weight of the production on my shoulders – and doing so successfully.

The Hippodrome Theatre, where I work, graciously donated any light fixtures, scenic elements, props, and costumes we needed; as well as rehearsal space. Despite losing many production team members, I was challenged to keep my head on level shoulders, keep networking, and find qualified, eager new members. Pushing through these challenges taught me that I am able to make things happen when I am passionate, driven, and willing to make sacrifices. I also learned to accept rejection with as much grace as possible and that my first choice is not necessarily the best choice.

Casting was an especially difficult challenge due to the size and diversity of the cast. Further, competition for similar casting pools with Florida Players and the School of Theatre resulted in severely limited options. The casting process required Sam, me, and others to actively scout for actors to audition. We also had several conflicts with Florida Players in which we both intended to cast the same person. In an attempt to remedy to situation without souring my relationship to the group, I was able to secure an agreement in which we shared the actor, who would split their time between the two rehearsal processes.

For another actor who received an offer from both shows, I was unable to secure a similar agreement. The decision was up the actor, who made the decision to join *The Wild Party*. This, to say the least, pissed off Florida Players. I did my best to



accommodate and work around the group and did feel guilty pulling from their actor pool. However, I had to look at the situation objectively. I reasoned that, professionally, it is up to actors to accept or reject roles; not the responsibility of companies to limit who they cast. Further, I did try to avoid conflict wherever possible. Ultimately, I had to accept that this conflict was an issue that was beyond my ability to remedy further. I moved forward satisfied that I had done all I could and that, at least, the actor in question was satisfied with their decision.

Working with Sam Johnson as my assistant was an enjoyable and educational opportunity for me. Sam is driven and talented, eager to help, professional to her core, and funny to the bone. She was a freshman and I was her mentor in the student group Florida Players, so I wanted to provide a valuable and enjoyable learning experience for her. She joined the show just after it went independent, meaning she took a leap of faith – as did everyone else on the team. For this, I cannot thank them enough. She was my rock; always eager to be a part of the process, help wherever she could (she even took on SM duties until we found a person to fill that role), and support me throughout the process.

Every decision that did not have to be made quickly, I made in conference with Sam. Even when I did make decisions quickly, I was sure to fill her in afterwards. I wanted her to get a full production experience, as she is eager to direct more in her own right. I was more conscious than usual of how I conducted myself in meetings, how I went about making decisions, and even more readily noticed small details in the production process I had gotten used to. This helped me appreciate the process even more and relish in sharing my passion with someone.

As first rehearsal neared, I encountered roadblocks in acquiring proper licensing to produce the show. This, combined with the beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic, led to first rehearsal being pushed back twice. The decision to push back rehearsals was not made lightly. Myself, my assistant, my stage manager, and my advisor agreed that it would be best to hold on starting rehearsals until we were confident that we would have proper licensing, would be safe and healthy, and would have necessary materials (like scripts) in time.

We couldn't wait forever, though, and had to make the call quickly. Ultimately, we decided that it was in the best interest of everyone involved to err on the side of caution and cancel the production. This was announced about a week before Florida Players and the School of Theatre made similar decisions.

Looking back, I am proud of the way I handled that unprecedented situation. I worked with my advisor to devise the best course of action, did everything in my power to keep the show going whenever possible, and worked with my production team to make the final decision as a unit. Despite caring deeply about the project, the health and safety of actors and team members simply came first.

I was unquestionably overwhelmed by the time the decision to cancel was made. All of my responsibilities to the production, in addition to the coursework of my final semester as a dual degree student, were already beginning to clash. I had begun to worry that I wasn't capable of doing it all. I have always had trouble saying no to an exciting opportunity. I am not, however, comfortable with my work suffering due to my own overcommitment. In hindsight, I know something would have had to give. I would never have let the production suffer, so I expect my grades and my job would have suffered instead.

An important lesson learned from this experience is that time management is key to a successful entrepreneur. I recognize that if I want my projects to enjoy the love and attention they deserve, I must *pick* them over other opportunities. Outside an educational setting (where I have often felt self-inflicted pressure to maximize my achievements), I think I will feel less pressure to overperform. Going into the professional sphere, I am excited to be able to narrow my focus; maximizing the effort and care that goes into each project, rather than the number of projects I take part in.

*The Wild Party* was meant to be the culmination of my studies at UF – a self-produced, site-specific, immersive musical directing project. Writing this now, almost two months after the production was cancelled and the day before it was

scheduled to open, my heart truly aches for the experiences, friendships, education, and fun I and my peers have missed out on.

I take comfort in the fact that we got so far with so many obstacles in our path. I take comfort knowing that I am moving forward to new opportunities, and that the people I leave in Gainesville continue kindling the fire of the passion we share for boundary-pushing theatre. I take comfort knowing that not rejection, nor doubt, nor lack of funds, nor lack of time nor energy took *The Wild Party* down. It took a global pandemic to finally take us out. I'm impressed with what I was able to accomplish and plan for; even if it couldn't happen. I know it would have been magnificent. I can only hope I get the opportunity to bring it to life in the future.