

THE PUBLIC.

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Amara Janae Brady



Dahlak Brathwaite



Jaime Cepero



Clarissa Marie Ligon



Eli Nixon



Camilo Quiroz-Vázquez
One Whale's Tale



Ellpetha Tsivicos
One Whale's Tale

COHORT MEMBER HEADSHOTS

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES DEvised THEATER WORKING GROUP 2023-24 COHORT

Amara Janae Brady, Dahlak Brathwaite, Jaime Cepero, Clarissa Marie Ligon, Eli Nixon, and One Whale's Tale

February 23, 2023 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced the six new artists for the 2023-24 cohort of the **Devised Theater Working Group**. Following a nomination process, the 2023-24 Devised Theater Work Group members are **Amara Janae Brady, Dahlak Brathwaite, Jaime Cepero, Clarissa Marie Ligon, Eli Nixon, and One Whale's Tale (Camilo Quiroz-Vázquez and Ellpetha Tsivicos)**.

Now in its 8th cycle, the Devised Theater Working Group is an ongoing initiative that supports live arts-makers of all disciplines in the devised theater movement. Led by Under the Radar Associate Director Jon Grenay, the artist resource group offers dramaturgical, technical, artistic, and administrative resources of The Public Theater. As part of The Public's acclaimed Under the Radar Festival, the cohort's year-long work culminates in UTR's Incoming! series, in which the artists bring their work to The Public stage with performances in the Shiva Theater.

"The Under the Radar Festival focuses on the theater-makers of the future making work today, and the Devised Theater Working Group is key to our year-round activities and especially to the Festival itself. As theater is taking a hard look at its place in current culture, these artists are openly investigating what it means to do theater now," said UTR Associate Director **Jon Grenay**. "They are asking artistic questions, but I'm equally interested in their practical and applied questions around how we can create this artform

today with the systems currently at play, and how this has such a tangible effect on what kind of theater gets made or seen.”

The **Devised Theater Working Group** (DTWG) is an artist resource group designed for live arts-makers of all disciplines. Formed as a complementary program to the Under the Radar Festival in 2014, DTWG creates an infrastructure to support collaborative collectives and other untraditional originators as they forge new theater. By offering the dramaturgical, technical, artistic, and administrative resources of The Public Theater, DTWG operates as part of Under the Radar Festival, where unique modes of creation and independent theater-making are elevated annually. Alumni of the Devised Theater Working Group include Ty Defoe, Daniel Fish, Ryan J. Haddad, Daniel Koren, New Saloon, Aya Ogawa, River L. Ramirez, and Whitney White.

DTWG is a component of the **Devised Theater Initiative** at The Public, one of the first of its kind in the U.S., which provides support and resources to the next generation of independent artists and ensembles. Born from iconic productions like *HAIR, for colored girls...*, and *A Chorus Line*, The Public Theater has always been a strong supporter of the devised theater movement and has helped promote the work of prominent and emerging devised theater-makers. Through The Public’s annual Under the Radar Festival and in its season at Astor Place, innovative approaches to theater have been brought to the attention of audiences in New York and around the world.

2023 DEvised THEATER WORKING GROUP BIOS

AMARA JANAE BRADY (*she/her/hers*) is a generative artist and cultural dramaturg hailing from the Windy City, Chicago. Her artistic goals are to show the humanity and divinity of Black women and connect underserved communities with experiences that mirror their own. She is a current fellow of WP Theater’s Playwriting Lab (2022-2024) and The Public Theater’s Devised Working Group (2023-2024). Favorite credits: “*my dick is david duke*” or... (Ars Nova’s ANTFest; actor, writer, producer), *This is Where We Go* (MCC; actor, writer), and Jillian Walker’s *SKiNFoLK* (*New York Times*’ Critic’s Pick; The Bushwick Starr; assistant producer). Her YouTube series is “‘Skinny & White’ Aren’t Character Traits.” She is a proud member of Joe Iconis & Family and frequently collaborates with Dominique Rider and Xander Browne. She currently resides somewhere between Brooklyn and Chicago, where she spends her days playing Just Dance, perfecting her coq au vin recipe, and hanging out with her Grandma. All Power to all people. Ashé. linktr.ee/ajbrady

DAHLAK BRATHWAITE is an award-winning dramatic auteur: playwright, composer, performer, director, and filmmaker. His work has been presented at The Smithsonian, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, REDCAT, MCA Chicago, Ars Nova, The Public Theater, The Apollo, SXSW, by Creative Time, and on HBO’s last two seasons of “Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry.” Dahlak’s trilogy of works—*Spiritrials* (solo play), *Try/Step/Trip* (musical), and *Adapting History* (documentary film)—take a personal look into the criminal justice system and the relationship between Black American music and Black American subjugation. Development of the work has been supported by CalArts, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Victory Gardens, and Montalvo Arts Center. Dahlak has received awards and support from NEFA, the Doris Duke Foundation, the U.S. State Department, NYU Tisch, and MAP Fund. He was a Creative Capital finalist and a United States Artist nominee. He is a graduate of NYU’s Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program, where he was awarded the Dean’s Full-Tuition Fellowship, and served as the assistant director for the national tour of the Tony-winning revival of *Oklahoma!*

JAIME CEPERO (*they/he*) is an Afro-Latino, queer, non-binary actor, writer, and award-winning activist. As a composer, their musical *Francois & The Rebels* (a punk rock telling of the 1791 Haitian Revolution) was showcased in *The Musicals Of Tomorrow* for Broadway Podcast Network, the Joe’s Pub: In Concert series, the 4x15 Workshop series at MTFmusicals, and New York Theater Barn’s Choreography Lab at Baryshnikov Arts Center. Cepero was a 2021 Write It Out! playwriting cohort with National Queer Theater, and a two-time Gold Anthem Award recipient for their work in community organizing and political activism. TV/film performance credits include “Smash” (NBC), “Connecting...” (NBC), “Mess”

(HereTV/Amazon), *Daddy*, *Dating My Mother*, *Jess*, *I Am Michael*, and *The Game Plan*. Theater performance credits include *Porgy & Bess* 75th Anniversary national tour; *Night Of The Living Dead! The Musical!*; *HAIR* (Dallas Theater Center); *Godspell* (ACT Connecticut); *Jesus Christ Superstar GOSPEL* (Alliance Theater Company); *You Will Neva Enter Our High Holy Land of Blackness* (Long Wharf Theater); and *Choir Boy* (Geffen Playhouse). Twitter: @JaimeCepero. Insta: @Papimagic.

CLARISSA MARIE LIGON is a director, stage manager, and self-proclaimed renaissance woman. She makes art because she believes it can change the world. When she isn't running a show, you can find Ligon on the stage singing, dancing, or producing as her burlesque persona Chubbi Bunni Sinclair.

ELI NIXON (*they/them*) builds portals and gives guided tours to places that don't yet exist, or exist but call for creative intervention. They are a settler-descended transqueer clown, a cardboard constructionist, and a maker of plays, puppets, pageants, parades, suitcase theaters, and low-tech public spectaculah. Nixon collaborates with artists, activists, schools, mental health and recovery centers, libraries, and the more-than-human world to expand imaginative capacity and build muscles for collective liberation. They are an enthusiast and practitioner of naturedrag, amateur flag dancing, and DIY festoonery. Nixon is proposing a new holiday in homage to horseshoe crabs. Their illustrated manual for celebrating the holiday, *Bloodtide*, is available through The 3rd Thing Press. Nixon is a member of the New Georges' Jam and brotherdykes unlimited, an organizer with Showing Up for Racial Justice–R.I., and a parent of a teenager, among other contained multitudes. elinixon.com

ONE WHALE'S TALE is a multidisciplinary production company that creates, fosters, and generates new independent work with an appreciation for magic and the preservation of culture. One Whale's Tale creates community centered work that reflects the experiences of immigrants, first-generation Americans, and people of color. They are guided by Magical Urbanism, an aesthetic One Whale's Tale has developed, which examines how the ancient traditions of our company members and collaborators exist within a modern urban landscape. One Whale's Tale's performances are inspired by cultural festivals and ceremonies which incorporate live music, food, and participatory elements for the audience. They create dialogues with the communities they work within. The company has partnered with organizations such as The People's Garden, the Gowanus Dredgers, the Street Vendor Project, los Tecuanes Quetzalcoátl, Make the Road NY, Hunter College Theatre Department, Bulla en el Barrio, Maraca Bruja, Rehabilitation Through the Arts, After Incarceration, Art and Resistance Through Education, Solo Homies Car Club, and the Federation of Cypriot American Organizations. One Whale's Tale's vision establishes a holistic approach to annual programming which involves their audience and community from creation to performance, giving them full access and a deeper connection to One Whale's Tale's work and resources. onewhalestale.com @onewhalestale

CAMILO QUIROZ-VÁZQUEZ is a Chicano theater artist, filmmaker, and visual artist from Los Angeles, California. He began his artistic journey at community arts center, Plaza de La Raza, which empowered him to study at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. In 2012, Camilo co-founded multimedia production company One Whale's Tale. His credits include *QUINCE* workshop (the TEAM's Petri Projects; writer, co-creator, producer), *QUINCE* (The Bushwick Starr; writer, co-creator, producer), *QUINCE en la Plaza* (Lincoln Center's Summer for the City; co-creator, producer), *Leonora's World* (Double Edge Theatre; designer, performer), *Persou* (the cell theatre; writer, co-creator, producer), *Night Descends on Svalbard* (Exponential Festival; writer, co-creator), and *Dolores* (Portland Short Film Festival; co-writer). Quiroz-Vázquez crafts worlds inspired by the family, spirits, and ancestors who intimately shared the spaces of his childhood. @camiloooo

ELLPETHA TSIVICOS is a multidisciplinary Cypriot-American artist whose work celebrates culture, music, and dialogue. She graduated from NYU in 2011 with a BFA in Drama, and a minor in Art and Public Policy that focused on Dialogical Art. In 2012, she co-founded multimedia production company, One Whale's Tale. Tsivicos's work includes a workshop of *QUINCE* (the TEAM's Petri Projects; director, co-creator, producer), *QUINCE* (Bushwick Starr; director, co-creator, producer), *QUINCE en la Plaza* (Lincoln Center's Summer for the City; director, co-creator, producer), *Night Descends on Svalbard* (Exponential Festival; director, performer), *Persou* (the cell theatre; director, co-creator, performer),

Leonora's World (Double Edge Theatre; designer, performer), the Art in Embassies Gala (producer, performer), MoMa PS1 Gala with Mariah Robertson (producer, performer), and a series of award-winning short films, documentaries, and music videos. Her book, *A Life Into Lands*, is published in English and Cypriot. Tsivicos believes art can change the world. @ellpetha

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER

THE PUBLIC continues the work of its visionary founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Conceived over 60 years ago as one of the nation's first nonprofit theaters, The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public's wide breadth of programming includes an annual season of new work at its landmark home at Astor Place, Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park, the Mobile Unit touring throughout New York City's five boroughs, Under the Radar, Public Lab, Public Works, Public Shakespeare Initiative, and Joe's Pub. Since premiering *HAIR* in 1967, The Public continues to create the canon of American Theater and is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning musical *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 60 Tony Awards, 184 Obie Awards, 56 Drama Desk Awards, 59 Lortel Awards, 34 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 62 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antony Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

The Public Theater stands in honor of the first inhabitants and our ancestors. We acknowledge the land on which The Public and its theaters stand—the original homeland of the Lenape people. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We honor the generations of stewards and we pay our respects to the many diverse indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

The LuEsther T. Mertz Legacy Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

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