

OVERSIGHT



DIRECTED
BY NIEGEL
SMITH

the
flea

BY NSANGOU
NJKAM

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THE FLEA THEATER

NIEGEL SMITH, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

CAROL OSTROW, PRODUCING DIRECTOR

PRESENTS THE NEW YORK PREMIERE OF

SYNCING INK

BY NSANGOU NJIKAM

DIRECTED BY NIEGEL SMITH

**FEATURING MCKENZIE FRYE, NURI HAZZARD,
ELISHA LAWSON, NSANGOU NJIKAM,
ADESOLA OSAKALUMI, DJ REBORN, KARA YOUNG**

GABRIEL “KWIKSTEP” DIONISIO CHOREOGRAPHER

RICCARDO HERNANDEZ SCENIC DESIGNER

CLAUDIA BROWN COSTUME DESIGNER

KEVIN RIGDON LIGHTING DESIGNER

JUSTIN ELLINGTON SOUND DESIGNER

SYBIL R. WILLIAMS DRAMATURG

MICHAL V. MENDELSON PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

The premiere of this play is presented in conjunction with:

Alley Theatre, Houston, TX

Gregory Boyd, Artistic Director and Dean R. Gladden, Managing Director.

Our hearts go out to the Alley following the events of Hurricane Harvey.

CAST

The Mutha (Oludumare - the supreme creator) DJ Reborn
 Baba (Obatala - the father of all) Adesola Osakalumi
 Mona Lisa (Osun - the womb of creativity) McKenzie Frye
 Sweet Tea (Oya - the force of wind) Kara Young
 Jamal (Ogun - the warrior) Nuri Hazzard
 Ice Cold (Esu - the trickster) Elisha Lawson
 Gordon (a Shango in the making) NSangou Njikam

All actors appear courtesy of Actors Equity Association.

SETTING: (2016-2017)

Act 1: Langston Hughes High. A prestigious suburban school.

Act 2: Mecca University. A prominent HBCU.

SPECIAL THANKS:

Neal Wilkinson, Alley Theatre,
 Leila Ben-Abdallah, Matt Mecchini
 Dave Ferdinand, One Dream Sound,
 Eva Pinney, TriBeCa Lighting

ABOUT THE PLAY:

Gordon wants to learn how to rap, thinking it will gain him respect, admiration, and the attention of a beautiful woman. What he doesn't know is that his journey to learn how to rhyme will take him not just deeper into Hip Hop, but deeper into his legacy and his purpose. Based on true events, Njikam leads us on a lyrical voyage to discover what it really takes to freestyle.

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the city council.

CREATIVE TEAM

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Playwright | NSangou Njikam* |
| Director | Niegel Smith |
| Choreographer & Associate Director..... | Gabriel “Kwikstep” Dionisio |
| Scenic Designer..... | Riccardo Hernandez |
| Costume Designer | Claudia Brown |
| Lighting Designer..... | Kevin Rigdon |
| Sound Designer | Justin Ellington |
| Dramaturg..... | Sybil R. Williams |
| Associate Scenic Designer | Táisa Malouf |
| Associate Lighting Designer..... | Zach Weeks |
| Assistant Director | Kristan Seemel |
| Assistant to the Director | Katherine George |
| Assistant Costume Designer | Sarah Lawrence |
| Assistant Sound Designer | John McKenna |
| Production Stage Manager..... | Michal V. Mendelson* |
| Assistant Stage Manager..... | Violet Asmara Tafari* |
| Wardrobe Crew | Stephanie Echevarria |
| Sound Board Operator | Tyshawn Major |

*Member of Actors Equity Association

FLEA STAFF

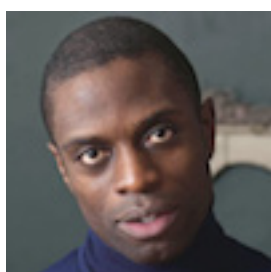
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|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Artistic Director | Niegel Smith |
| Producing Director | Carol Ostrow |
| General Manager..... | Erica Laird |
| Capital Project Manager | Tim Catlett |
| Company Manager | Emilie Pass |
| Marketing and Events Associate | Charlie Madison |
| Audience Development Associate..... | Aleesha Nash |
| Development Associate | Shannon Buhler |
| Co-Technical Director | Ali Akbarian |
| Co-Technical Director | Dan Hoskins |
| Wardrobe Supervisor | Sarah Lawrence |
| Box Office Coordinator..... | Joseph Sanchez |
| Director of Dance Programming | Lisa Reilly |
| Director of Music Programming..... | Lauren Alfano-Ishida |

Literary AssistantDrayton Hiers
 Graphic Designers.....David Prittie and Eleanor Philips
 Videographer..... Crystal Arnett
 Photographer..... Joan Marcus
 Attorney..... Carol M. Kaplan/Loeb and Loeb
 Development ConsultantRachel Colbert
 Theater, Technical & Production Consultant.....Kyle Chepulis
 Press Representative Ron Lasko/Spin Cycle

CAST



DJ REBORN (The Mutha) is a trailblazing, international DJ, sound collage artist, hip hop theater musical director and arts educator. She has spent the last two decades utilizing her passion for music and her skills as a DJ within these worlds to make an impact. Reborn has a myriad of impressive accomplishments including her time as a DJ/ creative writing mentor for teen girls at Urban Word NYC, DJ instructor and curriculum designer for Dubspot and currently as a mentor at The Lower Eastside Girl’s Club. In the .music world, she has opened shows for The Roots and John Legend and in the art world has spun for celebrated artists Kara Walker, Wangheci Mutu and Carrie Mae Weems. She has deejayed on BET and for the live telecast of the NAACP Image Awards as well as the MSNBC telecast of the One Nation Rally at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC. She has graced many stages including The Kennedy Center, The Apollo and The Sydney Opera House in Australia. In the theater world she has provided live soundscapes for activists Eve Ensler’s V-Day project and Howard Zinn’s Voices of a People and was the musical director and DJ for Will Power’s FLOW as well as the tour DJ for Russell Simmons Tony award winning Def Poetry Jam. DJ Reborn recently conceived, created and performed a theater piece about and featuring all women DJs. She continues to build a unique and dynamic resume that sets her apart from many in her field.



ADESOLA OSAKALUMI (Baba) starred in the original Broadway cast, national and international tours of *Fela!* and *Fela! The Concert* and the Broadway revival of *Equus* (Nugget U/S, ensemble). New York/Regional theater includes: *Skeleton*

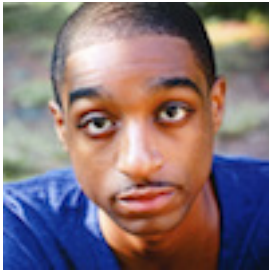
Crew(Atlantic Theater Company) *In Your Arms*(Old Globe Theatre), *Ngwino Ubeho* (Sundance Theater Lab), *Eyewitness Blues* (New York Theater Workshop), *Jam on the Groove* (Minetta Lane Theater, Drama Desk nominee). TV: *ICE* (Audience Network/DirectTV). Film includes: *IBRAHIM*, *Sex and the City 2*, *Crazy Beats Strong Every Time*, *The Accidental Husband*, *Across the Universe*, *Enchanted* and *Idlewild*. As a choreographer for film: *School of Rock*, *Marci X*. Commercials and Theater include: Broadway Bares, ESPN, Old Navy, PBS Kids, Halifax Bank & Advil. A New York native, NEA Grant recipient, Bessie Award winner and Sundance Theatre Lab alumni Adesola was introduced to the performing arts by his family and believes the responsibility of an artist is to enlighten and inspire. Web: adesola.com. Twitter: @AdesolaO IG: adesolaosakalumi



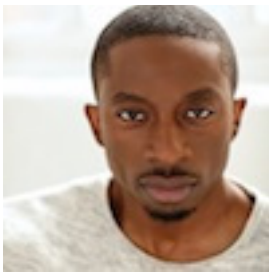
McKENZIE FRYE (Mona Lisa) is a multi-disciplined performing artist from Detroit, MI and a Howard University graduate with a B.F.A. in Musical Theatre. Off Broadway/Regional Credits include: *Syncing Ink* (Alley Theatre), *Wig Out!*, *Damn Yankees*, *Dreamgirls*, *River Deep* and *Harriet's Return* starring Debbie Allen. Film and TV credits include *wishing...*, *The Stronger*, *My Brother* and *Law & Order*. Recent workshops include: *The Lady Killer's Love Story* (The Apollo Theater), *Syncing Ink* (Alley All New Festival/ The Flea Theater /Hi-Arts) and *Girl Shakes Loose* (The Eugene O'Neill Center). Ms. Frye is also a choreographer with work that has been featured on *The Jonathan Ross Show*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* and both domestically and internationally on tour with Nile Rodgers and CHIC. One of McKenzie's best kept secrets is that she is a skilled songwriter with soon to be released music that includes collaborations with FOLAMI & Nile Rodgers of CHIC and Lester "L2" Shaw. It's been an honor and pleasure for Ms. Frye to continue this work with the *Syncing Ink family*. Belief is real!



KARA YOUNG (Sweet Tea) Harlem Born and raised. Credits: *Pretty Hunger* (dir. Martha Banta, The Public NYC), *Queen Latina and Her Power Posse* (Dir. Elizabeth Canavan, Cherry Lane), *Syncing Ink* (dir. Niegel Smith, Alley Theatre), *Gutting* (National Black Theater). Intensives include LAByrinth Theater Company's Intensive Ensemble and Sundance Theater Lab. MTV's *Girl Code* (4 seasons). @karaakter



NURI HAZZARD (Jamal) is a Brooklyn-based actor, writer, and MC. Having graduated from University of North Carolina School of the Arts in 2013 with a B.F.A. in Acting, Nuri has since moved from North Carolina to New York where he's been performing and teaching. Originally from Washington DC, Nuri began his formal artistic education at Duke Ellington School of the Arts. It was there he found his artistic voice and purpose, writing his own music and building the foundations of acting/performance with world renowned master teachers. Since then he's been able to continue making an impact as an actor and lyricist, most notably with the release of his latest EP *Seein' Signs* and his role as Arius in *American Milkshake* which premiered at Sundance Film Festival. Nuri has also spent time empowering future thinkers, artists, and innovators by mentoring and teaching acting and lyricism at high school programs in D.C. and New York. Mr. Hazzard is excited about opportunities to ignite important dialogue, inspire change, empower the oppressed, heal, and liberate spirits! He gives thanks to the Most High, his family, and his extended family.



ELISHA LAWSON (Ice Cold) is happy to be making his debut here at the new Flea theatre. He's been making a name for himself throughout the New York Television Scene, gaining fame for his role of "Switchblade" in the television series "The Get Down". Additionally he has portrayed roles in HBO's *Boardwalk Empire*, CBS' *Blue Bloods*, and just filmed a recurring role in the NBC's, *Shades of Blue*. After receiving his theater arts degree at UNC Pembroke, Elisha received a scholarship to attend The New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts. He was hired by Chicago City Limits Improv troupe straight out of school and has been working ever since. His theater credits include; *A Christmas Carol* (McCarter Theater), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Queens Theater in the Park), and *The Taste of It* (Balleybeg Theater Co.) Elisha is also Co-founder of his production company, ProDucks Media. He would like to thank God for his passion and his mom and dad for supporting it. elishalawson.com



NSANGOU NJIKAM (Gordon) is also the playwright of *Syncing Ink*. See below for his full bio!

CREATIVE TEAM

NSANGOU NJIKAM (Playwright) is an actor and playwright originally from Baltimore, MD. He is the author of *Syncing Ink*, *Re:Definition*, *I.D.*, *When We Left*, *Search For The Crystal Stairs*, and one of the authors of *Hands Up: 6 Plays*, *6 Testimonials*. His work has been developed by The Public Theater, Penn State University, The Flea Theater, Hip Hop Theatre Festival, UNIVERSES theatre company, New Black Fest, and the Alley Theatre. Mr. Njikam's play *I.D.* recently made its world premiere at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, South Africa before coming to the U.S. at Penn State Centre Stage. His playwriting residencies and fellowships include 2015 Emerging Writers Group at the Public Theater, 2013 New Black Fest fellow, and Penn State University commissioned playwright. As an arts educator, Mr. Njikam has worked for Brooklyn Academy of Music, CUNY Creative Arts Team, Harlem School of the Arts, and is co-founder of The Continuum Project, Inc., an organization using African Ancestry DNA testing and the Arts to promote healing and empowerment for communities. Mr. Njikam's work focuses mainly on Identity stories and the empowerment of the human spirit by recognizing and embracing one's personal gifts, utilizing Hip Hop theatre, poetry, and West African performance aesthetics. He also aims to develop new, diverse and younger audiences by creating "theatre of the now and for tomorrow." He received his BFA in acting from Howard University. After tracing his roots to the Tikar people in Cameroon, West Africa, he was named NSangou by Sultan Ibrahim MBombo Njoya, 19th king of the Bamoun kingdom in Cameroon. He currently resides in New York.

NIEGEL SMITH (Director) is a theater director and performance artist who sculpts social spaces into unique communal environments where we make new rituals, excavate our pasts and imagine future narratives. Directing credits include *Hir* (Magic Theatre, 2014; *Mixed Blood*, 2015; *Playwrights Horizons*, 2015), *A 24 Decade History of Popular Music...* (New York Live Arts, et al., 2015), *The Perils of Obedience* (Abrons Arts Center, 2013–ongoing), and *Neighbors* (The Public Theater, 2010). His participatory performances have been produced by American Realness, Dartmouth College, The New Museum, Prelude Festival, PS 122, and the Van Alen Institute, among others. He is the Artistic Director of The Flea Theater in lower Manhattan; Associate Artistic Director of Elastic City; and ringleader of Willing Participant – an artistic activist organization that whips up urgent poetic responses to crazy shit that happens. www.niegelsmith.com.

GABRIEL “KWIKSTEP” DIONISIO (Choreographer & Associate Director) AKA DJ KS 360 started dancing between the ages of 6 and 7 influenced by Soul Train and block parties in NYC. Kwikstep has performed in PBS’s Peabody Award-winning *Everybody Dance Now*, the Great Performances 20th Anniversary Special, and Kurt Weill’s “September Songs,” which was nominated for an Emmy Award. Kwikstep is a Bessie award recipient for choreography and also founded his crew known as Full Circle in 1992. In 1996 Kwikstep and his wife Rokafella established Full Circle as a non-profit internationally acclaimed Hip hop collective known as Full Circle Productions Inc and its members are known as Full Circle Souljahs. Today he is an international icon in breaking and is best known for his smooth style, versatility and signature head spins. He was also an original founding member choreographer and principal dancer in companies such as Rhythm Technicians and GhettoOriginal who were the creators of *Jam on the Groove* which was nominated for a Drama Desk Award. Most recently Kwikstep was a featured dancer/choreographer in The Netflix Series *The Get Down* directed by Baz Luhrmann.

RICCARDO HERNANDEZ (Scenic Designer) Broadway: *The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess* (2012 Tony Award Best Musical Revival), *The People in the Picture* (Studio 54), Tony Kushner’s *Caroline, or Change* (also Royal National Theater London - 2007 Olivier Award for Best New Musical/2006 London’s Evening Standard Award for Best Musical), *TopDog/UnderDog* (2002 Pulitzer Award Best Play-also Royal Court, London), *Elaine Stritch at Liberty* (also West End’s Old Vic & National Tour), *Parade* (Hal Prince director, Tony and Drama Desk Nominations), *Bells Are Ringing*, *Bring in ‘Da Noise, Bring in ‘Da Funk* (also National Tours and Japan), *The Tempest*. Recent: *The Dead* (Abbey Theater, Dublin), *Il Postino* Sets and Costumes (Los Angeles Opera, Theatre du Chatelet Paris, Theater an der Wien, PBS Telecast), *Die Entfuhrung Aus Dem Serail* (Opera de Nice, France), *Sweeney Todd* (Opera Theater of Saint Louis), *The Lost Highway* Sets and Costumes (Diane Paulus director, London’s English National Opera/Young Vic), *La Mouette* (Cour D’Honneur, Avignon Festival), *Jan Karski, Mon Nom Est Fiction* (Opera Theatre, Avignon Festival), *Abigail’s Party* (Oslo National Theater), Philip Glass’ *Appomatox* (Robert Woodruff director, San Francisco Opera). Over twenty productions at New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater: *The America Play*, *One Flea Spare*, *Stuff Happens*, *Mother Courage* (starring Meryl Streep), BAM, Lincoln Center, Atlantic Theater (collaborations with film director Ethan Cohen), Second Stage, NYTW, MTC, MCC, Playwrights

Horizons, etc. Regional: American Repertory Theater (collaborations with Diane Paulus, Ron Daniels, Robert Woodruff, Janos Szasz, Arthur Nauzyciel, Robert Brustein), Guthrie, Goodman, Taper, La Jolla, Steppenwolf, McCarter, etc. Opera: Don Giovanni (Diane Paulus director, Chicago Opera), Charles Wuorinen's Haroun (Mark Lamos director, New York City Opera), Amistad (George C. Wolfe director, Lyric Opera of Chicago), Houston Grand Opera, FGO, Santa Fe Opera, Gotham Opera NYC, etc. Also: Festival Automne Paris, Orleans CDN France, Det Norske Teatret Oslo Norway, MXAT (Moscow Art Theater) Upcoming: *Il Tabarro/Il Pagliacci* for Opera Theater of Saint Louis, *Il Postino* for Teatro Real de Madrid, directed by Ron Daniels, *La Traviata* for Lyric Opera of Chicago, directed by Arin Arbus. Princess Grace Statue Award. Princeton University Lecturer. Yale School of Drama.

CLAUDIA BROWN (Costume Design) has designed costumes for film, theater and dance. She has worked in New York City theaters for thirty years largely on new works by contemporary playwrights at theaters including The Flea Theater, Playwrights Horizon, MCC Theater Company, Signature Theater, and En Garde Arts. She has designed costumes for *Take Care*, by Todd Shalom and Niegel Smith, *Mrs. Farnsworth*, *Crazy Mary* and *Family Furniture* by A.R. Gurney, *Crowbar*, *Bad Penny*, *Sincerity Forever* by Mac Wellman, *Oh, The Humanity* by Will Eno, *Dawn* by Thomas Bradshaw, *Like I Say* and *Limbo Tales* by Len Jenkins, and *Nixon's Nixon* by Russell Lees. Her film credits include *River's Edge* (1987), *Trust* (1990), *Starting Out in the Evening* (2006), *The Ballad of Little Jo* (1992), *Smoke* (1986) and *Copycat* (1996). As well, she has designed costumes for Lava Dance, Hartford Ballet, and Arizona Ballet. She is a graduate of The Yale School of Drama.

KEVIN RIGDON (Lighting Design) Design credits include the Broadway productions of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Old Neighborhood*, *Buried Child*, *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, *The Song of Jacob Zulu*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Speed the Plow*, *Our Town*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Caretaker* and *Ghetto*. London credits include *Waiting for Godot*, *You Never Can Tell* and *Orphans* on the West End; *Speed the Plow* and *The Grapes of Wrath* for The Royal National Theatre; *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *The Man Who Came to Dinner* at the Barbican; *American Buffalo*, and *Ricky Jay and His 52 Assistants*. Productions for the Peter Hall Company include *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Measure for Measure*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Man and Superman*. Mr. Rigdon has

extensive design credits Off-Broadway and regionally. He was the resident designer for Steppenwolf Theatre from 1976 to 1997 during which he designed the scenery, lighting, and costumes for more than 110 productions. He is currently the Associate Director/Design for Houston's Alley Theatre where he has designed more than 80 productions. Mr. Rigdon is the recipient of two Tony Award nominations, seven Joseph Jefferson Awards, two American Theatre Wing Design Awards, and the Drama-Logue Award. Mr. Rigdon is the Artistic Director for the American National Exhibit for the 2019 Prague Quadrennial Sceneography Exhibition and he serves as the Vice President for International Activities for USITT and on the Executive Committee of OISTAT. In addition to his design credits, Mr. Rigdon is the John and Rebecca Moores Professor of Theatre and Head of Graduate Design at the University of Houston.

JUSTIN ELLINGTON (Sound Designer) is pleased to make his Flea debut. Credits include: New York (Broadway, Off-Broadway): The Acting Company: *X*; New York Theater Workshop: *Fetch Clay Make Man, The Seven*; MCC Theater: *The Pride, The Break of Noon*; Broadway/Lincoln Center: *Other Desert Cities* Regional: The Repertory Theater of St. Louis: *Until The Flood*; People's Light Theater: *The Mountaintop*; PlayMakers Repertory Company: *Detroit 67*; Jungle Theater: *Bars and Measures*; People's Light: *The Harassment of Iris Malloy, All My Sons*; Guthrie Theater: *Trouble In Mind*; Dallas Theater Center: *Romeo and Juliet, Stagger Lee*; Oregon Shakespeare Festival: *The Comedy of Errors*; McCarter Theater: *Fetch Clay Make Man, Are You There McPhee*; Alliance Theater: *Shakespeare's R&J, King Hedly, TopDog/UnderDog*; Children's Theater Company: *Five Fingers of Funk*; Chautauqua Theater Company: *A Raisin in the Sun, Intimate Apparel* International: The National Theater of London: *The American Clock* (workshop); The Royal Shakespeare Company: *My Shakespeare*; The Stratford Festival: *As You Like It*; Awarded by: The American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP), National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, and The Industry Film Producers Association.

SYBIL R. WILLIAMS (Dramaturg) is a playwright and dramaturge whose work has been professionally produced by Chicago's ETA Creative Arts Theatre; New York's National Black Theater; Pittsburgh's Kuntu Theatre; University of Pennsylvania; CALARTS; and Harlem's Rebel Theatre and the Red Shirt Reading Series in New York City. Her latest work *I Am A Drum* was presented as part of FRESSH Theatre's inaugural season in March 2016.

As a dramaturge, she completed a three-year project creating a docudrama

to celebrate the lives of the Little Rock Nine titled *It Happened In Little Rock* and the Latino/African-American Theatre festival *Voices at the River* at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre. She served as dramaturge for *Three Little Birds* at Adventure Theatre. Her latest projects include a new musical titled *U.G.L.Y.* at Sigworks Summer Musical Theatre Development Series.

As an instructor, Williams teaches courses on African-American, African, and Caribbean performance and aesthetics. She also teaches in the Women's Studies program focusing on feminist artist of the Diaspora. Having just returned from Cuba, she is most looking forward to exploring the work of contemporary women artists in Havana. This fall she will direct the freshman debut performance titled "Overture" for the Theatre/Musical Theatre program. It's always a blast!!

TAÍSA MALOUF (Associate Scenic Designer) is a Brazilian Set & Production Designer based in New York City. She design sets and environments for Film, Theater, Opera, Events & Fashion. She holds a Bachelor of Visual Communication & Semiotics degree from the University PUC of São Paulo, and a MFA degree in Design for Stage and Film at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, where she has been award with the Lew Wasserman Scholarship, John Conklin Scholarship, TSOA Department Fellowship & Shubert Foundation Scholarship. Taísa is a member of the United Scenic Artists Union - Local USA 829 IATSE.

ZACK WEEKS (Associate Lighting Designer) is thrilled to be working at the Flea! Zach's recent work includes *The Magic Flute*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead the Opera* (Seagle Music Colony), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (Gallery Players), *Hamlet* (Nuance), *A Little Night Music*, *Company* (St Barts Players). Zach holds an MFA in Lighting Design from Ohio University. To learn more about Zach or to see more of his work please go to zwdesigns.net.

KRISTAN SEEMEL (Assistant Director) Before coming to New York five years ago, Kristan was a freelance director in Oregon for the better part of a decade. While on the other coast, he worked for eight seasons at Portland Center Stage, first as a Literary Associate and later as Corporate Development Associate during the organization's transition into the historic Armory Theater, a world-renowned Green Building project. Kristan came up in the theater working on new plays, serving as dramaturg on a score of premiere productions and developmental workshops. His passion for new American writing is clear from

his direction of premiers such as *Mary-Kate Olsen is in Love* by Mallery Avidon and *The Electric Lighthouse* by Ed Himes (The Flea). Other new plays Kristan has directed include *Mutt* by Lava Alapai (Many Hats Collective) and *The Verspiary* by Matthew Zrebski (Stark Raving Theatre) as well as NW regional premieres of Carlos Murillo's *Mimesophobia* (Sand & Glass Productions), *The Long Christmas Ride Home* by Paula Vogel (TheatreVertigo) and Mac Wellman's *A Murder of Crows* (defunkt theatre). He has developed new plays with Playwrights Horizons/Clubbed Thumb (SuperLab), The Lark, Brave New World Repertory Theater, Spookfish and The Barn Arts Collective. Kristan is a graduate of the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA program in directing and while in Providence he helmed workshop productions *Oh Guru Guru Guru* by Mallery Avidon and *The Darkson Chronicles* by Theo Goodell. Recent favorite revivals include Brecht & Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (Brown/Trinity Rep) and *Hamlet* (CoHo Productions). Kristan's staging of Gertrude Stein's *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights* (defunkt theatre) garnered him a Portland Dramatic Critics Circle award (Drammy) for Outstanding Direction. Some of his favorite assisting credits include Gurney's *AJAX*, *The Mysteries* (The Flea), *A Raisin in the Sun*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Camelot* (Trinity Rep). Kristan is a proud alumnus of the 2012/13 Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab and the SDCF Observership Program. Check out www.kristanseemel.com for more info.

KATHERINE GEORGE (Assistant to the Director) is an Afro-Latina performer, director, writer, and educator from the Bronx, NY. She began her journey as performer at a young age and has been blessed with the opportunity of performing in various venues around the country including the Apollo Theater, Bowery Poetry Club, Carnegie Hall, the New Amsterdam Theater on Broadway, the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, and Radio City Music Hall. She was a member of the 2012 Urban Word Slam team which participated in the international poetry festival, Brave New Voices. She was also a member of the award-winning Brooklyn College Poetry Slam team since its inception in 2011 and was named the Grand Slam Champion in both 2014 and 2015. She co-coached the Urban Word 2013 national slam team which ranked 3rd in the world. She obtained her Bachelors degree in Theater from Brooklyn College where she partnered up with another student to create the play, *Black and Blue*. She was a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation Observership class of 2016-2017. Through this program, Katherine was able to observe Tony-nominated director, Liesl Tommy during the Public Theater's production of *Party People*. She's recently become an acting alumni for the 24-Hour Play: Nationals

program. You can watch her star in the new digital series, *#lovemyroomie*. You can also catch her occasionally singing background for Jennifer Lopez while trying to remember her lines for *Serials* as a Bat at the Flea! She thanks Niegel and the rest of *Syncing Ink* crew for bringing her into the magic.

SARAH LAWRENCE (Assistant Costume Designer) A graduate of Parson's The New School for Design, Sarah is a Brooklyn based artist, costume designer, and stylist. While pursuing her design degree and creating her own sustainable hand-crafted fashion line (www.gravexsl.com), Sarah found her way into theater as Assistant Costume Designer for Thomas Bradshaw's *Fulfillment* produced by The Flea Theater in the fall of 2015. She has since joined the Flea Staff as resident Wardrobe Supervisor and continues to costume shows like Witness Relocation's *The Loon*, New York Times Critics Pick *Inanimate*. Sarah is thrilled to be working on The Flea's production of *Syncing Ink*!

JOHN McKENNA (Assistant Sound Designer) is a Sound Designer and Engineer currently living in NYC. He was born and raised in Colorado where he started working professionally doing sound reinforcement. He wanted to continue in the entertainment industry, so he journeyed to State College, PA where he attended Penn State University, majoring in Sound Design. Recent accolades include an Audelco Award Nomination.

MICHAL V. MENDELSON (Production Stage Manager) is glad to be back at The Flea. Her other NY credits include The New School for Drama, New Georges, Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, Red Fern Theatre, TerraNova Collective, New Dramatists, The Pearl Theatre, Studio 42, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Dog-Run Rep, and Worth Street Theatre. Regionally, she has stage managed for Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre, Berkshire Playwrights Lab, and Fairfield Theatre. She is a proud member of Actors Equity.

VIOLET ASMARA TAFARI (Assistant Stage Manager) a New York based Stage Manager and Event Coordinator, is thrilled to make her Flea debut. Violet's work in music festivals and theater is inspired by her universal background and passion to connect thru the arts. It is through the art of the mind's eye that we create, embrace, and explore. Select Credits: *The Music Man* (Sharon Playhouse) *East O' West O'* (ANT Fest), *Mourning Becomes Electra* (Target Margin Theater Co.), *Old Hats* (Signature Theater), *The Golden Age* (MTC), *INSIDE* (PopUP Theatrics), AFRIKIN Fest, Spread Love Gang. It is not black and white but a juxtaposition of greyness.

FLEA STAFF

NIEGEL SMITH (Artistic Director) is a theater director & performance artist. His theater work has been produced by Classical Theatre of Harlem, HERE Arts Center, Hip Hop Theatre Festival, The Invisible Dog, Luna Stage, Magic Theatre, Mixed Blood, New York Fringe Festival, New York Live Arts, Phoenix Theatre Ensemble, The Public Theater, Summer Play Festival, Todd Theatre and Under the Radar, and his participatory performances have been produced by Abrons Arts Center, American Realness, Dartmouth College, Elastic City, The Invisible Dog, Jack, The New Museum, Prelude Festival, PS 122, the Van Alen Institute and Visual AIDS. He often collaborates with artist Todd Shalom and playwright/performer Taylor Mac.

Smith, a graduate of Dartmouth College, was the associate director of the Tony Award winning musical *FELA!*, assistant directed the off-broadway production of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and both the Broadway and off-broadway productions of Tony Kushner's *Caroline, or Change*. He has received residencies, grants and/or fellowships from Brooklyn Arts Council, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Sundance Theatre Lab, Theater Communications Group, Tucker Foundation, Van Lier Fund and VoxFest. Before surviving high school in Detroit, he grew up in the North Carolina piedmont, fishing with his dad, shopping with his mom and inventing tall-tale fantasies with his two younger brothers.

CAROL OSTROW (Producing Director) joined founder Jim Simpson at the helm of The Flea in 2001 and *The Guys* marked her return to Off-Off-Broadway. She was the OBIE-award winning Producing Director of the Classic Stage Company as well as the founder and original Producing Director of The Powerhouse Theater at Vassar, now in its 32nd season. In between, she has been an adjunct professor of theater at Vassar College, Chatham College and McGill University. For The Flea, Carol has produced 16 seasons of world premiere productions and has been responsible for the sound management of the theater's increasing programming and budget. She is also overseeing The Flea's capital campaign that has resulted in a new performing arts center for The Flea, launched this year. Carol is a graduate of Vassar College and the Yale Drama School. She is a new trustee of Vassar and she also serves on the Board of Advisors of the Yale Drama School. Beyond her alma maters, she is a member of the board of Central Synagogue, the National Psoriasis Foundation, the MacDowell Colony and LAVA, an acrobatic dance collective in Brooklyn. She is also a Wall Street Journal Expert, where she writes on small business for the paper's online edition. Married and the mother of four incredible and launched young adults, she and her family count Pittsburgh, London, Montreal and now New York City once again as home.

ERICA LAIRD (General Manager) joins The Flea after seven years as Managing Director with The Builders Association where she oversaw all the company's operations and

produced the development, premieres and touring of *HOUSE / DIVIDED*, *SONTAG: REBORN* and *ELEMENTS OF OZ*. Previously she was Marketing and Residency Manager at the Cutler Majestic Theater in Boston (now ArtsEmerson), and Senior Associate at NYC international booking agency Micocci Productions, where she booked tours for companies including STREB, Big Dance Theater, SITI Company and Mabou Mines. Erica is a graduate of Occidental College in Los Angeles, and a native of Kailua-Kona on the Big Island of Hawaii.

TIM CATLETT (Capital Project Manager) Tim Catlett's life has involved many twists and turns. A military upbringing took him around the world preparing him for the crazy life of a theater professional. Back in New York after almost 30 years, his time was spent in national touring, television, radio, independent and studio films, and no little amount of his first love; the stage, variously as designer, technical director, and/or director. He is a WI-certified Theater Teacher; a dearly loved 16 years of the hardest theater ever. He also has a passion for being creative safely, consulting and lecturing on theater safety programs. Additionally, he has been a magician and magic consultant for over 30 years. Most importantly, he is the proud father of a young lady who is a Shakespeare fanatic, and a young man who thinks working backstage would be awesome. He relishes the prospects of his time to come with The Flea.

EMILIE PASS (Company Manager) Prior to The Flea, Emilie was Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Company Management Fellow, the Box Office Manager for the Hollywood Fringe Festival, and an independent producer and director. She is passionate about creating opportunities for artists to take risks, and is thrilled to have the chance to do just that at The Flea! Emilie is a proud graduate of Wesleyan University and a Los Angeles native.

CHARLIE MADISON (Marketing and Events Associate) is a graduate from Brandeis University, where he majored in both Psychology and Musical Theater Writing. While at Brandeis, Charlie wrote and directed an original play, *LOST GIRLS*, and an original full length musical, *GRACE*. Other notable accomplishments include music directing his undergraduate a cappella group, Company and serving as Programs Assistant in the Brandeis Office of the Arts. Charlie began his experience in not-for-profit theater as an Artistic Intern at Central Square Theater (Cambridge, MA); since then he has served as the inaugural Summer Apprentice at the Arden Theatre Company (Philadelphia, PA) and was Manhattan Theatre Club's Fall 2015 Institutional Giving Intern. Out the office, Charlie enjoys singing his heart out, writing musicals and plays, and thrifting: his inspirations include Jeanine Tesori, Janet Jackson, Adam Guettel, and the one and only Mariah Carey.

ALEESHA NASH (Audience Development Associate) is a New York City based playwright and director who is passionate about sharing stories that help others gain consciousness

about the world we live in. She joins The Flea as the Audience Development Associate with a well-rounded set of skills, drawing on her background in non-profit fundraising, marketing, and event planning. Aleesha holds a master's degree from New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, & Human Development.

SHANNON BUHLER (Development Associate) Before joining the team at The Flea, Shannon worked just up 6th Avenue at HERE, first as the Development Intern and then as the Assistant General Manager. She's a Kansas native and a proud University of Kansas graduate, where she received a degree in Theatre Performance and served as the Theatre Department's Administrative and Marketing Associate.

ALI AKBARIAN (Co-Technical Director) Born in Canada, Ali has always been captivated by the mechanics of his surroundings and curious as to how things work on the inside; logically and emotionally. After a glimpse of potential in 2006, Ali set out to the University of Florida and found a path in theatre. Immediately following his graduation at the top of his class in Scenic Design; he was contracted for a year long residency at one of the most successful regional theatres in the southeast, The Hippodrome. Ali was contracted as Production Manager by a leading Event Decor company in the southeast region months before the end of his residency. Excelling in the commercial market while managing over eight productions a week with over thirty staff members and over-hire in multiple spaces; Ali's future in theatre was fading away quickly. On December 20th, 2015 this realization was cemented into his soul and so the following week he sold his motorcycle, car, and three quarters of his apartment. By December 27th, 2015 Ali moved home, Brooklyn, New York!

DAN HOSKINS (Co-Technical Director) A recent graduate of Earlham College, Dan is thrilled to start his professional career with The Flea. Dan has long had a passion for crafting stories and bringing them to life which, along with a love for the community that it creates, led to his decision to join the theater lifestyle in high school. Though he specializes in lighting, Dan believes strongly in the holistic view of theater and the benefit in learning many different aspects of tech to support the art as a whole.

SARAH LAWRENCE (Wardrobe Supervisor) A recent graduate of Parson's The New School for Design, Sarah is a Brooklyn based artist, fashion maker, and costume designer. While pursuing freelance design work and creating her own sustainable hand-crafted fashion line (www.gravexsl.com), Sarah found her way into theater as Assistant Costume Designer for Thomas Bradshaw's FULFILLMENT produced by The Flea Theater. She has since joined the Flea Staff as Wardrobe Supervisor and continues to put her degree in Integrated Design to good use!

JOSEPH SANCHEZ (Box Office Coordinator) is excited to be part of The Flea Theater's team. Over the course of many years, he has managed several historic Off-Broadway

Theatre box offices including The Actors' Playhouse, 45 Bleecker and The Cherry Lane.

LISA REILLY (Director of Dance Programming) Lisa Reilly's extensive work in the non-profit arts community includes positions as the Executive Director of the Emelin Theatre, the Managing and Artistic Director of the College of Staten Island Center for the Arts (CFA), and the Executive Director of the Earlville Opera House. In addition, she served as the Executive Director of Westbeth, an artists' housing project in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. Lisa has taught at Syracuse University and served as a consultant for dance and theatre organizations in the specialty areas of marketing, fundraising, board development, grantwriting, executive searches, and curriculum. Reilly has served on and chaired panels for the New York State Council on the Arts, the Council on Arts and Humanities for Staten Island, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Performing Arts on Tour program, the Performing Arts Exchange Conference, ArtsWestchester, the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, and many others. Lisa is a board member for Dusan Tynek Dance Theatre, Blessed Unrest theater company, and Racoco Productions, a modern dance company. She has been awarded scholarships from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation. Recently, Lisa has been delighted to be part of projects with The Bang Group, Heidi Latsky Dance, and Compagnia de' Colombari.

LAUREN ALFANO-ISHIDA (Director of Music Programming) is thrilled to be joining the team of The Flea as the Co-Director of Music Programming. She is the soprano half of the ensemble Duo Moderne with whom she presents concerts of new and rediscovered song. Recent operatic performances include the title role in Handel's Alcina, and Cleopatra in Giulio Cesare. Lauren has performed dozens of premieres by composers from the USA, Europe, and Japan. Upcoming projects include collaborations with musicians from the Universidad de Costa Rica (Costa Rica) and Conservatorio di Bari "N. Piccini" (Italy). In addition to singing, Lauren is the Production Manager for the Hunter Opera Theater, the opera ensemble in residence at Hunter College specializing in contemporary American opera. She directs the Children's Music Program at Park Avenue United Methodist Church in NYC and maintains an active private voice studio.

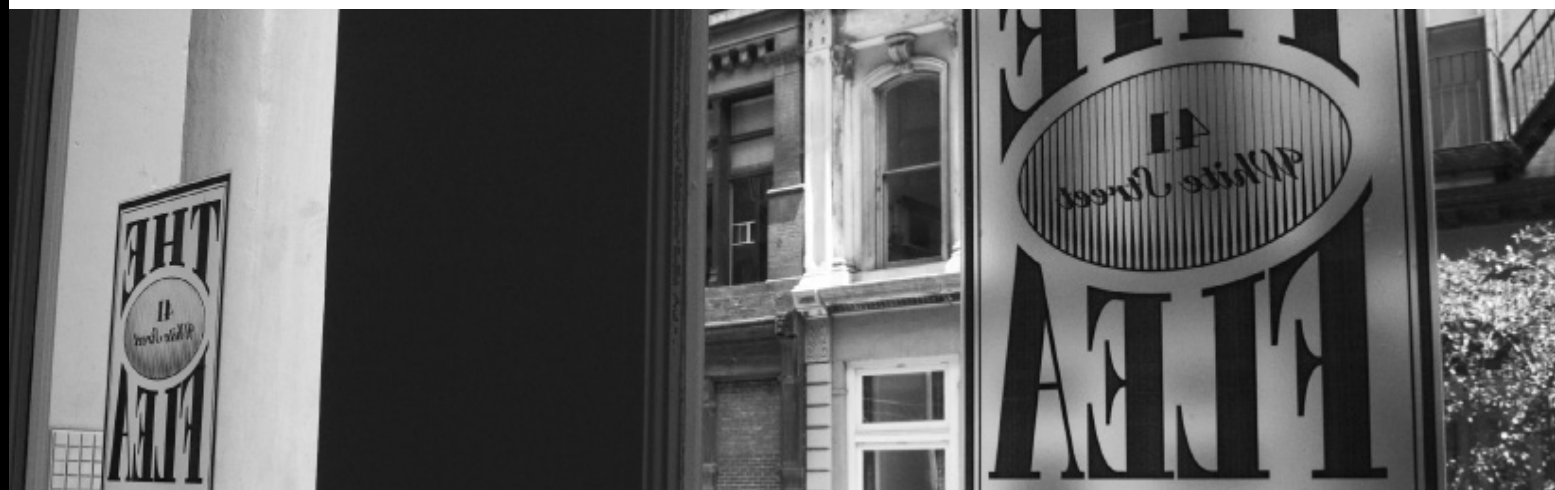
DRAYTON HIERS (Literary Assistant) In addition to his work at the Flea, Drayton is a Literary Associate of Yellow Earth Theatre, where he leads writing workshops and has guided plays to readings at the Finborough and Soho Theatres, receiving an Olwen Wymark Award from the Writer's Guild of Great Britain for his work in play development. He was the Artistic Director of LoNyLa Singapore, which developed four original plays, and he taught playwriting with Jean Tay at Singapore Repertory Theatre. Drayton teaches Script Analysis and directs new student plays at Marymount Manhattan College. He received his MFA in Dramatic Writing from Tisch Asia.

WHAT IS THE FLEA?

The Flea is our theater: three unique and intimate performance spaces, located at 20 Thomas Street in TriBeCa. But The Flea is also an award-winning producing organization, founded in 1996, that offers more than 250 cutting-edge theatrical and multi-disciplinary performances each year and gives voice to some of the most exciting and innovative writers of our time.

Founded from the purely artistic impulse to create “joyful hell in a small space,” our body of work has earned us accolades from across the globe including two Obie Awards for Best Production, an Otto for Courageous Political Theater, and a Drama Desk Award Special Award for our commitment to adventurous theater. Our 2001 production of *The Guys*, a raw artistic response to the events of 9/11, became a phenomenon that played to sold-out houses for 13 months and quickly cemented our leadership role in the downtown, Off-Off-Broadway and Lower Manhattan communities.

The Flea is a beacon for adventurous audiences and creative artists of all stripes, from the young striver to the legendary veteran. More than 150,000 people have come to The Flea to witness the rare spark created when artists are given free rein to play, experiment and invent—often in ways that the commercial theater can’t support. And it is that spark that fulfills our mission, pure and simple: to embody the spirit of adventure and excitement that has defined Off-Off-Broadway since its inception.



WHO & WHAT ARE THE BATS?

The Bats is our critically acclaimed resident company, cast anew each year from over 1,000 aspiring young actors. Voted “Best Off-Off-Broadway Company to Act In” by Backstage, being a Bat offers young artists the rare opportunity to break into the field with real life experience, performing in front of an audience on a regular basis and working to support The Flea and its visiting artists. All in one night, a Bat may tear your ticket, pour you a drink and rivet your soul to the stage.



WHAT IS OFF-OFF-BROADWAY?

Dating back over fifty years, Off-Off-Broadway began informally--an alternative, non-commercial environment where new ideas and projects were born out of energetic and often happenstance encounters. Hundreds of well-known artists credit this adventurous and free-spirited time with their falling in love with theater, and getting good at what they do.

Visit www.theflea.org for information on all things Flea!

Find The Flea Theater on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & Tumblr.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Nanahya Santana

Jim Simpson

Jeremy Smith

Niegel Smith

Basil Walter

Sigourney Weaver

Stephen Weinroth

Davis Weinstock

THE FLEA I.P.'S

In June of 2009 The Flea launched a unique patron program called The Flea IPs - an elite and dedicated group that helps to make the dreams of The Flea a reality. Flea IPs gain insider access through exclusive events including private talk-backs, intimate artist dinners, master classes and first-look readings. Flea IPs commit their support by generously pledging \$5,000 each year.



Interested? We'd love to make you a Flea IP too!

Please contact Carol Ostrow at 212.226.0051 x104 or carolo@theflea.org for more information.

The Flea proudly salutes our Flea I.P. members and thanks them for their unwavering support.

THE FLEA CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Twenty years ago The Flea's founders undertook an artistic experiment, renting an old TriBeCa factory in the wilds of Lower Manhattan and opening the doors to the most iconoclastic and talented artists they could find. Since then The Flea has evolved into an award-winning theater known for presenting the very best of Off-Off-Broadway theater, music and dance.

We have also become an emblem for the resilience of Lower Manhattan, drawing more than 150,000 people to the area since the 9/11 attacks. To continue in that leadership role, we purchased a site nearby that is now our permanent new home. Our goal is to continue producing our own intimate and exhilarating work while providing stability to dozens of other artists and performance groups. We are grateful to the following for their lead gifts to the project:

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The Shana Alexander
Charitable Foundation
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We apologize if you have been left off this list.
 Please contact Shannon Buhler at
 ShannonB@theflea.org for any corrections.

THE FLEA ANNUAL FUND

Flea productions and programs are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, as well as the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

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List as of 8/28/17



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 Susan Wilen
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List as of 8/28/17

We apologize if you have been left off this list. Please contact Aleesha Nash at AleeshaN@theflea.org for any corrections.

BECOME A MEMBER

Our theater is tiny and we sell out fast. Members are the first to receive information on Flea events, news, tickets and special offers. We have different membership levels, starting at just \$25, and all are 100% tax-deductible.

For more on how to become a member and all things Flea, email or call our Audience Development Associate, Aleesha Nash.

email: AleeshaN@theflea.org phone: 212-226-0051 ext. 107

FLEA REWARDS

Use your Flea Member Card or ticket stub to take advantage of these special offers from our downtown partners.

Petrarca (34 White St.)
212-625-2800 / petrarcatribeca.com
Italian Restaurant & Wine Bar
Receive a 10% discount on your bill

Da Mikele (275 Church St.)
212-925-8800 / damikele.com
Neapolitan-Inspired Italian Restaurant
Receive a 10% discount on the bill

Souths (273 Church St.)
212-219-0640 / southsnyc.com
Neighborhood Bar and Restaurant
A complimentary glass of wine with the order of an entrée

Billy's Bakery (75 Franklin St.)
212-647-9958 / billysbakerynyc.com
Deserts and Other Baked Goodies
Buy one cupcake & get the second 1/2 off

Añejo (301 Church St. at Walker)
212-920-6270 / anejotribeca.com
Mexican
A complimentary Plata margarita with any food purchase

Church Street Tavern (313 Church St.)
212-804-7766 / churchstreettavern.com
Modern Manhattan Tavern
Recieve 10% off your bill

TriBeCa Grill (375 Greenwich St.)
212-941-3900/myriadrestaurantgroup.com
American Grill
Enjoy a complimentary sommelier's choice glass of wine with dinner.

Nish Nush
(88 Reade Street, corner of Church)
212-964-1318/www.nishnushnyc.com
Fresh, gourmet hummus, falafel, baklava and more – 10% off with your membership card!

Sun In Bloom (165 Church St.)
212-791-6700/suninbloom.wordpress.com
Gluten-Free, Vegan & Raw Food Kitchen in Tribeca & Brooklyn- 10% off with your membership card!

CHECK **THEFLEA.ORG** OR CALL
212-226-0051 x107 FOR
THE LATEST UPDATES & DEALS.

BECOME A MEMBER

THE FLEA THEATER MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Get Special Attention. Support The Flea. Be a Member.

\$25+ Member

No booking or convenience fees
Exchange tickets up to 24 hours in advance
Exclusive Members-Only Pre-Sale

\$50+ Flea Fan

All of the above, plus:
1 guaranteed low price ticket to any Flea production
Invites to Flea Hangouts - we'll keep the bar open after the show, so you can have a round on us while chatting with fellow Fans & Bats!

\$100+ Flea Friend

All of the above, plus:
2 guaranteed low price tickets
Invites to Flea Friend Nights - these post-show parties include an open bar and some late-night nosh
One complimentary drink at our bar before every show

\$250+ Flea Friend (Enhanced!)

All of the above, plus:
One complimentary drink at our bar for your entire party

\$500+ Flea Friend (Super Enhanced!)

All of the above, plus:
Unlimited complimentary drinks at our bar!

\$1,000+ Flea Favorites:

All of the above, plus:
Invitations to Flea Fetes, and unlimited house seats to any Flea performance!

\$5,000+ Flea I.P's

All of the above, plus:
Invitation to select Opening Nights and Board Nights
Access to house seats for most Broadway Shows

Interested?

Email aleeshan@theflea.org for more information!

CALL 212.226.0051 x107 to join!