

**THE ELECTION LIGHTS ON**

# **FORTIBRAS**

By Lee Blessing

Directed  
by  
**Michael R.  
Cohen**



John Hinkel Park  
41 Somerset Ave  
north Berkeley  
(just north of the  
Marin Circle, off  
Arlington)

4 p.m. **FREE!**  
(seating begins at 3 p.m.)

Sat/Sun  
Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup>  
and

Sat/Sun/Mon  
Aug 31st/Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>



**THE REST IS SILENCE** ~~—————~~

**HILARIOUS**

Actors Ensemble of  
Berkeley  
since 1957

[www.aofberkeley.org](http://www.aofberkeley.org)

## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR (*and a little background*)

Previously, Prince Hamlet sees the ghost of his father, King Hamlet, who orders him to seek revenge on his uncle, Claudius. Claudius has murdered Hamlet's father, usurped the throne, and married Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. Hamlet devotes himself to avenging his father's murder but, because he is contemplative and thoughtful by nature, he delays and enters into a deep melancholy.

Claudius and Gertrude attempt to discover the cause of Hamlet's erratic behavior. They employ Hamlet's friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to watch him. When the pompous Polonius suggests Hamlet is mad with love for his daughter Ophelia, Claudius agrees to spy on Hamlet in conversation with Ophelia. Hamlet, possibly believing that Ophelia is in on the conspiracy, orders her to a nunnery.

After employing a troupe of actors to prove his uncle's guilt, Hamlet attempts to kill Claudius and finds him praying. Hamlet, unwilling to send Claudius' soul to heaven, waits for another opportunity.

Hamlet confronts his mother. Hearing a noise behind a tapestry, Hamlet stabs through the fabric believing it is Claudius, but killing Polonius. Claudius sends Hamlet to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern bearing sealed orders for the English king to kill Hamlet.

In the aftermath of her father's death, Ophelia goes mad and drowns in the river. Polonius' son, Laertes, returns to Denmark in a rage. Claudius convinces him that Hamlet is responsible for his father's and sister's deaths. Claudius plots to kill Hamlet (newly returned to Denmark) using a poisoned blade via a seemingly innocent fencing exhibition between Hamlet and Laertes. As a backup plan, Claudius poisons a goblet for Hamlet to drink should he score the first or second hits of the match.

The fencing begins and Gertrude drinks from the poisoned Goblet and dies. Laertes stabs Hamlet with the poisoned sword, and Hamlet stabs Laertes with the same poisoned weapon. After Laertes reveals that the king is to blame he dies. Hamlet then stabs Claudius with the poisoned blade and forces him to drink from the poisoned goblet. Claudius dies. Mortally wounded, Hamlet lies in the arms of his friend, Horatio.

And so our play begins...

And nothing is as it once seemed. Shakespeare holds a mirror to nature to show us our true selves, but in *FORTINBRAS*, Lee Blessing satirically exposes our reluctance or perhaps inability to accept the truth we see. In our world of political spin and manipulative advertising, the truth is relevant only when it can be bent to our purposes...or is it?

Michael R. Cohen

## **About Actors Ensemble of Berkeley**

Actors Ensemble of Berkeley has been around the block (and just around the corner from you) since 1957, making us the longest-running stage company in Berkeley. In 1965, AE began performing at the Live Oak Theatre — and has ever since. This year the schedule at John Hinkel Park amphitheatre, longtime home of what was the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival (later to move to Orinda and become CalShakes), opened up, and we jumped at the opportunity to present to you *FORTINBRAS* free in John Hinkel Park.

Our mission is to enrich, entertain and improve our community through fascinating theatrical works. With social consciousness and an ensemble approach, we provide area residents with opportunities to attend, participate in and be helped through theatre. Our shows will be affordable, our opportunities enjoyable, and our community impact felt year-round.

As Berkeley's only true community theatre company, we depend on our volunteers to bring their energy and creative vision to each play we produce. If you would like to volunteer in our theatre, give us a call or send us an email! We'd love for you to play a part in our next show!

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Check out [www.AEofBerkeley.Org](http://www.AEofBerkeley.Org) and subscribe to our email list for

- Special Events
- Staged Readings
- Audition Notices
- Two-for-One Nights and Other Discounts
- Season Tickets – And More!

### **Board of Directors**

Anna Andersen, Paula Bauer, Michael R. Cohen, Robert Estes, Margaret Gudmundsson, Bob Gudmundsson, Martha Luehrmann, William Martinelli, Emmy Pierce, Alecks Rundell, Vicki Siegel, Jerome Solberg

**Special Thanks To:** Michael Storm and TheatreFIRST, Vicki Siegel, Paula Bauer, Golden Gate Portables, the City of Berkeley, Michael Prizmich, Mr. Gums the cat, and Jerome Solberg's neighbors for tolerating 6 weeks of rehearsal in his backyard.

*Acts I is approximately 50 minutes long  
15 minute mission*

*Acts II is approximately 30 minutes long*

## **Cast**

### *In Alphabetical Order*

Hamlet.....Max Chervin  
Fortinbras.....Patrick Glenn  
Ophelia.....Sarah Guerrero  
Horatio.....AnJu Hyppolite  
Claudius.....Bruce Kaplan  
Bernardo.....Martha Luehrmann  
Osric.....Ann O'Connell  
Polish Maiden (8/24 and 25).....Lauren Rosenfield  
Laertes.....Nils Skudra  
Polish Maiden (8/31, 9/1&2).....Katie Tandy  
Polish Maiden.....Hannah Tobin-Bloch  
Polonius.....Jeffrey Trescott  
Marcellus.....Peter Weiss  
Gertrude.....Alison Whismore  
Captain/Ambassador.....Susannah Wood

## **Production Crew**

Director.....Michael R. Cohen  
Stage Manager.....Hannah Tobin-Bloch  
Assistant Stage Manager.....Katie Tandy  
Assistant Stage Manager.....Lauren Rosenfield  
Set Design.....Allie Blanchard  
Costume Design.....Helen Slomowitz  
Props/Art Direction.....Crystal Barnes and Molly Tsutsui  
Master Carpenter.....Robert Gudmundsson  
Master of Rigging.....Alecks Rundell  
Graphic Design.....Anna Anderson, Jerome Solberg  
Producer/Program.....Jerome Solberg

### *Summer 2013 Performance Schedule*

Saturday/Sunday

August 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup>

and

September 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>

### *Special Labor Day Performance*

September 2<sup>nd</sup>

**All performances begin at 4 p.m.**

(seating begins at 3 p.m.)

**John Hinkel Park**

41 Somerset Ave, Berkeley, CA

*Art will make you free - but paint, lumber, permits, and toilets  
are not - your contributions are welcome!*

## Cast and Crew Biographies

*In Alphabetical Order*

**Crystal Barnes** and **Molly Tsutsui** (Props and Art Direction), a mother and daughter team, admit they are Jacks of All Trades when it comes to the arts. They won't admit, however, to being masters of none. Thank you for the opportunity to work on *Fortinbras*.

**Allie Blanchard** (Set Design) was born in 1988 in New Milford, CT. She grew up in Florida, and received a B.F.A in drawing from the University of Florida in 2011. She then graduated from the San Francisco Art Institute in May of 2013 with an M.F.A. in painting. Her mediums range from drawing and painting to printmaking, sculpture, bookmaking, and installation. She currently lives and works in San Francisco, and has participated in multiple shows around the Bay Area, including a solo show at the Diego Rivera Gallery. Her work was published in the SF Chronicle in 2012

**Michael R. Cohen** (Director) served for 25 years as Director of Performing Arts at Rosemead High School east of Los Angeles. A member of Actors' Equity, he was assistant stage manager for the Barn Theater in Augusta, Michigan, and stage manager for the Ensemble Studio Theater and the Bilingual Foundation of the Arts in Los Angeles. He recently directed a staged reading of Havel's *The Memorandum* for AEB, as well as *Packrat Gene* by Margy Kahn for Ross Valley Players RAW program, where he directed *Pete's Place* last October. He holds a BA in Theater Arts from UCLA and a MA in directing from San Diego State University.

**Max Chervin** (Hamlet) is very excited to tell people he's played Hamlet, and omit the fact that he only had to learn less than 20 lines of actual Shakespeare. Max previously appeared with Actors Ensemble in a staged reading of Wilde's *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.* Max also recently was the Sound Board Operator for *Rock 'n Roll*. Max has also played Caldwell B. Cladwell in *Urinetown: the Musical* and Wilbur in *Hairspray*.

**Patrick Glenn** (*Fortinbras*) is thrilled to be working with Actors Ensemble once again. He previously performed with AEB as Rosencrantz in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Raised in Albany CA, Patrick has studied acting, improv, comedy, and drama in San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles, though he holds no fancy-pants academic degrees in those subjects. A consummate single-threat, Patrick neither sings nor dances. He would like to thank his awesome parents, sisters, brothers-in-law, girlfriend, friends, and every single audience member who made the trek out to John Hinkle Park.

**Sarah Guerrero** (Ophelia) is thrilled and tickled to be in her first Actors Ensemble show with such a hilarious cast. She recently graduated from Stanford University (sorry guys...Go Card!), where

she studied International Relations and Drama. Shortly thereafter she produced and performed in *Pawn: A New Musical* at the New York International Fringe Festival and the Daegu International Musical Festival in Korea. Other favorite credits include the Beggar Woman (*Sweeney Todd*), Belle (*Beauty and the Beast*), Viola (*Twelfth Night*), Beatrice (*Much Ado About Nothing*) and Nora (*A Doll's House*).

**AnJu Hyppolite** (Horatio) is delighted to be Horatio. She is humbled to be working with such a talented cast and director. AnJu was last seen on stage in a 2-month Bay Area tour of *The Vagina Monologues*. Her theatrical appearances also include *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and Pan Theater's production of *The Vagina Monologues*. AnJu's proudest film credits are *Lou's Prey* (Billy's Girlfriend), *Straight Jacket* (Erica), and *Where the Socks Go* (Social Worker). AnJu trains in the actor workshops at the American Conservatory Theater. She looks forward to adding additional theater roles to her acting arsenal and hopes her debut with AEB begets a lasting alliance.

**Bruce Kaplan** (Claudius) Bruce is delighted to be onstage again with AEB, where he made his very first stage appearance in 2000 in *Murder at the Vicarage*. He recently appeared in *The Haunting* for San Leandro Players and *The Cripple of Inishmaan* and *The Life of Galileo*, both at Masquers Playhouse. Last summer he played the lunatic Putnam in the musical *Jip, His Story* for Marsh Youth Theatre. Other roles include Robert in *Proof*, Prosecutor Knight in *The Scottsboro Boys Trial*, and Artie in *House of Blue Leaves*. In 2001, he won the Goodman Choice Award for *Orphans*. Thanks for supporting community theatre!

**Ann O'Connell** (Osric) Ann is excited to act once again with Actors Ensemble in this hilarious show. Ann was last seen in *Rock and Roll* with AEB and has acted in various roles from *Puck* to *Miss Prism* in England and the Caribbean. She moved to the Bay Area 2 years ago and is still managing to hang on to her English accent (unlike her children!).

**Lauren Rosenfield** (Polish Maiden) recently returned to the Bay Area after a year in Madrid, Spain where she co-directed a cross-cultural production of Sam Shepard's *Tongues*. She has worked as assistant dramaturge at Cutting Ball Theatre, assistant director at the SF Fringe Festival, and literary assistant at Playwright's Foundation. During the day she is the Development Coordinator at the educational non-profit, Citizen Schools.

**Alecks Rundell** (Master Rigger) is happy to be working with Max and the rest of talented production crew and grateful to the Actors Ensemble for supporting fabulous live art, especially *Journey of Light, a Glo-Opera*, which recently played the SF Fringe Festival this

past September. Please support AE of Berkeley for their contributions to community art. And Love to Priscilla.

**Helen Slomowitz** (Costumes) is happy to be a part of Actors Ensemble of Berkeley & costuming another show. She has Costume Designed in theatre, TV & film in the Bay Area as well as L.A. & the East Coast. Helen would like to thank the cast, crew & director for all their help, patience, input & just plain marvelousness!

This is **Nils Skudras's** (Laertes) first show with Actors Ensemble. Nils has appeared in previous productions of *Grease*, *Dead Men Tell No Tales*, and *A Few Good Men* and has taken classes at Berkeley Rep, CalShakes and Playhouse Merced. He is about to begin his senior year at UC Berkeley where he is a History Major and Theatre/Performing Arts minor. In his spare time Nils plays piano, reads voraciously, watches historical films, musicals and dramas, draws, and hangs out with his gorgeous Bichon Frise, Beauregard, who has his own Facebook page and a growing list of fans.

**Katie Tandy** (Polish Maiden) is a thespian import from Brooklyn, New York; she's called Oakland home for just over a year now. She is thrilled to be part of *Fortinbras*, her second production with the AEB, having recently completed a staged reading of *Havel's The Unveiling* at Live Oak Theater. Last fall she played Natalie Wood in *Stalking Christopher Walken*, which won Best of Fringe in San Francisco. When she's not traversing the stage, she works as a freelance writer and culture hunter. Much love to her darling deviants who always come out to clap and congratulations to the cast – you're hilarious.

**Hannah Tobin-Bloch** (stage management/Polish Maiden) is so glad to return this summer to the lovely cast and crew at Actor's Ensemble. She has previously worked at several other theaters in the Bay Area, but most recently had the pleasure to Assistant Direct with the amazing cast and crew of *Legally Blonde* at Stagedoor Conservatory. Thank you to my mom & dad for the seemingly endless supply of coffee and smiles.

**Jeff Trescott** (Polonius) moved to the Bay Area in 1981 with 17 acting friends who became the core of the Theatre of the Blue Rose. Over the next 15 years he learned his craft, appearing in over 60 TBR productions. Since then he has performed with various Bay Area theatres, including the Willows, Lamplighters, Lafayette Town Hall, Shotgun Players, and Actors Ensemble of Berkeley.

**Peter Weiss** (Marcellus) comes to Berkeley from Los Angeles where he appeared in films, television shows, and theatre. His stage roles include everything from Atahualpa in Peter Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* to John Laroquette's sidekick in the original comedy farce, *Tarboosh*. This is his first production with Actors Ensemble, and he is delighted to join the company.



**Alison Whismore** (Gertrude) is new to the Bay Area, having toured with the same international theatre company which performed in-house written plays throughout Europe and North America in an eclectic range of venues. Alison has a BA in Drama from Manchester University (UK) and trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in London. Most recently, she just finished working with San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's summer camps, and will be performing with Sacramento Theatre Company's upcoming production of *Pride and Prejudice*.

**Susannah Wood** (Captain/Ambassador) has enjoyed working with Actors Ensemble of Berkeley in staged readings of Havel's *Memorandum* and Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part III*. She has performed in theater, radio theater, children's theater, and musical theater/light opera in Chicago, Boston and the Bay Area. This fall she will appear with Synergy Theater (long form improvisation) and with Do It Live Productions, SF, in *The Golden Dragon*.

*Don't miss the 3rd show in our 2013 Season! (our 56<sup>th</sup> – since 1957)*

## ***Picasso at the Lapin Agile***

**By Steve Martin**

**Directed by Anna Andersen**

*What is the nature of genius?*

**Opens Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at Live Oak Theatre**

Running through Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013

*Coming to Live Oak Theatre January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014*

## ***Relatively Speaking***

**Three One Act Plays:**

*Honeymoon Motel* by Woody Allen

*Talking Cure* by Ethan Coen

*George is Dead* by Elaine May

Running through Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014

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