

"Hamlet was so much funnier
after he was dead".



Actors Ensemble of Berkeley

info@aefberkeley.org
www.aefberkeley.org

KENSINGTON AMPHITHEATRE

**59 Arlington Ave
Kensington, CA**

July 2nd, 3rd, 4th
16th & 17th
at 4 pm
Other dates & locations TBD



THE REST IS SILENCE

HILARIOUS

directed by Michael R. Cohen

FORTINBRAS

by Lee Blessing

Not (quite) Shakespeare in the Park

About Actors Ensemble of Berkeley

Actors Ensemble (**AE**) has been around the block (and just around the corner from you) since 1957, making us the longest-running stage company in Berkeley. Since 1965 we have performed primarily at Live Oak Theatre in North Berkeley. Recently we have also taken the opportunity to bring the magic of theatre to the John Hinkel Park Amphitheatre, a wonderful outdoor space with a vast legacy of performance.

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!

Actors Ensemble of Berkeley
P.O. Box 663
Berkeley, California 94701
www.aeofberkeley.org
info@AEofBerkeley.org



Check out www.AEofBerkeley.Org and subscribe to our email list for

- Staged Readings
- Audition Notices
- Two-for-One Nights and Other Discounts

Board of Directors

Michael R. Cohen, Nathan Bogner, Jeff Trescott, Jerome Solberg, Tracy Baxter, Jane Goodwin, Paulette Herring, Meryn MacDougall, Gabriel Ross, Victoria F. Siegel, Ian Wilcox*, Crystal Brown*, Susannah Wood*, Robert Estes*, Martha Luehrmann*, Norah Foster*
*=alternate.

Performance Schedule:

Weekends at 3pm July 2nd-24th plus July 4th

No performance July 9th

Kensington Amphitheatre

59 Arlington Ave, Kensington, CA 94707

The Performance is approx. 2 hours, with 1 intermission

All performances are free of charge

*Actors Ensemble is supported in part
by a grant from The City of Berkeley
Civic Arts Commission*



FORTINBRAS
by Lee Blessing
Cast and Crew

Fortinbras.....	Kenneth Matis
Hamlet.....	Liddy Freeman
Horatio.....	Helen Kim
Osrice.....	Ronnie Anderson
Ophelia.....	Kara S. Poon
Gertrude.....	Lisa Wang
Claudius.....	Bruce Kaplan
Polonius.....	Jeff Trescott
Laertes/Marcellus.....	Illan Halpern
Polish Maidens.....	Lyra Smith and Miranda Tilley
Barnardo/English Ambassador.....	Abe Karplus
Captain of the Norwegian Army.....	Isaiah Tweed
Director.....	Michael R. Cohen
Set Design.....	Isaiah Tweed
Costume Design.....	Paula Aiello
Props.....	Susan Dunn and Jerome Solberg
Music/Effects.....	Michael R. Cohen
Stage Management.....	Mel Feder and Lyra Smith
Fight Choreography.....	Jeff Trescott
Hair/Makeup.....	Kara S. Poon
Graphic Design.....	Sophie Ruf
Producer.....	Jerome Solberg

Fortinbras is presented by special arrangement with
Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

Actors Ensemble thanks **Temple Beth Hillel**, Richmond for
providing rehearsal space. <https://tbhrichmond.org>

Actors Ensemble thanks **Monkeybrains** for letting us use
their warehouse for some rehearsals and set fabrication.

Monkeybrains (<https://www.monkeybrains.net>) is a San
Francisco-based internet service provider (ISP) founded by
Rudy Rucker and Alex Menendex in 1998. Monkeybrains
operates a hybrid network of fiber optic and high capacity
wireless links servicing over 14,000 locations with over 50 new
locations coming online every week. Monkeybrains takes a
progress stance on Net Neutrality and we believe the Internet
should be secure, unbiased, and available to all.

DIRECTORS NOTE

In 2013 Actors Ensemble of Berkeley presented *Fortinbras* as our first production in the amphitheater at John Hinkel Park and this year we planned to revisit Lee Blessing's sequel to *Hamlet* to mark our return to that park. However, as the adage goes, "Man plans and God laughs" or "The best laid plans of mice and men...". I'm sure you get the idea. So, after our producer Jerome Solberg did his magic, here we are in Kensington where our talented cast presents a play that seems to become more relevant as time passes.

According to Henri Bergson, "laughter serves a social function: its purpose is to gently but firmly correct..." This play's corrections are not always gentle, but they are always hilarious. The more absurdly anachronistic our play gets and the sillier it gets the more truth it tells. And this story is all about telling the truth. When Fortinbras posits that "...we've got to have a new story." Horatio responds, "But there is only the truth." Later when Hamlet declares that, "The story must be told." Ophelia counters with, "From whose point of view? Yours?". Is the truth absolute or is it open to interpretation? Lee Blessing's message is obvious and now when it seems that truth is constantly bent or ignored for nefarious reasons, *Fortinbras* becomes even more relevant and important than when it premiered.

We hope we can make you laugh a lot, but we also hope we can cause you to think a little about the not so gentle corrections this play makes. Thank you for supporting Actors Ensemble of Berkeley.

Michael R. Cohen, June 2022

Donate to Actors Ensemble!

Fortinbras is presented Free of Charge, but the production does not come without costs. Our volunteer board of directors works very hard without compensation, but even so we depend on your contributions to pay insurance, rent space, build sets, buy and/or construct props, and most importantly provide some funds to help support our actors, designers, and crew as they create magic on stage we hope you enjoy.

Donate to Actors Ensemble via our website: www.aeofberkeley.org
Or send a check: P.O. Box 663, Berkeley, CA 94703
We are a 501(3)c organization.

Thanks to Ruth Giron Wong, Lisa Wang, Jeff Trescott, Jerome Solberg, and all those who have supported Actors Ensemble over the past year.

Cast and Crew Biographies

In Alphabetical Order

Paula Dodd Aiello (*Costume Designer*) has been sewing forever but she became hooked on costume design and creation in 1973 when she found herself in the magnificently populated world of the Renaissance Faire. She has worked with the wonderful folks of **AE** for about 10 years (for examples of her work, see www.sewbecoming.com). **Fortinbras** may not be pure Shakespeare, but she will never miss an opportunity to play around with ruffs, doublets, and codpieces.

Ronnie Anderson (*Osric*) is excited to return to the stage, after a decade long hiatus, especially with **Actors Ensemble** where he directed *Lips Together, Teeth Apart, She Loves Me*, and produced *Other People's Money*. Other productions he's directed include *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in Ukraine, Mack & Mable, Fools, Communicating Doors*, and *Twelfth Night*. His favorite acting roles are Charlie from *The Foreigner*, Jesus from *Godspell*, and Lord Evelyn from *Anything Goes*. Ronnie dedicates his performance to his mentor, the late Ralph Miller: long-time **AE** Board Member, true humanitarian, brilliant actor, and good friend.

Michael R Cohen (*Director*) has directed *The Skin of Our Teeth, An Enemy of the People, Twelfth Night, Panhandle, The Talking Cure*, and *Fortinbras* (2013) for **Actors Ensemble** and currently serves as board president. He is currently a member at large of the Ross Valley Players board where, as chair of the Ross Alternative Works (RAW) committee, he has produced, directed and designed the sets for numerous works including the critically acclaimed production of *The Packrat Gene*. For 25 years he served as Director of Performing Arts at Rosemead High School, a public high school east of Los Angeles. An AEA member, 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.

Susan Dunn (*Props*) is excited to cross swords with other *Fortinbras* folks this July. She has worked in all phases of production for various Bay Area Theaters and is looking forward to performances (someday) in her favorite John Hinkel Park! Susan is on staff at Altarena Playhouse in Alameda, and has worked at Berkeley Playhouse and Hillbarn Theatre as well. Lets bring on the Bard!

This is **Mel Feder's** first endeavor as *Stage Manager* and he couldn't be more thrilled. As a recent retiree he has now found a new passion in theater. His limited experience included (a long time ago) a double

casting as Jacques and Corin in a Cal Berkeley Master class production of *As You Like It* and the Director and teacher of an elementary school production of *The Emperor's New Clothes*. Mel has a B.A. in English and a California State Teaching Credential, both earned at Cal State, Northridge.

Liddy Freeman (*Hamlet*) began performing on stage at age nine as Marta in *The Sound of Music* and continued acting until graduating from the University of Florida with a B.A. in theater. Her favorite roles include playing Alice in *Closer* and Martha in *Waiting for the Parade*. After an eleven-year break from acting, during which Liddy explored her interests in photography, tech sales, dance, and energy healing, she is SO excited to be back on stage as Hamlet in **Fortinbras!**

Illan F. Halpern (Laertes/Marcellus) has acted in plays in Brazil, Canada and the east and west coasts of the United States. He holds a Ph.D. in Physics from UC Berkeley, and a minor in Theater Arts from MIT. After being in two **AE** play readings (*Lysistrata* and *Machinal*), he is thrilled to be making his main stage debut with **Actors Ensemble** in this production of **Fortinbras**.

Bruce Kaplan (he/him) (*Claudius*) is so excited to be performing again in the great outdoors with AE. In previous summers, he has appeared here in *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio), *The Complete Works of Shakespeare, Abridged*, and yes, as Claudius in **AE's Fortinbras** in 2013. Other favorite roles include Jaques in *As You Like It* and Buck in *Rocket Man* (Masquers Playhouse). If you love outdoor theater, head over to Orinda Community Center in September for *Pygmalion* (Doolittle). Thanks for supporting community theater!

Abe Karplus (*Barnardo*) has been acting since the age of four, performing with West Performing Arts of Santa Cruz, UC Santa Barbara's Shakespeare in the Park, and the BL Rocky Horror shadowcast, among many others. This is his second time with **Actors Ensemble**: previously, he played M. de Bonnefoi in *The Imaginary Invalid*. Outside of theater, Abe is a software engineer, working on designing communications satellites to bring internet access to underserved areas.

Helen Kim (*Horatio*) is thrilled to be working again with **Actors Ensemble**. She is a Bay Area actor who has previously worked with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Actors Space, and Ross Valley Players. Her training includes American Conservatory Theater, Voicetrax, and The Groundlings. Love and gratitude to Matt and all who have encouraged and supported her.

Kenneth Matis (*Fortinbras*) is excited to be performing in his first production for **Actors Ensemble**. Previously, he's had roles throughout the Bay Area from Marin to Half Moon Bay. Most recently, he played the Simon Bright for San Leandro Player's *The Games Afoot* and in *Much Ado About Nothing* for the Food Bank Players in Alameda.

Kara S. Poon (*Ophelia, Makeup Artist & Hair*) studied comparative literature, and theatre & performance studies at UC Berkeley (class of 2020), as well as English dramaturgy at the University of Cambridge. Her wide range of passions include screenwriting, playing the piano and saxophones, and exploring flavorful wines. Kara's array of experiences around the world, as well as her identity as a disabled artist, has informed her to tell stories in as universally accessible ways as possible.

Sophie Ruf (Graphic Design) is an architect and graphic designer who has loved theater ever since her nascent glue-eating days. Originally from the humid midwest, she now chirpily draws, twirls, and frequents local theater in the Bay Area. Today she is thrilled to doodle and help **Actors Ensemble of Berkeley!** "The play's the thing."

Lyra Smith (*Polish Maiden, Co-Stage Manager*) is overjoyed to be returning to the stage after a long hiatus. She has been active behind the scenes at Ross Valley Players as an Assistant Stage Manager for their productions of *Moll Flanders*, *The Odd Couple*, and *She Loves Me*. Most recently she served as Stage Manager for RVP's production of *The Packrat Gene* directed by Michael R. Cohen.

Miranda Tilley (*Polish Maiden*) is excited to be doing her third show with **Actors Ensemble**, her first appearance being in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* as Grusha. She's a recent graduate of Sonoma State University and sends her love to Sam.

Jeff Trescott (*Polonius, Fight Choreography*) has appeared in many roles in the Bay Area and elsewhere, including Hamlet in *Hamlet*, Polonius in *Hamlet*, and Barrymore in *I Hate Hamlet*.

Isaiah Tweed (*Set Designer, Captain of the Norwegian Army*) is an artist, designer, world traveler, and now an actor! He previously collaborated with the Santa Fe-based art collective Meow Wolf and is now based in Oakland. During the day he spends his time as an integral part of the Monkeybrains team, providing world class internet service throughout the Bay Area. Previous to **Fortinbras** he acted as the fabricator/builder for **Actors Ensemble's** production of *Mothers All* for its performances at Monkeybrains and Lighting/Build/Fabricator

on *Galatea a Rock Musical* at Counter Pulse Theater in San Francisco in 2019. He sends his love to Raecyne.

Lisa Wang (*Gertrude*) is thrilled to be returning to **Actors Ensemble** and has wonderful memories of performing outdoor theatre with them, which is a special brand of magic. Prior productions include: *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, Abridged, The Marriage of Figaro* and *Pride and Prejudice*. Lisa is an actor/improviser who has performed with various companies in addition to Actors Ensemble, including Berkeley Shakespeare Company, Contra Costa Civic Theatre, San Leandro Players and Playwrights Center of SF. You can catch Lisa performing improvised theatre regularly in San Francisco at [BATS Improv](#) as a Company member. More at [improv.org](#).

What's next for Actors Ensemble:

In 2023, in an amphitheater or theatre near you

Dragonfly, a Tale of Rostam and Sohrab

by Bijan Mofid

translated/adapted and directed by Zara Houshmand

A collaboration with **Darvag Theatre Company**

A modernist version of the legendary tale of the great warrior Rostam and his equally valiant son Sohrab. In the fog of war, despite the protests of lovers and mothers, and embroiled in the schemes of politicians, they meet in battle, Rostam killing his son without knowing his identity until the last moment. A story of the conflict between duty and love, and the tragedy and folly of war. **Dragonfly** is the work of the great Iranian playwright Bijan Mofid, first performed just before his death in 1985, and never in this version derived from the original script in Farsi. Mofid based his play on the story of Rostam and Sohrab found in the *Shahnameh*, or *Persian Book of Kings*, the national epic of Iran completed by Ferdowsi in the 11th century.

In 2022/2023 and beyond

Staged Readings

Productions Large and Small,

in venues in and around Berkeley California.

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Make a proposal to the board: proposals@aeofberkeley.org

Join the board or just volunteer and help us move forward!

info@aeofberkeley.org