

**JOIN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS FOR THEIR TENTH ANNIVERSARY
POLYPHONE FESTIVAL, APRIL 18-21**

Annual Festival of New Musicals to celebrate its 10th anniversary with two fully-staged developing works and a concert of music from festivals past

PHILADELPHIA (April 10, 2024) – As April begins, the University of the Arts' Ira Brind School of Theater Arts prepares to present its tenth annual Polyphone Festival of New and Emerging Musicals. Two fully-staged musicals-in-progress will be in repertory April 18 through April 21, as well as a curated tenth anniversary concert on April 20 and 21:

The Doctor is Dead

Book, Music, & Lyrics by é boylan
Co-directed by é boylan and Rose Freeman
Music Direction by Luke McGinnis
Vocal Direction by Maya Kociba

A contemporary fantasy for queer imaginations, *The Doctor is Dead* follows a secret society of trans and neurodivergent outcasts living underground. Using their unique abilities to investigate a mysterious empty coffin, our outcasts sing a song of leaving, of grief that becomes giving, of what begins in the end.

Content Disclosures:

Themes of: Grief, Loss of home, and Organized religion.

Presence of a coffin onstage.

For photosensitive audience members, there will be sequences of moving lights, flashlights turning on and off, and scenes both in dim as well as very bright lighting.

Sweetwater

Book & Lyrics by Patricia Noonan
Music by Liz Filios and Sean Mahoney
Directed by Megan Nicole O'Brian
Music Direction by Garrick Vaughan

As World War II shakes the nation, sisters Beth and Frankie journey to Sweetwater, Texas, where they join with women from across the country to fly for the US Army Air Forces.

From the fringes of the history books, *Sweetwater* brings the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) center stage in a story of duty, love, sisterhood, and the joys and costs that come with being pioneers.

Sweetwater contains allusions to war, combat, violence, and the atrocities of WWII and the Holocaust as well as references to death, grief, physical risk, and danger. The piece engages with and honors the struggles this group of pilots faced in the 1940s, including covert and overt forms of racism and misogyny.

Polyphone 10th Anniversary Concert

Directed by James Bruenger-Arreguin
Music Direction by Joey Rice

Revisiting a decade of Polyphone, the 10th Anniversary Concert features songs and artists from all past years of the festival. Truth Bachman (Shapeshifters 2021) and Daniel Henri Emond (Kill the Whale 2021), our special guest performers, alongside current UArts students, will celebrate the cutting-edge work developed at the university that has pushed the musical theater form toward a limitless and exciting future.

Featuring songs from:

The Total Bent (Stew & Heidi Rodewald)
The Elementary Spacetime Show (César Alvarez)
Annie Salem (Heather Christian & Rachel Chavkin)
The Material World (Dan Fishback)
Folk Wandering (Jaclyn Backhaus, Annie Tippe & Mike Brun)
Normativity (Jaime Jarrett)
White Girl in Danger (Michael R. Jackson)
Cowboy Bob (Jeanna Phillips, Molly Beach Murphy & Alex Thrailkill)
Retrograde (Sav Souza & Sarah Flaim)
Marie in Tomorrow Land (Maggie-Kate Coleman & Erato A. Kremmyda)
Akira and The Merpeople (Claire Tran & Teresa Lotz)
Don't Stop Me (Dave Malloy & Krista Knight)
Red & Black (Sheridan Merrick, Nick Hatcher & David Thomas)
TL;DR: Thelma, Louise; Dyke Remix (EllaRose Chary & Brandon James Gwinn)
Kill the Whale (Daniel Henri Emond)
Shapeshifters (Truth Bachman)
Dear Mr. C (Tidtaya Sinutoke, Lily Ali-Oshatz & Naomi Matlow)
WITS (C&C Inniss)

Schedule of Events

The Doctor is Dead

Public Performances:
April 18 at 8:00pm
April 20 at 5:00pm
April 21 at 5:00pm

Sweetwater

Public Performances:
April 19 at 8:00pm
April 20 at 2:00pm
April 21 at 8:00pm

10th Anniversary Concert

Public Performances:

April 20 at 8:00pm

April 21 at 2:00pm

All events will take place at the Arts Bank Mainstage, 601 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147

Tickets are now available at <https://universityofthearts.ticketleap.com/>.

About the Polyphone Festival

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Maggie-Kate Coleman, Polyphone represents an institutional effort by University of the Arts to change how musicals are born and how young theater makers are trained. By putting student actors and creatives in collaboration with cutting-edge artists of new musicals and dedicating university resources to new works as they are being born, Polyphone has made a transformative impact on hundreds of young artists, audiences and the field of new musicals as a whole.

The American Theatre Wing featured Polyphone in its Emmy-nominated series Working In Theatre in 2017. <http://americantheatrewing.org/working-in-the-theatre/polyphone/> Composer and Writer César Alvarez served as Polyphone's artistic director from its founding in 2015 through 2019.

The Polyphone Festival would not be possible without the generosity of Peter Haas, and Doug Kreitzberg and the late Suzanne Kreitzberg, whose memory we hope to honor through our work. We are so grateful for their continued support.

For press inquiries please contact Lindsay Cram at lcram@uarts.edu.

For regular updates and creative content follow Polyphone on Instagram at [@polyphonefestival](https://www.instagram.com/polyphonefestival)

Musicals are currently in development and are not open for critical review at this time.

About University of the Arts

University of the Arts' mission is simple: to advance human creativity. Established in 1876, UArts believes creativity is the most essential skill for success in today's society and has educated generations of groundbreaking artists, performers, designers and creative leaders for 145 years.

After being granted university status in 1987, University of the Arts became the largest institution of its kind in the nation, offering programs in design, fine arts, media arts, crafts, music, dance, theater and writing. It now features 22 undergraduate arts majors, 13 graduate programs and the nation's first PhD program in Creativity. UArts is also home to innovative centers across disciplines, including the Center for Immersive Media, Lightbox Film Center, Philadelphia Art Alliance and Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery. Learn more about UArts.

Selected Polyphone Artists and Staff:

Maggie-Kate Coleman - (she/her) Artistic Director, Polyphone Festival

MK is a lyricist, librettist, playwright, curator, educator, and cheerleader for new work. She is the recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant and the 2023 Richard Rodgers Award for MARIE IN

TOMORROW LAND created with Erato A. Kremmyda and Sam Pinkleton. Selected works include POP! with Anna K. Jacobs (World Premiere Yale Rep); THE GIFT OF THE MAGI with Andrew Cooke and Jeffrey Hatcher (Arkansas Rep); and WE WILL NOT BE SILENT (NYMF), FIELD TRIP: A CLIMATE CABARET (Superhero Clubhouse), THE WAY THEY LIVE (The Civilians at The Met), and HOTEL MEDITERANEE (Wild Project) all with Kremmyda. Her work has been developed with support from MacDowell, the Orchard Project, Mercury Store, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat, NAMT, Space on Ryder Farm, Ars Nova, Catwalk Institute, The American Music Theater Project, and The Civilians. MFA NYU Tisch School of the Arts, BA Ithaca College. She is a proud 2019 Polyphone Festival alumni artist. @maggiehyphenkate

Joey Rice - (he/him) Music Supervisor, Polyphone Festival

Joey is a music director, collaborative pianist, and educator based out of New York. He has collaborated with and arranged for artists such as Kristin Chenoweth, Jeff Richmond, Mary-Mitchel Campbell, Stephen Schwartz, the Colorado Symphony, and the Boston POPS. He is presently on the piano faculty at the University of the Arts, is a teaching artist in the theater schools at AMDA and Pace, and has served as a music director and staff accompanist for the Broadway Artists Alliance, Broadway Workshop, BroadwayEvolved, and Music Theatre Philly. A proud UArts and Polyphone alumni (BM Piano Performance 2022, Polyphone 2021) he is passionate about encouraging developing artists to collaborate on new works as it enhances their ability to revisit existing material with a more expansive point of view.

é boylan (they/them) Book, Lyrics, and Music / Co-Director, *The Doctor is Dead*

é is a NYC based director, creator, and composer developing new work towards trans liberation. Selected Honors Include: New Writer in Residence at Lincoln Center Theater, 2022 Jonathan Larson Grant (Finalist), 2022 Relentless Award (Honorable mention), 2023 June Bingham New Playwright Commission (Finalist), 2019 Trans Lab Fellow, 2019-20 Manhattan Theatre Club Directing Fellow, 2021 Johnny Mercer Foundation Songwriter, 2021 Prospect Theater Co. MT Lab, 2022 MTFxR Garage Artist, 2020-22 Roundabout Theatre Co. Directors Group, and 2020-23 Musical Theatre Factory's Makers Cohort. www.eboylan.com

Patricia Noonan (she/her) Book & Lyrics, *Sweetwater*

Patricia is a writer, actor, and educator. Her work includes book & lyrics for the musicals *Sweetwater* (developed/presented at Goodspeed and the Philadelphia Women's Theater Festival), *Learning How to Drown* (developed/presented at Goodspeed, Finger Lakes Musical Theater Festival, Boston College), *The Adventures of Ara* (developed for Bridge Arts Ensemble), and the upcoming game/RPG *Defenders of the Wild* for Outlandish Games. As an actor, she has appeared at the Roundabout, Lincoln Center, City Center, Arden, and theaters across the country and created roles in Maury Yeston's *Death Takes a Holiday* (Sophia), *Jane Austen's Pride & Prejudice* (Elizabeth Bennet), *The Brontes* (Charlotte), *Signs of Life* (Lorelei), *Baby Case* (Betty Gow), and *Neurosis* (Abby). She's a proud teaching artist with Arts Ignite, People's Light & Theatre, and at schools throughout the northeast. www.patricianoonan.com

Liz Filios (she/her) Composer, *Sweetwater*

Liz is a Philadelphia-based actor, musician and teaching artist. Compositions include *An Iliad* (Lantern Theater), *Twelfth Night O Lo Que Quieras* (DelShakes), *The Winter's Tale* (Folger Shakespeare Theatre),

and *The Little Princess* (Quintessence Theatre Group). Additional sound design and music direction credits include *The Tempest* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Round House Theatre), *D-Pad* (Theatre Exile), *The Ice Princess*, *Hamlet*, *Shakespeare In Love* (Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival), and *Dance Nation* (Temple University). Liz is the Director of Artist Training at People's Light, an Independence Foundation Fellow, and a recipient of the F. Otto Haas Award. She holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from the University of Michigan.

www.lizfilios.com

James Bruenger-Arreguin (he/him) Director/Co-Curator, *10th Anniversary Concert*

Born in Los Cabos, Mexico, and raised in Denver, CO. James is a Latino director and practitioner working in the Creative Development office at Disney Theatrical Group. Directing credits include: Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center: *Elf The Musical*, *Guadalupe in the Guest Room* (2021-2022 Henry Awards for Outstanding Direction of a Play and Outstanding Production of a Play). He was a recent Van Lier Directing Fellow at Repertorio Español and was part of the 2022-2023 Directors Group at Roundabout Theatre Company. Other Creative Credits: Repertorio Español: *Primero Sueño*, *La Extinción de los Dinosaurios* (Director). Southern Colorado Repertory Theatre: *The Last Five Years* (Director), *Evita* (Director/Choreographer) *Fly By Night* (Choreographer), University of the Arts: *Visiones del Cuerpo*, *Pop The Musical Exhibition*, and *Momentos* (Director). James holds a BFA in Directing, Playwriting + Production from the University of the Arts. // www.directordeteatro.com

Rose Freeman (zie/zir) Co-Director, *The Doctor is Dead*

Rose Freeman (zie/zir) is an award winning stage director, teacher, writer, and producer of theatre and opera. Zie has directed many plays, environmental events, burlesque acts, nationally touring hip-hop concerts, and new musicals and operas. Zie managed monster truck rallies and ran a sailboat company. Freeman occasionally acts, including touring with Tetro di Viti. Freeman writes libretto for musicals and operas. Zie co-founded Third Eye Theatre Ensemble. Freeman has worked with Mercury Store, Wolf Trap Opera, Mannes School of Music, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and many other fine institutions. Freeman is represented by Marvel Arts Management. www.Rosefreeman.org

Megan Nicole O'Brien (she/her) Director, *Sweetwater*

Megan is a five-time Barrymore Nominee and a UArts Alum. For seventeen years, she was the Co-Founder and Resident Director of the award-winning 11th Hour Theatre Company. Some favorite directing credits include: the World Premieres of *Big Red Sun* by John Jiler & Georgia Stitt and *Field Hockey Hot!* by Michael Ogborn, *Blues in the Night* & *The Bomb-itty of Errors* (Milwaukee Rep.), *Little Shop of Horrors* (11th Hour/Theatre Horizon), *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* & *Reefer Madness* (11th Hour/Montgomery Theater), *Rent* (11th Hour/Drexel University), *The Adding Machine Musical* & *High Fidelity* (University of the Arts), *Spring Awakening* and *Big Fish* (Temple University), *See What I Wanna See*, *City of Angels*, *Bonnie & Clyde*, *Dogfight*, *Altar Boyz*, *Rooms*, *Avenue X*, *The Wild Party*, *The Secret Garden*, *The Bomb-itty of Errors* & *tick, tick...BOOM!* (11th Hour Theatre Company). Megan is currently pursuing her MFA in Musical Theater Collaboration at Temple University. In addition to directing, Megan has been a teaching artist for twenty years, but her favorite job is being a mom to two awesome kids!

Luke McGinnis () Music Director, *The Doctor is Dead*

Maya Kociba (she/they) Vocal Director, *The Doctor is Dead*

Maya is originally from Cincinnati, OH where she attended the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music and received her Bachelor of Music in Music Education. During her time there, she was privileged enough to be able to work with musicians in the Cincinnati May Festival Chorus, perform at Cincinnati Music Hall with CCM's Community Women's Chorus, and travel to Kecskemét, Hungary for a two-week intensive in music pedagogy at the Kodály Institute. In addition to music education endeavors, she was also the music director for *Carousel* in 2018. That same year she toured with Austin Lamewona for the Ohio tour of his musical *Octets: A New Musical*, where she was the music director, contractor, and conductor. In 2022, she worked with Austin again as a transcriber, engraver, and composer for his newest musical *The Underground*. She will join him again as Music Director in 2023-2024 as the production team preps the show for its debut performance in August of 2024. She has been a private piano teacher for over 10 years, and has since added voice and ukulele students to her studio. She now lives in Southern New Jersey, where she is an elementary general music teacher in the Cherry Hill Public Schools and sings in the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia.

Garrick Vaughan (he/him) Music Director, *Sweetwater*

Garrick Vaughan is a classically trained tenor, actor, and music director from Philadelphia. Graduating with his degrees in Music Education and Vocal Performance from Temple University, Garrick has been active in the city's classical music scene, performing with Opera North Inc. at the Opera America Conference in 2012. Garrick has also been a finalist in the PHL LIVE Center Stage Classical Competition in 2014 and won in 2015. Garrick has shared the stage singing with Kristin Chenoweth and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Garrick's talents have been showcased across the country and internationally in the 2018 European tour of the musical *Hairs* and the Original USA Gospel Singers. Garrick played Harpo in the 2018 Barrymore Award-winning production of *The Color Purple*. Most recently Garrick made his Off-Broadway debut in the new musical *When We Get There*. You can find Garrick on all Social media @GarrickVaughan. "Follow Me and #catchdreams"