

STUDY GUIDE

GEFFEN
PLAYHOUSE

DRAGON LADY

PART I OF THE
DRAGON CYCLE



LOS ANGELES PREMIERE
DRAGON LADY

PART I OF THE DRAGON CYCLE

09.04–10.06.2024

GIL CATES THEATER

This guide is to be used for educational purposes only.

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

Brian Dunning, Alyssa Escalante, Mark J. Chaitin & Get Lit Players

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GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE TEACHING ARTISTS

Sean Michael Boozer, DeJuan Christopher, Paris Crayton III, Lyssa Deehan, Sidney Edwards, Ryan Hallahan, Aja Houston, BJ Lange, Tiffany Oglesby, Tara Ricasa, Gerry Tonella

ACCESSIBILITY AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

The theater has wheelchair and scooter-accessible locations where patrons can remain in their wheelchairs or transfer to theater seats.

OC OPEN CAPTION PERFORMANCE

Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024, 3:00pm — An LED sign will display the text of the live production in sync with the performance.

AD AUDIO DESCRIBED PERFORMANCE

Sunday, Sept. 22, 2024, 2:00pm — A performance audio describer will give live, verbal descriptions of actions, costumes, scenery, and other visual elements of the production.

ASL AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE

Sunday, Sept. 29 2024 at 2:00 pm — An ASL interpreter will be present in the house left.





SARA PORKALOB
PHOTO BY MICHAEL HENNINGER FOR
PITTSBURGH PUBLIC THEATER



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GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS THE LOS ANGELES PREMIERE OF

DRAGON LADY

PART I OF THE DRAGON CYCLE

WRITTEN & PERFORMED BY
SARA PORKALOB

DIRECTED BY
ANDREW RUSSELL

SCENIC DESIGNER
RANDY WONG-WESTBROOKE

LIGHTING DESIGNER
SPENSE MATUBANG

SOUND DESIGNER
ERIN BEDNARZ

ORIGINAL MUSIC & LYRICS
PETE IRVING

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
NICK CARVALHO

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
REBECCA K. HSIA

CAST



**SARA
PORKALOB**
ALL CHARACTERS



**PETE
IRVING**
GUITAR, VOCALS &
BAND LEADER



**JIMMY
AUSTIN**
TROMBONE



**MICKEY
STYLIN**
UPRIGHT BASS

ABOUT THE PLAY

OVERVIEW: On the eve of her 60th birthday, Maria Porkalob Sr. fires up her new karaoke machine to regale her granddaughter Sara with her astonishing life story. As a lounge singer who escaped a gangster-controlled nightclub in Manila to become a free-range mother of five in the United States, Maria is a matriarch not to be trifled with. Broadway star and storyteller Sara Porkalob embodies dozens of characters in a trigenerational tour-de-force performance that fuses killer karaoke with laugh-out-loud comedy to tell her family's incredible origin story.

TIME / SETTING: This play covers Maria Porkalob Senior's life from 1953-2005, ages 8-60 years old. The primary action happens in two locations: Bremerton, Washington & Manilla, Philippines.

RUNNING TIME: 2 hours, including one intermission.

AGE RECOMMENDATION: 12+

WARNINGS: Theatrical Haze • Flickering Lights • Loud Music • Loud Sound Effects • Gunshot Sound Effects

CONTENT ADVISORY: This production contains staged violence, mature content, sexual content, and profanity.

ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHIES



SARA PORKALOB *Playwright (she/they)*

Sara Porkalob is a theater maker, cultural worker, and creator of *The Dragon Cycle*, a trilogy of matrilineal musicals about her Filipino-American, badass family. Awards and nominations include: 2021 Princess Grace Award Winner for Theater, 2020 nominee Seattle Mayor's Arts Award, The Seattle Times "11 Movers and Shakers to Watch this Decade," 2019 nominee for Americans for the Arts Johnson Fellowship for Artists Transforming Communities, and Seattle Magazine's "2018's Most Influential People." She recently made her Broadway debut playing "Edward Rutledge" in the official revival of *1776*. She's a consultant with the City of Seattle and their Creative Strategies Initiative (CSI), a new City effort that uses arts- and culture-based approaches to build racial equity in non-arts policy areas like the environment, housing, workforce, and community development. @sporkalob & www.saraporkalob.com



ANDREW RUSSELL *Director (he/him)*

Andrew Russell is a theatre maker whose work is often inspired by real-life events, including *Stu for Silverton* (Intiman Theatre); *John Baxter is a Switch Hitter* (Intiman Theatre); *Full Gallop* (The Old Globe); and Sara Porkalob's *The Dragon Cycle*, featuring *Dragon Lady* (Intiman Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Pittsburgh Public Theatre), *Dragon Mama* (American Repertory Theatre, Diversionary Theatre), and *Dragon Baby*. As Producing Artistic Director of the Tony Award-winning Intiman Theatre in Seattle from 2011-2017, Andrew played a critical role in reorganizing and reopening the theater after its closure in 2011. He is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon School of Drama. @heyheyandyk, www.andrew-russell.com

OVERVIEW: THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines, an archipelagic nation in Southeast Asia, is located in the western Pacific Ocean. With a land area of approximately 300,000 square kilometers (about 115,830 square miles), it ranks as the second-largest archipelago in the world, consisting of over 7,641 islands.

The country is strategically positioned in both the Northern and Eastern hemispheres, and it lies along the Pacific Ring of Fire, making it prone to seismic and volcanic activity.

The Philippines shares maritime borders with several countries: Vietnam to the west, Taiwan to the north, Palau to the east, and Malaysia and Indonesia to the south. The surrounding bodies of water include the South China Sea to the north and west, the Philippine Sea to the east, the Celebes Sea to the south, and the Sulu Sea to the southwest.



IMAGE FROM MEDIOIMAGES / PHOTODISC / GETTY IMAGES



GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS

The geographical landscape of the Philippines is divided into three primary regions: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

LUZON: Luzon is the largest and most populous island in the Philippines, located in the northern part of the country. It serves as the political and economic hub of the nation. This region is home to the Mayon Volcano, one of the most active and iconic volcanoes in the Philippines.

VISAYAS: Visayas is known for its smaller islands and vibrant marine ecosystems.

MINDANAO: Mindanao features a mix of coastal areas, mountain ranges, and rich agricultural land.

KEY CITIES

MANILA: Situated along the eastern coast of Manila Bay in the southwestern part of Luzon Island, Manila is the capital city of the Philippines. It is the major administrative, political, social, cultural, and economic center of the country. Metropolitan Manila is made of 16 small cities and one municipality with four districts.

QUEZON CITY: Located to the northeast of Manila, Quezon City is the largest and most populous city in the Philippines. Both Manila and Quezon City are integral parts of Metro Manila, the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines, which serves as the seat of the national government.

SOURCE: <https://www.Wikipedia.com> - Philippines <https://www.britannica.com/place/Philippines> - History, Map, Flag, Population, Capital, & Facts



PHOTOS FROM THE PHILIPPINES
(counter clockwise):

The province of Pangasinan (*Condé Nast Traveller*).

The District of Intramuros in Manila (*Wikipedia*).

Makati Central Business District skyline in Manila (*japati*).

Jeepneys near Rizal Park in Manila (*Alamy*).

Batad Rice Terraces in Northern Luzon (*Getty*).

The Masskara Festival in Bacalod (*Herbert Kikoy*).

Manila Cathedral (*alentilove, Shutterstock*).

8 FUN FACTS ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES

1. About 400 million text messages are exchanged daily in the Philippines- thats 142 billion per year!
2. The PBA or The Philippines Basketball Association is Asia's first professional basketball league & also one of the oldest in the world (second only to the NBA). The Philippines also holds the Guinness World Record for the longest game of Basketball ever played: an unbelievable 120 hours, 1 minute and 7 seconds In March of 2014!
3. Jeepneys, Philippine's colorful and popular public transportation, are made out of all the army jeeps that the U.S Military left after World War II. It is estimated that over 55,000 jeepneys operate on a daily basis in Manila alone.
4. The rice terraces of the Cordillera region were made more than 2,000 years ago & are a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
5. The Philippines has the most variety of clams on earth, including 7 different species of giant clams!
6. Created millions of years ago, the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park is the longest navigable underground river in the world. It stretches for 24 km beneath the St. Paul's Mountain Range on the island of Palawan and is one of the Seven Wonders of Nature.
7. There are at least 175 languages spoken in the Philippines, including: English, Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon and Bicolano.
8. The national bird of the Philippines is the Philippine Eagle, one of the rarest birds in the world with an estimated population of fewer than 500. Philippine Eagles are believed to stay with the same mate for their entire lives.





THE MOUNTAINOUS BANAUE IN IFUGAO PROVINCE LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN PART OF LUZON
PHOTO FROM WWW.GUIDETOTHEPHILIPPINES.PH

ORIGIN OF TAGALOG LANGUAGE: HISTORY, INFLUENCE AND EVOLUTION

Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines, has been shaped by various influences throughout history. These influences have played a significant role in shaping both its vocabulary and grammatical structure.

The evolution of the Tagalog language reflects the diverse history and cultural interactions that have shaped the Philippines. With Spanish colonization in the 16th century came an influx of Spanish vocabulary that further enriched Tagalog's lexicon.

This period also saw changes in grammar and sentence structure, as well as adaptations to accommodate Catholicism brought by Spanish missionaries. Despite its foreign influences, Tagalog has remained resilient in preserving its indigenous roots while adapting to modern times. Today it serves as one of two official languages alongside English in a country known for its linguistic diversity.

Here are some key influences on the development of Tagalog:

AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGES: Tagalog belongs to the Austronesian language family, which includes languages spoken in Southeast Asia and parts of Oceania. As such, it shares common linguistic features with other Austronesian languages like Malay and Indonesian.

SPANISH COLONIALISM: The Spanish colonization of the Philippines from the 16th to 19th centuries had a profound impact on Tagalog. Spanish loanwords were assimilated into the language, enriching its vocabulary significantly. Many words related to religion, government, food, and everyday objects were borrowed from Spanish.

AMERICAN INFLUENCE: Following Spanish colonial rule, English became an important influence on Philippine languages during American occupation in the early 20th century. English words relating to technology, education, politics, and popular culture were incorporated into Tagalog.

MALAY/INDONESIAN INFLUENCE: Due to geographical proximity and historical trade connections between Indonesia/Malaysia and the Philippines, there have been exchanges between these languages over time. Some Malay/Indonesian words have made their way into contemporary Tagalog usage.

SANSKRIT/INDIAN INFLUENCE: Sanskrit-based loanwords entered Filipino languages through Indian cultural interactions that date back centuries ago when traders introduced Hinduism/Buddhism to Southeast Asia including present-day Philippines.

CHINESE INFLUENCE: Trade relations with China resulted in Chinese loanwords being absorbed into Philippine languages like Tagalog over many centuries.

SOURCE: Slang Words for English. (2024). Origin of Tagalog Language: History, Influence and Evolution. English Slang Words. <https://englishslangwords.com/orgin-of-tagalog-language>.

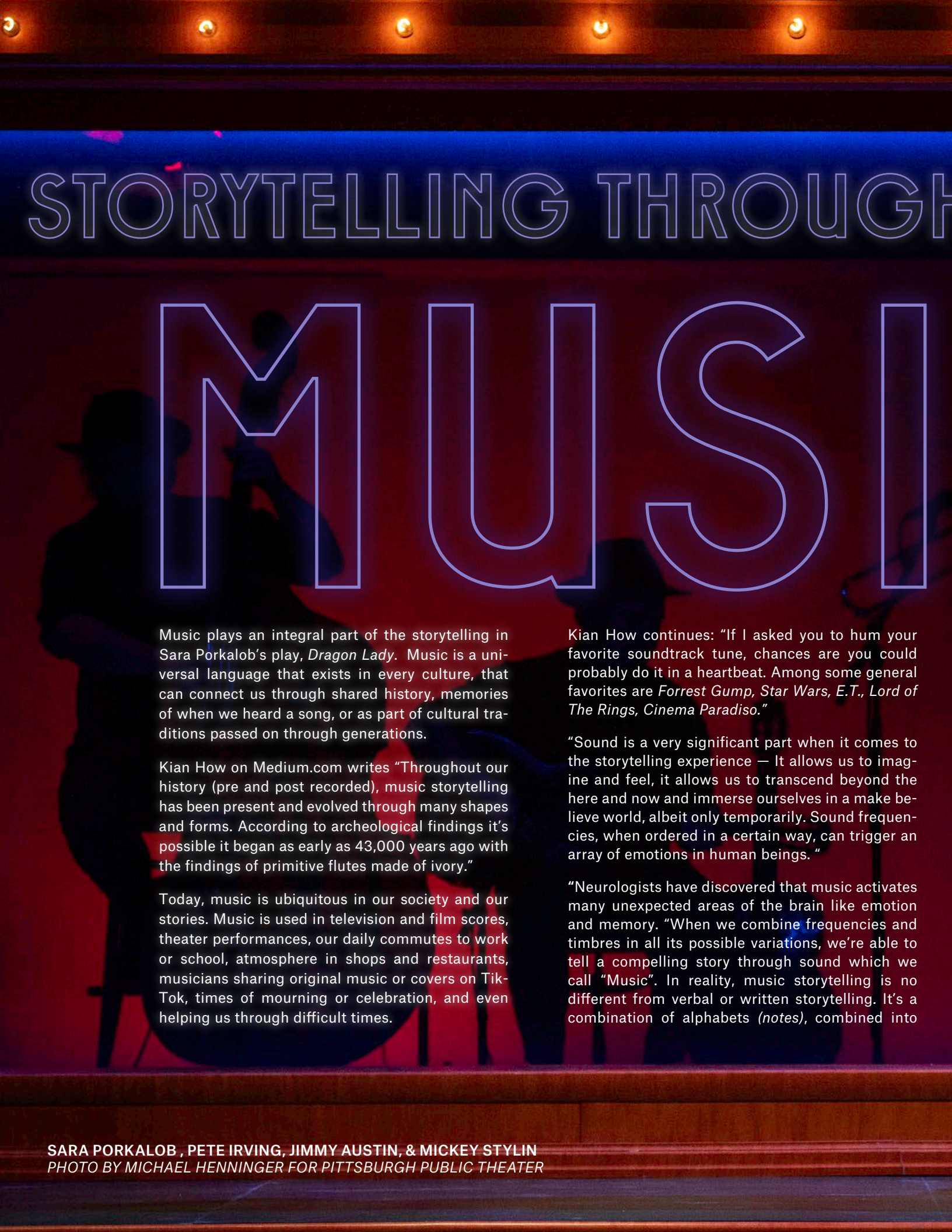


Pictured: One of the Monreal tablets, and window panes of the alphasyllabry of baybayin writing, from The National Museum of Anthropology, Manila. The term baybayin means "to write" or "to spell" in Tagalog. *TOP PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA COMMONS. BOTTOM PHOTO: WWW.ERISGOESTO.COM*



SCAN the QR code to the left to hear and learn Tagalog at *TagalogTime with Pat* on TikTok. In this video Pat shares Tagalog phrases we can use to say "Hello" in our everyday conversations!

#tagalog #filipino #pinoy #polyglot #tagaloglesson #filipinolanguage #filipinoculture #philippines #pilipinas



STORYTELLING THROUGH MUSIC

Music plays an integral part of the storytelling in Sara Porkalob's play, *Dragon Lady*. Music is a universal language that exists in every culture, that can connect us through shared history, memories of when we heard a song, or as part of cultural traditions passed on through generations.

Kian How on Medium.com writes "Throughout our history (pre and post recorded), music storytelling has been present and evolved through many shapes and forms. According to archeological findings it's possible it began as early as 43,000 years ago with the findings of primitive flutes made of ivory."

Today, music is ubiquitous in our society and our stories. Music is used in television and film scores, theater performances, our daily commutes to work or school, atmosphere in shops and restaurants, musicians sharing original music or covers on TikTok, times of mourning or celebration, and even helping us through difficult times.

Kian How continues: "If I asked you to hum your favorite soundtrack tune, chances are you could probably do it in a heartbeat. Among some general favorites are *Forrest Gump*, *Star Wars*, *E.T.*, *Lord of The Rings*, *Cinema Paradiso*."

"Sound is a very significant part when it comes to the storytelling experience — It allows us to imagine and feel, it allows us to transcend beyond the here and now and immerse ourselves in a make believe world, albeit only temporarily. Sound frequencies, when ordered in a certain way, can trigger an array of emotions in human beings."

"Neurologists have discovered that music activates many unexpected areas of the brain like emotion and memory. "When we combine frequencies and timbres in all its possible variations, we're able to tell a compelling story through sound which we call "Music". In reality, music storytelling is no different from verbal or written storytelling. It's a combination of alphabets (*notes*), combined into

H



forming words (*scales/modes/harmonies*) to building sentences (*musical phrases*). When applied into a full blown musical structure (*Intro, Verse, Chorus, Bridge, Interlude, Outro*), it becomes a story! This can be further embellished by having different ensemble sizes, instrument combinations, performance techniques, dynamics, tempo, genres etc. Instruments made out of different material, shapes/sizes and different playing methods project different timbral qualities — warm, woody, metallic, dark, bright etc. This is why violin sounds different from a guitar, a trumpet from an oboe. These are some of the tool-kit arsenal that a music storyteller can utilize to tell a story.”

Excerpts from Kian How's **A Brief History of Music Storytelling** on Medium.com. Jan 14, 2019 Read Kian's full article here: <https://medium.com/@kenhao/the-brief-history-of-music-storytelling-42ca9684bacf>



ACTIVITY:

PLAYLIST JAMS

ACTIVITY TIME: Up to 30 minutes.

Imagine you are the writer and performer of a solo show that tells the story of your family. Think about the ways in which music can tell a story, and create a playlist of 5-10 songs that tell YOUR story. They can be songs with personal meaning, songs passed down through traditions, songs that give a sense of time and place, or songs that evoke a feeling.




The playlist of your story:

BONUS ACTIVITIES:

Pick one and record a tiktok duet of it.

Be like Maria Sr. and "remix" or rewrite the lyrics to a verse of one of the songs on your list.

Find the karaoke track and sing along with your new verse!



DID YOU KNOW? The term "karaoke" originates from the Japanese language, meaning "empty orchestra." It was invented in 1971 by Daisuke Inoue, a musician from Kobe, Japan, who sought to create an affordable way for people to enjoy singing ~ Found in: *7 Fun Facts About Karaoke: The History, the Songs, and All!!!* By John Smith

SHARING FOOD & STORIES: SEATTLE'S FABULOUS FILIPINO FOOD SCENE

Scan the QR Code below to watch Marcus Samuelsson visit Seattle in "No Passport Required: Seattle", where he spends time with immigrant and second-generation Filipinos who are taking charge of the city's food scene. [Originally aired 2019, PBS]. He hangs at a cool speakeasy with Sara Porkalob (*minutes 27:53-32:07*) and chat about the power of storytelling while sharing some delicious Filipino food.



Hosted by renowned chef Marcus Samuelsson, *No Passport Required* is a PBS/Eater series that takes viewers on an inspiring journey across the U.S. to explore and celebrate the wide-ranging diversity of immigrant traditions and cuisine woven into American food and culture. Find more recipes, episodes and tips: <https://to.pbs.org/3qqn1T4>

#NoPassRequiredPBS #Seattle #Filipino #FilipinoFood

RECIPE: CHICKEN ADOBO FROM TEACHING ARTIST, TARA RICASA

"Chicken Adobo is a classic Filipino dish. This is fairly close to my own family's recipe, although we use regular white vinegar and a secret ingredient (hint: it's pickle juice). We don't add quail eggs--that's very fancy. Most Filipino families will have their own take on it — many will have several, depending on which auntie or uncle is cooking. ;)" — Tara, Geffen Teaching Artist

INGREDIENTS:

2 lbs chicken thighs or drumsticks
2 tablespoons oil
4 garlic cloves, smashed & skins removed
5 whole black peppercorns
2 dried bay leaves
1/3 cup soy sauce
1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
3 quail eggs

Find this and other recipes for Filipino dishes at Jeanelleats's food and travel blog: <https://jeanelleats.com/category/filipino/>

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat up the oil in a medium sized pot over medium-low heat.
2. Brown the chicken in batches so as not to overcrowd the pot.
3. Add the soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, peppercorns, and bay leaves.
4. Cover with a lid and simmer on lowest heat for 35-45 minutes, or until chicken is tender.
5. Drain liquid from the can of quail eggs and add the quail eggs into the pot. Simmer for another 5 minutes.
6. Enjoy your fragrant adobo with a side of rice. It tastes even better the day after!



PHOTO BY JENN SEGAL,
WWW.ONCEUPONACHEF.COM

THE ROOTS OF THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY IN THE U.S.

2023 marked the 125th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Paris – an agreement between Spain and the United States that ended the Spanish American War which led to the U.S. annexation of the Philippines. Notably, the Philippines was purchased for \$20 million. With the signing of the treaty, Cuba was also granted independence from Spain, while Puerto Rico and Guam were ceded to the US.

As a result of the Treaty of Paris, Filipino people gained access to the U.S. during an era when other Asian countries were prohibited from doing so. First, while federal immigration laws severely restricted the immigration of people from Asian countries from 1882 to 1965, Filipino migrants were considered US Nationals – allowing them to migrate to the U.S. (and its territories) without restrictions. This made them an attractive (and cheap) labor force to American agricultural corporations in Hawaii and the west coast of the United States. Second, the Pensionado Act of 1903 also allowed for many pensionados (or Filipino students) to attend prestigious American universities between 1903 and 1943. While many students returned to the Philippines to apply their degrees in the new infrastructures created by the US government, some pensionados settled in the United States. Third, American curricula and educational systems were introduced to the Philippines, resulting in English proficiency among its citizens and the recruitment of Filipino nurses, teachers, and other professionals to the United States. Finally, Filipinos were also encouraged to enlist in the U.S. Military – especially the U.S. Navy – creating pathways to citizenship for thousands of Filipino families.

The year 1898 also marks an important year in Philippine history. After centuries of Filipinos fighting against Spanish colonizers – with the most successful uprising being the Philippine Revolution (1896-1898) – the people of the Philippines declared their independence on June 12, 1898. However, both Spain and the US ignored this declaration and signed the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898 – without including any representation from the Philippines in the negotiation. In fact, Filipino diplomat Felipe Agoncillo traveled to Paris but was not allowed into the negotiating room. Because the Treaty of Paris meant transferring control of the archipelago from one colonial power to another – completely ignoring the efforts of the Philippine Revolution – Philippine insurrectionists continued to fight the U.S., unsuccessfully, in what would later be referred to as the Philippine American War. This uprising is historically documented as transpiring from 1899-1902, though regional efforts (like the Battle of Bud

Bagsak) endured until 1913. The Philippines did not become a fully independent nation until the end of World War II in 1946. President William McKinley justified the colonization of the Philippines as an exercise in “benevolent assimilation” – or the notion that the nation was in need of civilization and that it was the American government’s responsibility to colonize its people. William Taft (who served as Governor-General of the Philippines from 1901-1904 and later as President of the U.S. from 1909-1913) referred to the Philippines as their “little brown brothers”, and American propaganda portrayed the Philippines and other colonized nations as children in need of being saved.

Given all these factors, we acknowledge 1898 as a watershed year for both the Philippines and the United States – as well as for Filipino Americans and Filipinos across the diaspora. Of note, we are conscious of our usage of words like “recognize”, “observe” or “commemorate” (instead of terms like “celebrate”), as we are intentional to not promote the celebration or glorification of American colonialism. Yet, we recognize that this history was integral to the trajectories of Filipino Americans, and we encourage critical thinking about the impact of 1898 specifically, and American colonialism generally, in our lives.

SOURCE: Filipino American National Historical Society
<http://fanhs-national.org/filam/filipino-american-history-month-october-2023>



U. OF WASHINGTON FILIPINO STUDENT ASSOCIATION, SEATTLE, 1952 PHOTO BY WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

THE ROOTS OF SEATTLE'S FILIPINO COMMUNITY KUYA GEO, PBS

Scan the QR CODE to watch this episode of the Kuya GEO series, George “Geo” Quibuyen explores the history and legacy of the Filipino community’s presence in Seattle’s Historic Chinatown International, known to some as Filipino Town.





Scan the QR Code to the left to watch "A Filipino American Story" an animated video presenting the pivotal moments of courage, sacrifice, and triumphs of Filipino Americans since 1587, and how they paved the way for the current generation shaping the future today. This story is powered by NextDayBetter and AARP: AAPI Community for Filipino American History Month.

FROM MANILA TO LOS ANGELES



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch "LOST LA: Historic Filipinotown", Season 6, Episode 2 from PBS SoCal to see Filipino Americans work to make their heritage more visible in Los Angeles. In this episode, host Nathan Masters explores the yo-yo's surprising origin story, tours L.A.'s Historic Filipinotown neighborhood (a.k.a. "HiFi") in a Jeepney, and tastes classic Filipino street food.

HOW DOES TRAUMA SPILL FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT?

By Rachel Zimmerman, *The Washington Post*
COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

“Collective” intergenerational trauma and “racial trauma” refer to the psychological distress passed through generations as a result of historic events, including colonization, slavery and other forms of oppression.

This type of trauma reaches far beyond individuals and families and is a shared experience among a particular group, such as descendants of the 120,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese nationals who were detained in incarceration camps during World War II. Such trauma can manifest in many ways, from heightened anxiety, depression and insomnia to other mental and emotional health problems.

Thema Bryant, a specialist on healing from trauma and president of the American Psychological Association, said many people must cope with multiple forms of trauma at the same time. She said her own view of the world was filtered through her experience growing up in Baltimore with descendants of the transatlantic slave trade and a World War II veteran grandfather with PTSD. She’s also endured a lifetime of racism and survived sexual assault. “I’m both a survivor of trauma within my lifetime and of intergenerational trauma,” Bryant said.

In the memoir *What My Bones Know*, writer Stephanie Foo confronts a punishing personal history of abuse and, after being diagnosed with complex PTSD, explores how trauma can be inherited through generations. “We are all products of our history,” she said in an email interview. “I don’t really think it’s surprising that we carry our fears, traumas, tics and insecurities and pass them on to their children to some degree, whether it’s a depression-era recipe for potato salad or a deep-seated fear of abandonment.”

Foo’s great-grandmother and grandmother survived the Japanese occupation of Malaysia during World War II and a brutal guerrilla war with Britain known as the Malayan Emergency. “I personally believe that because my great-grandmother and grandmother had to hustle desperately to survive,” Foo said, “that has contributed to the hustle and creativity I’ve possessed in building my own career and survival skills here in America. It’s probably also contributed to my intense anxiety.”

SOURCE: Zimmerman, Rachel. “How does trauma spill from one generation to the next?”. *The Washington Post*, June 12, 2023.

HELPING PEOPLE COPE WITH GENERATIONAL TRAUMA

It often requires a holistic approach to break the grip of generational trauma, experts say, including the following:

AWARENESS: Jason Wu, a Bay Area psychologist and child of refugee parents, said the first step is building awareness. A patient may have internalized the belief they’re not good enough, “but upon unpacking it, they can see how their parents’, and maybe even their parents’ parents’, constant criticisms and lack of warmth or praise is the source of this belief.”

MIND-BODY THERAPY: Somatic, or body-based therapies such as yoga, have been found to be effective for trauma. Increasingly, expressive arts therapies employing movement, music or visual arts, are being used to help patients find more adaptive ways to cope, said Cécile Rêve, co-founder of ARTrelief, a center that provides these arts-based therapies.

REFRAMING: Foo said it was important to reframe the damaging stories she’d been fed as a child. “My mother’s voice saying, ‘You’re worthless, you’re unlovable, you’re stupid,’ ” she said. “I think the essence of healing has been the effort to rewrite that narrative to something more loving, forgiving and kind.”

BREAKING THE CYCLE: Studies suggest that even children who did not experience nurturing parenting can overcome this history if, as adults, they consciously adopt positive parenting strategies with their own children.

ACTIVISM: Directly addressing the sources of trauma, such as gun violence or racism, through activism and advocacy are also powerful tools for overcoming its grip, said Bryant, the APA president.

TALK ABOUT IT: Talk about it: How trauma is talked about in families can also be important. “Is it never discussed and therefore labeled as unspeakable? Or is it one part of the family’s story that is owned and claimed by each family member?” asked Arielle Scoglio, an assistant professor of health studies at Bentley University in Waltham, Mass. “The second response dispels shame related to the trauma and integrates it into a narrative that is flexible.”

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are for informational purposes only & do not constitute a medical service. Always seek the advice of a qualified health professional for medical advice, diagnosis, & treatment. If you need the support of a professional, you can access Asian Mental Health Collective at <https://www.asianmhc.org/apisaa> for a directory of Asian, Pacific Islander, and South Asian American (APISAA) therapists in the U.S.




ACTIVITY: TELL YOUR FAMILY'S STORY



ACTIVITY TIME: 1 hour+, can be completed before or after you've seen the play

This is a chance for you to explore the true stories about the people, places, and events related to your immediate family or your ancestors. With their consent, interview someone from your family, a neighbor or someone from your community to hear their story. Family can include elders, adopted family, chosen family, friends or anyone within your immediate community who you consider to be Family. You can honor this person's legacy by using this interview to write a short story, monologue or even a theatrical scene like the ones we see in Sara Porkalob's *Dragon Lady*. These tales are family heirlooms and they are a gift to each generation that preserves them by remembering them and passing them on.

PART ONE: COLLECTING YOUR STORIES

 You can ask your interviewee to pick a photo they love and tell the story behind the photo or you can use the questions below as prompts about the important places, people, or life events in their family. Encourage your interviewee to answer in as much detail as comfortable. This should take 10-15 Minutes for each person's story. Ask permission if you can record their story and/or take notes as they tell it. Note the details of their story, and also pay attention to the way in which they tell it.

Questions to Choose From:

PLACES

Where was your favorite place to visit when you were a child?

Where did you go for fun and recreation?

Where did you go when you wanted to hide?

Where did you go when you wanted to celebrate?

Where do you practice spirituality or faith?

PEOPLE

Who was the best cook in the family?

Who was the smartest, grumpiest, kindest, or most religious?


Did anyone in the family have some unusual characteristics?

When did the first family member come to America? Where did they come from? How did they get here? Are any family members still abroad?

LIFE EVENTS

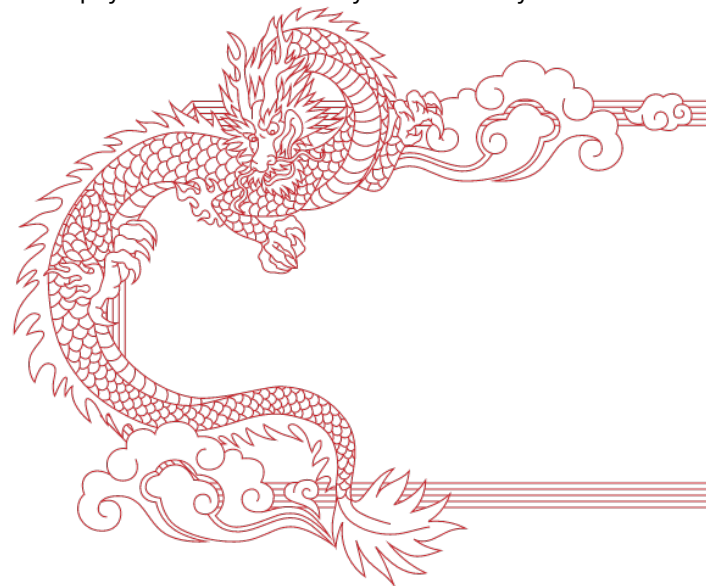
What were your favorite holidays? Did you have special holiday customs or foods?

Did you ever go on a vacation? Where? Who went with you? What did you do for fun?


 *When was a time where you had the confidence to make a difficult choice?*

Interviewer tips: Feel free to ask follow up questions if something your interviewee says captures your attention. "May I hear more about that? Are you comfortable elaborating?" What happened in the story? What happened next? These types of questions may lead you to hear a family story that has a clear setting, believable characters, and a plot.

As the interviewer, it is important to give space and LISTEN. Remember these are someone's personal memories and are a generous moment of sharing and vulnerability, so thank them for sharing.




PART TWO: RECORDING YOUR STORIES

 With the permission of the interviewee, after the interview you can use the worksheet on the following page to help you organize the moments from your interview into a story.


It can be helpful to frame the story with an arc: including a beginning, a middle and an end. Where does the story start? Where does the story change? Where does the story end?

This is a good place to add or jot down any descriptive imagery and sensory details to add detail to your story, or add any notes and thoughts from the conversation with your interviewee. What images, people, themes, moments were they drawn to/excited by, what areas they might want to know/hear/learn more about, and what areas needed more clarity.


 After using this outline, you can begin to write down the full story. As you write and revise your story, use your words to paint the picture of your story, and be specific!

- If your story is about a place: Describe what sounds, colors, smells, textures and the feelings this place evokes?
- If it is about a person: How does their face move when they speak? What does their voice sound like? How do they walk? How do they dress? Listen for dialogue. How do the characters talk?
- If it's about a life event: Describe how old the person was at the time. What time of year was it? How did it make you feel? What does this person stand to gain or lose? Why is what happens in the story important to them?
- How did they change through this or from this? What do they know now that they did not know before the event happened? What did they learn during the story?

PART THREE: SHARING YOUR STORIES

 Once you have your story on paper, you can share your story with a partner, or even your interviewee. As you read your story, think about what makes a performance fun to watch! As you listen to others' stories — think about the ways in which we tell stories and how a performer can connect with the listener. Think about all the ways in which Sara Porkalob told the story in *Dragon Lady*. Characterize the *narrative voice*: the storyteller's delivery. Is it playful, formal, breathless, somber? Or does it have moments of each?

PART FOUR: EXPANDING YOUR STORIES

 This story can be explored further by using it as inspiration to write a short story, monologue or even a theatrical scene like the ones we see in *Dragon Lady*. Often works of fiction can come from the truth in our own lives. As you explore this story, feel free to use your imagination to explore, embellish, adapt, add cultural and historical research, change character names or settings, or even explore different genres.



SCAN this QR code to read an interview with Sara Porkalob from "On Stage Pittsburgh" (Jan. 2024) for the Pittsburgh Public Theater's production of *Dragon Lady*, where Sara discusses the origins of the play and her relationship with her grandmother and the complex layers of storytelling in her play. In one run of the show her Grandmother made a cameo!



WORKSHEET: COLLECTING YOUR STORIES

WORKSHEET: OUTLINING YOUR STORY

 Use the worksheet below to organize the elements of your story. The outline should be the skeleton of your story, with key moments of the story to help connect the beginning to the end.

BEGINNING: *Where does your story start? Set the scene.*



CHARACTERS:

Who is in this story? How would you describe them?

MIDDLE: *Where does your story change? What event happens to shift the story?*

SENSORY IMAGES:

What images & descriptive words will help paint the picture of your story? Be specific! List at least three.

END: *Where does your story finish? How do the characters change through this or from this?*

FIRST LINE: *Think about a compelling first line that sets up the stakes and grabs the audiences attention.*



CUT ALONG THIS LINE TO REMOVE ACTIVITY FROM BOOKLET



ADRIANNA MITCHELL AND STUDENTS AT FAT HAM
STUDENT MATINEE AT GEFEN PLAYHOUSE
PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Depending on the time available and your participants' interests, guide them to respond to the suggested below. Encourage everyone to participate, and respect differing opinions. Individuals can share their thoughts with a partner or in a small group. Ask for several volunteers to share their groups' answers with the larger group.

- What images and moments from the performance stood out or resonated with you? What was meaningful, stimulating, surprising, evocative, memorable, interesting, exciting, striking, touching, challenging, compelling, delightful, different, and unique?
- Overall, how did you feel while watching this show? Engaged? Amused? Inspired? Provoked? Uncomfortable? What made you feel this way?
- Sara Porkalob plays multiple roles in this show. What are all the ways she distinguished the characters as a performer? How would the play be different with multiple actors playing these roles? Why do you think the creators chose to tell this story in this way?
- How would you describe each character's inner life in the show? Are they conflicted? If so, how, and why?
- Which character/s do you identify with or empathize with and why?
- Which characters remind you of someone in your life?
- After watching this play, what did you learn that you didn't know before seeing this play?
- What did you find most moving about the play? What moments were most thought provoking?
- Describe the design elements from the show: set, props, costumes, music. Be specific as possible: what did you see, hear, feel and experience? How do these design elements inform the storytelling and how do they make you feel as an audience member?
- What other shows have you seen with one actor playing multiple roles, either at Geffen Playhouse or other theaters?
- Think about your family legacy. What stories have the people in your life shared with you? How do those stories affect your relationships with those people? What stories do you share together?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BE like Sara Porkalob and write creatively, utilizing Geffen Education Theater Making at Home projects at <https://tinyurl.com/4fxpbcbn>

EDUCATE yourself about why Asian Pacific American Heritage is celebrated in May at <https://tinyurl.com/6xs3y3e3>

KNOW exactly what a Microaggression is at <https://tinyurl.com/br3sb5w3>

LEARN more about the important work done by the National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association. The NAAPIMHA is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote and redefine the mental health and well being of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander individuals and communities in the United States through training, programs, policy & advocacy, centering those with lived experience. Please go to www.NAAPIMHA.org

LOCATE your local library to learn more about Tagalog at www.lacountylibrary.org

REACH OUT to the Los Angeles Department of Mental Health if you are suffering from overwhelming grief or loss at <https://tinyurl.com/mw8yxbfk>

READ influential and entertaining AANHPI books, including: David Malo's *Ka Mo'olelo Hawai'i, (Hawaiian Antiquities)*; Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*; Gabrelle Zevin's *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*; and Michelle Zauner's *Crying in H Mart*.

SEE poet Alex D ang perform his poem *What Kind of Asian Are You?* at <https://tinyurl.com/bduk6u36>

TEXT or **CALL** "988" nationwide to connect directly to the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

VIEW the AAPI Actors Roundtable: Representation in Hollywood -- Multicultural TV Talk (Podcast) at <https://tinyurl.com/3whudxdv>

VISIT the online Los Angeles Public Museum for their LAPL Blog, "Shades of L.A.: The Filipino American Experience" at <https://tinyurl.com/mrhkjyju>

WATCH the short comedy video *What Kind of Asian Are You?* written by Ken Tanaka with David Ury at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWynJkN5HbQ>

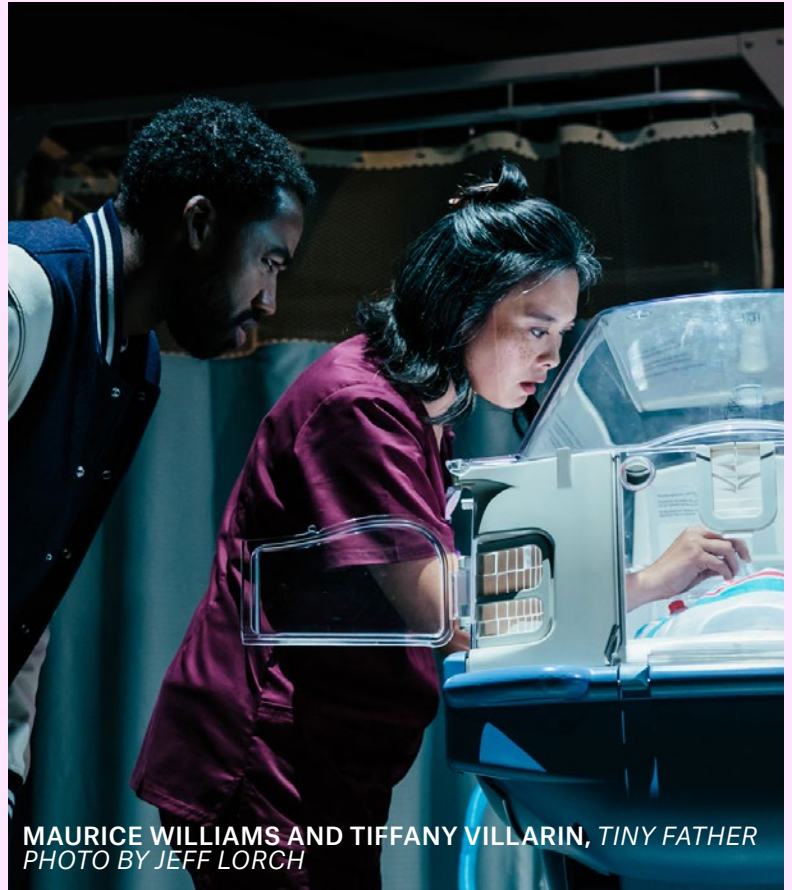
GET LIT: TINY FATHER

Geffen Playhouse Education & Community Engagement has partnered with the Los Angeles-based nonprofit Get Lit. Get Lit ignites student engagement, literacy, and young voices around the globe using the power of spoken word, technology, and community. Get Lit - Words Ignite is striving to change LA's literacy rate & arts scene into a grassroots wonderland, one teen poet at a time. Through classic and slam poetry, the power of Spoken Word, technology, and community they ignite a love of words and introduce teens to great works of literature. They respond with their own original poems and perform them all over the world.

Ultimately, Get Lit's goal is to improve students' writing and speaking skills, which will benefit them in university and beyond. Through their program they also develop self-confidence and unbreakable friendships and collaborations.

Each Study Guide this season will spotlight written response pieces to Geffen Playhouse productions, crafted by students enrolled in Get Lit Players literacy programs. Get Lit receives complimentary tickets to all Geffen Playhouse Gil Cates Theater shows as part of our Lights Up & Access Community Engagement Programs.

The poem *Big Life* written by Erica Almond on the following page is in response to the Geffen Playhouse's production of Mike Lew's *tiny father*, presented June 12 - July 14th, 2024.



MAURICE WILLIAMS AND TIFFANY VILLARIN, *TINY FATHER*
PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH

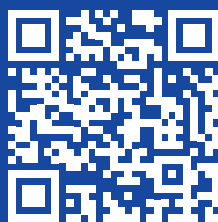


ERICA ALMOND, poet (she/her)

Erica Almond is a Communication Studies Graduate from CSUN, 2020. She is a lifelong Creative with a deep passion for the Arts and a Teaching Artist with Get Lit. Erica is an Alumni of the Youth Get Lit-Classic Slam 2013-2014: winner of 2014 era! She draws inspiration for her poetry work through connections to emotions, stories, people, and self. Erica enjoys witnessing and being immersed in all things arts and performing arts.

The next Get Lit written response will be to Sara Porkalob's *Dragon Lady*, and will be shared in the Study Guide for Geffen's next show: *Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Beckett, presented November 11- December 15th, 2024.

GETLIT



SCAN the QR code to the left to check out Get Lit's performances, interviews and behind-the-scenes tomfoolery at their Youtube page.

Learn more or get involved here:
<https://www.Getlit.Org>

Big Life

by Erica Almond

The melodies of beeping are the lullabies to my every day
Background noise in my dreams.
Rhythmically foreshadowing life and death.

Beep...Breath...Beep...Breath..

Try to Inhale and exhale with the ventilator-calm anxieties.
Fail that process.
Breath has a hold on my lungs,
I couldn't bear to let it go.

Beep...Breath...Beep...Breath...

You're on fluorescent display in a room full of darkness
Swaddled in warmth and wires
A beacon of light too fragile to touch.

Beep...Breath...Beep...Breath...

"What am I doing here?"

My mind is trying to suspend itself into a new shape of
existence,
I barely knew who I was before...

No one ever talks about the real BIG BANG moment your
life explodes
When every speck of life lived jams itself into a singular
point
On your shoulders,
in expectation that they carry the weight
The unstoppable cataclysmic force tears you into-nothing
before matters
Propelling you outwards to find what will

"Why is this happening?"

This phenomenal atomic collision being you,
Tiny Girl.
Stepping hurriedly into this world.
Premature.
Pressure.
Future tales of your Mom drifting into heaven two days
into your life
Leaving her legacy behind.

"What's a moment of time spent?"

I sit in this hospital counting the days.
Logging your breaths.
Watching you sleep.
Hungering for you to eat.
Theorizing the complexities of this exponentially
expanding moment
With these burning questions about the deadlocked
present,
The crippling past,
The unforeseeable future,

The answers are empty.

"Why am I alone?"

Talk about a Divine roasting.
The irony that your existence is the whole of two people I
really didn't know

"Who am I supposed to be?"

You were born before I ever conceived the true concept
of me.
A boy inside
Who has yet to arrive
at the surface level of what my life means.
Tethered with fear itching claws in the back of my mind
"You might never become yourself either Tiny Girl..."

"What's in a name?"

Sweet sudden surprise
One tiny name scribbled across a sticky note
Precious life in my hands
Healing generations of me
Intertwining lifetimes of love
Alive with blooming buds of hope

In the hands of others
We count our days of living
We cradle the weight of what our voices hold
What decisions we decide
Or
The choices we make.
Realize-those are two different ways of making the same
evolution.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

AN INTERVIEW WITH PRODUCTION COORDINATOR AND RESIDENT PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER, ALYSSA ESCALANTE

What is your position at Geffen Playhouse?

My position at Geffen Playhouse is Production Coordinator and Resident Production Stage Manager.

What educational, artistic, and professional experiences led to you working at the Geffen?

I have been working in the Los Angeles area theater community since I graduated from college as a stage manager. I had worked in almost all the major theaters in the area except the Geffen. A few years ago, my mentor brought me in as a second assistant stage manager on a musical and that was my first show here. Since then, I have done four shows for the Geffen. While I was working on a show last year, I realized that I might want to help out in the production department while continuing to stage manage so I asked the Director of Production if that was something the company needed. I started working here full time last year helping out in production.

What are your primary responsibilities as a Stage Manager and Production Coordinator?

As a Stage Manager, my primary responsibilities are communication, scheduling, and running shows. I communicate to the Geffen staff, design teams and actors about schedules, notes from rehearsal, and production needs. When we are in rehearsal, I help to run the room, keeping us on schedule and facilitating the art making process. When we get to the run of a show, I am responsible for making the show happen as well as “calling” all the technical elements of a show which include lights, sound, automation, projection, actor entrances and so much more. As the resident production stage manager here, I stage manage a few shows a year, sub on shows when a stage manager is sick, and support other stage managers through the season.



As Production Coordinator, I assist the production department at the Geffen with scheduling and communication, much the same way a stage manager runs a show. I keep notes on all things they may need to know about shows later on in our season before we have hired them.

What key skills and disposition does a Production Coordinator and Stage Manager need to possess?

Flexibility and initiative are always key. Flexibility to adjust to the ever-changing needs or challenges of a show, the flexibility to communicate in different ways to different people, and the flexibility to adapt when there is a sudden change in a show.

Initiative is a key quality I look for when I hire stage managers. I want to know that someone is on the lookout for potential challenges and anticipates ways to problem solve them. The more a stage manager is able to anticipate the needs of a production, the more valuable they are in the process.

Was there a pivotal moment when you realized you wanted a life in the arts?

I was in kindergarten and saw a student matinee of Peter Pan. I left the theater feeling sad, because I wanted so badly to be a part of all the people onstage telling the story. I really think I knew then. I still get that feeling when I see a great show.

What do you find most challenging about your work?

The theater schedule can be tough for folks to get the hang of. I worked very hard to get where I am now in my career, but it came with sacrifices in my personal life. Realizing that, I am actively working on my work life balance.

What do you find most rewarding?

Watching a brilliant performance is always a rewarding experience because I directly had a hand in supporting the work. There is nothing more thrilling than hearing how much an audience loved or was moved by a show.

What was one of your favorite shows to work on?

Here at the Geffen I absolutely loved everyday working on *Fat Ham*. The Broadway company was such a talented and kind group of folks that the production never felt like work. I also had the opportunity to be a sub on the Hamilton tour in LA a few years ago. It was incredible to work on a show that I was already a fan of that has impacted so many people.



A STAGE MANAGER'S CONTROL CENTER IN THE BOOTH
PHOTO BY BRIDGE THEATER, X: @_BRIDGETHEATRE



SCAN this QR code to watch videos from American Theatre Wing's Masterclass series on different jobs in American Theater. Stage Managers, Wig Makers, Scenic Designers, Front of House staff, Marketing Directors and many other people work behind the scenes to bring a show to life! If you are interested in a career in the arts and work behind the scenes, learn more here. #theater #jobs #alifeinthearts #getintotheatre #americantheatrewing #career #behindthescenes

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