

# AM I ROXIE?



GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

STUDY GUIDE

WORLD PREMIERE  
**AM I ROXIE?**

**06.18 – 07.20.2025**

GIL CATES THEATER

*Am I Roxie?* was originally developed in the Writers' Lab at Ammunition Theatre Company.

**THANK YOU**

*Geffen Playhouse Education & Community Engagement programs are made possible, in part, by grants from Dwight Stuart Youth Fund and U.S. Bank Foundation*

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**SPECIAL THANKS TO**

Brian Dunning, Philipp Rossi & Geffen Teaching Artists

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**ACCESSIBILITY AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE**

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



**OPEN CAPTION PERFORMANCE**

An LED sign will display the text of the live production in sync with the performance.

English: Saturday, September 20, 2025 - 3:00 pm

Español: Friday, September 26, 2025 - 8:00 pm & Sunday, October 05, 2025 - 2:00 pm

**AD AUDIO DESCRIBED PERFORMANCE**

A performance audio describer will give live, verbal descriptions of actions, costumes, scenery, and other visual elements of the production.

Sunday, September 21, 2025 - 2:00 pm



**ASL INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE**

An ASL interpreter will be present in the house left.

Sunday, September 28, 2025 - 2:00 pm







THE INTERIOR OF GRAND OPERA IN PARIS  
PHOTO GARY, ADOBE STOCK



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GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF

# AM I ROXIE?

WRITTEN & PERFORMED BY  
**ROXANA ORTEGA**

DIRECTED BY  
**BERNARDO CUBRÍA**

SCENIC DESIGNER  
**EFREN DELGADILLO JR.**

COSTUME DESIGNER  
**JENNIFER LYNN DECK**

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
**PABLO SANTIAGO**

SOUND DESIGNER  
**CRICKET S. MYERS**

PROJECTION DESIGNER  
**YUKI IZUMIHARA**

COMPOSER  
**ARIAN SALEH**

SPANISH TRANSLATOR  
**BERNARDO CUBRÍA**

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER  
**JULIAN OLIVE**

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER  
**REBECCA K. HSIA**

## CAST

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**ROXANA  
ORTEGA**  
ALL CHARACTERS



**XOCHITL  
ROMERO**  
U/S ROXIE / OTHERS



# ABOUT THE PLAY

**OVERVIEW:** In this fiercely funny one-woman tour-de-force based on her own life, writer/actor Roxana Ortega (*The Casagrandes*, *The Groundlings*) navigates the chaos of her mother's mental decline with outrageous humor and unbreakable spirit. Playing everything from a mermaid-obsessed aunt to a prickly sherpa, Roxie takes us on a wild ride into an opera house, up a killer mountain, and through the doomscape of her own mind. Heartfelt and hilarious, *Am I Roxie?* explores duty, destiny, and how facing your darkest fears can reveal who you truly are.

**RUNNING TIME:** 85 minutes, no intermission.

**AGE RECOMMENDATION:** 12+

**WARNINGS:** Theatrical Haze • Gunshot Sound Effects

**CONTENT ADVISORY:** This production contains sexual content and profanity.

# ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHIES



**ROXANA ORTEGA** Playwright (she/her)

Roxana Ortega is an award-winning actor and multi-hyphenate artist who is thrilled to be making her Geffen Playhouse debut. Her on-camera credits include Shonda Rhimes' *For the People* (Apple TV+), *Santa Clarita Diet* (Netflix), *New Girl* (Fox), *NCIS* (CBS), *Grand-Daddy Day Care* opposite Danny Trejo, *Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous* opposite Sandra Bullock, and countless national commercials. Behind the mic, her credits include the Emmy and Imagen Award-winning *The Casagrandes* (Nickelodeon), the Emmy-winning *Monsters at Work* (Disney+), *Archer* (FX), *Star Trek: Lower Decks* (Paramount Plus), and *Call of Duty*, to name a few. She studied theatre at Studio A.C.T. and has performed on San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles stages. She is a Sunday Company alumna of the prestigious Groundlings Theatre and is a current member of Ammunition Theatre Company. Her storytelling has been featured on podcasts and stages all over Los Angeles, including at the Moth GrandSLAM. Roxana was born in Los Angeles and graduated from UC Berkeley Phi Beta Kappa with a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. She dedicates this performance to all the Carmens and all the caregivers.  
IG: @roxanaortegaofficial [www.roxanaortega.com](http://www.roxanaortega.com)



**BERNARDO CUBRÍA** Director (he/him)

Bernardo Cubría is a Mexican writer/director. Recent directing credits include *Revenge Porn or the Story of a Body* by Carla Ching and *Brain Problems* by Malcolm Barrett, both with Ammunition Theatre Company, and his own play *The Hispanic/ Latino/Latina/Latinx/ Latiné Vote* at Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum in 2024. His play *Crabs in a Bucket* won the 2024 Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Writing. His play *The Play You Want* premiered at LA's The Road Theatre in 2022, garnering Cubría both a Stage Raw Award and a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle nomination for Playwriting. In 2019, Cubría was nominated for the Ovation, Stage Raw, and Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Best Playwright awards for his play *The Giant Void In My Soul*. Other playwriting awards include the Smith Prize for Political Theater. He was a chair for the 2024-2025 Dramatists' "Guild National Playwrighting Fellows. For film, he penned the feature screenplay *Copa* that Eva Longoria is set to direct and *Guerrero* which Gina Rodriguez is attached to direct, and he was a 2023 Sundance Screenwriters Lab Fellow for the screenplay *Kill Yr Idols* which he co-wrote. He was also a writer on seasons 3 and 4 of *Acapulco* on Apple TV+. Para Abu.



# SYNOPSIS

BY GERARDO TONELLA, GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE TEACHING ARTIST

**\*SPOILER WARNING!** *This synopsis should be used for comprehension and contains plot points for the play, Am I Roxie?*

**TIME / SETTING:** 2016 & before. California & Beyond.

**STORY:** Roxie, an anxious, single, 30-something year old actress living in Los Angeles has her world upended when her father dies, and she now gets to be in charge of her mom, Carmen, who is living with Alzheimer's.

After a long and winding search (& a battle with her "Inner Latina Critic"), she finds a nearby nursing home where she can visit her mother regularly while still keeping up with the grind of the entertainment business. When that first home turns out to be severely lacking and potentially dangerous, she enlists the help of her tias (and the almighty Yelp) to look for a better place.

As weeks go by and Roxie starts to spend more time (in between auditions and gigs) with her mother, she begins to appreciate a new side to Carmen that she had not been able to witness before. The two start to get a little closer (sometimes a little too close) and start to discover a new bond. After helping Carmen take a bath, Roxie starts to realize that she will also need someone to bathe her someday, and decides to fully dive into the dating scene again and invests in freezing her eggs.

A friend invites Roxie to hike Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa, and she decides to follow her tias' encouraging advice and go on the adventure. Roxie realizes that some challenges can be just as rewarding as climbing the tallest mountains, and that to truly honor the sacrifices her mother made for her, she needs to learn to fully live - even through the pain and uncertainty - and to live life large!



L-R: PLAYWRIGHT AND PERFORMER ROXANA ORTEGA & DIRECTOR BERNARDO CUBRÍA IN REHEARSAL FOR AM I ROXIE? AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE. PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH



# SINOPSIS

POR GERARDO TONELLA, GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE TEACHING ARTIST

**¡ALERTA DE SPOILER!** *La sinopsis se utiliza para la comprensión y contiene puntos importantes de la trama de la obra Am I Roxie?*

**LA AMBIENTACIÓN:** 2016 y anteriores. California y más allá

**LA TRAMA:** Roxie, una actriz de 30 y tantos años ansiosa y soltera que vive en Los Angeles, encuentra su mundo completamente alterado cuando su padre fallece, y ahora tiene que estar a cargo de su madre, Carmen, que vive con Alzheimer.

Luego de una larga y tediosa búsqueda (y una batalla con su “Crítica Latina Interior”), ella encuentra un residencia de ancianos cercana donde puede visitar a su mamá de vez en cuando y seguir cumpliendo con las demandas del medio artístico. Cuando en la primera residencia las cosas resultan ser un tanto inadecuadas y hasta peligrosas, ella acude a la ayuda de sus tías (y el todopoderoso Yelp) para encontrar un lugar mejor.

Al cabo de un rato, Roxie comienza a pasar más tiempo -entre audiciones y trabajos - con su madre, y comienza a apreciar un lado nuevo de Carmen del cual no había sido testigo antes. Las dos comienzan a conocerse más íntimamente (a veces demasiado íntimamente) y empiezan a descubrir un nuevo lazo entre ellas, menos como madre e hija, y más como hermanas. Después de darle un baño a su madre, Roxie comienza a darse cuenta de que ella también va a necesitar a alguien que le dé un baño algún día, y decide sumergirse de nuevo en la búsqueda de una pareja.

Luego de que una amiga la invita a escalar el Monte Kilimanjaro en África, y decide seguir los consejos alentadores de sus tías, Roxie se empieza a dar cuenta de que algunos retos pueden ser igual de valiosos que escalar las montañas más altas, y que para verdaderamente honrar los sacrificios y lecciones que su madre le regaló, ella debe aprender a vivir, - a pesar de la incertidumbre y el dolor - y vivir en grande!

## WHAT'S FUNNY ABOUT THAT?

AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT/PERFORMER  
ROXANA ORTEGA

SCAN THE QR CODE TO read an interview from the Geffen Playhouse blog with Roxana Ortega and Geffen Playhouse Associate Artistic Director Amy Levinson, where they discuss the process of developing the show and using humor to tackle the serious subject matter.





THEMES & TOPICS



WHO  
IS

CARMEN?

LILIYA NIKITCHUK AS CARMEN FROM THE LVIV  
NATIONAL OPERA IN UKRAINE  
PHOTO FROM OPERA.LVIV.UA



The play *Am I Roxie?* opens with the main character, Roxie, taking her mother to see a production of *Carmen*, the opera by Georges Bizet. The famous opera serves as a plot device to explore Roxie's relationship with her mother, who also happens to share the same name with the title character in the Opera! Carmen loves the opera and this connection provides Roxie with a deeper look into her mother's mind. The iconic character Carmen has influenced countless other stories and pop-culture. Read below for the plot of George Bizet's show, *Carmen*.

Bizet's opera is based on Prosper Mérimée's 1845 novella, *Carmen* and premiered in Paris in March of 1875. The opera, set in 19th-century Seville, Spain, begins in a busy town square where soldiers and townsfolk gather. Among them is Micaëla, who searches for Corporal Don José, but leaves when told he is not yet on duty. When the cigarette factory bell rings, a group of workers emerges, led by the captivating Carmen, who sings of love's wild, untameable nature. Playfully dismissing her admirers, she tosses a flower to Corporal Don José, who resists her charms.

Micaëla soon returns with a letter from José's mother, urging him to come home and marry her. Before he can decide, a commotion erupts: Carmen has been accused of stabbing a co-worker. Ordered to guard her until a prison warrant is written, Corporal Don José is seduced by her flirtation and helps her escape—an act that leads to his arrest.

Months later, in a tavern, Carmen entertains soldiers with her friends Frasquita and Mercédès. The celebrated bullfighter Escamillo arrives, instantly smitten, but Carmen brushes him aside. Smugglers Dancairo and Remendado try to enlist the women in their schemes; Carmen refuses, waiting instead for Corporal Don José. When he appears, her teasing dance is interrupted by the call to military duty. She demands he abandon the army for her; he refuses until Zuniga arrives, sparking a jealous brawl. Forced to flee, Corporal Don José joins the smugglers.

In the mountains, Carmen grows weary of Don José's possessiveness. A fortune-telling game forewarns her—and Don José—of death. Micaëla arrives to persuade Don José to visit his dying mother, while Escamillo comes seeking Carmen. A duel between the men is broken up by the smugglers. Don José leaves with Micaëla, vowing to return.

The final act unfolds outside the bullring. Crowds cheer Escamillo's parade; Carmen is at his side, defiant and unafraid when warned that Don José lurks nearby. Alone, he pleads for her to return to him. She rejects him, throwing down his ring. As the crowd roars for Escamillo's victory, Don José stabs Carmen. She dies at his feet while he confesses his crime.

**SOURCE:** Philadelphia, O. (n.d.). Full synopsis - Carmen synopsis. Opera Philadelphia. What is the Story of Carmen? Plot, Synopsis & More | ENO. (2025, July 24). English National Opera. Wikipedia contributors. (2025, July 25). Prosper mérimée. Wikipedia. Wikipedia contributors. (2025b, August 10). Carmen. Wikipedia.

# ACTIVITY: IMPROVISE YOUR OWN OPERA!

Roxie tells us that she and her mom Carmen created their own improvised Opera songs for fun, turning the everyday things like breakfast toast into fun dramatic moments.

**ACTIVITY TIME:** Up to 30 minutes. Include 5 minutes to do some vocal warm ups The activity can be done solo or with others.

Scan the QR code Watch & Listen to the video clip of "Habanera" from *Carmen* by George Bizet, performed by Anna Caterina Antonacci for the Royal Opera! Use the melody of "Habanera" and come up with your own lyrics to the song with something from your own life! If you're feeling extra creative, you can also create a brand new melody! Georges Bizet, step out of the way! A new opera is about to grace the stage!



If you're interested in hearing more opera, look online to watch more clips like the one above, listen to the numerous recordings or be like Roxie and Carmen and visit your local opera house to see a live opera performance!



J'NAI BRIDGES AND COMPANY IN "CARMEN" BY LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO. PHOTO BY TODD ROSENBERG



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch international Opera soprano sensation Danielle de Niese give advice and instruction on how to warm up your voice for that perfect sound!



This September, Geffen Playhouse presents the World Premiere of *Am I Roxie?* by Roxana Ortega. In this solo performance show, Roxana's mother Carmen suffers from Alzheimer's Disease. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the biological process that begins with the appearance of a buildup of proteins in the form of amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles in the brain. This causes brain cells to die over time and the brain to shrink. About 6.9 million people in the United States age 65 and older live with Alzheimer's disease.

Every September, communities worldwide join together for World Alzheimer's Month, a global campaign to raise awareness, challenge stigmas, and promote understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Established in 2012 by Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), the month-long initiative gives organizations, caregivers, families, and advocates the opportunity to extend their impact beyond just one day of recognition.

At the heart of this initiative is World Alzheimer's Day, held annually on September 21st. This date marks the anniversary of the day ADI was founded in 1994. While the entire month is filled with education, advocacy, and community events, World Alzheimer's Day serves as the focal point for global activity. It is also the day ADI releases its influential World Alzheimer Report, which highlights critical research, statistics, and policy recommendations.

Dementia is one of the most pressing health and social care challenges of the 21st century, with significant implications for health-care systems and communities worldwide. World Alzheimer's Month helps bring attention to policymakers, while also empowering local organizations to gain visibility, credibility, and influence in their own regions.

Each year features a key theme designed to initiate conversations, educate the public, and dispel myths surrounding dementia. Activities can range from memory walks and fundraising events to seminars, radio call-ins, art exhibits, and online awareness drives. Whether in a large city or a rural village, the campaign's strength lies in its inclusivity. Anyone can participate, regardless of whether they have personal experience with dementia or not.

ADI also plays a central role fighting Alzheimer's Disease by creating and distributing educational toolkits, posters, and resources to Alzheimer's and dementia associations around the world. These materials help local groups to host events that resonate culturally while still contributing to a unified, global message.

Getting involved is simple. You can share information on social media, attend a local awareness event, volunteer with an Alzheimer's organization, or make a donation to support ongoing research and care initiatives. The more people who participate, the stronger the worldwide call to action becomes. Visit [www.alzint.org](http://www.alzint.org) to learn more.

World Alzheimer's Month is not just about awareness—it's about connection, advocacy, and hope. By standing together in the month of September, we remind the world that dementia affects us all, and together, we can work toward a future of greater understanding and better care.

**SOURCE:** ADI - Frequently asked questions. (n.d.). ADI - Frequently Asked Questions. Alzheimer's disease - Symptoms and causes. (n.d.-b). Mayo Clinic.

# WORLD ALZHEIMER'S MONTH



A PURPLE ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS RIBBON  
PHOTO BY NEW AFRICA FROM ADOBE STOCK





PHOTO BY ORAWAN FROM ADOBE STOCK

# LEARN MORE:



Scan the QR Code to the left to read **“What Happens to the Brain in Alzheimer’s Disease?”** from the **National Institute on Aging**. The healthy human brain contains tens of billions of neurons, which are specialized cells send messages between different parts of the brain, and from the brain to the muscles and organs of the body. Alzheimer’s disease disrupts this communication



Scan the QR Code to the left to read or listen to **“Still there: Alzheimer’s has ravaged his mother’s memory, but music brings her back”,** from **NPR**, by **Dustin Jones**. According to a study from Northwestern University, many Alzheimer’s patients, can still recall melodies from their past because the cerebellum, where musical memories are processed, is affected later in the disease. This allows patients like Carmen to recognize and enjoy the music they’ve always loved, even after they can no longer speak. In this article- Adam and Marti Kaye talk about the musical bond between mother and son. Alzheimer’s disease has crushed Marti’s memory. At this stage, she cannot form a word. But somehow the pathway to musical melodies remains clear,” Adam says. “And it is along this pathway that she and I are able to communicate.”



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch: **“A Marriage to Remember | Alzheimer’s Disease Documentary”** from the **New York Times**. In this short documentary, the filmmaker Banker White explores how Alzheimer’s disease has revealed the strength of his parents’ marriage.



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch **“Matter of Mind: My Alzheimer’s”** from **PBS and Independent Lens**. an intimate portrayal of three families confronting the unique challenges of Alzheimer’s and how this progressive neurodegenerative disease transforms roles and relationships. Whether it’s a partner caring for a loved one or an adult child shifting into being their parent’s caregiver, these stories show how families evolve when a loved one is diagnosed.



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch: **“Alzheimer’s: What You Can Do”** from **PBS**, delving into the research that shows how our social interactions, diet, exercise, stress levels, and other daily health habits like “the ginkgo biloba” that have dramatic effects on our cognitive abilities as we age. With scientific data and personal stories about holistic treatment approaches, the film explores the discoveries that are changing the medical profession’s view of dementia.



Scan the QR Code to the left to watch: **“Alzheimer’s: The Caregiver’s Perspective”** from **PBS**. Hear caretakers’ experiences in the world of dementia — from diagnosis to the long goodbye.



# MOUNT KILIMANJARO





As a kid Roxie dreams about Africa and ends up climbing Mount Kilimanjaro as an adult! Read more about what it takes to ascend this epic mountain.

Mount Kilimanjaro, located in Tanzania, is the tallest mountain in Africa. Kilimanjaro is very popular with both experienced hikers and first time adventurers because scaling the mountain requires no technical skills or equipment, such as rope, harness, boot crampons or ice axe. It is a hiking or “walk up” peak, not a mountaineering or climbing peak.

#### KILIMANJARO IS A DORMANT VOLCANO

Kilimanjaro is not only Africa’s tallest peak, but also the world’s tallest free standing mountain. The summit, named Uhuru Point, is *19,341 feet/5,895 meters* above sea level.

Volcanic mountains, such as Kilimanjaro, are formed when molten rock erupts, and piles upon the surface. The mountain once had three volcanic cones – Kibo, Shira and Mawenzi.

*Kibo (19,340’/5,895m)* Kibo is the tallest cone and also the central cone. This is where Kilimanjaro’s summit lies. It was formed 460,000 years ago.

*Mawenzi (16,893’/5,149m)* Mawenzi is a craggy peak that ranks as the third highest peak in Africa, after Kibo and Mount Kenya (*12,549’/3825m*). You will have good views of Mawenzi on the Rongai and Northern Circuit routes.

*Shira (13,000’/3,962m)* Shira is no longer a peak. It is estimated to have been about 16,000 feet high before it collapsed, creating the Shira Plateau on the western side of the mountain. The Machame, Lemosho and Shira routes trek across this feature.

Mount Kilimanjaro is a stratovolcano – a term for a very large

volcano made of ash, lava, and rock. Shira and Mawenzi are extinct volcanoes, meaning that there is no activity underneath these cones. In short, they are cut off from their supply of lava.

However, Kibo is considered a dormant volcano; it can erupt again! If a volcano hasn’t erupted in the last 10,000 years, but scientists think it will erupt again, it’s considered dormant. The last major eruption was 360,000 years ago. The most recent activity was 200,000 years ago. The ash pit is a two hour round trip hike from the highest campsite, Crater Camp. Those who visit the ash pit will be greeted by the smell of sulfur from the volcano’s lava.

#### THE MOUNTAIN IS ON THE EQUATOR

Mount Kilimanjaro lies just 205 miles from the equator. The equator is an imaginary line that passes through the exact center of the Earth dividing the Northern Hemisphere and Southern Hemisphere. While climbing Kilimanjaro, trekkers will experience five distinct ecological zones on their way to the top. These include: *Bushland/Cultivated Zone, Rainforest Zone, Heath/Moorland Zone, Alpine Desert Zone, and an Arctic Zone.*

Weather conditions near the base of the mountain tend to be tropical to semi-temperate and are relatively stable all year round. The lower plains are hot and dry. As one heads away from the bushland towards the rainforest, conditions become increasingly warm and humid. Each zone gets colder and drier as the elevation increases. Plant and animal life also disappear with the rise in altitude through the heath and alpine desert zones. The summit is in the arctic zone, characterized by ice and rock. At this altitude, categorized as “extreme”, there can be no permanent human habitation as the body is in a state of deterioration (*short exposures are OK*).



A SNOW CAPPED MOUNT KILIMANJARO IN TANZANIA  
PHOTO BY PAUL HAMPTON FROM ADOBE STOCK



## KILIMANJARO'S ICE CAP IS DESTINED TO DISAPPEAR

Kilimanjaro's glaciers are the poster child of global climate change. Its icecap has shrunk 82% since 1912. Scientists estimate Kilimanjaro's glaciers may be completely gone in 50 years. The cause of this is thought to be due to deforestation, which contributes to global warming.

Melting and sublimation (*the transition from solid phase directly to vapor*) both contribute to the ice loss, says study author Doug Hardy, a glaciologist from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The glaciers have been in retreat for more than a century, Hardy says, with a drying climate in East Africa as one main culprit.

Nearly 5 million indigenous trees were planted around the base of the mountain in 2008 to combat the issue.

wrong route. Many who fail choose to climb on the Marangu Route, which is the shortest path (five days round trip) to the peak. However, the best way to climb is to use a longer route to aid in acclimatization. Additionally, many people climbing Kilimanjaro are first time backpackers. They do not adequately prepare for their climb in terms of having the right gear, doing enough training, and hiring a reputable guide service

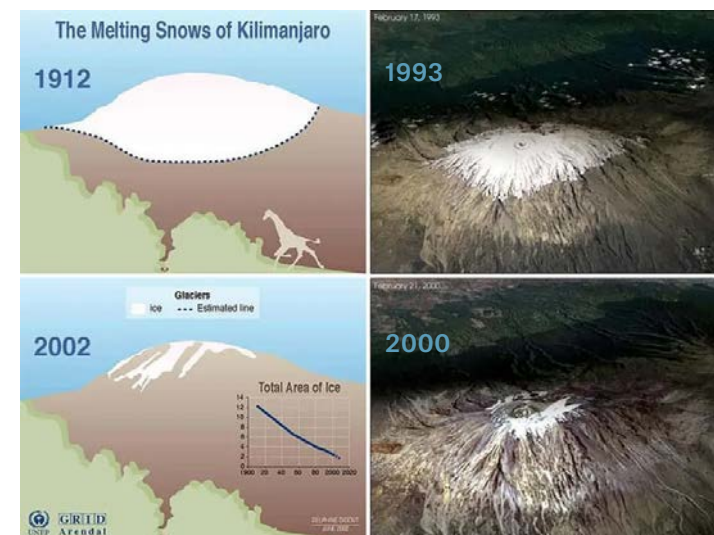
## ATHLETES HAVE CLIMBED KILIMANJARO REALLY FAST

Kilimanjaro has been tackled at a pace that will amaze you. The fastest ascent and descent of Kilimanjaro was completed by Swiss Karl Egloff in just 6 hours and 42 minutes in 2014.

How is this possible? Athletes who do perform speed climbs of high altitude mountains have already well acclimatized to the altitude prior to their attempt. They've spent many days or weeks at high elevation to prepare. Therefore the risk of acute mountain sickness is eliminated.

German Anne-Marie Flammersfeld holds the record for the fastest ascent and descent by a woman on Kilimanjaro, climbing to the summit in 8 hours 32 minutes and reaching the bottom in a total time on the mountain of 12 hours 58 minutes in 2015. The record for fastest unaided ascent (meaning that the climber carried his own food, water and clothing) is held by Tanzanian Simon Mtuy, who climbed to the summit and back in 9 hours 19 minutes in 2006.

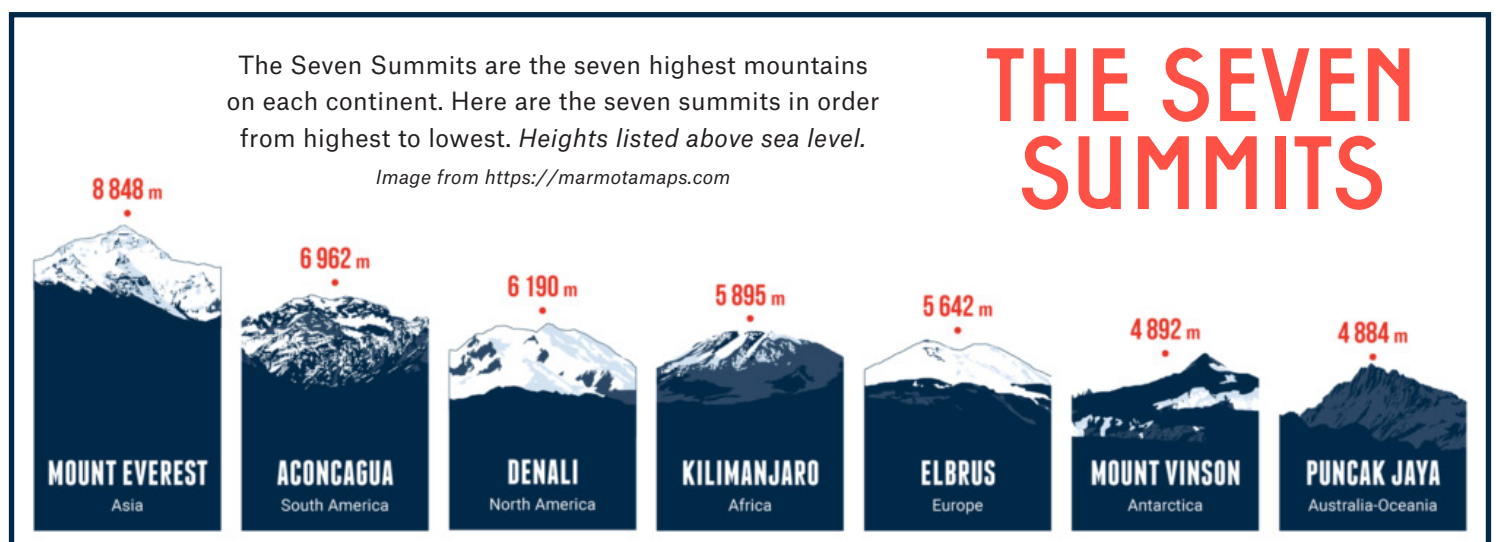
The oldest person to successfully climb Kilimanjaro is 89 year old American woman Anne Lorimor, led by Ultimate Kilimanjaro®. The youngest person to climb Kilimanjaro is American Coalton Tanner, who summited at age six in 2018. The youngest girl to summit is Ashleen Mandrick, who was also six years old when she accomplished the feat. The minimum age for climbing Kilimanjaro is 10 years old, but the park authority grants exceptions to children who have significant experience trekking.



## ATTEMPT TO CLIMB KILIMANJARO

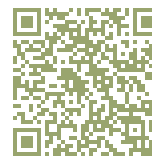
Approximately 30,000 people climb Kilimanjaro every year. Though not substantiated, it is often reported that 50% of climbers fail. Why do so many people fail? Mostly due to altitude sickness. People make the mistake of selecting the

**Would you climb Mount Kilimanjaro?**





# DO YOU WANT TO CLIMB MOUNT KILIMANJARO?



SCAN the QR Code to the left to READ a guide on Everything You Need to Know about Climbing Kilimanjaro from adventurers Sentry and Isabel Kelly on their website [Operation-adventure.com](http://Operation-adventure.com).

Explore their website to see all of their exciting travels and for other tips and tricks for your next adventure!

**SOURCE:** 16 Facts About Mount Kilimanjaro from Altezza Travel. <https://altezzatravel.com/articles/kilimanjaro-interesting-facts>, 12 interesting Facts About Mount Kilimanjaro from UltimateKilimanjaro.com <https://www.ultimatekilimanjaro.com/12-interesting-kilimanjaro-facts/>



UHURU PEAK, MOUNT KILIMANJARO, TANZANIA  
PHOTO BY MALAJSCY FROM ADOBE STOCK



DISCOVER:

## PERU

Roxie's mother Carmen was born in Peru & was an actress in the capital city of Lima! Peru is the third largest country in South America, after Brazil and Argentina. It is made up of a variety of landscapes, from mountains and beaches to deserts and rain forests. The western coast of Peru is a narrow strip of desert 1,555 miles long bordering the Pacific Ocean. The coastal desert makes up only about 10 percent of Peru, but it is home to more than half of all Peruvians.

## HISTORY

The earliest inhabitants arrived in Peru about 15,000 years ago. Societies emerged on the west coast more than 5,000 years ago and began to spread inland. These included the Chavín, the Moche, and the Nasca.

One of the most important Peruvian cultures was the Inca, who lived in Peru around 600 years ago. The Incan capital, Cusco (*pictured above*) is still a major city today. Every year, roughly 1.5 million people travel to Peru to visit the archeological site Machu Picchu. It is believed to be a significant place in Incan history. Located over 2,000 meters above sea level in the Andes Mountains, the site stretches over five miles and features more than 3,000 stone steps. The Incan Empire was conquered by Spanish colonists in the 16th century, and the remains of the ancient city of Machu Picchu were lost for over 400 years. Today Peru is a constitutional republic, with a president, a congress, and a supreme court. Peruvians are required to vote by law. Presidents serve five-year terms and can only be elected twice in a row. Most Peruvians follow the Catholic religion introduced by the Spanish. While Spanish is the official language of Peru, there are actually as many as 43 native languages spoken in Peru, including Quechua, Aymara, Shipibo, Ashaninka and Agurauna. The Incan language Quechua is still spoken by 8 million people.

## NATURE

The world's largest rain forest, the Amazon, covers nearly half of Peru. Called the Selva in Spanish, this huge jungle, which also covers half of Brazil, is home to plants and animals that do not live anywhere else on Earth, and is home to many indigenous tribes. The mighty Amazon river has

its origins in three Highland rivers in Peru: the Marañón, Mantaro and Apurímac.

The second highest mountain range in the world runs through Peru. These peaks, called the Andes, are so tall and forbidding that the ancient Inca people thought they were gods. Peru's mountains support special types of grasses and plants, which provide food for mammals like llamas, alpacas, and vicuñas. Over 70% of the world's alpaca population lives in Peru. One plant that grows in the Andes, the puya raimondi, grows for a hundred years before blooming. Deep in the northern part of the country, right in the Andes Mountains, lies Yanacocha Mine, which is estimated to be somewhere between the second and fourth largest gold-mine in the world. Interestingly the native Quechua people knew of the treasure before ground was broken on the mine, calling the local river Corimayo, or "gold river". On the Pacific Coast, many interesting plant and animal species have adapted to the dry desert climate. And off the coast, the Peru Current nourishes huge numbers of small fish, which in turn support large populations of bigger fish and seabirds, including Humboldt penguins.

## CULTURE

Ponchos have been a part of Peruvian culture since as early as 2000 BC! A traditional Peruvian poncho can take up to six months to make. This includes spinning and dyeing the wool—usually alpaca—and then weaving it into colorful and intricate patterns. Peru is known for its delicious cuisine, which includes dishes like ceviche, lomo saltado, and aji de gallina. Peru is the birthplace of potatoes, and over 4,000 varieties of potatoes are grown in the country. The Peruvian national instrument is the charango, a type of small guitar featuring five double strings and made from the shell of an armadillo.

**SOURCES:** <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/countries/article/peru> <https://childrenshungerfund.org/blog/10-interesting-facts-about-peru/#> <https://www.bunniktours.com.au/blog/15-fascinating-facts-about-peru>





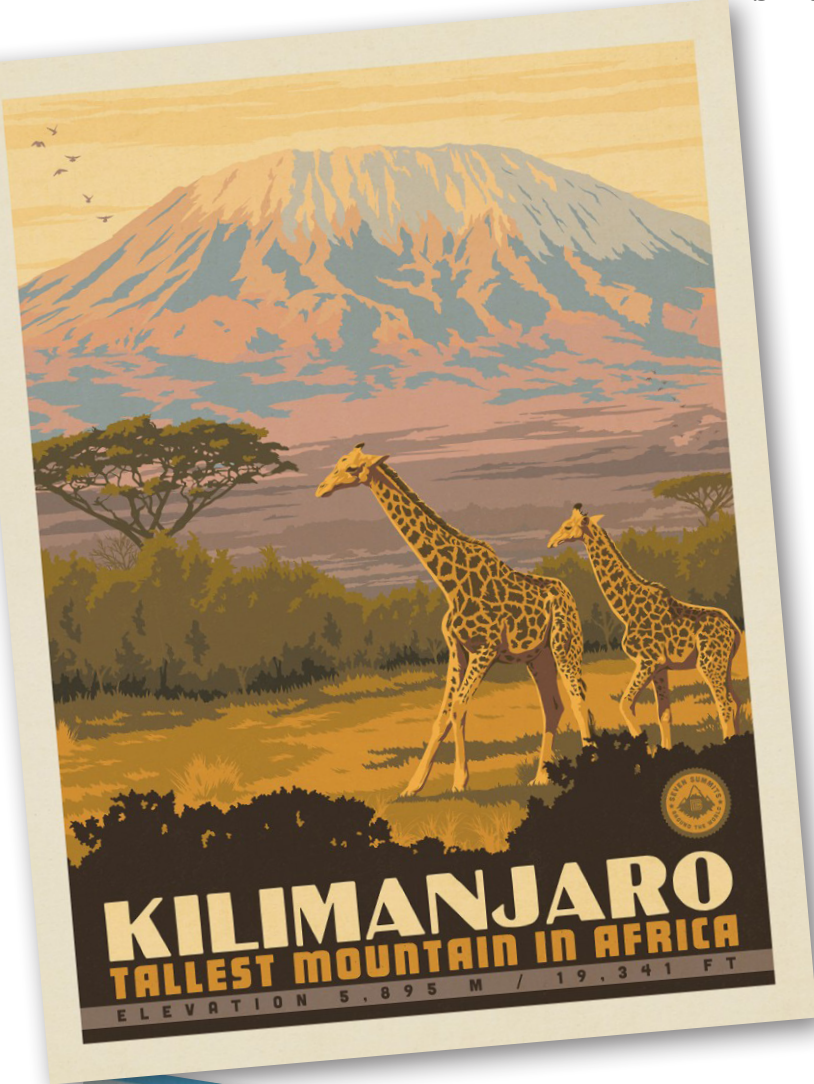


THIS PAGE: PLAZA DE ARMAS IN LIMA CITY, PERU  
PHOTO BY BORIS STROUJKO FROM ADOBE STOCK  
MAP OF PERU, BY STELLAR BONES, ADOBE STOCK  
OPPOSITE PAGE: CUSCO, PERU & AN ALPACA  
PHOTO BY SHARPTOYOU FROM ADOBE STOCK



# WISH YOU WERE HERE

In *Am I Roxie?* Roxana Ortega adventures off to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. What far-off adventure have you dreamed of going on? Travelers often send postcards to their loved ones back at home. A postcard is a card for transmitting a message that can be mailed without an envelope. The first government-issued cards were the straw-coloured Austrian Korrespondenz Karte (with a two-kreuzer stamp included) issued in October 1869. The period from 1907 to 1915 is known as the “golden age of the postcard,” and it’s when the divided design on the back of the card was created, introducing the postcards that we know today. That divided back—with room for a message on the left and the address on the right—is essential to understanding how to write on a postcard. The space for a message is much more limited than in a letter (or any digital correspondence), so you need to choose your words wisely.



maybe you  
could you  
me at more



**ACTIVITY:** Imagine you're traveling on a grand adventure, or think of a time when you went on a great trip! Who would you write to and what would you write on a postcard to tell them about your experience? How would you describe it in words?

Think of a postcard as an old-school text message. It's an opportunity to send a short, personal note that's hyper-specific to the place where you are and/or the person you're writing to.

**Use the back of the postcard below your card to send a snapshot of your trip,** or the day-to-day life wherever you are. You can make a joke, or even craft a poem.

**Draw a quick sketch of your location the front of the card to the right as the cover!**

Here are some tips to write your message:

Use colorful and descriptive language. Write a quick list of five interesting facts you've learned about where you are. Give a local traveling tip. Share a funny or sweet anecdote from your life during the past few days. Share interesting news. Recall an inside joke and what inspired you to think of it.

Address your postcard. Research the country you're in to see how much postage would cost to send a post-card to the United States. International postcards typically take 7-21 business days to be delivered, but this can vary based on the destination and other factors.

**SOURCE:** <https://www.thesaurus.com/e/writing/how-to-write-postcards/>





# AUDITIONING 101

BY BRIAN ALLMAN, GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In her *Am I Roxie?* Actor and Playwright Roxana Ortega shares some stories about her journey as a professional actor. Roxie runs all over Los Angeles on auditionings or filming commercials, movies, video games, voice overs and TV shows. Below are some steps to follow when you get an audition!

## BEFORE THE AUDITION:

*Research the project – know the story, style, and who’s creating it.* For classical pieces, head to the library or use an online search engine to do some research. For original pieces, or for content that cannot be viewed beforehand, try to read another play or script from the writer. Who is putting on the production, and what other work(s) are they known for? Ask yourself, “Do my values align with those of the production?”

*Understand your character – their goals, personality, and backstory.* What does your character ultimately want? How do they react and treat others? How do they speak, hold themselves, move?

*Learn your lines* – the more you know them, the more you’ll understand what your character wants, and the more you can listen and respond to your scene partner, who is often the reader in the audition room that casting has provided. You can print and hold your scene during your audition, but knowing your lines will help you feel more comfortable.

*Make bold choices* – decide what your character wants and how they’ll get it.

*Take care of yourself* – Rest, healthy eating, and a positive mindset are incredibly important to the sustainability of an actor/artist. Thank those who have helped you along the way, such as family members and friends, by expressing gratitude for their support.

## AT THE AUDITION:

*Arrive early* – being early shows professionalism, and helps to give you time to settle in. Allow extra time to factor traffic, parking and other delays.

*Dress smart* – hint at your character without wearing a full costume. Be careful about wearing strong deodorants, shampoos, or perfumes, as some people in the audition room with you may have an allergy or intolerance to strong or overwhelming scents.

*Bring your materials* – such as your headshot, résumé, or anything else requested. For starting artists, a basic headshot is acceptable. Best to frame your head and face clearly and have good lighting! For a resume, list your previous theater, film, or performance experiences. For starting actors, even a few bullet points about your skills and talents can be helpful to a casting director.

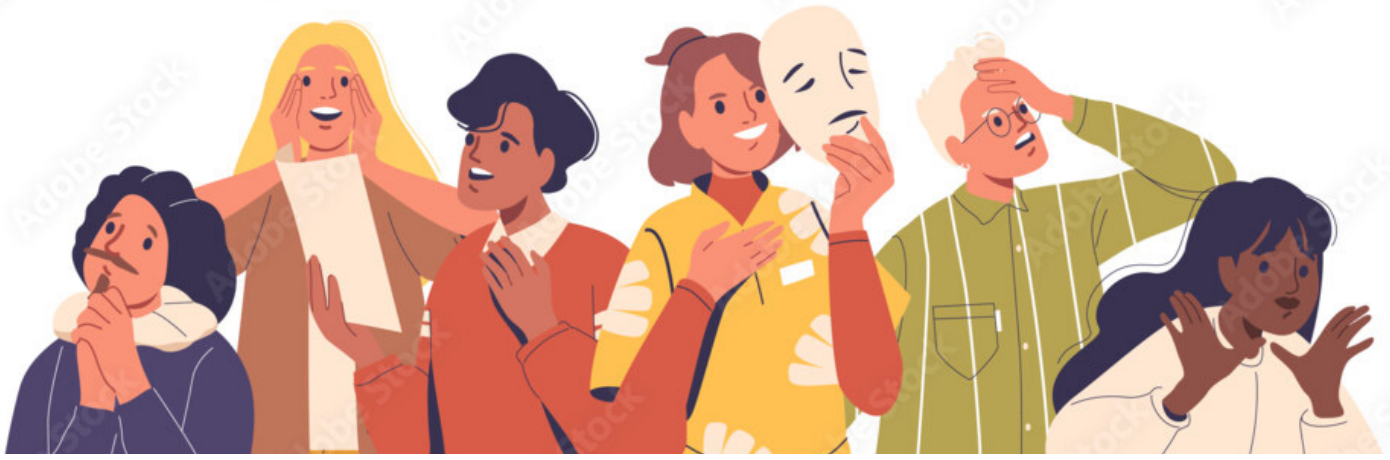
*Be kind to everyone* – assistants, readers, and other actors. This also applies to the people you pass on the street on your way to and from your audition.

If you’re nervous – that’s okay! A daily practice of Meditation can be helpful for your nerves! Breathe deeply, visualize success. Often practicing at home will help will ease your nerves, and practice will help you to be more comfortable and confident in the audition room. Practice speaking out loud, practice saying your name, practice walking into a room, practice being confident. Remember- just focus on your scene partner during the audition-they can help you forget about everything else going on in that room.

*Be flexible* – sometimes the director will ask for a different perspective on a second take. If during your audition you mess up, take a breath and keep going. Many successful artists understand that mistakes are part of the creative process and often gifts that can be used to discover something new!







### SELF TAPES & VIRTUAL AUDITIONS :

Many actors can now audition at home with Self-Tapes! See the QR code below to watch a video guide on how to film a self tape audition. You don't need fancy equipment, just use good lighting and a neutral and plain background. Too much detail or pattern behind could distract the casting directors from your audition.

Make sure your sound is clear. Everyone needs to be able to hear you clearly. Frame the shot so it's not too far away or too close. (Where the camera is set up in relation to you, and how much of your face and/or body is seen). Follow all directions from casting!

### AFTER THE AUDITION:

Thank the casting team. Honestly. Earnestly. Don't stick around unless they ask you to stay.

Write notes in your audition journal – what went well and what challenges you had and how you felt? Perhaps consider finding an acting class or private coach.

Let it go – not getting the role isn't personal. There are many reasons beyond your control when it comes to who is chosen; many have nothing to do with your talents or skills as the reason you were not cast.

### REMEMBER:

Professionalism, preparation, and adaptability can make casting directors remember you for future roles—even if you don't get this one!

**SOURCE:** Chapman, A., MA. (2024, October 20). How to Audition (with Pictures) - wikiHow. Rodriguez, B. (2022, November 22). How to Audition. <https://www.backstage.com/>.



SCAN the QR code to the left to watch the YouTube video from Makayla Lysiak on how to self tape audition at home, including her self tape set up (lighting, camera, etc.).



SCAN the QR code to the left to watch the video "An Actor's Warm-Up | Voice | National Theatre", led by Jeannette Nelson, helping actors to prepare their voice ahead of performances, featuring exercises on breathing, resonance, projection and articulation.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO the right to see Roxana Ortega's iMDB page! She has been in over 90 projects including voice overs, video games, movies and tv and now her debut at GeffenPlayhouse!





# YES, AND...

BY BRIAN ALLMAN, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The writer and star of *Am I Roxie?* Roxana Ortega has a background in comedy and improvisation. She has previously studied at and worked with the Upright Citizens Brigade and the Groundlings. Improvisation is a form of acting or performance that takes place without a script. Most times, a suggestion — perhaps from a live audience — or a prompt, is all that is needed to begin a show or scene. Sometimes an improvised scene can even take shape without a suggestion, but rather, just through observations made in the moment, of the situation of being in front of an audience, or from a word or movement of a fellow improviser on stage with you.

The number one rule in improvisation is to keep the scene going, moving, or flowing. An important principle of studying and performing improv is the concept of “yes...and...”. The concept is quite simple, but often takes time and practice to understand. The idea is to respond, either verbally or through action, to another’s suggestion or offer, by accepting and saying, “Yes!”. You are fundamentally agreeing to what the other performer(s) is saying, accepting their truth of the situation

Next, after agreeing to or accepting the offer given, your response takes the form of “and...”, which indicates that you are adding something to your partner’s suggestion. By adding additional, complimentary, or progressing ideas, you help to keep the scene moving and growing. If you say “No” after an offer, there’s nowhere to take the scene. If you do not grow the scene by adding to the concept of “and...”, then there’s also nowhere to take the scene. This process of giving and growing between two or more improvisers can take place either in a few minutes, which is better known as short-form improv, or in a scene 20 or more minutes, known as long-form improvisation, with games such as *The Harold*, *The Armondo*, or *The Montage*.

Depending on the improv troupe, school, training institute, or theater company — props, sets, and music may be utilized, but at its basic core, improvisation can be performed anywhere, at any time, with anyone. Additional rules or guidelines for improvisations that vary from house to house and performer to performer include “no questions - only statements”, “make your scene partner look good”, and “listen actively”!

Improvisation is a great and helpful tool for actors and artists that want to exemplify range, exude confidence, and exhibit the power of the ensemble. “Yes, And...” is also a great perspective on living, whether on a stage in front of an audience, or not. Positivity, and responsibility.

*Brian Allman has been a professional improvisational actor and instructor for 30 years. He has taught for, performed at, or studied with a number of different improv troupes from around the country, including but not limited to: Acme Comedy, AMDA, Annoyance Theatre, ComedySportz, Improv Olympic, UCB, Second City, UCLA Ruin, Old Milwaukee, Cock 'N' Toast, The Midnight Show, Dirty South Improv Festival, Defiance Theater Company, A Faery Hunt, and, The Actors' Gang.*



PHOTO BY LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS FROM ADOBE STOCK



# THE AUDIENCE'S ROLE

## What is your important role as an audience member?

Seeing live theater is different from going to a movie theater, watching something at home on your TV, or attending a live sporting event or concert. You are an important part of the experience- just as much as the performers on stage!

What are some things we should keep in mind to ensure that we, other attendees, and the performers have a great experience?

### THE THREE R'S

#### Please be **RESPECTFUL!**

- Respect the space, the work, and one another.
- Silence phones and put them away during the show.
- Unwrapping candy or cough drops before play begins.
- Respect the artists by not taking pictures or videos during the performance.

#### Please be **RESPONSIBLE!**

- Arrive early to the theater! It can be disruptive to enter the theater after the show has already started, and you will miss some great moments and important parts of the story!
- Remain seated until the end of the show (unless it is a true emergency).
- Eating or drinking before or after the show, or during intermissions.
- Please visit the restroom before or after the show, or during intermissions.

#### Please be **RESPONSIVE!**

- Respond genuinely! For example, if you find something amusing, funny, feel free to laugh and react.

### USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

We appreciate you sharing your Geffen Playhouse experience via social media, and kindly request that you do not do so inside the theater, where the use of electronic devices is prohibited.

We recommend that you post your responses and thoughts in the lobby after the performance, and invite you to tag @GeffenPlayhouse and use #GeffenPlayhouse to share your experience and to continue the conversation with us online.



L-R: GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY, ANGELA LEWIS, AKILAH A. WALKER, KIMBERLY SCOTT AND ASIA MARTIN DURING A TALKBACK FOR A STUDENT MATINEE OF *BLACK CYPRESS BAYOU*. PHOTO BY ISAAK BERLINER.



LAUSD STUDENTS AT THE STUDENT MATINEE OF *THE LEGEND OF GEORGIA MCBRIDE*. PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH



DANIEL K. ISSAC AND AUDIENCE AT *EVERY BRILLIANT THING*. PHOTO BY ISAAK BERLINER



LAUSD STUDENTS AT THE STUDENT MATINEE OF *THE LEGEND OF GEORGIA MCBRIDE*. PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**BE** educated on different types of improvisation troupes at <https://tinyurl.com/44bhtpb6>

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**CELEBRATE** Hispanic History Heritage Month from September 15th to October 16th <https://tinyurl.com/3j27nnr8>

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**DISCOVER** more about Peru at <https://tinyurl.com/yszb92bc>

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**EXPLORE** the ultimate guide to Improv with 101 tips, strategies, & tools at <https://tinyurl.com/yf37evu2>

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**EXPERIENCE** Machu Picchu, Peru with a guided 360 ° tour at <https://tinyurl.com/ymtfjhc7>

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**HONOR** Hispanic Heritage Month with 8 Unique Documentaries <https://tinyurl.com/2c6n26uu>

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**LEARN** about early signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's at <https://tinyurl.com/3k46kec5>

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**LISTEN** to Ted Talks in Spanish (with multilingual subtitles) at <https://tinyurl.com/cdm9c9jc>

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**READ** the Ultimate Guide to Puns at <https://tinyurl.com/5c9x2ka2>

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

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**UNDERSTAND** the 10 comedy terms that every actor should know at <https://tinyurl.com/ytmxwm>

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**WATCH** Abbott and Costello's - Who's On First Routine at <https://tinyurl.com/kxekrm93>

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TARA RICASA AND SARA PORKALOB AND STUDENTS  
AT THE STUDENT MATINEE OF *DRAGON LADY* AT GEFfen PLAYHOUSE  
PHOTO BY ISAAK BERLINER

# POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Depending on the time available and your participants' interests, guide them to respond to the suggested questions below. Encourage everyone to participate, and respect differing opinions. Individuals can share their thoughts with a partner, in a small group, as part of a bigger group discussion, or as written responses.

- What are some images and moments from the production that stood out or resonated with you? What was meaningful, stimulating, surprising, evocative, memorable, interesting, exciting, striking, touching, challenging, compelling, delightful, different, or unique?
- Overall, how did you feel while watching this show? Engaged? Amused? Inspired? Provoked? Uncomfortable? What made you feel this way?
- Did you identify or empathize with any of the characters played by Roxana Ortega? If so, which character(s) and when? If not, why not? Which characters remind you of someone in your life?
- What is/was your relationship like with your parents? Often the idea of family can extend outside of our relatives. Who in your life is in your chosen family? What is your relationship like with them?
- Here are some of Geffen Playhouse's other solo performances *Dragon Lady* W/ Sara Porkalob, *The Hope Theory* W/ Helder Guimarães, *Every Brilliant Thing* W/ Daniel K. Isaac, *Mindplay* W/ Vinny Deponito, *Emergency* W/ Daniel "Koa" Beaty, *A Christmas Carol* W/ Jefferson Mays. If you were to write your own solo piece and tell your story, what story would you want to tell and why?
- Roxie scaled Mount Kilimanjaro in the play and IRL. If you could travel to any place in the world, where would you go and why? Or describe a previous adventure!
- Who in your family do you feel most comfortable talking to about serious topics? What about less serious or silly topics? Who in your family has supported you through a difficult time?
- 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?
- If you could tell a loved one anything, who would you tell and what would you tell them? Who or what inspires you? Give them a call or write them a letter and share how impactful they were in your life.





# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## AN INTERVIEW WITH LEAD SCENIC CARPENTER, PHILIP ROSSI

**What is your position at Geffen Playhouse and how long have you been at the Geffen?**

My position at the Geffen Playhouse is Lead Scenic Carpenter. I've been at the Geffen since July of 2014.

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

I have a degree in theatre from New York University and one of the required classes was a theater practicum. My assignment was working in the undergraduate scene shop, assisting the carpenters in set construction. After I completed my required classwork, I was hired as a work study carpenter for the next 4 years. After graduating, I continued to work as a freelance carpenter in New York; working in theaters and scene shops. When I moved to LA, I contacted a carpenter buddy from NYU who was already working at the Geffen to see if they needed any carpenters. It turns out they were short staffed and I was asked to come to assist the build that day!

**What are your primary responsibilities as the Lead Scenic Carpenter?**

My primary responsibilities are leading the crew as they complete the pre-rig, load-in, maintenance, and strike of the set. I also lead the installation of any physical elements of automated scenery.

**What key skills and disposition does a Lead Scenic Carpenter need to possess?**

A crew lead not only needs a comprehensive knowledge of scenic construction, rigging, and automation, but also the ability to communicate clearly with the production team and their own crew. The ability to lead a team of people effectively through tense crew call, and long hours is a necessity, but a sense of humor doesn't hurt.



PHOTO BY LAURA BURKE

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

I saw a middle school production of *Into the Woods: Jr.* when I was in sixth grade at a school assembly. That was when I realized acting was something you could do; not just something on TV.

**What do you find most challenging about your work?**

The most difficult thing about the job is keeping crew morale up during a long build when things aren't going well.

**What do you find most rewarding?**

Hearing the audience react to the set when the lights come up.

**What was one of your favorite shows to work on?**

One of my favorite shows to work on was *Key Largo*. The set designer was incredible, but down to earth- a real joy to work with! And the set was amazing. We created an entire rain-storm onstage complete with real wind and rain; even a tree blowing through a window.

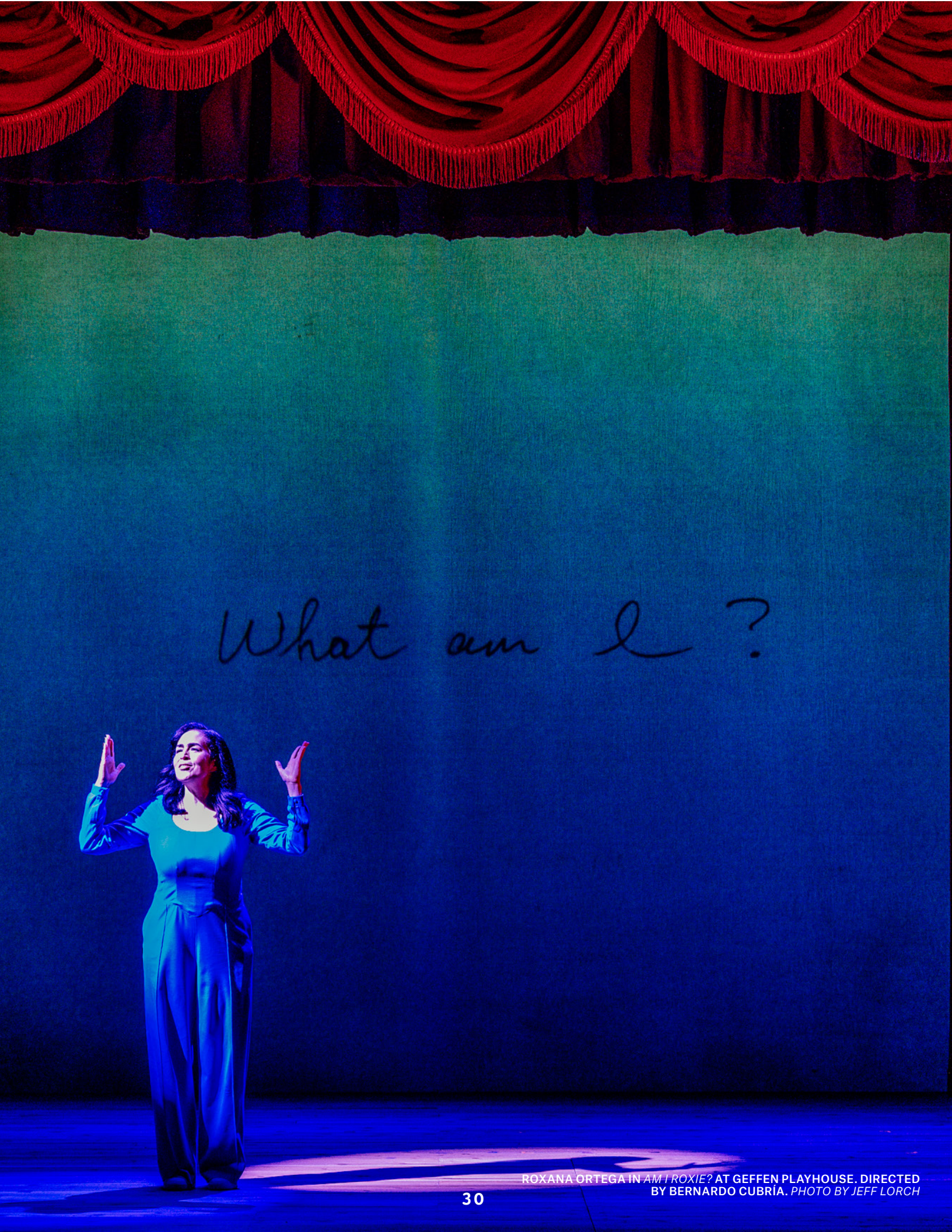


PHILIP WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES  
OF GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE'S *WAITING FOR GODOT* IN THE GIL CATES THEATER.  
PHOTO COURTESY BY MELISSA HARTMAN.



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





What am I?

ROXANA ORTEGA IN *AM I ROXIE?* AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE. DIRECTED  
BY BERNARDO CUBRIA. PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH





Wanna see more theater?

Sign up for the TeenTix LA Pass at

[LA.TEENTIX.ORG/SIGN-UP](https://LA.TEENTIX.ORG/SIGN-UP)



A program for anyone ages 13–19! Once you're registered, you'll get access to \$5 tickets at over 40 arts organizations, including Geffen Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, and Center Theatre Group, and many more. Check out the full list of TeenTix-eligible events at [la.teenitix.org/calendar!](https://la.teenitix.org/calendar!)

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1

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2

Check out  
TeenTix LA's  
Events Calendar  
and find a show  
to see.

3

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(or sometimes  
free!)



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### PHOTOS:

TOP, L-R: BILLY EUGENE JONES, MATTHEW ELIJAH WEBB, CHRIS HERBIE HOLLAND, *FAT HAM*. PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH  
MIDDLE, L-R: AUDREY FRANCIS & JAMES VINCENT MEREDITH IN *NOISES OFF*. PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH  
BOTTOM, CLOCKWISE: MARCEL SPEARS, MATTHEW ELIJAH WEBB, CHRIS HERBIE HOLLAND AND LAUSD STUDENTS AT THE STUDENT MATINEE OF *FAT HAM*. PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH



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**EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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