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Compagnia de' Colombari

KING LEAR



COMPAGNIA DE' COLOMBARI: KING LEAR

Fri. June 14 at 8:00PM, Sat. June 15 at 3:00PM & 8:00PM,
Sun. June 16 at 2:00PM & 7:00PM (120 minutes) University Theatre

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COMPAGNIA DE' COLOMBARI: KING LEAR

Friday, June 14 at 8:00PM • Saturday, June 15 at 3:00PM & 8:00PM
Sunday, June 16 at 2:00PM & 7:00PM (120 minutes, no intermission)
University Theatre, 222 York Street New Haven, CT

ABOUT KING LEAR

"If a man who thinks he is a king is mad, a king who thinks he is a king is no less so." —Jacques Lacan

Compagnia de' Colombari's KING LEAR, adapted and directed by Karin Coonrod, is a raw, primal and potent "paper crown" Lear that strips down the Shakespearian classic to its essence through a vigorous exploration of the text and characters' psyches and motivations. KING LEAR emerges from the vast silence into a whirlwind and returns to the silence. An ensemble of ten actors ranging in age and gender all embody Lear at the beginning. One by one, they strip off their paper crowns and transform into other characters in the play.

Under Coonrod's shrewd direction, the performers radically take over the text and the theatre space. Spreading across the treacherous psychic cartography of the play, they dig deep into the internal and external voyage of a mighty king who loses himself and is found again after enduring arduous challenges.

This fresh, vital and urgent exploration of encountering oneself is a journey of a fractured soul and a broken community discovering wholeness through nearly unbearable suffering. It is a journey from imperception into awareness, becoming human, learning to recognize love, embracing vulnerability and understanding that humility is our superpower.

DRAMATURG NOTE

Welcome to our King Lear.

In *The Fire Next Time*, James Baldwin writes, "The person who distrusts himself has no touchstone for reality—for this touchstone can be only oneself." Almost 400 years earlier, William Shakespeare prefigured Baldwin's observation with King Lear, the story of an autocratic monarch who has "ever but slenderly known himself." Lear's power shields him from self knowledge. It is only through loss-of his land, his power, and his mind-that he gains, eventually, insight.

Compagnia de' Colombari's production of King Lear embodies these parallel processes of loss and gain. The play begins not with one Lear, but with ten, each bedecked in a paper crown: ten very different actors who, together, play the titular king. Quickly, this unity fragments. Other characters appear, vying for influence, diminishing Lear by their very presence.

Such attrition brings clarity. Refined to his barest essentials, Lear attains, for

the first time, true understanding. But in this tragic universe, wisdom comes at unendurable cost. By blurring the boundaries between performance space and audience space, between king and subject, between perpetrator and witness, between character and spectator, this King Lear renders this cost inescapable. We lose, as Lear, together. As Lear, we meet ourselves. And as Lear sees, terribly and miraculously, we, too, see.

—Gabrielle Hoyt, Production Dramaturg

KARIN COONROD'S DIRECTOR'S NOTE

KING LEAR, played by ten actors in ten paper crowns, is sculpted out of vast silence, making the emergence of truth haunting in its comedy and tragedy. To release the interconnectedness of the text into the audience, Karin Coonrod asks a company of ten actors to each play Lear at the top of the play, peeling away to play other characters as they materialize.

The monstrosity of power, with its façade of invulnerability, reveals itself to be blind at every turn. The mighty king does not know himself. This is a journey of a fractured soul and community coming into wholeness through nearly unbearable suffering. The journey from blindness into SEEING, the journey to become a man, a human, to recognize love, to be vulnerable, is what we watch through flashes of brilliant lucidity.

The play makes a trajectory through what is measured into a liminal realm of the measureless.

Shaking this play out of its clean psychological representations, the production sharply hits the psychological target of each character while being fully interconnected in its journey.

KING LEAR ACTORS & CREATIVE TEAM BIOS AND CREDITS

Brandon Burton (King Lear/Edgar) Regional: *Death of a Salesman* (Broadway), *Fences* (Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival), *The Folks at Home* (Baltimore Center Stage), *Merry Wives* (Public Theater). Yale Drama: *Othello* (Othello), *Henry VI pt. 3* (York, George, Bona). Yale Rep: *A Raisin in the Sun* (Bobo). Film/Television: "Cram" (Amazon/Tubi), "Evil" (CBS). MFA: Yale Drama

Abigail Killeen (Lear/Goneril) Previously with Karin Coonrod/Colombari: *The Merchant of Venice*, *Everything That Rises Must Converge*, *Whitman on Walls* (WoW!). Also directed by Karin Coonrod: *Babette's Feast* (Portland Stage, Theatre at St. Clement's). Based in Portland, Maine, Abigail is an Affiliate Artist at Portland Stage. Recent credits: *What The Constitution Means To Me* (Heidi), *The Clean House* (Lane), *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Blanche), *Love/Sick*, *A Christmas Carol*. Other Portland theater: *Doll's House Part 2* (Nora, Good Theater), *Sophonisba* (Sophonisba, Dramatic Rep), and *Macbeth* (Lady Macbeth, Fenix). Founding member of Connecticut Free Shakespeare, where she worked for eight seasons. Abigail is also a Professor of Theater in the Department of Theater and Dance at Bowdoin College. @bowdointheaterdance

Julian Elijah Martinez (King Lear/Edmund) Broadway: Network. Off-Broadway: This Land Was Made (Vineyard Theatre); Sanctuary City (New York Theater Workshop); Anatomy of A Suicide (Atlantic Theater Company); Mud (Boundless Theater Company); Alligator (New Georges). Regional: King Lear (Shakespeare Theater Company); Father Comes Home From The Wars Part 1, 2, 3 (co-production Yale Rep and A.C.T.); and 9 Circles (Forum Theatre, Helen Hayes nomination). TV: "Wu-tang: An American Saga"; "Law and Order: SVU"; "That Damn Michael Che Show"; "Prodigal Son"; and "Elementary." Other: Company member of The Acting Company and Board member of Developing Artist. Training: MFA Yale School Of Drama. julianelijahmartinez.com @julianelijahmartinez

Jo Mei (King Lear/Regan) Jo's NY theater credits include, Salesman (Connelly Theatre), Lunch Bunch (PlayCo. & Clubbed Thumb), Anatomy of a Suicide (Atlantic), Babette's Feast (Theatre at St. Clement's), World of Extreme Happiness (Manhattan Theatre Club), You For Me For You (Ma-Yi). Regionally, she has worked at Berkeley Rep, Pittsburgh City Theatre, Portland Stage, A.R.T., The Goodman, Woolly Mammoth and others. TV credits include "Crashing" (HBO), "Nicki"(Freeform), "Bones" (Fox), and "The Good Wife" (CBS). Jo starred in and co-wrote the award-winning film "A Picture of You." Other film credits include "A Bread Factory, Part One," "Who We Are Now," "Adult World," and "The Grief of Others." Member: The Actors Center. Training: Juilliard. Follow @jotomato

Tom Nelis (King Lear/France) Broadway: Girl From the North Country, Indecent, The Visit, The Caine Mutiny Court Martial, Aida. Off-Broadway: The Vineyard, The Public Theater, New York Theater Workshop, Manhattan Theater Club, Theatre For A New Audience, Playwrights Horizons, Signature Theater, Second Stage, BAM, Ars Nova, Dance Theater Workshop, The Women's Project, The Talking Band, Ripe Time, En Garde Arts and most recently The Beautiful Lady at Cafe La Mama. International: The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Suzuki Company of Toga, SITI Company and international tours with Laurie Anderson and Richard Foreman. Awards: Eliot Norton Outstanding Performer (Prospero - The Tempest), OBIE (Marshall McLuhan - The Medium), Drama League Nomination (Leonard Bernstein - SCORE). Founding member of SITI Company, MFA, UC San Diego.

Lukas Papenfusscline, aka leiken (King Lear/Fool), is a singer and performer exploring expansive identity, queer spirituality, and ephemera. They specialize in medieval and new music and work exclusively in collaborative environments. A sought-after vocalist for concert, opera, and theater, leiken can often be seen leading their band, mammifères, singing with world-renowned ensemble Sequentia, or collaborating with leading contemporary artists like Ran Blake, Eve Beglarian, and Four Larks. leiken also loves fermentation, textiles, and swimming. www.leiken.xyz @leiken_666

Michael Potts (King Lear/Gloucester) Broadway: The Piano Lesson (Outer Critics Circle Nom.), The Iceman Cometh (Richard Seff Award), The Prom, Jitney, The Book of Mormon, 1984 and Grey Gardens. Other credits: Richard III (Falstaff Award), Mother Courage, Twelfth Night, The Tempest and The America Play (Obie Award). Television & film: The Piano Lesson, Rustin, Ma

Rainey's Black Bottom, Rounding, "East New York," "The First Lady," "L&O: SVU," "True Detective" and "The Wire." Yale School of Drama graduate. Instagram:@mpotts62

Paul Pryce (King Lear/Kent) is thrilled to join the Compagnia de Colombari King Lear ensemble! Theatre credits: The Merchant of Venice (Compagnia de Colombari / Arts & Ideas Festival), Hamlet, The Piano Lesson, Good Goods (Yale Repertory Theatre), Create Dangerously (Miami New Drama), Julius Ceasar, Pericles (Elm Shakespeare), Pecong (The National Black Theatre of Harlem), GO FORTH! (NY & US Tour), Silence & Fear (Compagnie Lieux Dits, France). Film & TV: Marvel's "Jessica Jones," "Narco Saints" (Netflix), "Unforgettable" (CBS). As a filmmaker & producer, Paul's debut film, Come Out Come Out World, premiered at the Cannes Short Film Corner. His short film The Deliverer won Best Foreign Film at The Atlanta Underground Film Festival, and his feature-length screenplay for The Deliverer was a Sundance Writers Lab Short-listed Finalist. Paul teaches at Brooklyn College, HB Studio, and in South Korea. MFA: Yale School of Drama alum. Paul was born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago.

Celeste Sena (King Lear/Cordelia) is a Caribbean-American Actress, singer, and dancer based in NYC and a recent graduate of Brooklyn College's MFA Acting Program. She has also trained at the Atlantic Theater Company, Alvin Ailey and BADA. Her recent on-screen work includes commercials for Totino's Pizza Rolls with Pete Davidson and Etsy, short films Welcome to Afro Tree for Warner Bros/OneFifty and a Rap Pack starring Emmy-Winning Actor Jharrel Jerome. She has also had a series of readings and workshops for leading Off-Broadway theaters, such as Infinite Life and The Welkin at Atlantic Theater Company, Good Bones by James Ijames at The Public Theater, and Fish by Kia Corthron at the Keen Company.

Tony Torn (King Lear/Oswald) Previously with Karin Coonrod/Colombari: Whitman on Walls!, The Tempest at LaMama, Mycenaean workshop at TBA Festival, Portland OR. Recent Stage: Spider Rabbit, directed by Dan Safer, at The Prelude Festival; Bedlam's Fall River Fishing, directed by Eric Tucker; Mabou Mines' Mud/Drowning, directed by Joanne Akalaitis; Dom Juan at The Fisher Center, Bard College, directed by Ashley Tata. Recent Screen: "Law & Order SVU" (NBC); "The Blacklist" (NBC); "Teenage Bounty Hunters" (Netflix). Upcoming: feature films, The Dutchman and Exhibiting Forgiveness. Tony is known for working extensively with experimental theater makers Reza Abdoh and Richard Foreman, as the founding director for Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping, playing Rusty Trawler in Breakfast at Tiffany's on Broadway opposite Emilia Clark, and creating and starring in Ubu Sings Ubu with Dan Safer. Most recently, Tony directed the English language premiere of Romina Paula's acclaimed play The Whole of Time at Torn Page, a private event space named in honor of his parents, Rip Torn and Geraldine Page.

Paul Wellington (Black Angel #1) is the owner and founder of Redemption Flute LLC. At the core of Redemption Flute is Paul's purpose. Through the marriage of flute melodies and the introspective practice of meditation, Paul traversed the labyrinth of his trauma and emerged with a profound understanding of human suffering. His journey of self-discovery kindled a

flame of compassion within him, igniting a fervent desire to extend the same healing hand that guided him through the darkness. Paul's commitment to healing is manifested through a myriad of creative avenues. From soul-stirring sound baths to theatre and immersive retreats, Paul's flute resonates with the promise of healing and renewal.

Peter Gomez (Black Angel #2) (he/him/his) is a versatile artist—a writer, actor, poet, storyteller, and songwriter. Born in Harlem and raised in Washington Heights, New York, Peter's talent was nurtured from a young age. Despite early-stage success, he faced challenges in adolescence, leading to entanglement in street life and legal troubles.

During his incarceration, Peter found a renewed passion for the arts through the Rehabilitation through the Arts program. He participated in productions and workshops and earned an Associate's degree in Liberal Arts from Bard College (BPI). Released in February 2024, Peter now uses his artistic talents for social change, advocating for social justice, mental health, and climate change. He shares his voice through spoken word events, demonstrating the transformative power of the arts and the resilience of the human spirit.

Ariel Mayer (Black Angel #3) (all pronouns) is a versatile artist working as an actor, director, dancer, and choreographer. They have devised work at Eugene O'Neill's National Theater Institute, New York Theatre Workshop's Youth Artistic Instigators, and Boston University's Summer Theatre Institute. With specialized study in Shakespeare's text at Shakespeare & Company, Prague Shakespeare Company, and Elm Shakespeare Company, Ariel has portrayed roles such as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Jaques in *As You Like It*, Lady Percy in *Henry IV Part 1*, and Viola in *Twelfth Night*. Recently, Ariel played Masha in Sarah Ruhl's translation of Anton Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, directed by David Jaffe at Connecticut College, where Ariel is pursuing a double major in Theatre and Dance. As an experienced dancer, Ariel has won numerous world and national American Ballroom Nine Dance championships. They study Modern and West African dance techniques with David Dorfman and Shani Collins-Achille. Combining their storytelling modalities, Ariel has discovered a passion for dance physical theater.

CREATIVE TEAM

Karin Coonrod (Director) is the founding Artistic Director of Compagnia de' Colombari and has directed on stages worldwide. Notable productions include *Henry VI*, *Love's Labor's Lost* (Public Theater, NYSF); *King John*, *Julius Caesar* (Theater for a New Audience); *Enrico IV* (American Repertory Theater); *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (New York Theater Workshop); *texts&beheadings/ElizabethR* (Folger Theatre; BAM/Next Wave Festival); and *The Merchant of Venice* (Venice, Italy; International Festival of Arts & Ideas; Peak Performances at Montclair State University; The Hopkins Center; Dartmouth University). Coonrod, with Compagnia de' Colombari, has launched new theater traditions in Orvieto, Italy and brought works into detention centers, jails, schools, pubs, libraries, parks, museums, galleries, piers, churches, and the streets. The book *The Transnational Theatre of Karin Coonrod* (Bloomsbury Press UK) is currently in development. She teaches

directing at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale.

Frank London (Composer) is a Grammy Award-winning trumpeter and composer, a member of the Klezmatics, and a band leader of many groups. He has performed and recorded with John Zorn, Pink Floyd, Mel Tormé, Lester Bowie's *Brass Fantasy*, LaMonte Young, Gal Costa, They Might Be Giants, David Byrne, Itzhak Perlman and is featured on over 500 albums. His latest recordings include the Klezmer Brass Allstars' *Chronika!*, Frank London's *Brass Conspiracy*, and *The Elders' Spirit Stronger Than Blood*. His first symphony, *1001 Voices: A Symphony for a New America* (with text by Judith Sloan and video by Warren Lehrer), premiered in 2012. His Yiddish-Cuban opera, *Hatuey Memory of Fire* (libretto by Elise Thoron), premiered in Cuba and New York in 2018.

Gabrielle Hoyt is a DFA candidate at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale (DGSD), where she researches the nexus of Jewishness and musical theater and serves as Associate Editor of *Theater* magazine. Gabrielle has published with *American Theatre*, *Theater* magazine, *Studies in Musical Theatre*, and *Hey Alma*, and received the 2023 John W. Gassner Memorial Prize for her essay "Reviving Jewishness." She previously worked as a literary manager at Round House Theatre (RHT), where she administered the Equal Play commissioning program. Credits include *Cactus Queen*, *Fucking A*, *Macbeth*, and *rent-free* (DGSD); *Ironbound*, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, and *The Book of Will* (world premieres, RHT); *The Heal* (world premiere, Getty Villa); *Handbagged* (US premiere, RHT & 59E59); *In Every Generation* (world premiere, Victory Gardens); and *Period Sisters* (HEREArts). In November 2024, she will dramaturg the world-premiere musical *A Hanukkah Carol* (RHT). MFA: David Geffen School of Drama at Yale, BA: Yale College.

Oana Botez (Costume Designer) is a Princess Grace Recipient, NEA/TCG Career Development Program Recipient and NEA/TCG Round of Global Connections Program. Nominated for The Lucille Lortel Award, The Theatre Bay Area Awards, The Henry Hewes Design Awards, and The Barrymore and Drammy Awards. Her designs have raised critical acclaim in New York's BAM Next Wave, Bard SummerScape/Richard B. Fisher Center, Baryshnikov Arts Center, The David H. Koch Theater/Lincoln Center, The Glimmerglass Festival, Soho Rep, LCT3, The Public Theater, 59East59, La MaMa, The Kitchen, PS122, HERE Arts Center, The Joyce Theater, The Ontological-Hysteric Theater, BRIC Arts Media, Big Apple Circus/Lincoln Center and The Classic Stage Company. Ms. Botez is a Bucharest Art Academy (Romania) graduate and received an MFA in Design from NYU/Tisch School of the Arts. Ms. Botez significantly contributed to the first Romanian theater design catalog, *Scenografica*. She taught costume design at Colgate College, Brooklyn College and MIT. Ms. Botez is an Associate Professor Adjunct in the Design Department at David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. She resides in Manhattan, New York.

Tye Hunt Fitzgerald (Sound Design) is a Canadian-born Sound Designer based in New York City. Design credits include *Comedy of Errors* (The Public Theater), *Legally Blonde* (Oregon Cabaret Theater), *A Good Day For Me Not For You* (Waterwell), *Superstitions* (OKC Rep), *The Vagrant Trilogy* (The

Public Theater), The Full Monty, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Skylight Music Theater), Matilda The Musical (New Arts), Floyd Collins, Wilder Shorts (Lenfest Center For The Arts). Associate Credits Include: Hell's Kitchen (Broadway), Home (Broadway), Pictures From Home (Broadway), A Soldiers Play (Broadway and 1st National), How I Learned What I Learned (Seattle Rep), Cullud Wattah, The Micheals, White Noise, Eve's Song (The Public), Letters From Max (Signature Theatre), The Coast Starlight (Lincoln Center Theater), Alice By Heart (MCC). Festival Sound Design: The International Festival of Arts and Ideas New Haven 21-24. MFA Yale School of Drama. tyehuntfitzgerald.com

Charles T. Meier (Scenic Designer) is a 2024 MFA candidate at Yale's David Geffen School of Drama. Credits at Yale include Ghosts, The Winter's Tale and The Hedgehog's Dilemma (Yale Cabaret). Credits at Wheaton College in Illinois include The House of Bernarda Alba, A Phoenix Too Frequent, All in the Timing, The Stonewater Rapture, and an upcoming production of Love's Labour's Lost. Charles has won over three dozen awards as a float designer for the Rose Parade® held in Pasadena, California, on New Year's Day. Select clients include Amazon Prime Video, PBS Masterpiece, The Los Angeles Lakers, Zappos, and The UPS Store. Charles holds a B.A. from Wheaton College, Illinois and an M.A. in Shakespeare Studies from the University of Birmingham, UK.

Stephen Strawbridge (Lighting Designer) has designed more than 200 productions on and Off-Broadway and at most leading regional theaters and opera houses across the US. Internationally, he has helped create major premiers in Bergen, Copenhagen, The Hague, Hong Kong, Linz, Lisbon, Munich, Naples, Sao Paulo, Stockholm, Stratford-Upon-Avon (for the Royal Shakespeare Company), Wroclaw and Vienna. Artistic collaborators have included such notable directors and choreographers as Robert Brustein, Martha Clarke, Graciela Daniele, Gordon Edelstein, Barry Edelstein, Richard Foreman, Athol Fugard, Loretta Greco, Mark Lamos, Kenny Leon, Emily Mann, Kathleen Marshall, Tarell McCraney, Trevor Nunn, Diane Paulus, Erica Schmidt, Bartlett Sher, Rebecca Taichman, John Tillinger, Robert Wilson, Mark Wing-Davey and Robert Woodruff. His work is represented multiple times in the repertoires of Pilobolus Dance Theatre and Alison Chase/Performance. He has been recognized with numerous awards and nominations, including the American Theatre Wing, Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle, Connecticut Critics Circle, Dallas-Fort Worth Theater Critics Forum, Drama Desk, Helen Hayes, Henry Hewes Design and Lucille Lortel. He is the lighting designer advisor for Yale Repertory Theatre and heads the lighting design department at David Geffen School of Drama at Yale.

CREATIVE TEAM CREDITS

Adaptor and Director: Karin Coonrod
Assistant Director: Jacob Basri
Composer: Frank London
Costume Designer: Oana Botez
Assistant Costume Design: Caleb Krieg
Costume Construction: Talla Dia & Caleb Krieg
Costume Painting: Jennifer Stanjeski

Paper Crowns: Tine Kindermann
Scenic and Space Designer: Charles Meier
Lighting Designer: Stephen Strawbridge
Assistant Lighting Design: Krista Smith
Lighting Programmer and Board Op: Gib Gibney
Sound Design: Tye Hunt Fitzgerald
Dramaturg: Gabrielle Hoyt
Fight Director: Michael Rossmly
Fight Captain: Brandon Burton
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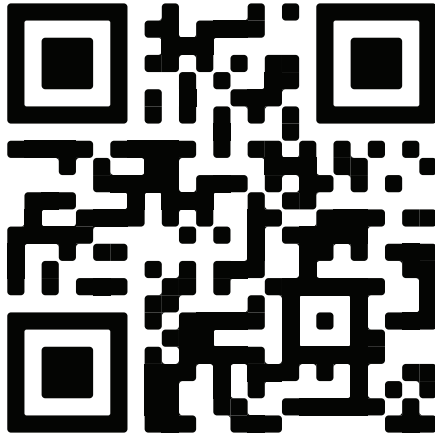
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