Theatre & Dance Department Faculty
Sarah Pia Anderson, Larry Bogad, Stuart Carroll, Della Davidson, Rinde Eckert, David Grenke, Jose Gutierrez, Lynette Hunter, John Iacovelli, Melanie Julian, Michele Leavy, Peter Lichtentfelts, Dyan McBride, Jade McCutcheon, Maggie Morgan, Tom Munn, Jon Rossini, Barbara Sellers-Young, Peggy Shannon, Darrell Winn

This performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 5 minutes with one 15 minute intermission. Audio, video or photographic recording of this performance is strictly prohibited by law. Please take a moment before the performance begins to note the exits nearest your seat. At this time, please turn off the ringers on your cell phones and pagers. Food and drink are not permitted inside the theatre. Thank you for your cooperation.
Writer/Director’s Notes

Fate and Spinoza was just a title when I began imagining what I might do during my residency. I had been reading Spinoza’s Ethics at the time. Titles are often needed in advance of the work for publicity purposes. Fate and Spinoza then was a challenge and provocation: I had to ask myself what a piece would look like that bore that title.

Baruch Spinoza begins his Ethics with a definition of God in a series of postulates, axioms, and demonstrations that necessitate the arguments that follow. He then proceeds to argue us out of the illusion that we understand anything. We can’t know the root causes of our actions, he argues, because these causes are too many and varied to be mechanically understood (too many billiard balls in play); our pretended grasp of our situation is, therefore, a comforting fiction. Religion, to Spinoza, is largely superstition, not because God doesn’t exist, but because we insist on imaging God in the finite terms of our own condition. So we cannot account for our actions with a wave of the magic wand of “free will” (the illusion that we have accounted for all the drives at our back and therefore may assume we are now free to choose) and we cannot explain God in terms of the set of finite values (language) that conditions our existence.

As is usually the case with Western minds, such debunking of our treasured notion of the autonomous ego, has tempted many to see Spinoza as a fatalist. Spinoza’s imagination wasn’t so limited. He ends the Ethics with demonstrations of how to live through reason based on the intrinsic humility of our limitations and the liberating realization of our inseparability with God... Heady and hearty stuff.

For Spinoza, such preoccupations were the product of an obstructed view, one’s pretensions in the way of truth. Yet he understood these preoccupations as basic to our character. Our fate is to be preoccupied with our fate, so to speak. Fate and Spinoza, in part, seeks to dramatize and elaborate these insights without discouraging the philosophically averse from panicking and fleeing. We wish to move you, amuse you, and challenge you, as we have been challenged in the process of honoring our title.

These narratives “ghost” though our lives. We emphasize the importance of certain events and minimize the importance of myriad other unaccountable events that shape us and determine our fate. We are often trapped by these narrative engines, ludicrous Rube Goldberg-esque systems of cause and effect designed to legitimize habits that, as often as not, dampen our enthusiasm for change and cause us to ignore opportunity. Or, we can abandon our rationale, demolish the perfectly vacant and austere edifice of our self image, ask ourselves “what is the right question?” wake up from the troubling dream, leave this doomed attic, put on a bright red hat, and take in the world at hand.

These actors and my creative staff have participated in a process that is often annoyingly arcane. We did not know where we were headed when we started. I was, of course, in the lead, using my frontier experience to guide my bewildered cast as adroitly as I could. But, inevitably, I had to order them forward without being able to assure them of our destination. These actors and my creative staff have participated in a process that is often annoyingly arcane. We did not know where we were headed when we started. I was, of course, in the lead, using my frontier experience to guide my bewildered cast as adroitly as I could. But, inevitably, I had to order them forward without being able to assure them of our destination.

Production Staff

Set Design Advisor......................................................... John Iacovelli
Lighting Design Advisor..................................................Thomas Munn
Costume Design Advisors................................................. Maggie Morgan
Assistant Stage Managers.................................................. Paris Korkunis, Alix Patt
Assistant Costume Designers............................................. Julie Friedrichsen, Jocelyn Tripet-Diel
Costume Production Crew............................................... Tamara Arzumanova, Chris Carstens, Brianna Goltz, Ebony Grant, Mai Her, Rosa Lee, Katie Macko, Allison Minick, Libby Painter, Paris Perraualt, Raena Rice, Kathryn Stein, Alice Vasquez, Rujih Wu
Scenery Production Crew.................................................. Eun Young Kim, Ryan Mahan, Amber Nolan
Dressers................................................................. Elizabeth Boam, Christina Fajardo, Wescina Fox, Jessica Herman, Danielle Katzner
Video Projection Technician............................................... Kelly Fleischmann
Follow Spot Operator.....................................................Amy Kronzer
Lighting Technician.........................................................Robert Quiggle
Sound Technician..........................................................Christian Savage
Stage Crew............................................................... Pamella Durham, Christina Fajardo, Lucas McDonald, Matt Rapore, Claire Robson, Jenna Seid

Special thanks are due to my assistant director Randy Symank who took over for me when I went to Hong Kong in the middle of tech rehearsals.

-Rinde Eckert

Production Staff
Nights at the Circus
Directed by MFA Candidate Patricia Miller
March 13 -16
Wyatt Pavilion Theatre

Main Stage Dance/Theatre Festival
April 10 - 20
Main Theatre

Back Roads
Created and Performed by
MFA Candidates Victor Toman and Sara Zimmerman
April 24 - 26
Arena Theatre, Wright Hall

Measure for Measure
by William Shakespeare
Directed by MFA Candidate Randy Symank
May 15 - May 23
Main Theatre

Nest
by Bathsheba Doran
Directed by Granada Artist-in-Residence Irina Brown
May 22 - June 1
Wyatt Pavilion Theatre

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JANICE, MARJORIE..............................Olufunmilayo O. Alabi
GWEN, RACHEL...............................Rebecca David (MFA)
DARRELL........................................Travis Dukelow
MANAGER, ISAAC STRANGE................Joe Ferreira
MUSICIAN............................Rich Gaarde
ELIOT LANSKY..................................Sebastian Lagos
APRIL LANSKY....................................Hope Mirlis (MFA)
DAVID “SPINOZA” CORNELL....................Matt Moore
BERNARD, DEVIL...............................Timothy Orr* (MFA)
TERRENCE........................................Bryan Pham
MAID, ALICE.................................Christine Samson (MFA)
DELIA LANSKY, BRIDGET....................Anna Schumacher
MAL, MARTIN.................................Victor Toman (MFA)
FATE.................................................Viky Zelaya

*Appearing by special arrangement with Actors’ Equity Association
Baruch de Spinoza was among the most important of the post-Cartesian philosophers who flourished in the second half of the 17th century. He made significant contributions in virtually every area of philosophy, and his writings reveal the influence of such divergent sources as Stoicism, Jewish Rationalism, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Descartes, and a variety of heterodox religious thinkers of his day. For this reason he is difficult to categorize, though he is usually counted, along with Descartes and Leibniz, as one of the three major Rationalists. Given Spinoza’s devaluation of sense perception as a means of acquiring knowledge, his description of a purely intellectual form of cognition, and his idealization of geometry as a model for philosophy, this categorization is fair. But it should not blind us to the eclecticism of his pursuits, nor to the striking originality of his thought.

Among philosophers, Spinoza is best known for his Ethics, a monumental work that presents an ethical vision unfolding out of a monistic metaphysics in which God and Nature are identified. God is no longer the transcendent creator of the universe who rules it via providence, but Nature itself, understood as an infinite, necessary, and fully deterministic system of which humans are a part. Humans find happiness only through a rational understanding of this system and their place within it. On account of this and the many other provocative positions he advocates, Spinoza has remained an enormously controversial figure. For many, he is the harbinger of enlightened modernity who calls us to live by the guidance of reason. For others, he is the enemy of the traditions that sustain us and the denier of what is noble within us. After a review of Spinoza’s life and works, this article examines the main themes of his philosophy, primarily as they are set forth in the Ethics.

http://www.iep.utm.edu/s/spinoza.htm
dancer at the Astoria Dance Centre. He is grateful to be able to work with Rinde at such a young age and for all his theatrical opportunities growing up.

HOPE MIRILIS (April Lansky)

Hope Mirilis is a native New Yorker, who spent the past 16 years in Atlanta, GA where she co-founded Synchronicity Performance Group. She is an active stage and commercial actress with credits including Scana Energy, Home Depot and Austin Snack Crackers. Favorite stage roles around Atlanta include Ruth in Anne Frank: Within and Without (Center of Puppetry Arts), Turtle/Bird in A Year with Frog and Toad (Synchronicity), Dabby Bryant in Our Country’s Good (Theatre Gael), Christina in Fetu and Her Friends, Reggie Fluty in The Laramie Project (Actor’s Express), and Mrs. Shin in Good Person of Szechwan (Theater Emory). Hope is currently a first-year Acting MFA. Special thanks to Rinde and Randy for their trust and guidance.

MATT MOORE (David “Spinoza” Cornell)

A fourth-year Communication Major and Theatre Minor, Matt Moore would like to someday have a career in investigative reporting. Matt is very excited to be working with such an eclectic group of performers and he would like to thank Rinde for allowing him to be a part of his vision. Matt would also like to thank his parents for understanding and helping fund his theatrical endeavors, and his girlfriend Clara for being so patient with his rehearsal schedule.

TIMOTHY ORR’ (Bernard/Devil)

Timothy Orr is happily making his UC Davis debut after recently appearing with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival in A Child’s Christmas in Wales. Tim has worked with Capital Stage (Sacramento), The Foothill Theatre Company, The Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, The Sierra Shakespeare Festival, and Sacramento Theatre Company. Favorite roles include Watson in Dirty Story, Jake in Stones in His Pockets, Ralph in A Christmas Story, The Alien in Resident Alien, and Frederick Bates in Grinder’s Stand. Tim is also a classically trained pianist and composer, and has scored original music for many stage productions.

BRYAN PHAM (Terrence)

Bryan Marcus Pham is a second-year student at UC Davis, double majoring in Dramatic Art and Psychology. Thus far at UC Davis, he has appeared in Man of La Mancha (as Padre), Urinetown (as Mr. McQueen), and in THIRDeYE’s Brigid’s Reign (as Jared). He would like to thank Rinde for giving him the opportunity to grow as an actor, and for also showing him a new aspect of theatre. He would like to dedicate his performance to his family and friends, and is looking forward to whatever the future may have in store for him.

RINDE ECKERT (Playwright/Director/Composer)

Renowned as a composer, writer, director, singer, actor and movement artist, Rinde Eckert conceives and writes music and libretto and performs his own full-length works that tour extensively in the US and across Europe. Other works include: Horizon (premiered New York, June 2007); Orpheus X (premiered Cambridge MA, March 2006); And God Created Great Whales (premiered New York, May 2000, winning the Obie Award); Four Songs Lost in a Wall; and The Gardening of Thomas D, which premiered in Europe at the Maubeuge Festival in 1994.

Eckert has worked extensively as a writer and composer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. He was the librettist/performer for the operas Slow Fire with composer Paul Dresher and Ravenshead with composer Steven Mackey. As a writer of instrumental music, his chamber works have been performed in Portland, Boston and New York. He has recorded three CDs of songs: Finding My Way Home, Do the Day Over and Story In, Story Out. In 2005 he received the Marc Blitzstein Memorial Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He became finalist for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Drama with Orpheus X.

RANDY SYMANK (Assistant Director)

Randy is currently the second-year MFA candidate in Directing. From 2004 to 2006, Randy served as artistic director of Unhinged Productions in Houston, TX. He has also worked with a variety of other companies including Opera San Jose, the Alley Theatre, Stages Repertory Theatre, the Houston Shakespeare Festival, Bobbindoctrine Puppet Theatre, and Mildred’s Umbrella Theatre Company. Randy received a B.A. in Theatre Arts from Texas A&M University and was a member of Director’s Lab West at the Pasadena Playhouse in 2006.

CARRIE MULLEN (Scenic & Lighting Designer)

Carrie Mullen is a second-year MFA candidate in Scenic/Lighting Design. At UC Davis she recently designed lighting for Woyzeck and scenery for Fig A: The Heart. Previous production credits include Ubu Roi, The Green Bird, and The Exception and the Rule. She has also designed several new plays including: The Opelousas Sisters, Circus Acts, and Cante Jondo: the Roots of Flamenco. She received her BA in Theatre Arts with a Technical Concentration at Sonoma State University in 2006 and has worked as a Theatre Technician at Spreckles Performing Arts Center in Sonoma. She would like to thank the Theatre & Dance Faculty, Staff, and Students for all their hard work and her family for their Support.
CAST BIOGRAPHIES

OLUFUNMILAYO O. ALABI (Marjorie/ Janice)

Olufunmilayo O. Alabi was born and raised in Oakland and graduated from Oakland Technical High School in 2007. She is a first-year Art History major who plans on changing her major to Dramatic Art. She is very delighted for having the opportunity to be in her first production at UC Davis. Also, Funmi is thankful to have worked with Rinde Eckert, the production team and the cast where she has learned a lot about herself, others and the play. She looks forward to being involved in more productions here at UC Davis where this first time experience would pave the path of her future. Funmi would like to thank everyone who was involved in this production for their encouragement, support and advise. In addition, she would like to exclusively thank Emily Hartman for taking the time out of her Saturday in helping Funmi with her big chunk of lines especially, “…a greasy crumpled napkin on a crushed brown bag.” Lastly, special thanks from Funmi to her family and friends for the everlasting love and support. Love You Mommy!

REBECCA DAVID (Gwen, Rachel)

Rebecca was born in Portland, Oregon and grew up in Los Angeles. She has performed with companies in Portland, Chicago, L.A. and Eugene. Favorite roles include Leann in Piece of My Heart (Integrity Productions), Lysistrata in Lysistrata 3000 (American Demigods), Tosca (dancer), (Portland Opera), and Rebecca/Beatrice in her one-woman show, rise, descend, rise (self-produced). She has a BA in Theatre (minor in dance) from University of Oregon, and a Summer Course Certificate from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She is a first-year MFA candidate here at UC Davis.

CHRISTIAN SAVAGE (Sound Designer)

Christian Savage is a first-year student studying Managerial Economics and minoring in Dramatic Art. He was recently the Sound Technician for the fall production of Noises Off. Prior to UC Davis, Christian spent the last five years designing sound for his high school and several community theatres. During summer 2007, he worked as a sound assistant for Music Circus in Sacramento. Christian grew up in Rocklin and graduated from Rocklin High in 2007.

EMILY HARTMAN (Stage Manager)

Emily Hartman is a third-year Dramatic Art major with a minor in Comparative Literature. Past stage management assignments at UCD include Noises Off last November and numerous assistant positions. She would like to thank her family and friends for all their support, Amanda and Alix for all their help, and all involved with Fate and Spinoza for a great rehearsal process and run. She plans to pursue a career in production and entertainment management.

RICH GAARDE (Composer/Musician)

Rich began playing music at an early age, but really started growing as a musician after taking some calculus and trigonometry classes in high school. As the math got more complicated, the music seemed to make more and more sense. He has been fascinated with sound ever since. Now he writes songs and compositions for a variety of instruments: principally guitar. Thanks to Beethoven, Buckley, Davis, and Yorke.

SEBASTIAN LAGOS (Eliot Lansky)

Sebastian Lagos is a first-year undeclared major at UC Davis. Some of his previous roles include Bernardo in West Side Story (Townsend Harris Highschool production), the Baker in Into the Woods (Kew-Forest Middle school performance), and ensemble member in Cinderella (Queens College production). He is excited to be in California, but misses New York and Broadway. Before acting, he spent 11 years as a