

Rotate Theatre Company presents

# Stage Test: An Evening of Works in Development

Saturday, February 17, 2024 . 4:30pm



Featuring staged readings of new short plays and excerpts from full-length pieces by:

Brooke Allen, Ashely Bagot, Leah Roth Barsanti, Safina Klepzig,  
Kristin P., Richard Paro, Breahan Eve Pautsch, and Rini Tarafder



Studio 4C at **MYARTS** 1055 E Mifflin, Madison, WI



[www.RotateTheatre.org](http://www.RotateTheatre.org)

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## Accessibility

Please email [RotateTheatre@gmail.com](mailto:RotateTheatre@gmail.com), call 608-515-8912, or view our current [Audience Access Chart](#) for information or requests regarding access or accommodations.

## Land and Labor Acknowledgement

We are grateful for the labor performed by so many storytellers that have influenced our practices and offer ideas from a range of disciplines including Queer Disability Justice (ex: Sins Invalid), Indigenous Environmental Studies (ex: Robin Wall Kimmerer), Black Feminisms (ex: Audre Lorde), Indigenous Performing Arts (ex: Monique Mojica), and so many others! We encourage you to engage with storytellers from a wide range of perspectives!

This project was created in the Great Lakes Region, where many Native nations and Indigenous communities have long cultural and governmental histories that go back thousands of years and continue today, despite genocidal invasion and ongoing colonization by the United States. Much of the production took place on occupied Ho-Chunk land in Teejop / Madison.

In this region, we use buildings and technology disproportionately built and cared for through the ongoing extraction of materials and labor from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and other marginalized communities around the world.

This context, and how we respond collectively and as individuals, impacts our work, our communities, and our stories.

## The Plays

*Run Time: Approximately 95 minutes, including an intermission.*

*Note: Stage Test is designed for adult audiences. Supervised children are welcome if comfortable with mature themes, humor and language.*

### **Crabapples**

- By Rini Tarafder, directed by Cyra K. Polizzi.
- Featuring: Sarthak Kumar, Vanessa Uzcategui.

### **Let's Eat Mary** *(excerpt)*

- By Brooke Allen, directed by Breahan Eve Pautsch.
- Featuring: Cyra K. Polizzi.

### **AI Did Not Write This Play** *(excerpt)*

- By Leah Roth Barsanti, directed by Ashely Bagot.
- Featuring: Maria Dahman, Autumn Yael Fearing-Kabler.

### **Seeds to Celebrate**

- By Kristin P.
- Featuring: Ashley Bagot, Cyra K. Polizzi.

### **Haunted** *(excerpt)*

- By Breahan Eve Pautsch.
- Featuring: Maria Dahman, Sarthak Kumar, Aaron Lade, Christina Thuli.

### ***Intermission***

- Optional activity with the cast!

### **Rivers** *(excerpt)*

- By Ashely Bagot.
- Featuring: Aaron Lade, Breahan Eve Pautsch, Cyra K. Polizzi.

### **Featured Classical Monologue**

- Directed by Breahan Eve Pautsch.
- Featuring: Aaron Lade.

### **Surprise!** *(excerpt)*

- By Safina Klepzig, directed by Richard Paro.
- Featuring: Richard Paro, Christina Thuli.

### **Untitled Dracula / Carmilla Play** *(excerpt)*

- By Richard Paro.
- Featuring: Ashely Bagot, Maria Dahman, Erika Kachama-Nkoy, Cyra K. Polizzi.

Stage Directions performed by Kathleen Nichols.

## The Collaborators



**Brooke Allen**  
Writer

**Brooke Allen's** works have been produced in major theatre centers including New York, London, and Chicago, where she's collaborated with Red Tape Theatre, Ruckus Theatre, Tympanic Theatre Company, Not Waiting Productions, and HealthWorks Theatre. Allen is best known for her plays *Ruby Wilder*, *The Deer*, and *The Life and Death of Madam Barker*. As a live lit storyteller, Allen has appeared with Mortified, Write Club, You're Being Ridiculous, and The Paper Machete. Allen is a graduate of the Creative Writing program at Webster University and has a masters in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. *she/her*



**Ashely Bagot**  
Cast, Director, Writer

**Ashely Bagot** is a Rotate Theatre ensemble member and works in many areas of theatre and film, including directing, acting, playwriting, and designing. In addition to her work with Rotate Theatre, Ashely has collaborated with many other theatre companies, primarily in the Chicago area. Ashely also works assisting people with mental illness access housing and recovery services. *she/her, they/them*



**Leah Roth Barsanti**  
Writer

**Leah Roth Barsanti** is a Chicago-based artist with an MFA in Writing for the Screen and Stage from Northwestern University and a passion for writing in any collaborative medium. Her work focuses on strong women and girls trying to make space for themselves in a world that doesn't ever make that easy. Her protagonists struggle against expectations: both their own and those of others. Her specific areas of interests include anything related to mental health, sports, forgotten or overlooked moments from history, and zombies. Leah's plays have been semifinalists for The O'Neill, Screencraft Stage Play, and Blue Ink Awards, finalists for the Goodman's New Stages Residency, and winners of the Judith Barlowe Prize. She is also an active roller derby player with the Windy City Rollers. <http://lbarsanti.wix.com/lrbtheplaywright> *she/her*



**Maria Dahman**  
Cast

**Maria Dahman** has been performing in Madison since moving here in 2017. Recent performances include *Laconia* (2022) and *Lysistrata* (2019), both at Broom Street Theater where she now serves as the artistic director. She really enjoys new works and experimental theater that incorporates music and dance, and is so happy to have the opportunity to work with Rotate Theatre again.

[maria.dahman@gmail.com](mailto:maria.dahman@gmail.com) *she/her*



**Autumn Yael Fearing-Kabler**  
Cast

**Autumn Yael Fearing-Kabler** grew up in Los Angeles where they were involved in theater arts for many years and they are SO stoked to be getting back to it with Rotate Theatre, having recently performed in *Rotate Theatre Mini Fest*. They hold a BS in Community & Environmental Sociology from the UW-Madison, have been engaged with community organizing and mutual aid efforts throughout their time in Madison, have worked as a professional cook, and recently began working with the Jewish Social Services of Madison where they are passionate about continuing a housing first approach with newly arrived families and individuals, and eager to bring more of the community into the process of refugee resettlement. Autumn Yael still often cooks at home, and loves being in nature with their life partner, Fawzy, and Pitbull, Romy. *they/them*



**Erika Kachama-Nkoy**  
Cast

**Erika Kachama-Nkoy** was born in Kinshasa, Zaire, she grew up in Maine, went to college in Chicago and has made Madison her home since 2000. Recent performances include *Rotate Theatre Mini Fest* and Broom Street Theater's 2018 production of *Beg Pardon* (Sally Hemings). Erika is a user experience designer at PBS Wisconsin, UW-Madison. *she/her*



**Safina Klepzig**  
Writer

**Safina Klepzig** loves all types of theater from classic plays like *Death of a Salesman* to contemporary musicals like *Hamilton* and *Spring Awakening*. She was recently seen performing in *Rotate Theatre Mini Fest*. Safina is also a New York Fashion Week runway model and has been published in international and domestic media. Safina grew up as a competitive horseback rider and now works as a veterinary assistant at a small animal clinic. *she/her*



**Sarthak Kumar**  
Cast

**Sarthak Kumar's** fascination of good storytelling has always motivated him to explore, appreciate, and perform theatre. Sarthak's experience includes writing and directing for the theatre during his undergraduate studies in India. He has also worked in translation and editing of plays from English to Urdu, informed by his deep passion for Urdu and Hindi poetry. When bringing characters to the stage, Sarthak also draws on his extensive scientific background and deep interest in behavioral psychology. *he/him*



**Aaron Lade**  
Cast

**Aaron Lade** is making his triumphant return to the stage after a long hiatus. In a previous life, he enjoyed performing in New Mexico and Colorado. You may have seen him on stage as Father Flynn in *Doubt*, Juan-Julian in *Anna in the Tropics*, or Dead Body on the Floor of the Barn in the hit television show *Longmire*. He tries not to take himself too seriously, and to date the Universe has obliged him. *he/him*



**Kathleen Nichols**  
Cast

**Kathleen Nichols** found a home on the stage and screen in the Twin Cities theater community at a young age and then went on to study Theater & Drama, as an acting specialist, at UW-Madison (and was fortunate to meet, and now return to play making, with incredible actors/directors Brea and Cyra). Kat has also worked as a teacher in NYC and NJ K-12 schools facilitating student learning and elevating student voice in improv, plays, musicals, spoken word, documentary video-making, playwriting, and arts-based social activism. *she/her, they/them*

<p><b>Kristin P.</b> Writer</p>	<p><b>Kristin P.</b>'s works often explore the absurdity of dominant expectations and systems of control in the US.</p>
 <p><b>Richard Paro</b> Director / Writer / Cast</p>	<p><b>Richard Paro</b> is an award winning theatre and film director based in Madison, WI. Richard uses highly collaborative techniques and much of his work emphasizes coalition-building, as seen in productions like <i>There Might Be... Stumble</i>. In addition to his work with Rotate Theatre, he's worked with many companies in Chicago, including Stage 773, Arc, Theatre-Hikes, Prologue, Tympanic, Dandelion, and Stockyards Theatre Project, and his feature-length and short films have screened at festivals in 22 states and 15 countries. Always excited to share his favorite theatre, movies, and music with new audiences, Richard has worked in festival programming for years in Chicago, Milwaukee, and surrounding areas. <i>he/him</i></p>
 <p><b>Breahan Eve Pautsch</b> Director / Writer / Cast</p>	<p><b>Breahan Eve Pautsch</b> is a director, writer, and actor. In addition to her work with Rotate Theatre, Breahan has collaborated with Raven Theatre, The International Voices Project, Wildclaw Theatre, Broken Nose Theatre, Speaking Ring Theatre, Halcyon Theatre, Theatre Entropy, North Lakeside Players, Scriptworks, and Akvavit Theatre where she served in many roles including artistic director. Breahan is frequently called upon for her expertise directing contemporary Nordic plays for U.S. audiences. Breahan grew up in Cadott, WI, graduated from UW-Madison in Theatre and English, and was based in Chicago for years before returning to Madison. <i>she/her</i></p>
 <p><b>Cyra K. Polizzi</b> Cast / Director</p>	<p><b>Cyra K. Polizzi</b> is a theatre actor with a wide range of experiences in other specialties (directing, writing, facilitation, etc) and modalities (dance, music, film, etc). Much of their work incorporates humor, queer possibilities, and multi-issue activism. Cyra grew up performing in the driftless area of rural WI, attended UW-Madison in Theatre Acting, Gender Studies, and Environmental Studies, and worked in theatre and film in Chicago for 15 years before happily returning to Teejop / Madison. Cyra recently completed a grad program at UW-Madison formalizing their transdisciplinary research asking questions about accessibility and sustainability in theatre practices. <a href="http://www.cyrakpolizzi.com">www.cyrakpolizzi.com</a> <i>they/them, she/her</i></p>



**Rini Tarafder**  
Writer

**Rini Tarafder** is a PhD student in Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies at UW-Madison. Her research is about political theatre in India. Rini's plays have been performed at festivals in Madison and in educational spaces in India. She also experiments with poetry, musical instruments, photography, sewing, and digital forms of performance art. Rini's ideal day would include walking through the woods, looking at birds. *she/her*



**Christina Thuli**  
Cast

**Christina Thuli** is an educator who discovered her love of working with students through a Theatre for Young Audiences production of *The House I Call Love* she performed in during her time at UW-Madison. Experiences with acting, improv, music, writing, and directing help Christina integrate theatre in a myriad of ways into her teaching. Christina is passionate about equity and joy in education, spending time with family and friends, playing music around a campfire, running, and spending time in nature. *she/her/ella*



**Vanessa Uzcategui**  
Cast

**Vanessa Uzcategui**, originally from Venezuela, discovered a love for theater at age 10. Vanessa graduated from Flagler College with a B.A. in Theater Arts. Previous roles include the Dark Witch in the play *Dark of the Moon* by Howard Richardson and William Berney. Vanessa also loves to take dance classes. *she/her*

## About *Stage Test: An Evening of Works in Development*

Rotate Theatre's winter event, *Stage Test: An Evening of Works in Development*, features staged readings of new short plays and excerpts from full-length pieces, plus audience members are invited to shape the next steps these plays take on their journeys to the stage!

*Stage Test* is part of Rotate Theatre's 2023/2024 development-focused season and comes off the heels of two adult workshop series, one focused on writing, the other on acting. Both mixed-level workshop series emphasized the importance of underrepresented perspectives, provided opportunities for experienced and beginner artists to learn from each other, and utilized our Rotation Practices which offer accessible activities for exploration and skill-building. Many of the series artists are featured in *Stage Test* along with frequent Rotate Theatre collaborators, giving audiences a glimpse into the workshops as the writers and actors experiment with brand new pieces. After the performance, share your questions in a post-show talk-back and cast a ballot for the plays you want to see in Rotate Theatre's future programming!

## About Rotate Theatre Company

Rotate Theatre Company, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, produces plays and musicals, festivals and curated programs, workshops, independent films, and special events.

Rotate Theatre projects are designed to contribute to larger webs of strategies that build more just futures for artists and the general public. To accomplish this, Rotate Theatre projects embrace practices that enrich the lives of collaborative artists, engage audiences in laughter and discussion, incorporate multidirectional learning, and celebrate performing arts featuring underrepresented perspectives.

Recent projects include [Rotate Theatre Mini Fest](#) which featured special events, audience engagement activities, and an entertaining and thought-provoking lineup of short plays presented as part of [World Premiere Wisconsin](#).

### Ensemble Members

Ashely Bagot, Crystal Hartford, Richard Paro,  
Breahan Eve Pautsch, Cyra K. Polizzi

### Contact Info

Rotate Theatre Company  
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[www.rotatetheatre.org](http://www.rotatetheatre.org)



## Thank You!

Thank you to all of our collaborators, audience members, and friend organizations, including:



**South Madison Partnership**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



**And, a huge thank you to our individual donors!**  
**Your generosity makes our work possible!**

## Support Rotate Theatre Company!

Support from individuals and organizations is essential!

### Become a Rotate Theatre donor today!

- Click [Donate!](#) to make a one-time or monthly tax-deductible donation.
- We also accept [PayPal Giving](#) donations.
- If you prefer [Cash App](#), our cashtag is: [\\$RotateTheatre](#)



We use alternative ticketing models to offer a significant number of very low-cost tickets to our productions, available to all. We also offer artists very low-cost and free workshops. Your donation helps make this possible! Thank you!

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