

 STRAND
THEATER CO.



June
9-25

R/J

Conceived by O'Malley
Steerman and Betse Lyons
Adapted by Aladrian C. Wetzel
and Elizabeth Ung
Directed by Susan Stroupe
www.strand-theater.org

Community Producers

The following individuals graciously donated to the R/J Fundraising Campaign in the Spring of 2023. We are extraordinarily grateful for their generosity and belief in queer theatre and artist equity in Baltimore. We could not have created this art without the foundation they built.

Eric Abele, Sammy Rose Baker, Rebecca Bernstein, Katharine Bradford, Lianna Brizzi, Ann Marie Brokmeier, Zipporah Brown, Logan Butcher, Sara Cain, Tara Cariso, Molly Cohen, Lee Conderacci, Christen Cromwell, Annalisa Diaz, Catherine Dickinson, Kimberly Dodson, Lauren Ellis, Ryley Ellis, Sean Eustis, Francis Fillmore, Fred Fletcher-Jackson, Brytani Fraser, Bo Frazier, Max Garner, Daniel Gavigan, Madeline Gessler, Miceala Gramelis, Charles Green, Rebecca Hackerman, Lydia Hadfield, Ronald Heneghan, Caitlyn Hooper, Gary Huck, Colleen Hylton, Dave Iden, Sarah Jones, Laura Kaye, Rachel Keenan, Julie Lewis, Matthew Leyendecker, Karen Li, Nancy Linden, Avital Loeb, Ken-Matt Martin, Kevin Mcaliister, Susan McCully, Anabel Milton, Annie Montone, Willa Murphy, Keisuke Nakajima, Rocco Nunzio, Louis Otero, Elizabeth Pellegrino, Tyler Peterson, Deanna Pettit, Aria Pignotti, Kenneth Poisson, Becka Polinger, Jess Rassp, Janice Rattigan, Erin Riley, Tricia Rogalski, Elizabeth Rogers, Devon Rowland, Nichemat Judith Saroff, Steven Satta, Nathan Schiefele, Jamie Schoonover, Grace Sciannella, Crystal Sewell, Chad Short, Davinia Shorter, Lisa Simmons-Barth, Daniella Sions, Camille Steger, Breanna Stewart, Vanessa Strickland, Cassandra Svacha, Rob Vary, Bex Vega, Kristin Wall, Sarah Weissman, Jules White, Margot White, Nancy Willing, Vivan Woods, Stephanie Ybarra, Jacob Zabawa, 24 Anonymous Donors

Be Part of the Inclusion Solution!

*LGBTQ+ folks have always been a part of society but are still, in 2023, fighting for their basic rights, safety, and meaningful inclusion. Here at Strand, we celebrate the stories of our Queer siblings and encourage you to support them by seeing more shows like **R/J**.*

But more than that, we humbly ask you to consider making a donation to one of these important life-saving, equality-minded, and opportunity-creating LGBTQ+ charities.

<https://www.baltimoresafehaven.org>

<https://transmaryland.org>

<https://translifeline.org/>

<https://bcf.org/lgbtqfund/>

<https://www.pridecentermd.org/>

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<https://pflag.org/>

<https://sherlockshomes.org/>

<https://www.familyequality.org/>

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Stay Tuned for the Strand Theater's Season 16 Announcement!
www.strand-theater.org

Strand Theater Company proudly presents

R/J

Adapted from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*
Conceived by O'Malley Steuerman and Betse Lyons
Adapted by Aladrian C. Wetzel & Elizabeth Ung
Devised by the R/J Ensemble
Directed by Susan Stroupe

Cast

Makayla Beckles.....Gregory/Gentle Capulet/Death/
Citizen 1
Cirron Lanier Greenidge.....Benvolio/Chorus 2
Betse Lyons.....Juliet
Theodore Sherron III..... Father Lance/Chorus3/
Citizen 2/Montague Fam
O'Malley Steuerman.....Romeo
Bex Vega..... Princess/Tybalt/Chorus 1
Shannon Willing.....Sampson/Lady Capulet
Jacqueline Youm.....Q/Chorus 4/News Anchor/
Montague Fam

Creative Team

DirectorSusan Stroupe
Stage Manager..... Jennifer Hasselbusch
Costume DesignAnnie Montone
Costume Design Assistant.....Aria Mairin
Set/Scenic DesignMika J. Nakano
Lighting DesignRowan Ethridge
Sound DesignMadeline "MO" Oslejsek
Props DesignCaitlin Bouxsein
Intimacy Direction.....Katie Hileman
Intimacy Direction Assistant.....Shawna Potter
Fight Choreography.....Mallory Shear
Social Media.....Betse Lyons/O'Malley Steuerman
ProducerErin Riley
Marketing/PRElena Kostakis

Content Disclosure

This production is recommended for audiences aged 13+ unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. R/J contains adult themes such as online harassment, body shaming, sex/sexuality, and on-stage violence and suicide.

Special Thanks

Baltimore Center Stage, Robert Books, Julianna Brion, Linus Berggren Aaron Elson, Carlos Guillen, Kairo Cooper, Diana Honeycutt, The Submersive Collective, Amy Rhodes, Erna Vary, Hamilton-Lauraville Main Street, and our Talk Back Panelists

**Approximate Run Time - 2 hours and 45 minutes,
with one 15-minute intermission**
All photography and video recording is strictly prohibited
Please silence all electronic devices

Makayla Beckles (Gregory/Gentle Capulet/Death/Citizen 1 - She/Her) is a Maryland based Actor and Stage Manager who is excited to be working at The Strand for the first time! This is her first show post-grad from University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) where she received her B.F.A. in Acting. Stage Management credits include The 2023 Young Playwright's Festival: THE LOOKING GLASS (Baltimore Center Stage), The Vanguard Arts Fund: THE GAME (Olney Theatre Center), THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR (*Olney Theatre Center*). This summer Makayla will be continuing her Stage Management journey at Olney Theatre Center for Olney Outdoors.

Cirron Lanier Greenidge (Benvolio/Chorus 2 - He/Him) is a multi-talented artist. Last seen singing and the Dance Captain in DON'T BOTHER ME I CAN'T COPE musical (Motor House). His stage play "Men Tell All" was read at the (Motor House) by Rapid Lemon Productions. Cirron is currently a student of Lamont Ferrell's sitcom comedy writing class and is working on a new reality show. In addition, he joins the team behind the McPhuqurs cartoon series as Co-Producer and making his debut here at the Strand Theater Company IG: @cirron.inc

Betse Lyons (Juliet/Conceiving Artist - She/Her) is an actor, director, producer, and intimacy choreographer in the Baltimore area. Some previous acting credits include: HIGH SCHOOL COVEN (The Strand), GASLIGHT (FPCT), THE DROWNING GIRLS (The Strand), I WILL EAT YOU ALIVE (Interrobang), SEE ALSO (Submersive), DETROIT '67 (The Strand), LOVE IS A BLUE TICK HOUND (Rapid Lemon), SEA VOYAGE (BSF), SALLY MCCOY (Cohesion), 10x10x10 (FPCT), and THE TEMPEST (Annex). You can find her fat-positive account on TikTok @betsebabe. All the love to O'Malley, best project partner and perfect Romeo.

Theodore Sherron III (Father Lance/Chorus3/Citizen 2/Montague Fam - He/Him) is a Baltimore-based actor who studied at University of Maryland, Baltimore County where they majored in Acting. He has played a wide variety of roles including Orcus in SHE KILLS MONSTERS (UMBC), Buckingham in RICHARD III (CSC), and Fleance in MACBETH (CSC). Theodore is very excited to be making his debut with Strand Theater Company and would like to thank their Mom and Dad, and everyone who made this show possible! Follow them on IG: @theodoresherron3rd

O'Malley Steurman (Romeo/Conceiving Artist - They/Thon) is a Baltimore-based actor, DRAGster, and poet. Thon graduated from Towson University with their BFA in Acting in May of 2020 and have since solo traveled the U.S. to complete their research-based performance project and series entitled so, what are you gonna do next? Local Credits: LIFE IS A DREAM, TINY BEAUTIFUL THINGS, OUR TOWN (Baltimore Center Stage), SQUIDSBURY (Truepenny Projects), HE DO THE POLICE IN DIFFERENT VOICES (The Acme Corporation), COVID MONOLOGUES (Single Carrot Theater & Strand Theater Co.). Get hip here, www.omalleysteurman.com and here @omalleysteurman on instagram.

Bex Vega (Princess/Tybalt/Chorus 1 - He/They) received their BA in Musical Theatre from SFUAD in 2011. This is their return to theatre after 5 years. They are very excited. His favorite role was Hedwig in HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH. Their first role was Lt. Brannigan in GUYS AND DOLLS. Their last role was in a Zoom theatre performance and that was really weird. They are a beginning woodworker and an avid dog person. If anyone keeps bees please let them know, he would like to work for you. Bex is a Northern California transplant (Let's go Oakland!). This return to stage is dedicated to his chosen family, near and far.

CAST CONTINUED

Shannon Willing (Sampson/Lady Capulet - She/Her) is happy to be making her debut at the Strand. Shannon is a Baltimore-based theatre artist, dancer, and graphic designer. Recently, she has performed in PUFFS (Megan Jones) and DO NOT GO GENTLE (Joanne) at Spotlighters, and in Jena Frick's Galentine's Sketch Show at FPCT. Some of her other favorite productions include THE HEIDI CHRONICLES (Lisa), TWELFTH NIGHT (Olivia), and FLAMING IDIOTS (Bernadette). Shannon has been a guest dancer for CCBC Dance Company for the last two years. This fall, she will be pursuing her Masters in Social Design at MICA.

Jacqueline Youm (Q/Chorus 4/News Anchor/Montague Fam - She/Her) is a Senegalese American actor, lawyer, and French, English, Spanish, Mediation, and Negotiation teacher. She is passionate and insatiable when it comes to the arts. Some of her favorite theatre credits include Clarice Lyle in George Boyd's CONSECRATED GROUND (Laurel Mill Playhouse); Stool Pigeon in August Wilson's KING HEDLEY II (Dominion Stage); Adenikeh in Jocelyn Bioh's NOLLYWOOD DREAMS (Round House Theatre); Marianne Angelle in Lauren Gunderson's THE REVOLUTIONISTS (Globe Openstage); Nora in Lucas Hnath's A DOLL'S HOUSE PART II (Silver Spring Stage); Mrs. Cheveley in Oscar Wilde's AN IDEAL HUSBAND (Sandy Spring Theatre Group); and so many more. Jackie is elated to be making her debut with Strand Theater Company and would like to thank her family, friends, and her community for their wondrous support! You can find many of her virtual productions on Youtube (Cestjackie): <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvd4LWK9h1msuj9oeFXHtng> | Instagram: @jy_artiste | Facebook: Jacqueline Elisabeth "La langue est un théâtre dont les mots sont les acteurs." Ferdinand Brunetière

CREATIVE TEAM

Caitlin Bouxsein (Properties Design - She/Her) is happy to be back at the Strand, with whom she previously directed A CIVIL WAR CHRISTMAS by Paula Vogel (2021) and performed as a small child and a grumpy grandma in WATCH: A HAUNTING by Molly Rice (2008). She is a designer, director, movement artist, and performer who has worked with several other Baltimore area theater companies including Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, Single Carrot Theatre, Fluid Movement, and Submersive Productions (with whom she is a member of the Submersive Collective). She also produces original works with her spouse, Alexander Scally, under the name BOUXSCAL Productions, which have been featured at The Charm City Fringe Festival and other local venues. Education: B.A. Theatre Arts, Drew University

Rowan Ethridge (Lighting Design - They/Them) is a DC/Baltimore area designer, painter, and technician. They graduated Towson University in 2021 with a Bachelors of Science in Theatre Design and Production. While there, they studied and made theatre with O'Malley (Romeo). They love getting the opportunity to work in devised theatre, whether it be plays or dance, and love to explore the human condition through color and movement. Huge thanks to mom and dad for supporting me, and to O'Malley for welcoming me into the process.

Jennifer Hasselbusch (Stage Manager - She/Her) is a performer currently based in Baltimore with favorite past roles including Susan in VINEGAR TOM (Spotlighters), Kayleen in GRUESOME PLAYGROUND INJURIES (BOOM Theater Co.), and Isabella in THE SPANISH TRAGEDY (Mobtown Theater). Recent technical credits include FRANKENSTEIN and MARY-KATE OLSEN IS IN LOVE, both at Strand. With a BA in Psychology and a minor in Theatre from UMBC, by day she can be found at the UM School of Social Work as the Financial Services Manager for The Center for Restorative Change. Gigantic shout out to the cast and creative team for their incredible work over the past almost year to create what you see on the stage today.

Katie Hileman (Intimacy Choreographer - She/Her) is a fat DIY theatre-maker and intimacy choreographer working out of Baltimore, MD. She is the Artistic Director and co-founder of The Interrobang Theatre Company (interrobangtheatre.org) where she has produced over a dozen new works for the stage, including runs at Charm City Fringe Festival (Best of Fringe 2014), Women's Voices Theatre Festival, and NYC Fringe. Beyond Interrobang, Katie is an Assistant Faculty member of Theatrical Intimacy Education, and has taught workshops and choreographed intimacy for several local companies including: Rapid Lemon Productions, Fells Point Corner Theatre, McDaniel College, Stillpointe Theatre, UMBC, and JHU Barnstormers. Her original work centers around messy, ugly, contemporary women; focusing primarily on issues surrounding the beauty, pain, and absurdity of living in a fat body. Her original play about diet culture and fat liberation, *I WILL EAT YOU ALIVE*, will have its Baltimore premiere at The Voxel in January 2024, produced by Interrobang. Katie has a BFA in Acting from UMBC and an MFA in Theatre from Towson University.

Aria Mairin (Costuming Assistant - She/They) is a Baltimore based creator and actor who studied at the American Musical & Dramatic Academy where they received a Conservatorship as well as a Bachelors in Fine Arts for Theatre. After a crazy couple of years, they debuted in Baltimore 2023 at Strand Theater stage managing and co-costuming the dramatic and edgy *HIGH SCHOOL COVEN*, followed by costuming comedic period piece *THE LADY WAS A GENTLEMAN*. She would like to thank from the bottom of their heart: her amazing partners, their family, and all of the lovely wonderful beings who believe in them and give their unending love and support. Give them a follow on IG and TT: [@thesongbird.am](https://www.instagram.com/thesongbird.am)

Annie Montone (Head Costume Design - She/Her) is a magician, teacher, and designer in the Baltimore area. She has served an instructor at Baltimore School for the Arts in the areas of theatrical performance and production design. She studied costume design and construction under Misha Kachman at St. Mary's College of Maryland, and has worked for numerous stages, companies and cosplayers over her career. She is the current costume designer for *The Encounter* and co-founder of School of Magic Arts. Annie would like to thank Robbie, Diana, and Brian for their never ending support and love.

Mika J. Nakano (Environmental Design/Graphic Design - She/Her) is a Baltimore-based multi-disciplinary artist teacher. She is interested in stories told from different parts of the world, and how people have made sense of nature and the supernatural. You may have seen her in previous Strand shows *FRANKENSTEIN* (2023), *SPAGHETTI LO MEIN* (2022), *THE DROWNING GIRLS* (2021), or some of her visual arts as show posters (season 13 and 14) and sets (*CIVIL WAR CHRISTMAS* and *THE DROWNING GIRLS*). She has been in other shows through Strand theater, Everyman, and Mercury Theater.

Madeline "MO" Oslejsek (Sound Design - She/They) is delighted to return to the Strand for the fourth time! Baltimore highlights include: *THE GROWN-UP* (UMBC Theatre); *THE LADY WAS A GENTLEMAN*, *HIGH SCHOOL COVEN*, *FRANKENSTEIN* (The Strand Theater, nominated for BEST SOUND DESIGN in Baltimore's BroadwayWorld Regional Awards). Upcoming projects include: *INCENDIARY* (Woolly Mammoth, Associate Design), *R/J* (Strand Theater Company), *I WILL EAT YOU ALIVE* (Interrobang Theatre Company), and the Young Playwrights Festival (Baltimore Center Stage). Previously based in London, England, Mo is a queer multidisciplinary theatre artist whose work is based in phenomenology and 'queer' as a practice. She uses space, sound, and text to shine a light on the imperfections of the human experience, and aims to push the boundaries of what spectators and makers believe theatrical art is capable of. Currently, she is the Assistant Director of Marketing at Everyman Theatre. Credentials include a BA in Theatre from Ohio Wesleyan University and MA in Advanced Theatre Practice from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London. www.madelineoslejsek.com

Shawna Potter (Assistant Intimacy Choreographer - She/Her) is the author of *Making Spaces Safer: A Guide to Giving Harassment the Boot Wherever You Work*, *Play*, and *Gather*, co-creator of the Safer Space Program, and a bystander intervention educator. She is currently in training to become an Intimacy Professional and is grateful to Katie Hileman for the opportunity to shadow and assist her on this production.

Susan Stroupe (Director - She/Her) is a generative theater maker, primarily working as a director, ensemble deviser, and teaching artist, who specializes in interdisciplinary, devised, and immersive theater. Throughout her career, Susan has worked all over the country as a director, performer, dramaturg, writer, puppeteer, teacher, and collaborator in professional and professional community-based projects, with actors and nonactors of many ages, backgrounds, and many abilities and disabilities. Susan is originally from Atlanta, GA, has lived and worked in Albuquerque, Vermont, the Twin Cities, LA, NYC, and is now based in Baltimore, Maryland. She is a founding member and Core Creator of Submersive Productions, Baltimore's award-winning immersive theater collective, a teaching artist for Baltimore Center Stage and Everyman Theatre, and a freelance director for many companies in Baltimore. She has a BA from Macalester College and an MFA in Theater Arts from Towson University, and currently teaches Theater History and is a regular guest director at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). R/J is Susan's second time directing for Strand Theater, since 2016's *HARRY AND THE THIEF!*

Elizabeth Ung (Playwright - She/They) is a queer mixed-race Chinese American theatre artist and actor. She was born on the Cienega region and Tongva lands, also known as Southern California. They were raised on the Susquehannock and Piscataway Conoy lands, colonially known as Baltimore and Washington, D.C., and now currently resides in O'ahu, Hawai'i. At The Strand Theater, she premiered her one-act play *SPAGHETTI LO MEIN* (collaboration w/ Asian Pasifika Arts Collective), directed the virtual presentation of *MAN OF GOD*, and performed in *LITTLE WOMEN*. Other select playwriting credits include *NOW ENTERING: SHRINE OF THE INTERNET GODDESS* (Truepenny Projects), *PRECIOUS TIME* (Adventure Theatre MTC), and *THERE IS NO HOPE IN THE CITY OF CHAOS* (Keegan Theatre). Their next upcoming writing project will be an audio drama with Feminist Fairytales Season 2, arriving in late 2023. Education: CANDIDATE MFA Directing & Playwriting (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa - currently enrolled); BA in Theatre (University of Maryland, Baltimore County). www.elizabethung.com; Instagram: @elizung; Facebook: @Elizabeth Ung; TikTok: @liz_u_dynasty

Aladrian C. Wetzel (Playwright - She/Her) is a Baltimore-born multi-disciplined artist, whose playwriting centers on Blackness and infertility. She is the Executive Director of Two Strikes Theatre Collective, associate member of Fools and Madmen and advisory board member of Truepenny Projects. Aladrian is a 2021 Semi-Finalist for the Playwright's Realm Scratchpad Series, a top ten finalist for the 2021 Women Write Now screenwriting competition, a participant in the 2019 Kennedy Center's Page-to-Stage, and a selectee in Cohesion Theatre Company's 2018 Playwright's Fellowship. Her short plays have been presented in festivals with Queens of Cups Theater, 4615 Theatre, Rapid Lemon Productions, Rep Stage, Theater Alliance and Two Strikes Theatre Collective. Recent writing credits: *INVISIBLE REMEMBRANCE* (Truepenny Projects), an adaptation of *RACHEL* by Angelina Weld Grimke (Rapid Lemon Productions), *VARIATION OF BLACKNESS* (Two Strikes Theatre Collective), *COMMERCIAL BREAK: SATIRICAL COMMERCIALS ON RACE* (Two Strikes Theatre Collective), *NO WARNING* (Queens of Cups), *THANK YOU, DAD* (Rapid Lemon Productions), and *DARK SIDE OF LIGHT* (Rapid Lemon Productions).

Strand Theater is deeply grateful for the generous support of the following organizations and individuals, who help us create opportunities and uplift voices of women artists on stage and off!



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Laura Brandon, Aaron Heinsman, Brad Norris

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Strand Theater is 501c3 nonprofit organization

In Loving Memory of Rowan Ethridge



**A STATEMENT FROM STRAND THEATER AND
COMPANY OF *R/J*:**

To our beloved theater community:

It is with very heavy hearts that we share the news that Rowan Ethridge, our vibrant and talented lighting designer for *R/J* and beloved member of this community, unexpectedly passed away on Thursday, June 8.

Our company of actors, designers, and leadership is devastated and supporting each other through this time. As many of you know, the intimate work of making theater together creates unusually quick and close bonds. Some of us met and worked with Rowan for the first time on this production, and some have known Rowan for years; all of us wish to convey how much we have loved working with Rowan. They brought an immense amount of skill and warmth to this project, and as a self-described body enthusiast, they worked diligently and lovingly to make every actor in our cast feel and look beautiful on stage.

We hope to honor Rowan's beautiful work on this production through every performance of *R/J*.

Thank you all for the abundance of love, support, and grace you've already been giving to us and this production; we hold it with us as we navigate through this together.

**With much love,
The Company of *R/J* and Strand Theater**

Our Community Partners

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June 9-25

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Dinner is served January 2024 at The Voxel



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