

THEATRE RHINOCEROS PRESENTS

# AT THE WAKE OF A DEAD DRAG QUEEN

Written by  
TERRY GUEST

Directed by  
TANIKA BAPTISTE

LIVE, IN PERSON!

Oct 28 – Nov 14, 2021

tickets: [theRhino.org](http://theRhino.org)

Spark Arts, 4229 18th Street, San Francisco, in The Castro

# Production Notes

## Artistic Director's Note

Terry Guest has written a play that is deceptively simple, confusingly entertaining, and full of inappropriate joy - but that's the magic of it. *Wake* speaks to a very serious subject and to a very urgent inequity in our culture – disease and discriminatory access to treatment, something we're living through right now. But it focuses on the day to day of a relationship, and that relationship, while bitchy and competitive, is full of bliss, love, and sauciness. And that is the very nature of survival. How do people survive? Through life, boisterous, glorious life. I can't think of a better story to return us to the property of the living theatre than *Wake*. I am grateful to Terry, to Tanika, to Devin, Mario, Isaac, Colin, Sebastian, Wesley, Seafus, Rebecca, Sebastian, Christine, Samantha, Vince and to my indefatigable partner in crime Joe, for bringing us back to life with this needful and joyful production.

John Fisher

## Director's Note

As Vickie wisely states ``*the enemy, the big pharma companies and the NRA and whatever, they want us to sit around hating each other..*'' Our Queens Courtney and Vickie, grant us up close and intimate access to their private selves as they work through their health, love and costume changes. Everyone loves a fierce Queen. She's usually done up impeccably, her mug or makeup flawless, her hair on fleek and her gown usually long enough to drag hence the term "Drag Queen. But what do they look like out of the spectacle of stage attire and what are they going through behind closed dressing room doors?

We celebrate Drag Queens for their display of creativity and femininity they contribute to mainstream society but we don't hold space for their human conditions. Their health, their sustainability. We have relegated the Drag Artists to the role of commodity for our entertainment as opposed to seeing them as human beings who may struggle financially and internally. This play serves to announce to the world there is a discrepancy between the medical treatment of rich and poor people, with an even greater discrepancy evident when race is involved.

Terry Guest, our playwright, has created an exemplary tribute to his uncle and true Queen Courtney Berringers in *At the Wake*. It has been a privilege and honor to tell this story with two outstanding and giving artists such as Devin and Mario. Thank you John, Joe, Isaac, Seafus, Wesley and Colin for the space, time and teamwork. Lastly, thank you dear audience for your support of our community. We need you and you definitely need the Queens!

You Betta Werk!  
Tanika Baptiste

**Theatre Rhinoceros  
and  
Honorary Producers  
Tom Horn and the Bob A. Ross Foundation  
present  
*AT THE WAKE OF A DEAD DRAG QUEEN*  
By Terry Guest  
Directed by Tanika Baptiste**

Stage Manager ..... Isaac Traister  
Lighting Installation/Design.....Colin Johnson  
Scenic Design..... Seafus Chatmon  
Costume Design ..... Tanika Baptiste  
Sound/Video Design..... Wesley Murphy  
Scenic Construction.....Sebastian Attardo  
Costume Consultant..... Rebecca Redmond  
Brochure/Graphics/Ads.....Christine U'Ren  
Promo Photography ..... Vince Thomas  
Box Office/Program.....Joe Tally  
Theatre Installation ..... Sebastian Attardo  
Choreography..... Tanika Baptiste  
..... Web.....Samantha Lomax  
Lighting Equipment.....Eric Johnson, Craig Souza

Special thanks to Aviva Kanoff, Shin Aoki, Stephanie Niemann, and Lawrence Dillon.

Very special thanks to Eric Johnson and Craig Souza for making the lighting possible with a generous donation of equipment, delivery, and advice.

A very, very special thanks to Ira and Andy for their hospitality. You guys are the best!

*At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen* is approximately eighty minutes in length and is performed without intermission.

First Theatre Rhinoceros Performance: Thursday, October 28, 2021.

*At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen* is presented by special arrangement with its author.

## **Cast**

DEVIN CUNNINGHAM "COURTNEY/ANTHONY"

MARIO MAZZETTI "VICKIE/HUNTER"

## **Time**

Distant past, today, distant future.

## **Place**

The play oscillates between the afterworld and the memory of a dingy gay bar in Albany, Georgia.

## **Theatre Rhinoceros**

John Fisher (Executive Artistic Director), Joe Tally (Development Director),

Samantha Lomax (Web)

## **Board of Directors, Theatre Rhinoceros**

Cath Brannigan, Laurence Dillon, Josh Dunsby (President), Kim Larsen  
(Vice-President/Development Chair), Jeremy Laurin (Finance Chair),

Ely Orquiza, Stan Stone

## Who's Who

**Tanika Baptiste** (Director/Costume Designer/Choreographer) is absolutely elated to direct her fourth production with Theatre Rhinoceros. Originally from San Diego, she has worked as a Director, Producer, Actor and Vocalist in both the San Francisco Bay Area and SD. Her most recent Bay Area directorial credits include *Pillow Talk*, *The Review or How to Eat Your Opposition* (Theatre Rhino) and *Rachel* (SBMT). SD credits: *Clybourne Park* (Character Physics), *The desTROYers* (Old Globe Theatre - Powers New Voices Festival), and *Fires in the Mirror* (Trinity Theatre Company). She has performed and/or directed with La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego REP, Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Ground Floor, Marin Shakespeare Company, The Old Globe, American Conservatory Theatre, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre and Diversionary Theatre.

**Seafus Chatmon-Smith** (Scenic Designer) is a recipient of San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle "Excellence in Theatre" award for his 2019 scenic design of *Admissions* for Los Altos Stage Company. Some of his designs include Las Positas College's 2006 production of *Macbeth* (Sound Designer), Bay Area Children's Theatre's *Fancy Nancy Splendiferous Christmas*, 2016 (Sound Designer), *James and the Giant Peach JR*, 2017, (Music Director), *Junie B Jones JR*, 2018 (Music Director), Dragon Theatre's *Equivocation*, 2018 (Scenic Designer), Lohman Theatre's *She Kills Monsters*, 2018 (Scenic Designer), Los Positas College's *Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Odd Stupid Tales*, 2019 (Scenic Designer).

**Devin Cunningham** (Courtney/Anthony) is an actor, singer, and writer from Oakland, CA. He studied acting at PCPA- Professional Actor Training Program. After graduating, he worked with the Lower Bottom Playaz on Baraka's *The Toilet*. His work with the African-American Shakespeare Company includes *Leon*, *Black Eagles*, *Shaniqua*, *Cinderella*, and four roles in *The Trial* by Karani Marcia Leslie-Johnson. *Bro.* a one-act play written by Cunningham, was to be produced by Gritty City's Rep prior to Covid.

**Terry Guest** (Playwright) is a Chicago based playwright, actor and teaching artist. Other works include: *A Ghost in Satin* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *The Magnolia Ballet* (2022-23 Rolling World

*Premiere*), *Marie Antionette and the Magical Negroes*, *The Madness of Mary Todd* (currently in development with Goodman Theatre), *Andy Warhol Presents: The Cocaine Play*, and *Ghost Town* (Chicago Children's Theatre). Follow along on instagram @terryexplainsitall or at [www.terrycguest.com](http://www.terrycguest.com)

**Colin Johnson** (Lighting Installation/Lighting Design) returns to The Rhino having stage managed, assistant directed and designed for many Rhino productions including *Shakespeare Goes to War* and *Breaking the Code*. He is employed by Somarts and is the Technical director for Safe House Arts, and works at A.C.T. and theatres across the city. Love to Amber!

**Mario Mazzetti** (Vickie/Hunter) is excited to mount this production having played the role of Vickie/Hunter in Theatre Rhinoceros' reading last fall. A 2020 MFA graduate of Academy of Art University, Mario currently resides in Los Angeles. Favorite Bay Area productions include *Cloud 9* at Custom Made Theatre, *Fiorello!* at 42nd St. Moon, and *Rock of Ages* at Pacific Coast Repertory Theatre. For upcoming performances, follow Mario on social media at @mariomazzetti or visit [www.mariomazzetti.com](http://www.mariomazzetti.com)

**Wesley Allen Murphy** (Sound/Video Design) is excited to be working on his third show with Theatre Rhinoceros. He worked previously on designing sound and video for *The Review* and *Pillow Talk*. Wesley is a professional multi-instrumentalist who has played in various bands in Northern California specializing in 5-string banjo and bass guitar. In 2014 he went on a national tour with singer-songwriter Brianna Lea Pruett. He has recorded at Bob Weir's TRI Studios in San Rafael, Canyon Records in Arizona, and Daytrotter Studios in Chicago. He has been nominated for two Elly awards, including Sound Design for his original score in Folsom Lake College's *Alice in Wonderland*.

**Isaac Traister** (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be returning to live theater with Theater Rhino. Previously he has stage managed *The Normal Heart*, *Transitions*, *DareBnB* and *Sister Act* with Rhino, and has also stage managed several shows at City College of San Francisco and assistant stage managed *Violet* and *Gypsy* with Bay Area Musicals. Isaac has also worked backstage with various companies throughout the Bay Area.

# Theater Rhinoceros Donors 2018-2019

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## **SUPPORTING ROLE**

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***Monthly Reading Series***

**Curated by Joe Tally**

The first Tuesday of every month @ 700pm

Live and Online

4229 18<sup>th</sup> Street, SF

Free

***The Rhino Holiday Extravaganza***

**Curated by Kim Larsen**

Thursday, December 30, 2021 @ 800pm

Live and Online

Gateway Theatre

215 Jackson Street, SF

Tix: [www.TheRhino.org](http://www.TheRhino.org)

All of these programs are performed live and available online. Check [TheRhino.org](http://TheRhino.org) for additional information.

Please consider making a holiday donation to Theatre Rhino and keep queer theatre alive! [www.TheRhino.org](http://www.TheRhino.org).

