

# Native Gardens

Written by Karen Zacařlas  
Directed by Jeanette Sanchez-Izenman

STUDIO THEATRE IN THE  
KAREN HILLE PHILLIPS CENTER  
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS



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MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE

# *Native Gardens*

*by Karen Zacarias*

## *Production Team*

DIRECTOR.....Jeanette Sanchez-Izenman  
SCENIC DESIGNER/TECHNICAL DIRECTOR.....Keenan Minogue  
COSTUME DESIGNER/COSTUME SHOP MANAGER...Kathleen Anderson\*  
COSTUME DESIGNER.....Dorothea Koetje\*  
LIGHTING DESIGNER.....Amanda Sweger  
SOUND DESIGNER.....Stephania Lara  
PROPS DESIGNERS.....Parker Brown\*, Naomi Dugaw\*, Erika Leblanc\*  
STAGE MANAGER.....Audrey Williams\*

## *Production Crew*

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/ASSISTANT HOUSE MANAGER.....Kody Smith\*  
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER.....Monroe Torkelson\*  
ASSISTANT SCENIC DESIGNER.....Addy Keller\*  
ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER.....Phoenix Leiseth  
DRAMATURG.....Cordelia Seil\*  
D.C. NATIVE PLANT SPECIES RESEARCHER.....Gabriela Vera-Kavanaugh  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS.....Lucille Bell, Marley Bjornstad\*,  
David Cope-Powell, Glen Fritz\*, Alonna Hall\*, Addy Keller\*,  
Teghan Kelley, Dorothea Koetje\*, Stephania Lara, Braeden Linkenback\*,  
Alexander Mackenzie, Cooper Perez, Edan Reitan, Beno Sher, Cordelia  
Seil\*, and the Fall 2024 Theatrical Production Class  
COSTUME SHOP ASSISTANTS.....Samael Blacknell, Evergreen Burling\*,  
Dorothea Koetje\*, Clover Laguz\*, Phoenix Leiseth, Zivia Rich\*, Beno  
Sher, Monroe Torkelson\*  
LEAD ELECTRICIAN.....Amanda Sweger  
ELECTRICIANS.....Bailey DeLozier\*, Alonna Hall\*, Dorothea Koetje\*,  
Braeden Linkenback\*, Jeremy McCarter, Cooper Perez, Edan Reitan,  
Cordelia Seil\*, Kody Smith\*

## *Running Crew*

ASSISTANT HOUSE MANAGER.....Kody Smith\*  
LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR.....Alonna Hall\*  
SOUND BOARD OPERATOR.....Cordelia Seil\*  
STAGE CREW/USHERS.....David Cope-Powell, Abigail daCorte\*,  
Oscar Oberg  
WARDROBE CREW.....Jade Brunner, Evergreen Burling\*, Clover Laguz\*

\* Denotes membership in Alpha Psi Omega (ΑΨΩ), National Theatre Honor Society

## Cast

Tania.....	Makayla Martinez
Pablo.....	Josiah Rodriguez
Frank.....	Parker Brown*
Virginia.....	Chelsea Hesselbach
Witness/Pablo Understudy.....	Tyrone Ramsey Jr.
Witness/Frank Understudy.....	Lucas Lucero
Witness/Virginia Understudy.....	Miranda Manning
Witness.....	Alice Lasley
Witness.....	Lizzie Sunday

### Time/Place

2016, Washington D.C.

## Special Thanks...

Cameron Bennett, Dean of the College of Professional Studies; Associate Dean Brian Galante and the School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Patrick Brockwell; PLU GREAN Club; Art Giddings; Travis Pagel

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## Actor Biographies



**Parker Brown** (Frank) is a fourth-year acting/directing major with minors in dance and writing from Vancouver, WA whose recent credits include Malcolm in *Macbeth* (PLU), Improviser in *Legend of Crow* (PLU), and Lord Aster in *Peter and the Starcatcher* (PLU). He would like to thank his mom and dad; they mean everything to him. Also his dog Anna!



**Chelsea Hesselbach** (Virginia) is a first-year musical theatre major from Puyallup, WA whose recent credits include Georgia in *Curtains*, Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Agnus in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* all at Emerald Ridge High School. They would like to thank Jack, Ella, Phia, their parents, and Mr. Tavern for all their support.

## Actor Biographies



**Alicia Lasley** (Witness) is a freshman musical theatre major from Quincy, WA whose recent credits include Morticia Addams in *The Addams Family* (Quincy High School), and Greta Ohlson in *Murder on the Orient Express* at (Quincy High School). She would like to thank her family, Kylie Youngren, Hailey Webber, and other Quincy High School Family.



**Lucas Lucero** (Witness/Frank Understudy) is a freshman theatre major from Puyallup, WA whose recent credits include Bobby in *Curtains* and Antonio in *Much Ado About Nothing*, both at Emerald Ridge High School. He would like to thank his family and friends for their support, and director Jeanette Sanchez-Izenman for this opportunity.



**Miranda Manning** (Witness/Virginia Understudy) is a third-year musical theatre major from Tacoma, WA whose recent credits include Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer in *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer* (Tacoma Little Theatre) and Sandy in *Grease* (Stadium High School). She would like to thank her family, and the many new friends she has made since transferring to PLU.



**Makayla Martinez** (Tania) is a second-year history and gender, sexuality, and race studies double major from Colorado. Her recent credits include Ensemble in *Beauty and the Beast* (Highlands Ranch High School) and Improviser in *Legend of Crow* (PLU). She would like to thank her parents, her siblings, and all her friends that supported her through her first show! Finally, she would like to thank director Jeanette for giving her this opportunity.



**Tyrone Ramsey Jr.** (Witness/Pablo Understudy) is pursuing his undergraduate degree as a kinesiology major and theatre minor, following his career in the U.S. Army culminating as a Green Beret. He has studied at the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute in California and locally at Mighty Tripod Acting Studio and Freehold Theatre. This is his acting debut at PLU and he wishes to thank his wife, Christina for her constant support, director Jeanette Sanchez-Izenman for this opportunity and his amazing fellow cast members and production team for an incredible experience.

## Actor Biographies



**Josiah Rodriguez** (Pablo) is a first-year theatre major from Parkland, WA whose recent credits include Gomez Addams in *The Addams Family*, Beatrice Worthington in *The Plot Like Gravy, Thickens*, and Ken Gorman in *Rumors*. He would like to thank his mom and grandparents for being his biggest supporters.



**Lizzie Sunday** (Witness) is a first-year communications major from Buckley, WA whose recent credits include Maria in *Twelfth Night*, and Mrs. Drudge in *The Real Inspector Hound*, both at White River High School. She would like to thank her director, Jeanette Sanchez, for providing her with this wonderful opportunity.

## Production Biographies

**Kathleen Anderson** (Costume Designer/Costume Shop Manager) has an MFA in Costume and Set Design from Northwestern University. Her favorite designs for PLU Theatre include costume and set designs for *Twelfth Night* and *The Spitfire Grill*, costume design for *Cabaret*, *A Dream Play*, and *The Fantasticks*, and puppet and costume design for *The Floating World*. She has also designed extensively for Tacoma Opera and Harlequin Productions in Olympia.

**Addy Keller** (Assistant Scenic Designer) is a third-year design/tech theatre major from Sammamish, WA. Some of her recent credits include assistant lighting designing *The Great American Songbook: a musical revue* (PLU) and *Jasper In Deadland* (PLU) and stage managing *Macbeth* (PLU). She would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work on this production.

**Dorothea Koetje** (Costume Designer) is a senior musical theatre major and Hispanic studies minor whose recent credits include directing *NOMT: Don't Typecast Me!* (PLU), fight choreographer for *Macbeth* (PLU) and costume shop assistant at PLU since 2022. She would like to thank her wonderful parents, sister, partner, and friends for their continuous and unconditional support.

**Stephania Lara** (Sound Designer) is a PLUS year fine art major from Kent, WA whose recent credits include directing PLU's *Late Knight*. She would like to thank Hanne and Amanda for this opportunity.

**Phoenix Leiseth** (Assistant Lighting Designer) is a sophomore design/tech theatre major from Moorhead, MN whose recent credits include assistant stage manager for *Legend of Crow* (PLU), assistant stage manager for *NOMT: Don't Typecast Me!* (PLU), and wardrobe crew for *Macbeth* (PLU).

## Production Biographies

**Keenan Minogue** (Scenic Designer/Technical Director) is Resident Assistant Professor of Theatre. Keenan has broad expertise in all aspects of live production, and has been afforded the opportunity to practice his craft across the nation, with projects numbering in the hundreds. Previously, he designed props for the world premiere of Theresa Rebeck's *Downstairs*, built and painted sets for the many theaters of Chicago, and collaborated on projects within the live events industry at large. Keenan Received his BFA from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, and MFA in Theatrical Design and Production Technology from the University of Memphis.

**Jeanette Sanchez-Izenman** (Director) Jeanette is a teaching artist, dramaturg, intimacy choreographer and director. Her work as a director recently won an award from the Sound on Stage for best musical with Centerstage Theatre's *First Date*. Other shows she's directed in the South Sound include *El Coqui Espectacular* and *the Bottle of Doom*, *Oregon Trail*, *A Christmas Carol*, *More or Less*, and *Bocón*. Her upcoming project, *Fermin's Great Book of Dreams*, will be at Centerstage Theatre in the spring of 2025. This play is for her mom. She finds and builds community everywhere she goes.

**Cordelia Seil** (Dramaturg) is a second-year musical theatre & design/tech double major from Kent, WA. Cordelia began with design and technical theatre last fall and immediately fell in love. Recent credits include assistant lighting designer for *Peter and the Starcatcher* (PLU), lighting designer for *Legend of Crow* (PLU), and assistant choreographer for *Fiddler on the Roof* (Village Theatre KIDSTAGE). Big thanks to family and friends, and they hope you enjoy this hilarious and important show!

**Kody Smith** (Assistant Director) is a fifth-year acting/directing major from Everett, WA. His recent directorial credits include *Peter and the Starcatcher* (PLU), *Off Broadway: a musical revue* (PLU), and *Does the Sun Still Shine at the End of the World?* (PLU), a one act both written and directed by him. He would like to thank Jeanette for her passion and care, as well as the entire cast and crew. With special thanks to GC and NN.

**Amanda Sweger** (Lighting Designer) is Chair of Theatre and Dance and a lighting and scenic designer who has freelanced in Seattle, Chicago, Nashville, and Philadelphia. She received an MFA from Northwestern University in 2011 and is now a tenured professor at Pacific Lutheran University. She is proud to have designed with companies such as The Second City, TimeLine Theatre, the Seattle Theatre Group, and Taproot Theatre Company.



## *Production Biographies*

**Monroe Torkelson** (Assistant Stage Manager) is a PLUS year double major in theatre and communications. They are from the Chicago area and their recent credits include Peter in *Peter and the Starcatcher* (PLU), stage manager for APO's 2024 One Acts Festival (PLU), and Captain in *Macbeth* (PLU). She would like to thank the whole production team, the whole cast and crew, especially KC.

**Audrey Williams** (Stage Manager) is a senior theatre, creative writing and literature triple major from Vancouver, WA whose recent credits include assistant stage manager for *Jasper In Deadland* (PLU) and stage manager for *Melancholy Play* (PLU) and *Off Broadway: a musical revue* (PLU). They would like to thank directors Jeanette and Kody as well as the amazing cast and crew of Native Gardens for creating such a wonderful production.

## *Directors' Notes*

In 2020 I voted in my first election. 4 years prior I watched as the same candidate ran for office, and now, I am about to vote for the second time, with that very same candidate still in the race.

The politics of this play are not subtle. They're not meant to be. Because we all get the underlying message. Instead of subtlety, the show is focused on asking the questions: why are our politics the way they are? What happens when we conform to these expectations? And what happens when we break them?

*Native Gardens* the play, much like its namesake, is a challenge to traditional ways of thinking. Not only does this include conservative viewpoints on immigration and fitting into the American dream, but all of our viewpoints on how we interact with each other. Including those on the opposite side of the political spectrum.

The show challenges us to not judge, not attack, not jump down the throats of those we disagree with. Instead it asks us to lead with empathy. With understanding and a shared love for our country and for our people.

As of you reading this now, we likely already know the results of this week's election (if things are still up in the air, my condolences to us all). Regardless of these results, important as they may be, this show's challenge to us all, still holds true.

We must be ready to grow, rain or shine, flower or weed. All of us together, new neighbors, all part of one very old neighborhood.

**-- Kody Smith ('25), assistant director**

## Directors' Notes

"The difference between a flower and a weed...is a judgement." – Unknown.

Karen Zacarías introduces *Native Gardens* with this quote and it shapes what you are seeing here. Dandelions are my favorite flower. I know they are a "weed" but they are also symbol of spring and longer days. Their yellow faces turn hopefully to the sun, and they provide nutrients to pollinators and the soil in which they claim their territory.

I've spent years rescuing them when my dad would rip them out by the roots in his yard by transplanting them to pots and then forgetting about them only to find that he'd been watering them.

And that speaks to the theme of this play. Compassion spawned from a disagreement of what is a weed and should be eradicated, and what is a flower and should be enjoyed.

At its core, *Native Gardens* is about hope and learning to not simply coexist but thrive. Set in 2016, because it could not work out this way in today's political climate, it brings focus to two generations, two different political stances and two different judgements on what is a flower and what is a weed.

In 2016, my social media exploded as I cultivated conversations with folks with disparate beliefs in everything from gun violence to police violence to how we teach our shared United Statesian history. Prior to the election, I could keep civil dialogue going, and then it became a lot less safe.

Now, the week of the election, and at time of writing, we don't know the results, the same candidate who childhood friends voted for in 2016 (and 2020 and likely this week) stated in a California rally, "I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to target and dismantle every migrantcriminal network operating on American soil." And whose closest advisor has recently stated, "America is for Americans."

We are no longer sharing safe ground.

Still, we can turn our faces to the sun. We can choose to find commonality in our shared United Statesian dreams for something like a shared garden, a bigger table, a loving family.

**-- Always with hope, Jeanette Sanchez-Izenman, director**



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