

DIVERSIONARY

ANNOUNCING THE CAST OF THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *BALLAST*



Contact: Cara Hanhurst, Connectivity Manager

619-220-6830 x 105

Press@Diversionsary.org

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San Diego, CA

WHO: Maxton Miles Baeza, Dana Case, Dana Aliya Levinson, Jennifer Paredes, Skyler Sullivan*, and **Jacque Wilke*** make up the ensemble for this World Premiere production. Diversionsary's Executive Artistic Director **Matt M. Morrow** will direct.

WHAT: Diversionsary announces casting for the World Premiere of *BALLAST* by **Georgette Kelly**.

WHEN: May 4th - June 4th. Performances run Thursdays at 7pm, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm, and Sundays at 2pm.

TICKETS: Single tickets are now available to the public and range from \$15-\$45 - more information can be found at www.diversionary.org/ballast or by calling the Box Office at 619-220-0097. Discounts are available to Groups, Students, Educators, Seniors and Military. To be notified of ticket sales, please sign up for the Diversionary Theatre Email List: <http://diversionary.org/maillinglist/>



Diversionary welcomes fresh & favorite talent back to San Diego!

Diversionary has announced casting for the World Premiere of *BALLAST* by Georgette Kelly. This highly poetic play explores the waking and dream lives of two trans and cisgender couples as they come to terms with the new lives they find themselves in.



In *BALLAST* we find Zoe (Jacque Wilke) and Grace (Dana Levinson) navigating their relationship in the wake of Grace's gender transition. While Zoe dreams of escape, Grace simply yearns for a return to normality and work as a Pastor. Their lives intersect with two strangers: young Xavier (Maxton Miles Baeza) begins to confront inner demons as he initiates

his own gender transition, and his best friend Savannah (Jennifer Parades), who discovers personal freedom through their unique relationship. Skyler Sullivan* and Dana Case create the community surrounding these two couples. With much of the story taking place in the characters' dreams, this cutting-edge new play skydives into the unconscious to explore personal identity and how gender shapes our spirituality, desires and destiny.



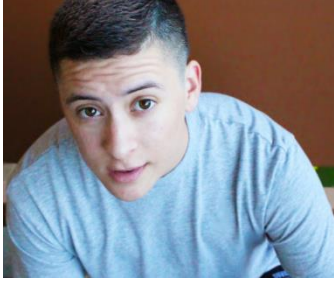
Director Morrow has been cultivating the play since 2012 when playwright Kelly was still studying under the helm of two time Pulitzer Prize finalist Tina Howe at Hunter College in New York. Four years later, Morrow says:

"BALLAST is even more topical and vital as our country comes to grips with issues our trans community face daily. Georgette has crafted a compelling story brimming with intelligence, poetry and surprising humor. This brave play takes the audience on a journey that is both epic in scale and deeply personal, to emotional and psychic realms never before traversed in the theatre. Expect the unexpected."

BALLAST plays May 4th - June 4th at Diversionary Theatre. More information can be found at www.diversionary.org/ballast

For interviews and photos, please contact Cara Hanhurst, Connectivity Manager, and 619-220-6830x105 or by emailing Press@diversionary.org

ABOUT THE CAST



Maxton Miles Baeza (Xavier) Maxton is honored to be making his Diversionary Theatre debut with *Ballast*. Previous credits include: the national tours of *Cathy Rigby is Peter Pan* and *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (McCoy Rigby Entertainment); *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Peter Pan* (3-D Theatricals); *Red Car Trolley News Boys*, *Disney Jr. Live on Stage!* (Disney California Adventure).



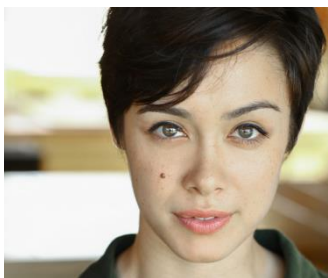
Dana Case (Ensemble) Dana is happy to make her debut with Diversionary Theatre in this beautiful new play. Elsewhere: *Orange Julius* (MOXIE); *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Seascape*, *Death of a Salesman*, *A Lie of the Mind*, *The Waverly Gallery*, *True West*, *Humble Boy*, *Be Aggressive*, *Summer and Smoke*, *Buried Child* (New Village Arts Theatre); *Curse of the Starving Class* (NVA/Cygnat

Theatre). Also, roles at The Old Globe Theatre, Gaslamp Theatre, Sushi, Sierra Repertory Theatre and Project Theatre. Dana earned an MFA in Acting from Cornell University and is a member of SAG-AFTRA.



Dana Aliya Levinson (Grace) Dana is an actress, composer and lyricist, orchestrator and a transgender activist. Favorite acting credits: *Untitled* (Sony/RCA Visual Album, dir. Natalie Rae Robison), *The Vagina Monologues* (Mini-Tour) and *The Highs and Down Lows* (Patti). Favorite writing credits: *Encore* (Comédie

Nation, Paris), *Fifth Republic* (NYMF 2010 under the title *Les Enfants de Paris*), and *MADAME* (NYMF 2011). Favorite arranging credits include Well-Strung, Joanna Gleason *In Bloom*, *Broken Bride*, and BCEFA *Gypsy of the Year*.



Jennifer Paredes (Savannah) Jennifer is excited and so grateful to be debuting at Diversionary Theatre with *Ballast!* Recent Stage Credits: *Into the Beautiful North*, *Manifest Destinitis*, and *Rapture, Blister, Burn* (San Diego Repertory Theatre); *Perfect Arrangement* (Intrepid Theatre); *Seven Spots on the Sun* (InnerMission Productions); *Lydia* (Ion Theatre); *El Huracán* (DNA New Work Series, La Jolla Playhouse); *OjO:*

The Next Generation In Travel (WoW Festival, La Jolla Playhouse); *September and Her*

Sisters (Scripps Ranch Theatre); *Blamed: An Established Fiction* (winner of Best Dramatic Production at SD Fringe); *BASH/SLAM JAM* (Lambs Players Theatre); *The Nutcracker* (New Village Arts); *The Shape of Things* (USD). Jennifer received her B.A. in Theatre Arts at University of San Diego. For more information, please visit jenniferparedes.net



Skyler Sullivan* (Ensemble) Skyler is grateful to be returning to Diversionary Theatre with *Ballast*. Previously for Diversionary: *A Civil War Christmas* and *The Big Gay Improv Show*; New Village Arts: *Emilie*. NYC credits include *Largo desolato*, and *The Vibrator Play*. Regional: *Strata*, and *Midnight Radio* (Bricolage, Pittsburgh); TV: *Sesame Street* and *The Electric Company* (PBS); In addition, Skyler is a hospital clown with *Healthy Humor*, and will be in residence this summer at Paul Newman's Hole in the Wall Gang Camp for sick kids. MFA Brooklyn College.



Jacque Wilke* (Zoe) Jacque is thrilled to be back on the Diversionary stage! Diversionary Theatre: *The Divine Sister*, *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler*, *Scrooge in Rouge*, *Next Fall*, *Fair Use*, *The New Century*, *Anita Bryant Died for your Sins*; Cygnet Theatre: *Stupid F*cking Bird*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Travesties*, and *Mistakes Were Made*; San Diego Repertory Theater: *Honky* (Craig Noel Award); La Jolla Playhouse: *Yoke*, *The Car Plays*; Intrepid Theater: *The Winter's Tale*, *All My Sons*; North Coast Repertory Theatre: *Unnecessary Farce*, *Lend me a Tenor*, *Mistletoe*, *Music*, and *Mayhem*, and *Don't Dress for Dinner*; Moonlight at the Avo: *Blithe Spirit*; MOXIE: *Or*; New Village Arts: *The Seven Year Itch*, and *The Heidi Chronicles*; Circle Circle Dot Dot: *Red Planet Respite*, *The Break-up Breakdown*; Bang Productions: *Side Man*; Laterthanever Productions: *He Said, She Said*. Jacque is a proud member of Actors Equity and SAG-AFTRA.

ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM



Photo: Joe Mazza

Georgette Kelly (Playwright) has one foot in New York and the other in Chicago. Her play *Ballast* was featured on The Kilroys List 2015 and was chosen as a finalist in the 2015 Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition. Georgette's other plays include: *I Carry Your Heart*, *Faith in a Fallen World*, *In the Belly of the Whale*, *how to hero or the subway play*, and an adaptation of Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping*. Her work has been developed by The Kennedy Center, The National New Play Network, The DC Source Festival, The Alliance Theatre, terraNOVA Collective, Taffety Punk, Diversionary Theatre, Capital Stage, TOSOS, Prologue Theatre, New Leaf Theatre, and Chicago's DCASE. She is a 2016 Lambda Literary Fellow and a member of 2014-2015 TerraNOVA Groundbreakers Playwrights Group, The Dramatists Guild of America, and Writers WorkSpace. Georgette holds a B.A. in Performance Studies from Northwestern University and an M.F.A. in Playwriting from Hunter College, where she studied with Tina Howe, Arthur Kopit, and Mark Bly. GeorgetteKelly.com.

Matt M. Morrow (Director) Since joining Diversionary, Matt has directed the San Diego Premiere of Bash Doran's *The Mystery of Love and Sex*, and the West Coast Premieres of Jordan Harrison's *Amazons and Their Men* and Christopher Shinn's *Now Or Later*. Prior to joining Diversionary Theatre, Matt was the Associate Artistic Director of City Theatre Company, a LORT theatre in Pittsburgh dedicated to

producing work written in the past five years. With City he directed the Regional Premiere of Jessica Dickey's *Charles Ives Take Me Home*, the World Premiere of Tami Dixon's *South Side Stories* (Pittsburgh Post Gazette & Tribune Review's Top Ten of 2012; "...directed to crystalline point by Morrow." -City Paper), Kim Rosenstock's *Tigers Be Still* ("Morrow has struck a balance between the jokey and the serious sides of "Tigers Be Still" so that Ms. Rosenstock's simple message comes through clearly and without preaching." -The Pittsburgh Post Gazette); and workshops of the new musical *The Shadow Sparrow* by Anton Dudley, Keith Gordon and Charlie Sohne, and *Don't You F*cking Say A Word* by Andy Bragen for City's Momentum Festival of New Works.

He has developed new work with The Sundance Theatre Institute, The Banff Centre, American Conservatory Theater, Lincoln Center, PlayPenn, and Page 73 Productions in residence at the Yale School of Drama. His work as a director has been seen in NYC at Amas, Playwrights Horizons, Urban Stages, EST, HERE, Dixon Place, Cherry Lane, The York, The Tank, NYC Int'l Fringe, Midtown Int'l Festival, among others. Favorite credits include: *SCarrie! The Musical* (Bricolage Productions), *Only Children* (Lincoln Center), the first NYC revivals of *The Falsetto Trilogy*, *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, *John and Jen*, and Lisa Kron's *2.5 Minute Ride* ("an affecting revival" -The New Yorker, "an exhilarating ride" -The New York Sun). His production of Jennifer Haley's *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom* with Bricolage Production Company was cited as "breathtaking" by City Paper and in the Top Ten of 2010 by The Pittsburgh Tribune Review.

Matt is currently developing Jennifer Haley's *FROGGY*. He served as The John Wells Professor of Directing at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Drama (Graduate & Undergraduate Directing programs), and is a member of the Lincoln Center Director's Lab. He holds a BFA in Directing from Carnegie Mellon University. www.mattmmorrow.com

Ron Logan (Set Designer) Ron's previous work at Diversionary: *A New Brain*, *Amazons and Their Men*. Ron's other theatre work: *Sea of Souls*, *Ryes*, *Six*, *Grove*, (ion theatre – workshopped original works), *Geeks! The Musical!* (BLKBOX), Co-scenic Designer for *Bug* (ion).

Elisa Benzoni (Costume Designer) Elisa's previous work at Diversionary: *The Mystery of Love and Sex*. Elisa's other theatre work: *The Who & The What*, *Our Town*, *Brahman*, *Tall Girls*, *Sam Bendrix at the Bon Soir* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Measure for Measure* (The Old Globe), *Chagall*, *a Man Found Wanting* (Malashock

Dance), *The Storm*, *A Man, His Wife, and His Hat*, *The Three Penny Opera*, *Everything Nice* (UC San Diego Theater and Dance), *Dido and Aeneas* (Back Collegium San Diego).

Sherrice Mojgani (Lighting Designer) Sherrice's previous work at Diversionsary: *Bright Half Life*. Sherrice's other theatre work: *Art* (Intrepid), *God of Carnage* (New Village Arts), *Outside Mullinger*, *My Manana Comes*, *The Mountaintop*, *Clybourne Park*, *Honky*, (San Diego Rep), and many others with Moxie Theatre.

Emily Jankowski (Sound Designer) Emily is a Sound Designer and Composer based in Southern California. This is her Diversionsary debut! Moxie Theater credits: *Blue Door*, *Brownsville Song (B-side for Tray)*, *Orange Julius*, *Lesson 443*, *A Discourse on the Wonders of the Invisible World*, *Jade Heart*. UC San Diego credits: *A Doll House*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Storm*, *June Moon*. The Trip: *3 Plays in a Tattoo Shop*, *All the Rooms of the House*. Additional credits: *Ex Machina* (NYC Fringe '13), *The Rest of Your Life* (Axial NYC). Interactive sound installations: *It Should Be Breathing*, an installation involving sound generating pressure sensors- a collaboration with MFA print-maker Gretchen Jankowski, Cal State Long Beach alumnus. Emily She holds an MFA in Sound Design for Theatre from UC San Diego, and a BFA from UC San Diego in Interdisciplinary Computing and the Arts, Music. Emily is also the Radio Operations Assistant at KPBS and the Technical Director for KPBS Midday Edition. www.emilyjankowski.com.

Bonnie Durben (Props Designer) Bonnie's previous work at Diversionsary: *2.5 Minute Ride*, *Well*, *The Mystery of Love and Sex*, *The Boy Who Danced On Air*, *Now Or Later*, *Baby With The Bathwater*, *She-Rantulas*. Bonnie's other theatre work: *Next to Normal*, *White Christmas*, *Sound of Music*, *Lion in Winter*, *Spamalot*, *Mary Poppins*, *My Fair Lady*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Tommy*, *South Pacific*, *Life Could Be A Dream* (Moonlight Productions), *Same Time Next Year*, *Plaid Tidings*, *One Flew Over The Cookey's Nest*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (New Village Arts), *The Graduate*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Match Maker*, *Guys And Dolls*, *39 Steps* (Mira Costa College), *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *I Hate Hamlet*, *Macbeth* (Intrepid Theatre).

Tara Knight (Projection Designer) Tara's previous work at Diversionsary: *Amazons and Their Men*. Tara's other theatre work: The world premiere of *Hollywood* and Arthur Kopit's *A Dram of Drummhicit* directed by Christopher Ashley at La Jolla Playhouse, Designing and co-conceiving the Emmy Award-winning *The Floating World* with Malashock Dance. Knight began her career working on the animated films of Faith and

Emily Hubley, including the animated sequences in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. Knight's animated documentary series about Hatsune Miku, the singing, dancing, collaboratively-constructed hologram, have been screened at the Mori Art Museum, SXSW Interactive Festival, and on the Discovery Channel among others. She currently is an advisor for the *Voyager Record 2.0* project with NASA, teaches at UCSD in the Theatre and Dance department, and is the Associate Dean for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for the Division of Arts and Humanities at UCSD.

Monica Perfetto (Resident Stage Manager, Stage Manager) is grateful to call Diversionary home as both Production Coordinator and Resident Stage Manager. Monica has a BA in Theatre Arts and Performance Studies from the University of San Diego. At Diversionary: *Well, The Boy Who Danced on Air, Now or Later, In the Va Va Voom Room, A Civil War Christmas, Bright Half Life, and A New Brain*. Elsewhere: *RENT* (Southwestern College), *Annie* (California Youth Conservatory), *Much Ado About Nothing, I Hate Hamlet, All My Sons, Macbeth, and A Midsummer Night's Dream the Musical* (Intrepid). As Production Assistant/ Assistant Stage Manager: *Ain't Misbehavin', The Fox on the Fairway, Side by Side, Chapter Two* (North Coast Repertory Theatre), and *The Two Gentleman of Verona* (The Old Globe/USD MFA Program).

SPECIAL EVENTS

Performances run Thursdays at 7pm, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm, and Sundays at 2pm. More information can be obtained by calling our box office at 619-220-0097.

Low Cost Previews.....Thursday, May 4th – Friday, May 9th

First Fridays.....Friday, May 5th at 8pm

To say thank you to those that serve, Diversionary offers complimentary tickets. Email Cara@Diversionary.org for more information.

Opening Night.....Saturday, May 13th at 8pm

Pre-and post show festivities – celebrate with the cast and company!

Industry Night.....Monday, May 15th at 7pm

Theatre Professionals enjoy a special discount to our only Monday evening performance!

Designer Spotlight.....Thursday, May 18th at 6pm

Join us in Fritz's Lounge before the show to meet the Design Team, see a display of the concepts used in producing the show and hear the influences and process involved. Hosted hors d'oeuvres round out a fun pre-show experience! The party starts at 6pm before the 7pm performance.

Director Happy Hour.....Thursday, May 25th at 6pm

Join Director Matt M. Morrow in Fritz's Lounge for hosted hors d'oeuvres and a chance to chat before the show! Pre Show reception at 6pm, performance at 7pm.

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*Actor Appears Courtesy of AEA