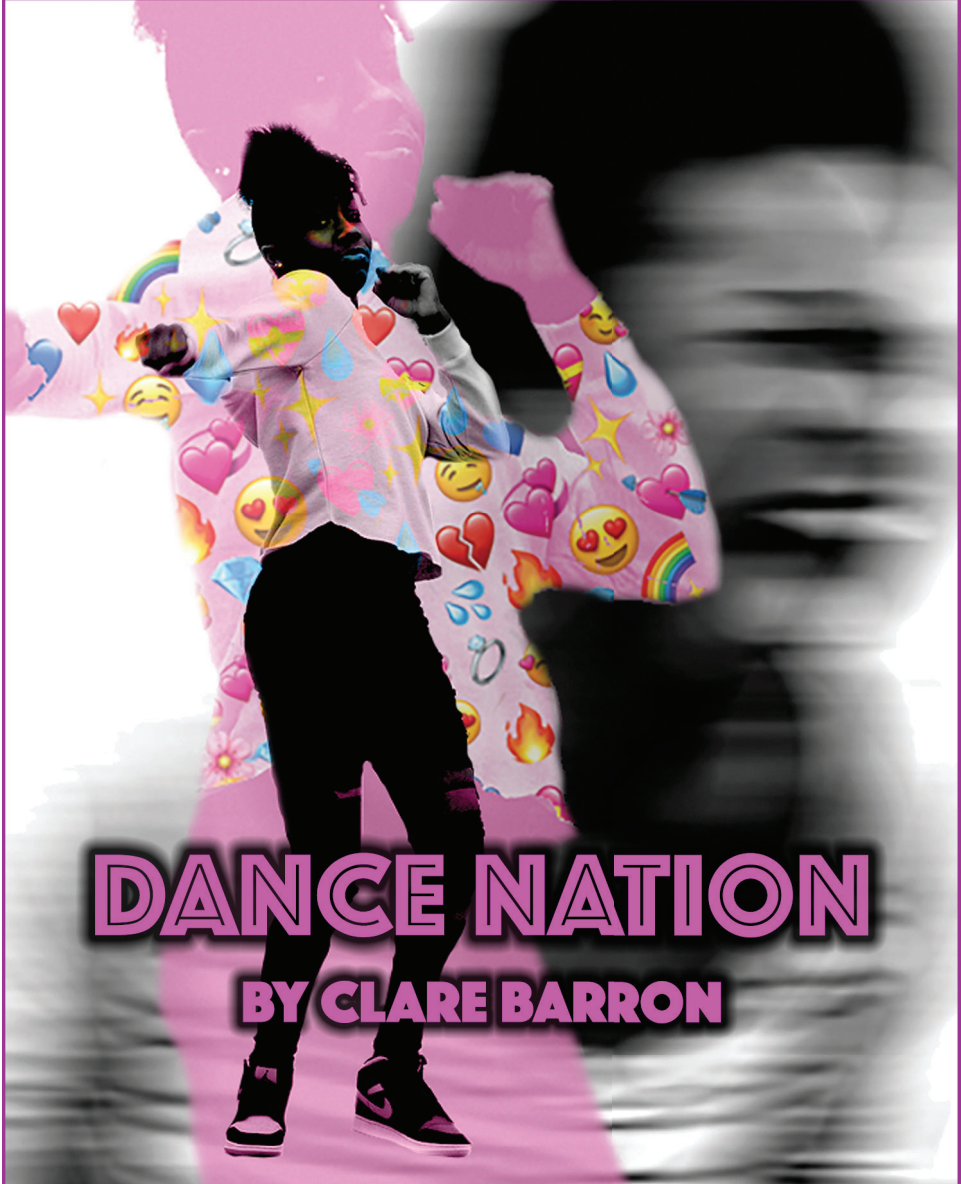


theatre **KAPOW**



DANCE NATION
BY CLARE BARRON

February 18 - 20, 2022
Friday and Saturday 7.30 pm
Sunday 2.00 pm

Bank of
New Hampshire **Stage**
16 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CONCORD NH

February 25 - 26, 2022
Friday 7.30 pm
Saturday 7:30 pm



www.tKAPOW.com

Playwright's Perspective

It can be kind of paralyzing to make work about gender in a moment like this. And worse to have to talk about it. But I'm going to try.

This is a play about thirteen-year-old girls. It's also a play about women, ambition, and desire. I wanted to write this play because I wanted to present a different picture of teenage girls onstage. One where trauma wasn't the central narrative. One where "being the best" was.

The girls are played by women ranging from their 20s to their 60s because I was tired of the casting convention of hiring petite twenty-five-year-olds to play thirteen. I didn't want the characters in the play to look like what you think teenage girls should look like - because teenage girls don't really look like that! Also, because the play is really about how we carry what happens to us when we're thirteen through the rest of our lives.

I, for one, am still struggling with a lot of the same things. That's something I have to change. And I want to be clear that I think that all of this is as much about the world's expectation that I be palatable to other people, well-behaved, sweet, helpless, and unassuming, as it is about my own failure to take real responsibility for myself as an agent for change in the world - as each of us are.

And also, in my case, sometimes that "helplessness" or seeming helplessness has enabled me to work within the system and succeed. We participate in corrupt currencies all the time. I feel a lot of shame when I receive any kind of recognition. In part, because I'm not comfortable taking up too much space. In part, because I'm aware that I've had it relatively easy. That there's something precarious about being palatable to gatekeepers in a world that is so deeply unfair.

That's the tricky thing about rewarding excellence: How can we celebrate a few when there are so many without the platform, without the access and who are met with deep institutional bias?

The girls in the play are dealing with all these questions of who's the best, who deserves to be recognized, what to do when the system (aka Dance Teacher Pat) is unfair, how to be friends and compete at the same time, how to stand up for yourself when you've been trained not to ...

The difference is they're only thirteen. The difference is they're still a little naïve. They still think anything is possible.

In the play, the girls audition for a "special part" in one of their competition dances. After the audition, one of the girls, Amina, runs up to her best friend, Zuzu. They both congratulate each other on their auditions, ignoring the fact that one of them will inevitably be disappointed. Then Amina gets an idea: "Maybe we'll both just get it!"

Zuzu lights up. The thought hadn't occurred to her. "Oh my god! That would be perfect!"

Why not.

*excerpt from her essay in Playwrights Horizons' subscriber bulletin for Dance Nation in 2018.

Director's Note

Just reading *DANCE NATION* was like being struck by lightning. It's bold, intense, and fierce. It's filled with an adolescent urgency, joy, and terror that truly feels like a force of nature. And layered into all this incredible energy is an irresistible theatrical challenge - the playwright demands that the 13-to-14-year-old competition dancers in the play be played by adult actors, adolescent angst bubbling up inside adult bodies.

I used to think about the play as a kind of time-travel, where past and future versions of the characters are present at the same time. But more and more I think, "Maybe that's just the human condition." Our past selves don't disappear or die; they're still tucked away inside us, occasionally reminding us of who we used to be or what we wanted, our best and worst moments, what we gave up and what we kept. Most of us probably don't let those past selves out into the world very often, but what if we did? What if we all let out the wild, screaming, dancing, "I want my life to start!" adolescent inside of us? Would we recognize ourselves? Would we cheer?

~ Wanda Strukus, Director

theatre KAPOW and the Greater Derry Arts Council present

DANCE NATION

by Clare Barron

Amina.....Tajoura Davis
Zuzu..... Helen Hy-Yuen Swanson
Connie..... Lali Haines
Luke.....Raphael Campos
Maeve..... Katie Collins
Sofia.....Deirdre Hickok Bridge
Ashlee.....Carey Cahoon
Vanessa/The Moms.....Rachael Chapin Longo
Dance Teacher Pat..... Gary Locke
Director.....Wanda Strukus
Choreographer..... Lorraine Chapman
Stage Manager.....Kayla Marquis Williams
Producer/Technical Director..... Matt Cahoon
Lighting Design.....Tayva Young
Sound Design..... Brian Williams
Costumes..... BarbaraHollbrook
Assistant DirectorHeidi Krantz
Image Design..... Neva Cole

Place: Somewhere in America. Time: Now.

~ **The performance runs 100 minutes with no intermission** ~

**Content Transparency: This show contains coarse language, depictions of self-harm and descriptions of masturbation, sex and sexual violence.*

DANCE NATION is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

DANCE NATION received its UK premiere at the Almeida Theatre, London, September 2018. Playwrights Horizons, Inc., New York City, produced the World Premiere of *DANCE NATION* in 2018 with support from an award by the National Endowment of the Arts, and a generous gift from Scott M. Delman.

Special thanks to The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Trust for supporting new plays at Playwrights Horizons, and special thanks to the Time Warner Foundation for its leadership support of New Works Lab at Playwrights Horizons.

DANCE NATION was developed at the Perry-Mansfield New Works Festival, June 2015, with the Atlantic Theatre Company, and presented as part of the Contemporary American Voices Festival at Long Wharf Theatre, September 2016.

DANCE NATION was written, in part, in residence at SPACE on Ryder Farm, and received extensive workshop time and space as part of New Dramatists' Jerry A. Tishman Playwrights Creativity Fund.

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The Company

Deirdre Hickok Bridge (Sofia) is honored to be among this incredibly talented and exciting cast and production team. Her previous theatre KAPOW productions include the ensemble of *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play*; Emma Arkadina in *Stupid F%cking Bird*; and Euridyce in *The Burial at Thebes*. She is particularly proud of her 2019 performance at the Hatbox Theatre in the titular role of *Bo-Ni-ta: a Play for One Woman*, which she also co-produced. Other favorite roles include Veronica in *God of Carnage* (SquarePeg), Lady Croom in *Arcadia* (Glass Dove), Marie in *Wonders* (Phylloxera), Lady Bird Johnson in *All the Way* (VIPA), Carla Albanese in *Nine* (MAC) and Marie Tremblay in *Sputnik: A Love Story* (NTG). She is a five-time NH Theatre Award finalist for Best Supporting Actress. Deirdre has also periodically trained with tKAPOW through their monthly Open Training sessions, as well as Shakespeare & Company's Weekend Intensive. She holds a BS in Textile Science from the UMASS Dartmouth College of Engineering. When not on stage, she is a full time mom and vintage clothing collector and seller. This play has reminded her that, no matter how many decades removed from ballet class, she will always consider herself a "former dancer."

Carey Cahoon (Ashlee) was seen last season with tKAPOW as Odd Nansen in *The Boyg*. For tKAPOW's 2017 production of *Living in Exile* as Briseis she won the NH Theatre Award for Best Actress (Professional). She also won the 2017 NH Theatre Award for Best Actress as Queen Marguerite in *Exit the King*, and in 2014 for her roles in tKAPOW's 3-person *Macbeth*. Other favorite roles include Sarah Goodwin in *Time Stands Still*, Cassandra in *Agamemnon*, Julie in *Miss Julie*, Hedda Tesman in *Hedda Gabler*, Jessie in *'night, Mother*, the Pilot in *Grounded* and Penelope in *The Penelopiad*. Carey has also performed, directed or designed with Glass Dove Productions, Boston Playwright's Platform, Stage One Productions, the Palace Theatre, and the Anselmian Abbey Players. She holds a BA in Classics from St. Anselm College, and trained at the Atlantic Acting School, Shakespeare & Company, and with SITI Company. Careycagoon.com

Matt Cahoon (Producer/Technical Director) is the Artistic Director of theatre

**THE PRESSURE
TO BE
PERFECT**
a conversation after
the performance

SUN FEB 20
2 pm

Bank of
New Hampshire  Stage

sponsored by

 Dance
NH COLLABORATIVE

To encourage conversation about the themes presented in DANCE NATION, tKAPOW will host a post-show panel discussion after the Sunday, February 20th matinee performance. Panelists include Jennifer Thorn, Professor of gender studies from Saint Anselm College; and Sarah Pilotte, Program Director at the Crisis Center of Central NH. The discussion is sponsored by Joan Brodsky and the New Hampshire Dance Collaborative.

KAPOW. Matt has directed many productions for the company including: *The Boyg*, *Agamemnon*, *A Dream Play*, *Raining Aluminum*, and *The Penelopiad*. His work with theatre KAPOW has resulted in three NH Theatre Awards for Best Director. Matt has directed for a number of other companies including the Winnepesaukee Playhouse (*Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *Miss Julie*), Jean's Playhouse (*Kimberly Akimbo*), and LaMaMa ETC. (*The Life and Times of Lee Harvey Oswald* in NY and *Me and Bea* at LaMaMa International in Spoleto, IT). Matt's theatre training includes work with Double Edge Theatre Company, SITI Company, the New England Center for Circus Arts, and Range of Motion Arts. In 2013, Matt attended the International Symposium for Directors at LaMaMa Umbria in Spoleto, Italy. In addition to his theatre work, Matt serves as the Director of Cultural Programming at Pinkerton Academy, an independent high school in Derry, NH. In 2011, Matt was named to the New Hampshire Union Leader's "40 Under Forty" program.

Raphael Campos (Luke) is a Brazilian born artist. From a very young age, he has always loved to perform for an audience or for the camera. To entertain people and make them feel the same joy that he feels is what he loves the most. He loves dancing so much that at the age of eighteen, he enrolled himself in a dance school where he stayed until the age of twenty-four. It was during this time that he studied ballet, jazz, contemporary, tap dance, singing, and musical theater. Additionally, he participated in school productions of *Wicked*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Cinderella*. Raphael has also performed as a dancer for the Disney Magic Moments Parade in Brazil. After moving to the United States, Raphael kept finding ways to advance his art. He has taken classes with Julia Boynton, Sarah Reich, and Dianne Walker. He has also worked closely with his singing coach, Jessica Tasucu. Raphael also studied as a theatre major at Bunker Hill Community College. He had the pleasure to learn from and work with amazing teachers and professionals of the arts like Robert St. Lawrence and Pro-shot Kalami. During these studies, Raphael collaborated on Bunker Hill productions as a movement specialist for *Gruesome Playground Injuries* by Rajiv Joseph and performed on a Radio Drama *The Persians* by Kaite O'Reilly. Raphael has

also worked as a model for commercials and as a voice-over actor. When not dancing, singing, or acting, you would find Raphael either traveling, watching a scary movie at home, or playing with his English Bulldog.

Lorraine Chapman (Choreographer) danced professionally with Eliot Feld Ballets/NY and Ballet British Columbia as well as for several Boston-based choreographers including Amy Spencer, Richard Colton, Diane Arvanites, José Mateo, and Marcus Schulkind. As a choreographer she has received several grants and has created works for numerous venues, festivals, and companies. She officially formed LCTC in 2002, a New England-based, dance-theater company (www.lorrainechapman.org). Her awards include three New England States Touring Grants from the New England Foundation for the Arts, a Live Arts Boston Grant and a Brother Thomas Fellowship from The Boston Foundation, a Boston Dance Alliance Rehearsal & Retreat Fellowship, a Boston Center for the Arts Dance Residency and a Summer Stages Dance/Baryshnikov Arts Center Residency as well as being featured in Dance Magazine as one of "25 To Watch". She received her training at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School and L'Ecole Superieure De Danse Du Quebec as well as from Frances Kotelly and Samuel Kurkjian, and teaches dance at Urbanity Dance, Northeast School of Ballet, and Ballet Arts Centre of Winchester. Lorraine frequently collaborates with New Hampshire Dance Collaborative and most recently was the dance-artist-in-residence at Canterbury Shaker Village. *Dance Nation* is her third time working with tKAPOW and she is very thankful to Matt, Carey, and Wanda, the cast and crew, and everyone who supports the arts in NH, MA, and beyond!

Katie Collins (Maeve) is delighted to be working with tKAPOW again, having previously appeared in *Mr. Burns* and *Circle Mirror Transformation*. With over 35 years of theater experience, Katie has worked with several other companies including Milford Area Players, Community Players of Concord, Nashua Theater Guild, and the Majestic Theatre. Her favorite roles include Vivian Bearing in *W;t* (2013 NH Theater Award for Best Actress); Marty in *Circle Mirror Transformation*; Hannah in *Spitfire Grill*, and Maude in *Bakersfield Mist*. Katie is in her 17th season as the Director of Development at the Capitol Center for the Arts and lives in Manchester with her adorable wife Kelly and several cats, where they enjoy frequent guestappearances by their talented daughter Liza. On the side, she is a contributing writer for the website Grown and Flown, where she has published over 40 essays and articles. Katie wants to thank Wanda and Theatre Kapow for taking a chance on a show that celebrates the tremendous power of girls and embraces the beautiful diversity of this powerful cast.

Tajoura Davis (Amina) is a native of Stamford CT, and is a singer/songwriter who fronts a local R&B/Rock cover band, TJXpress. Her regional acting credits include *American Son* (Kendra - Hatbox Theatre), *Doubt* (Mrs. Mueller - Concord Community Players), *The American Plan* (Olivia - Yellow Taxi Productions) and *The Buddy Holly Story* (Apollo Singer, MC - Seacoast Rep) and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Calpurnia - Palace Professional Productions and Winni Players). She is looking forward to working with tKAPOW for the first time with such a fun and talented ensemble cast. She would like to thank her family and friends for being so supportive of her passion for the arts over the years.

Lali Haines (Connie) is honored to make her tKAPOW debut in *DANCE NATION*, among such a talented group of actors and a visionary creative team! Some past favorite shows include *Into the Woods* (Witch), *Children of Eden* (Mama Noah), *Seussical* (Mayzie, Sour Kangaroo), *Pippin* (Fastrada), *The 25th Annual*

Putnam County Spelling Bee (Rona Lisa Peretti), and most recently *All Night Strut* (playing herself as Alto). Lali is a physician at Mass General Brigham, practicing gynecology, empowering girls and women to take charge of their reproductive health. What a gift it's been to create, perform and tell this story. Thanks to Matt, Carey and Wanda for this theatrical opportunity, and thank you J, for the rest.

Barbara Holbrook (Costume Designer) has a BA in Theatre, an MFA in Costume Design, and a passion for creative collaborations on stage and off. She's delighted to be working with tKAPOW for the first time. Past projects with special places in her heart include *Pippin*, *The Secret Garden*, *Annie*, *Godspell*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Candide*, *Shadowlands*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, and *The Man of La Mancha*. Her career path has taken her through various positions in theater, retail, consulting, and being an at-home parent. Barbara's a certified meditation instructor, Reiki Master, yoga teacher (Yoga Alliance RYT-500), and serial pattern disruptor. She lives north of Boston in a multi-generational household where she hones her practices of love, humor, resilience, and unapologetic self-care. She's grateful to her family for their patience and her dogs for their endless amusement. She respects and admires the company of DANCE NATION for their courage. Finally, she invites you, the audience, to let this show inspire or embolden you in perhaps unexpected ways.

Heidi Krantz (Assistant Director) is beyond excited to be working once again with tKAPOW. They have worked on numerous shows with this company, including *The Penelopiad*, *I Used To Feel (ROOM)*, and *The Boyz*. They are also an NHETG award winning actor for their performance as Velda in *The Amish Project*. When they aren't rehearsing, they are more than likely spending all their time with as many dogs as they can. They want to give the entire company at tKAPOW a huge thank you for keeping theatre alive during what feels like a relentless, never-ending pandemic.

Gary Locke (Dance Teacher Pat) has been working on and around theater stages since dirt was new. He is a semi-professional hyphenate, having served as actor-producer-director-writer-designer for a wide range of shows across the decades with his own company, Phylloxera Productions, as well as for various theaters in New England including The Players Ring and The Seacoast Rep in Portsmouth, and Hatbox Theatre in Concord. Gary has directed productions as diverse as the Gershwin musical *Crazy for You*, Jean Genet's psychological thriller *The Maids*, and *Holmes and Watson* by Jeffrey Hatcher. As an actor, his favorite roles include the Marquis de Sade in *Marat/Sade*, Henry in 2017's production of *The Fantasticks* at Hackmatack, and Richard Russell in *All the Way*. He and his wonderful, if long-suffering, wife Jan will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary this year.

Rachael Chapin Longo (Vanessa/Moms) received her BS in Theater from Skidmore College and her MA in Educational Theatre from NYU. She is an actor, director, educator and playwright. Rachael has dedicated herself to educational theatre and has worked as a professional teaching artist and education director; creating curriculum and teaching classes in acting, directing, playwrighting and movement. Her directing credits include *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Laramie Project*, *The Death of a Caterpillar*, *West Side Story*, *The Tempest*, *South Pacific*, *Sister Act*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *The Ash Girl* and *Silent Sky* (for which She was a finalist for a NHTA "Best Director" Award in 2019). Acting credits include *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Crucible*, *Desdemona*, *Mr. Burns: A Post Electric Play*, *The Penelopiad*, *The Burial at Thebes*, *Natural Shocks* and *Gidion's*

Knot. Rachael is currently an adjunct professor of acting and theater arts in the Visual and Performing Arts Department at Merrimack College and the owner of Shawsheen Arts Studio in Andover, MA. She is also a company member and actor with theatre KAPOW. She most recently appeared in the premiere of A.J. Ditty's play, *The Boÿg*. She is grateful to have the support of her KAPOW family as she continues to train and learn and feels very lucky to work with the amazing artists on the *DANCE NATION* team. Special thanks her incredible family for all their support and cheers.

Wanda Strukus (Director) is a theater-maker and movement artist who focuses on ensemble-building, collaborative creation, site-specific performance, and participatory practices. Her theater and dance work has appeared in theaters, galleries, parks, and abandoned buildings throughout New England and the Midwest, through collaborations with The Revolving Museum, Shakespeare in the Valley, Another Country, Chamber Theatre Productions, The Young Company of Greater Boston Stage Company, theatre KAPOW, The Yellow Springs Theater Company, Babes with Blades, Chicago Women's Theatre Alliance, and others. She has taught, directed, and choreographed at colleges and universities throughout New England, and was the founding director of the BFA in Contemporary Theater at Boston Conservatory at Berklee. She is an alumna of the Jacob's Pillow Choreographer/Director Lab and performed for many years with Daniel McCusker Dance Projects and Brian Crabtree and Dancers. Past directing projects with theatre KAPOW include the 24-hour Theater Festival, *Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief*, and *Natural Shocks*. She is thrilled to be collaborating again with the Theatre KAPOW team and this fiercely talented cast!

Helen Hy-Yuen Swanson (Zuzu) is a mixed-Asian actor and violinist based in Boston. She graduated in 2019 from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) with an M.A. in Classical and Contemporary Text (Acting), which included a residency at Shakespeare's Globe. She's also studied extensively at the Michael Chekhov Actors Studio Boston and is a Feldenkrais ATM® Teacher. Along with acting in numerous short films, her selected theatre credits include: *The Draft* (Hibernian Hall, Best Ensemble Winner at the Arts Impulse Awards); *Yellow Face* (O.W.I. Bureau of Theatre); *Hindsight 2020* (Those Women Productions); *As You Like It* (Shakespeare's Globe/RCS); *The Witch of Edmonton*, *Three Sisters*, *Black-out*, and *The Age of Blindness* (RCS). During her time at RCS, she developed a solo performance, titled *Mixed Up*, based on her own experience as a half-Asian woman and the disconnect between others' assumptions about this experience with how she actually sees herself. This work is intrinsically connected with her desire to support underrepresented stories and be the representation for others that she lacked when growing up. Helen is honored to be part of this fierce, feral, and absolutely not cute group of collaborators working on *DANCE NATION*. Connect with her on IG/Twitter @thehelenswanson. helenswanson.com

Kayla Marquis Williams (née Fernekees) (Stage Manager) is a middle school theatre teacher by day and is back to creating live theatre, in person, by night (for which she is eternally grateful). She graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BA in Theatre Arts and a Dance Pedagogy Minor from Plymouth State University in 2015. Post-graduation, Williams has worked with theatre companies all over the United States in a multitude of roles, including as a stage manager, playwright, choreographer, director, and as a performer. Her choreography has been enjoyed at Salem High School's productions of *All Shook Up*, *Cinderella*, and *The Sound of Music*, and most recently, Kayla choreographed *Mamma Mia* with the Pentucket Players. She spent the summer of 2016 writing and directing the shows

for the IMPACT touring children's theatre troupe at Jean's Playhouse in Lincoln, NH, and has had her plays used in the 2018 and 2019 seasons. Now, she directs her students in the annual stage production at Parthum Middle School in Lawrence, MA (*Annie, Jr.* is coming this Spring!). Stage management credits include: *Catch Me If You Can* (Arizona Broadway Theatre); *The Addams Family*; *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*; *Man of La Mancha*; *Lend me a Tenor*; *Same Time, Next Year* (Jean's Playhouse); and three National Tours of *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol* (PerSeverance Productions). Kayla would like to thank her mother- for supporting her no matter what; Leah- for making her feel like she finally belongs in the theatre profession; and her loving husband, Brian, for picking up the slack at home while she's at endless rehearsals.

Tayva Young (Lighting Designer) is in her 11th year with tKAPOW. She is very excited to be working on the 14th season of: *Return!* She considers tKAPOW her theatre family and could not have asked for a more talented, supportive and imaginative group of people to work with. She has been honored with two NH Theater Awards for best Lighting Design for *Time Stands Still* and *Living in Exile*. Some of her favorite tKAPOW productions are: *Melancholy Play* by Sarah Ruhl, *Living in Exile* by Jon Lipsky, *Grounded* by George Brant and *Silent Sky* by Lauren Gunderson. She enjoys the collaboration process with so many talented individuals, bringing the magic of live theatre to all audiences. She lives in Maine on a small homestead with her husband Steve and 2 children, Nolan and Norah. She thanks each and every one of you for supporting the arts, during this time of uncertainty and distance. Welcome Back and Enjoy the Show!

Clare Barron (Playwright) is a playwright and actor from Wenatchee, Washington. Her new play, *Shhhh!* just premiered at Atlantic Theater Company in NYC. Her plays include *You Got Older*, which received its world premiere with Page 73 and will appear at Steppenwolf in 2018 (Obie Award for Playwriting, Drama Desk Nomination for Outstanding Play, Kilroys List, and Susan Smith Blackburn finalist); *I'll Never Love Again* (The Bushwick Starr, NYTimes & Time Out Critics' Picks); *Baby Screams Miracle* (Woolly Mammoth, Clubbed Thumb); and *DANCE NATION*, which won the Relentless Award established in honor of Philip Seymour Hoffman and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. She is also the recipient of a Whiting Award, the Page 73 Playwriting Fellowship and the Paula Vogel Award at the Vineyard.

**theatre KAPOW thanks the following people and organizations
for their support of DANCE NATION:**

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