Mission Academy of Performing Arts @ Brava Presents

UNMASKED: THE COVID CHRONICLES

Youth Stories from the Pandemic

Screening
Friday, April 29, 2022
7pm at Brava Theater

Directed by Keith Carames

Written & Performed by students from James Lick Middle School in collaboration with Young Thespians Theatre Lab

Production Design by San Francisco Running Crew

With Guest Director Kristen Jones and Music Direction by Lindsay Radar of the San Francisco Opera Guild

Original Music by Ben Welte
Mission Academy of Performing Arts @ Brava presents

**UNMASKED: THE COVID CHRONICLES**

**STORIES FROM THE PANDEMIC**

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<th>The Cast</th>
<th>Thistle Schiefer</th>
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<td>Kara Gibbons</td>
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<td>Gabriella Trujillo</td>
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<td>Gloria Moran</td>
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<td>Ella Gollihur</td>
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<td>Arabella Hunterson</td>
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<td>Noemi Noyola</td>
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<td>Wallace “Ace” Miner</td>
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<td>Ruby Steinberg</td>
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<td>Classic Shulman</td>
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<td>Serafin Riley-Hernandez</td>
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<td>Maggie Berthiaume</td>
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<td>Arlo Raglin</td>
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<th>Special Guest Actors</th>
<th>Sedrick Cabrera</th>
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<td>Aidaa Peerzada</td>
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| Director                  | Keith Carames    |

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<th>Special Guest Director Musicals</th>
<th>Kristen Jones</th>
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<th>Pianist and Music Director</th>
<th>Lindsay Radar</th>
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<th>Playwright in Residence</th>
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<th>Playwrighting Consultant</th>
<th>Susan Stauter</th>
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<th>Acting Coaches</th>
<th>Curt Branom</th>
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<td>Ruby Day</td>
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Student Playwrights
Zachary Schwartz
Kara Gibbons
Gloria Moran
Serafin Riley-Hernandez
Maxine Burns
Thistle Schleifer
Maggie Berthiaume

Mission Academy of Performing Arts @ Brava Director
Melvign Badiola

San Francisco Running Crew
Lighting Design Teaching Artist
Dave Ragaza
Cinders Park
Oliver Provenzano
Student Lighting Designers

Sound Design Teaching Artist
David Molina
BenWelve
Milan Hitch
Student Sound Designers

Scenic Design Teaching Artist
Sarah Phykitt
Sadie Moffat
Inez Standen-Bloom
Gwendoyn Tupy
Lindsay Kim
Student Scenic Designers

Production Assistant
Niku Radan

Cinematographer
George S. Rosenthal

Post Production Sound Designer
George S. Rosenthal

Editor
Alanna Taubert

Camera Operator
Daniel Mulvey
DIRECTOR’S NOTE
KEITH CARAMES

We almost didn’t have a show this year. Its very existence - an actual triumph. In the fall of 2020, the Covid Curtain dropped. Like all other performing arts teachers, I was suddenly faced with modifying years of pedagogy, adapting tried and true lessons, and reenvisioning my personal approach as an artist and a teacher.

Working online with young actors was challenging; the subtleties of performance evaporated. The turn of a head, the blink of an eye, the pressure of someone’s hand upon your shoulder - all gone. The capturing of immediate happy accidents, the exchange of breath and sweat were all now out of reach. Suddenly everything was fed through a machine. Theatrical metabolic change only happens when we are in each other’s presence. Online theatre class is not to be confused with movie making. Camera angles, swirling musical scores, varied exotic locations - these were all luxuries we did not have. Looking at each other through small screens, we were faced with a new set of realities. We tried our best.

Once back in the classroom, mask mandates prevented us from using our entire instrument. How could I assess an actor’s emotional commitment if I could not even see their face? Like a painter brutally robbed of his brushes, we had to paint with our hands, to reimagine theatricality. I coexisted with the constant question of how to remove the mask? How could we take away the obstacle standing between actor and audience? How could we maintain the immediacy of true theatre? How could we use our most powerful tool - the act of storytelling - to create a Quintillian evening to both teach and to please.

We were forced by the crucible of Covid to create something new; we relied on our own stories. We didn’t need a conventional script. Locked in the Covid chrysalis of 2020, we emerged transformed, eager to share our new work.

Tonight’s special event is the proud accomplishment of not only our students who served as playwrights, actors and technicians, but also the partners and teaching artists who joined us on our journey from page to stage. Everyone from the Mission Academy of Performing Arts, to Susan Stauter Artistic Director Emeritus SFUSD, from the managing team of the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company, to the creative collaborators from the San Francisco Opera Guild, from our acting coaches at the Pacific Singers and Actors Workshop to our film crew at TheComplexSF - everyone played a significant role in what we are about to witness on the big screen at the gorgeous Brava Theater.

Each and every one of us has Covid stories to tell; a hundred years from now, will anyone believe what we all had to endure? Our presentation documents our collective experience and serves as a living testament to the power of creative perseverance, courage, and magic. Thank you for joining us tonight to celebrate Unmasked: The Covid Chronicles. The Arts Education Master Plan is alive and well in San Francisco.
We tell each other stories. Over and over we recount the events of our lives, repeating narratives that have been cherished and handed down to us - funny things, cautionary tales, long, winding, mysterious yarns that never grow old and sometimes transform in the telling. We know the stories so well, we can finish them for each other and we encourage each other to “tell the one about…” and “remember the time when…”

Stories ground us; they tie us to the past and prepare us for the future. We are healed and inspired by the metaphors. Frightened by Covid, forced into isolation, our stories sustained us. Just as our ancestors told stories while huddled around campfires, our own families told tales while huddled around the XBox. And we found strength in the telling. The young and the old are joined in our search for the eternal binding narrative.

The work we now view is the result of honoring and valorizing the stories of our young who, during the most difficult, painful, and confusing time of their lives, were able to create something of such joy and beauty and hope. Listen carefully - these are the emerging voices of the future, and these are their unmasked stories! Congratulations to all involved in this important educational endeavor.

Unmasked was filmed on location at Brava Theater Center
2781 24th Street, San Francisco, CA 94110
March 2022
SPECIAL THANKS

Marcelo Pereira
Al Flores
The San Francisco Opera Guild
Caroline Altman
John Morris
Afie Royo
SFUSD Arts Department Performing Arts Supervisor, Ron Machado
SFUSD Arts Department Director, Sam Bass
Susan Stauter
The Complex, SF
James Lick Middle School Principal, Ruby Detie
James Lick Middle School Vice Principals Kiara Herrera and Cephus Johnson
JLMS Staff and Students and their families
Cairah Brown
Ruby Steinberg
Glade Cuentos
Wyatt Drennan
Curt Branom
Ruby Day
Bentley Upper School
San Francisco Department of Children, Youth & Their Families

Mission Academy of Performing Arts @ Brava, along with this production of Unmasked, were funded in part by the SF Department of Children, Youth, & Their Families.
Mission Academy of Performing Arts @ Brava (MAPA@Brava) trains youth in theatrical production and performance. Students can choose from an array of programs, including San Francisco Running Crew, Brava’s hands-on training program in theater production, design, and management; Cuicacalli Escuela de Danza, which explores the traditions of Mexican Baile Folklorico, hip hop, and modern dance styles; Mariachi Juvenil La Misión, where students learn mariachi-style music through individual coaching and classes; and Young Thespians Theatre Lab, offering students high quality performing instruction integrating drama, movement, and music. Learn more about MAPA@Brava and apply to the program here.

San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company unites artists and audiences through live theatre that is reflective of the authentic perspective and history of the San Francisco Bay Area. The non-profit organization supports artists through creative development, full productions, and mentorship that aspire to engage a new generation of live theatre supporters. SFBATCO is a partner organization of Mission Academy of Performing Arts @ Brava.

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Adam Maggio - Managing Director
Christine Chung - Director of Operations & Design
Aidaa Peerzada - Literary Manager & Outreach Coordinator
Claudio Andres Silva Restrepo - Technical Director
Darian Gemora - Email Marketing Manager

sfbatco.org
@sfbatco
Brava! for Women in the Arts was founded in San Francisco’s Mission District in 1986 to champion, celebrate, and create space for the voices of women, people of color, LGBTQIA+, and underrepresented communities. For over three decades, Brava has produced vibrant, culturally diverse, provocative work by prominent San Francisco feminists, community leaders, activists, and artists. Brava’s producing history includes award-winning new work by Artists in Residence Rhodessa Jones & Cultural Odyssey, Marga Gomez, Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe, and Cherríe Moraga; the world premieres of The Mathematics of Love by Cherríe Moraga, and the Off-Broadway hit Mighty Real: A Fabulous Sylvester Musical, as well as the annual events Baile en la Calle: The Mural Dances and the San Francisco Son Jarocha Festival. Brava’s current artistic programming encompasses traditional and contemporary music festivals, a variety of film festivals, contemporary and experimental theatrical productions, international comedy shows, lectures, and professional dance productions—making Brava one of the most eclectic and multifaceted arts venues in the Bay Area. Brava’s resident youth programs include the long-standing SF Running Crew, pairing youth with professional mentors and hands-on opportunities for technical theater training; Cuicacalli Escuela de Danza, traditional and contemporary dance training for youth; Mariachi teaching students to make beautiful music mariachi style; and Young Thespians Theatre Lab, offering high quality instruction integrating drama, dance, music, and stagecraft. Brava is committed to providing affordable space for artistic development and presentation and quality professional arts training for underserved youth in the San Francisco community.

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Support

Individual donors play a key role in supporting innovative new work, while also supporting the next generation of art and audiences through education and outreach programs. Visit brava.org to find out more and give today.

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