

KAFKA'S

METAMORPHOSIS

MAY 7-12

STUDIO EXHIBIT

An
Immersive
Play



PHOENIX
THEATRE ENSEMBLE

[BIT.LY/KAFKA2024](https://bit.ly/kafka2024)

METAMORPHOSIS

Thank you for joining us at KafkaTech's METAMORPHOSIS!

A NOTE FROM THE CREATORS: *This experience is one we have been nurturing for sometime now and we are thrilled to be sharing it with you. So many people have helped us tremendously to realize our vision and we cannot thank them enough.*

Artistically, we were called to create this show given our passion for reimagined classics, an affection for psychological quandaries and a desire to ask simple questions alongside the nuance of complicated human realities: How can we have mercy for ourselves and one another in a world that demands maximum productivity?

We hope audiences walk away with a sense of tantalizing ideological whiplash whilst knowing how dearly loved they are as people. The show for us is both a healing experience and cautionary tale. The latter reminds us of the dangers of futurism, which grew out of the early 20th century. Futurism emphasized the dynamism of industrialism, speed, technology, youth, and violence, proposing that the efficacy of machine-like living was aspirational, and encouraging a violent break from the past using modern technology. This philosophy, although born from a desire for growth and prosperity, contributed to fascist movements which eroded our collective humanity. Fascism would instruct us to get rid of all that makes us uncomfortable – and the human inclination is to abhor and be disgusted by a roach. This show asks, are you prepared to prioritize mercy over your discomfort? Can you reject the obsessive self-correction that led to the futuristic ideals of fascism? The transformed Gregor Samsa needs people to see his humanity even though he has been dehumanized, made abhorrent. In a world that demands we all become our best selves, can we find mercy for that which we find disgusting, inconvenient, or inessential? Can we see humanity in the alien? Can we make peace with the imperfect?

ABOUT PHOENIX THEATRE ENSEMBLE

Founded in 2004, Phoenix Theatre Ensemble is an Audelco, IRNE, Elliot Norton, and NYITA award-winning not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization committed to the presentation of the great stories of the classical canon, and new adaptations of language-rich texts in innovative stagings that speak to and serve contemporary audiences. We are dedicated to nurturing a diverse resident company of classically trained and highly skilled theatre artists.

WHO'S WHO: THE ARTISTS



CLARA FRANCESCA (CREATOR, PERFORMER & RESIDENT ARTIST), an alumnus of Anne Bogart's SITI Company's Inaugural Conservatory, Clara's work ranges from traditional acting to poetic immersive avant-garde. Theatrical works include: 43 Stages of Grief (The Tank), The Brick Theater (Macbeth, Hamlet, Three Sisters), Live Arts The Phoenix Theatre (Skin of Our Teeth, Wind In The Willows), Theatre For The New City (Freedom Summer), NYC's Hayden Planetarium (Mars-Band), La Mama (The Well), Edinburgh Fringe Festival (Manifesting Mrs Marx), and Firenze Cinema la Compagnia (Speaking Dante: The Divine Comedy in 24 hours). Clara's selected television credits include: "FBI" (CBS) opposite Jeremy Sisto, and "New Amsterdam" (NBC) opposite Ryan Eggold. Film credits include supporting roles playing Lance Henriksen's daughter in "Reklaw", as well as co-starring in award-winning "Johnny Ghost". Clara won Best Actress at the Arts Centre Fairfax Stage for self-devised piece "Susan Who?" about under-age coerced sex work and government. Clara received the Dame Joan Sutherland Fund for excellence in Theatre. www.clarafrancesca.com/ @clar_esca



LEO LION (CREATOR, PERFORMER & RESIDENT ARTIST), a director, teaching artist, and producer from Brooklyn, and the Associate Artistic Director of Phoenix Theatre Ensemble. Leo has directed for Phoenix since 2018, helming their PlayCoop New Works Incubator, a home for new storytelling forms like ARG and RPG. Leo is also the founding Artistic Director of The Firebird Project, a theater production and arts education company. Recent directing credits include Rossum's Universal Robots and The Snow Queen with Firebird, Wind in the Willows and Scandalton: LIVE with Phoenix. As a teaching artist, Leo leads workshops in improv, playwriting, and RPG storytelling. As a genderqueer first-gen immigrant, Leo seeks to create work that explores nebulous identities, placelessness, and unconventional methods of meaning-making.

leolion.com/ @whosleolion



NATE EDMONDSON (SOUND DESIGNER), is an international, multi-award-winning composer-lyricist, sound designer, and musical director for stage and screen. A long-standing member of the Rockefeller Studios creative team, his scores have been heard across the world, including multiple Off-Broadway and West End runs of The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show, The Eric Carle Story Show, Paddington Gets in a Jam, Disney's Winnie the Pooh: The New Musical Stage Adaptation, and Sesame Street the Musical (Rockefeller Productions). Nate's most recent new work, Peter Rabbit the Musical, premieres in 2025. Originally from Australia, he has worked on many critically-acclaimed productions with Australia's premier theatre companies, including The Harp In The South, Blackie Blackie Brown, and Cloud Nine (Sydney Theatre Company); Mark Colvin's Kidney, and Seventeen (Belvoir Theatre); The Tempest (Bell Shakespeare); Possum Magic and Edward The Emu (Monkey Baa Theatre Company). Nate is an alumnus of Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). www.nate-edmondson.com The creators of the show want to thank Nate profoundly for the extra unforeseen support throughout the development and creation process.

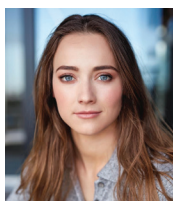


MAXIMILLIAN ROMANOV (PRODUCTION DESIGN), is a multimedia artist with a BFA in Film based in NYC. Versed in many mediums he has done props and costumes for multiple theater and film productions.



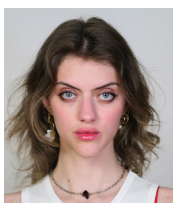
BUFFY CARDOZA (PRODUCTION DESIGN), Off Broadway - The Good John Proctor (Henry Hewes Design Nomination), Fall River Fishing, Arcadia, Daniel's Husband, Drinks With Dead Poets, Crime and Punishment SMALL, After, Small World, Sabbath Girl. Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival-Love's Labors Lost, Henry V, Penelope, Much Ado About Nothing, By The Queen, Murder of Roger Ackroyd, Medea (coproduction with Red Bull/Bedlam) Rip Van Winkle, Much Ado About Nothing. Penguin Rep

Theatre-Sabbath Girl, Gene and Gilda, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Mr Parker, You and I, Let There Be Love and many more. Phoenix Theatre Ensemble-Wind In The Willows, Metamorphosis, The Importance of Being Earnest, Skin of our Teeth. Buffy is the Festival Production Manager and Props Designer for 2022, 2023, 2024 Phoenix Live Arts Festival.



SAMANTHA HAFEY (STAGE MANAGEMENT & DESIGN), emerges as a versatile international multi-disciplinary, weaving her mastery across various crafts including production, direction, writing, composition, creative direction, costume design, and now, in her inaugural foray, stage management. She is the founder of eco feminist production company Wild Tongues, and serves on the board of San Diego NFP 'The Music Company'. Committed to lifelong learning, Samantha holds dual degrees

from Monash University in Theatre and Performativity, and Popular Voice (in part at NYU), earning the prestigious John Monash CTP Prize for Academic Excellence. Currently, she is expanding her expertise through a Global Award Scholarship at the Atlantic Acting Conservatory in New York City.



SOFE COTE (STAGE MANAGEMENT & DESIGN), is a multimedia artist and academic based in NYC. She has collaborated with Leo and Firebird on set and props for several theater and film productions, and had her art shown in galleries across Maryland and New York.



DENISE BARBARITA (SOUND ENGINEER), is a 3x Grammy award Lisa Studios. Over the past 20+ years, Denise has worked on a variety of music productions, across many genres, working with independent artists and major label clients alike. Her clients include Sony Masterworks, EMI, Koch Records, Nonesuch, Razor & Tie, KonzeptVR, Movers & Shakers, and organizations such as The New York Film Academy, and MOMA.

Denise also works with film producers and directors creating soundtracks (music composition, sound design, foley, ADR and mixing) for feature films, documentaries, trailers, and commercials. The creators of the show want to thank Denise tremendously for her meta-insight quote of the season "self help is self destructive".



CLAIRE TALBOTT (PROJECTION DESIGNER), is a multidisciplinary video designer, animator, and artist. Recent work: Hell's Kitchen (Broadway), Metamorphosis (Firebird Theatre Project), Far Away (Columbia University), The 2024 Grammy Awards (DF Productions), 'Til Death (Theatre Row), The Stella Show (IRT Theatre), Espejos: Clean (Hartford Stage), Justin Bieber's JUSTICE International Arena Tour (Comp Artist, Possible Productions), the 2022 League of Legends World Championship Opening Ceremony (Associate Producer/Comp Artist, Possible Productions) Claireatalbott.com



ARIEL ESTRADA (MEDIA, MARKETING & RESIDENT ARTIST), is Webby Award-winning producer, actor, writer, and advocate for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander and all performing artists of marginalized identity. Ariel is the Founder and Executive Artistic Director for Leviathan Lab, a nonprofit creative studio for AANHPI performing artists, and the Associate Director of the Theatre Program at Fordham University. He also sits on the boards of Musical Theatre Factory, the Episcopal Actors Guild, and the advisory board of Houghton Hall Arts.

His leadership has been recognized by artEquity, New York Foundation for the Arts, Theatre Communications Group, and Theatrical Intimacy Education. www.ariellestrada.com | www.leviathanlab.com | www.imdb.com/name/nm2110309/ | www.linkedin.com/in/ariellestrada



MS. AMELIA FOWLER (GUEST VOICE & RESIDENT ARTIST), has been seen on or in POSE, Law & Order: SVU, The Many Saints of Newark, GLAAD award winning play She Like Girls, her one woman show Flozetta and recently had the pleasure of working on "The Bride". She is very pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute to "Metamorphosis".



CRAIG ANTHONY BANNISTER (GUEST VOICE & RESIDENT ARTIST), PTE Resident Artist, has been working as an actor/director/producer across the tri-state area and beyond for over 3 decades. The sampling of the stages and places include: 13th St. Repertory, Joyce Soho, LaMama, Castillo Theatre, Wild Project, The Metropolitan Playhouse and Amphibian Stage. Also works as a performer/activist, using theatre to bring diverse communities together, including seniors and teens and police

officers and inner city youth.



ELISE STONE (GUEST VOICE & RESIDENT ARTIST), is an award-winning actor who has performed more than 200 roles on the New York stage including the celebrated world premier productions of Eric Bentley's and Darius Milhaud, Bertolt Brecht's Mother Courage and Her Children (Mother Courage) and the world premiere of Bentley's adaption of Wedekind's LuLu (LuLu). She is a Founder and Artistic Director of Phoenix Theatre Ensemble and to the best of her knowledge possibly the only

Romani woman in the US to lead a theatre company. Great gratitude to the artists, audiences and supporters who have made these first 20 years of Phoenix Theatre Ensemble possible.



CRAIG SMITH (GUEST VOICE & RESIDENT ARTIST), was an ensemble member of New York's prestigious Jean Cocteau Repertory where he made his artistic home for more than three decades, appearing in over 200 productions from Stoppard to Shakespeare and Sophocles to Williams. In 2004, Craig and four colleagues founded Phoenix Theatre Ensemble. The New York Times has described Craig as "one of our most consistently fine actors" and Playgoer.com said he is "a downtown legend." He is the recipient of the President of the Borough of Manhattan's Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Arts and Community Service.

THE FINAL SHOW TOKEN:

QUESTION: Mr. and Mrs. Samsa were struck, almost simultaneously, with the thought of how their daughter was blossoming into a well built and beautiful young lady. They became quieter. Just from each other's glance and almost without knowing it they agreed that it would soon be time to find a good man for her. And, as if in confirmation of their new dreams and good intentions, as soon as they reached their destination Grete was the first to get up and stretch out her young body.

☐ YES

☐ NO

The creators of the show thank you for joining us today. We remind everyone that they are divine (substitute for adjectives of choice) in their own way. Because of the value of each human, not needing any debugging, we invite you to reflect on the land you walk, those who came before, who are here now and who will be here in the future. We invite you to reflect on the words at <https://liveartsinnyack.com/land-acknowledgement> which are guided by Ramapo Nation Clan Mother Cynthia Fountain. The creators of this production, and Phoenix Theatre Ensemble including our Jewish team members and artists, call for the release of all hostages taken on Oct. 7th and for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in occupied Palestine, and hope for a time when all may live lives which are safe, free, and prosperous.

Please see Phoenix Theatre Ensemble's Statement of Land Acknowledgement

<https://liveartsinnyack.com/land-acknowledgement>

This land acknowledgement invites you to consciously and constantly subconsciously reflect upon the story of the literal and metaphorical soil that holds your home, spirit and cradle. This land acknowledgement invites you to consciously find ways to treasure one another, to weave lives together, to be an ambassador for uniting the world and not just your neighborhood. We welcome you to start this journey in Nyack and keep sharing it. Whilst the New York City Commission on Human Rights acknowledges the land politically designated as New York City to be the homeland of the Lenape (Lenapehoking) who were violently displaced as a result of European settler colonialism over the course of 400 years, the original custodians of these same lands continue to bless the soil past, present and future, and are with us in this very moment. You might reflect upon the impact of innocently insisting an Original Custodian be marked with a stamp upon entering a bar for a social event to ensure venue re-entry, and why they might refuse given generations of "white" person abuse to their people dehumanizing them by branding them as property. You might reflect upon the brilliance of the Original Custodians living in synergy with nature minimizing environmental stressors, and how this wisdom is being borrowed by "white" establishments in research and application. We welcome you to learn about the land you reside in, and to join us in advocating for the inherent sovereignty of Indigenous people.

STAY TUNED FOR OUR NYACK FALL FESTIVAL
www.liveartsinnyack.com

*This production of **Metamorphosis** is made possible in part by funding from The National Endowment for the Arts, The New York State Council on the Arts, The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, The Office of New York City, Councilperson Carlina Rivera, The Board of Trustees of Phoenix Theatre Ensemble and corporations and individuals who support and appreciate the work of Phoenix Theatre Ensemble.*



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