

PLAYBILL®

The Royal Underground Theatre Company
at the Live Oak Theater, Berkeley, CA
SEPTEMBER 12-28, 2025



SEMINAR

A COMEDY

THE HIT BROADWAY PLAY BY
THERESA REBECK
DIRECTED BY ENRICO BANSON



The Royal Underground Theatre Company
at the Live Oak Theater | Berkeley, California

PRESENTS

SEMINAR

A COMEDY

by

THERESA REBECK

with

HARRISON ALTER

KRISTY AQUINO

**MICHAEL CARLOS
DAVID PATIÑO**

CHIKA OKWONKO

Original Music by
JERICA BANSON

Sound Design
ENRICO BANSON

Intimacy Director
ANGELINA LABARRE

Set Cordination
MARTIN FARRELL

Lighting Design
CARRIE MULLEN

Producer
JENNY BANSON

Directed by

ENRICO BANSON

SEMINAR is presented in special arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, with or without flash, is strictly prohibited. Please turn off all electronic devices, including cell phones, pagers, and watch alarms.

SETTING

New York City. An apartment on the Upper East Side, then, Leonard's apartment. Present day. Right now.

SEMINAR IS PERFORMED WITHOUT AN INTERMISSION

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

SURVIVAL, SEDUCTION AND THE MYTH OF MERIT



Harrison Alter (Leonard), Michael Carlos (Douglas), David Patiño (Martin), Chika Okwonko (Kate) and Kristy Aquino (Lizzy) in *Seminar*.

When *Seminar* premiered in 2011, it was billed as a dark comedy about a fiction writing master class. But dig deeper and you'll find something sharper. It's a play about power, ambition, and the quiet (and not-so-quiet) compromises we make to "make it."

Leonard, our prickly literary lion, mentors with the precision of a scalpel, or a sledgehammer. His students come seeking validation and leave with a crash course in reality: talent helps, but politics, timing, connections, and resilience usually win the day.

Rebeck's world may center on publishing, but the themes hit just as hard in film, tech, influencer culture, any creative field, really. Swap novel for screenplay, podcast, or personal brand, and the play still lands. We live in a time that rewards the loudest, not necessarily the most thoughtful. Meritocracy? Cute idea.

At its core, *Seminar* is about truth, validation, and how badly we want both. Leonard's question lingers: Do you want to be told you're good, or do you actually want to *be* good? In a world of algorithmic applause and instant likes, that's a hell of a question.

And yes, there's sex. In this world, it's a transaction, a tactic, a currency. Love isn't the point. Power is. Uncomfortable? Absolutely. Unrealistic? Hardly.

This cast met the play's challenges with guts and heart. They're amazing and this process has been a joy from the start. I'm especially proud to cast young BIPOC actors in roles they rarely get to inhabit. Watching them bring these characters to life reframed the play for me. It opened up a new angle, one that's overdue.

Because the seminar doesn't end when the curtain falls. The real one is out here. The rules are unclear. The grading is biased. But the only way through is to keep creating anyway.

Enrico Banson, *Director*

CAST

(In alphabetical order)

Leonard	Harrison Alter
Izzy	Kristy Aquino
Douglas	Michael Carlos
Kate	Chika Okonkwo
Martin	David Patiño

Production / Creative

Director	Enrico Banson
Intimacy Direction	Angelina LaBarre
Original Music/Composer	Jerica Banson
Lighting Design	Carrie Mullen
Sound Design	Enrico Banson
Set Coordination	Martin Farrell
Live Oak Technical Supervision	Glen Epperson



ABOUT THE ROYAL UNDERGROUND THEATRE COMPANY

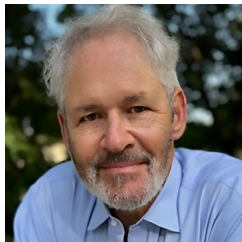
Royal Underground Theatre Company produces daring, high-quality theatre that challenges, entertains, and sparks conversation. We believe in theatre that is intimate, thought-provoking, and unapologetically bold — work that speaks to our community and resonates far beyond the stage.

We began as a nomadic theatre company in San Francisco at the start of the millennium, eventually finding a creative home at Fort Mason’s Southside Theatre. Over the years, the arts have faced enormous challenges, from shifting cultural priorities to the devastating impact of the pandemic. Through it all, we have continued to create and to persevere, fueled by the belief that bold theatre matters. Today, we return with renewed purpose to build a permanent space for Bay Area actors to take on daring, exhilarating work at a standard that feels fully professional, powered by the spirit and commitment of a volunteer ensemble. Our goal is to give audiences the kind of transformative theatrical experiences that stay with them long after the curtain falls.

theroyalunderground.org

A Non-Profit Organization

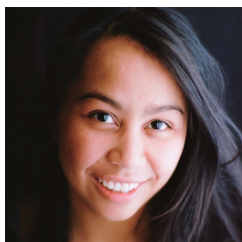
WHO'S WHO



Harrison Alter

as Leonard

is so happy to be working on this thought-provoking project – it's a lot more fun than it may appear! Harrison is just rediscovering theater after a 35-year detour as a physician, most of which he spent working and teaching in the emergency department at Highland Hospital in Oakland, CA. He was recently seen in *To Master the Art* (CCCT); *It Runs in the Family* (Orinda Starlight); *The People vs. Mona* (Masquers); and workshoping Athena Ever's *A Pride Line*. His most recent role was as Sigmund Freud in *Freud's Last Session* with Royal Underground in Berkeley. Harrison currently works as Interim Medical Director for Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless. He was born and raised in Chicago, and lives in Berkeley with some of his family, all of whom he is so grateful to for their love and support.



Kristy Aquino

as Izzy

is thrilled to be making her Royal Underground Theatre debut in the riot that is Theresa Rebeck's *Seminar*. Recent roles include Viola in *Twelfth Night* (Los Altos Stage Company), Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Sunnyvale Community Players), Karen the Computer in *The SpongeBob Musical* (Palo Alto Players), Velma Kelly in *Chicago* and Kate Monster in *Avenue Q* (Plethos Productions). In addition to performing, Kristy is also a youth theatre educator at A.C.T. San Francisco, as well as an elementary school music teacher. Endless gratitude to her family and friends. She hopes that you enjoy visiting our little universe constructed out of language, as a timeless and reverential act.

WHO'S WHO



Michael Carlos

as Douglas

is honored to be making his theatre debut in Enrico Banson's thrilling interpretation of *Seminar* by Theresa Rebeck. A Berkeley-based actor, singer, dancer, and musician, Michael fell in love with performing at age three after watching *The Sound of Music*. He recently completed a two-year professional acting program at Empowerhouse Acting Studio, where he studied the Meisner Technique under Melissa Thompson-Esaia. He currently studies modern dance with Robin Nasatir at Shawl-Anderson Dance Center and trains in classical vocal technique with Cheryl Keller at Keller Voice Studio. Outside of performing, Michael works as an academic support specialist at Black Pine Circle School, where he also teaches seventh-grade drama. He holds a bachelor's degree with honors in Spanish, Education, and Public Health Sciences from UC Davis.



Chika Okonkwo

as Kate

is delighted to make her theater debut in *Seminar*. A recent graduate of Empowerhouse Acting Studio in Berkeley, she's passionate about storytelling that captures the nuance and complexity of the human experience. Originally from Atlanta, GA and now a proud Bay Area local, Chika loves diving into a good book, going to the theater, and building creative communities where people can share their art. Chika spends as much time behind the camera as she does in front of it and is excited to write and direct her own short film soon. Huge thanks to her family and friends for all their support!



David Patiño

as Martin

is honored to make his Royal Underground Theatre debut! *Seminar* has been an amazing process; working with such talented actors and director, David is proud of the work this team has achieved. It is his belief that good theatre is theatre that inspires you. He hopes you enjoy the show! Previous play credits: *She Kills Monsters* as Miles, *Pride and Prejudice* as Mr. Darcy, and *Tiny Beautiful Things* as Letter Writer #3 (Plethos Productions) Previous musical credits: *Chicago* as Amos (Plethos), *Hunchback of Notre Dame* as Featured Ensemble (TMC Arts), *RENT* as Roger and *In the Heights* as Sonny (Chabot College), *Once Upon a Mattress* as Sir Harold (Ohlone College)



Enrico Banson

Director

is thrilled to be directing this amazing cast! Enrico's a filmmaker, stage director, actor and has written and directed two full-length indie films, *The After* and *Some Night* which played/opened various film festivals including the LA Int'l Film Festival. Stage direction credits include *Freud's Last Session* (Royal Underground), *People vs Mona* at Masquers (11 2024 BATCC Nominations including Best Director) *Amélie* (Masquers). Fave stage acting credits: Dr. Fine/Dr. Madden in *Next to Normal*, Stephen in *Farragut North* (Masquers), *Serge* in Art, Roger in *RENT* (San Francisco Regional Premiere/Hollywood Hudson Theatre), Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Golden Eagle Award/ Winner the National Shakespeare Competition), Iago in *Othello*, Harry in *Company* (actor/muso version playing piano and trumpet as well). He'll be directing *Catch Me If You Can, the Musical* this Fall for Masquers. proud SAG and WGA member. Love to family, friends and wife Maria! enricobanson.com



Angelina LaBarre

Intimacy Direction

is an Intimacy Choreographer, Director, and the Program Coordinator of the Contra Costa College Drama Department. Her previous intimacy choreography credits include *In Love and Warcraft*, *Bad Hombres/Good Wives* (CCC), *You on the Moors Now*, *Stupid F@cking Bird*, *Spring Awakening*, *The 39 Steps* (Masquers Playhouse), and *Life Sucks* (Pinole Community Players). Angelina holds an MFA and an M.Litt in Shakespeare and Performance from Mary Baldwin University's partner program with the American Shakespeare Center, and a BA from Sacramento State University.



Jerica Banson

Original Music/Composer

is a musician, singer-songwriter, and composer whose work spans stage, film, and the recording studio. A lifelong musician, Jerica began playing guitar at age five, studied at the San Francisco School of the Arts, and later graduated from Loyola Marymount University. They have composed original scores for award-winning films including *Some Night* (2020), which received Best Music Direction at Accord CineFest, as well as *The After* (2012) and *The Perfect Couple* (2022). Beyond composing, Jerica works across the music industry as both talent and creative producer. They are currently part of the music management team at TaP Music, supporting artists such as Lana Del Rey, Ellie Goulding, and Dermot Kennedy. Favorite pit credits include *RENT* (SF Regional Premiere/Hollywood Hudson Theatre), *Once on This Island* (Contra Costa Civic Theatre), and *Next to Normal* (Royal Underground). Follow them @[jericabanson](https://www.instagram.com/jericabanson).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This production simply wouldn't exist without the extraordinary generosity and support of so many. Huge thanks to John Hull, Shay Oglesby-Smith, and the entire team at Masquers Playhouse in Point Richmond for lending us their talent, tools, and trust. Deep gratitude to Molly Bell and the leadership at Korsa Musical Theater for championing this project, and to Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless for graciously providing us a rehearsal home. We also thank Joji Tolentino for their artistry and contributions to our set and visual world, Maria Calderazzo, Josefa Bordon and Jerianne Banson for their unwavering support, and the Borsontino family for cheering us on every step of the way. From the cast, crew, and everyone at The Royal Underground Theatre Company—thank you. This show was built with community, and we're proud to share it with you.

OUR NEXT PRODUCTION



A FEW GOOD MEN

BY **AARON SORKIN**

DIRECTED BY
ENRICO BANSON

**APRIL 17 - MAY 6
2026**