



REDCAT

Paul Outlaw

- **BBC (Big Black Cockroach)**

Theater

JUN 20-22, 2024

8:30 PM

**REDCAT
Roy and Edna Disney
CalArts Theater**

**CALARTS
California Institute of the Arts**

We gratefully acknowledge that we operate on the traditional lands of the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash peoples—including the Gabrieleño, Fernandefio, and Ventureño; members of the Takic and Chumashan language families; and other Indigenous peoples who made their homes in and around the area we now call Los Angeles. We honor their ancestors past, present, and future, and recognize their continued existence and contributions to our society.

Paul Outlaw

• BBC (Big Black Cockroach)

Conceived, written and performed by PAUL OUTLAW

Directed by SARA LYONS

Lighting design by CHU-HSUAN CHANG

Sound design by JONATHAN SNIPES

Projections and visual media design by HANA S. KIM

Stage management by LANAE WILKS

Produced by OUTLAWPLAY

Co-produced and production managed by BROOKE HARBAUGH

Publicity services by MATT JOHNSTONE PUBLICITY

Dialect consulting by JOEL GOLDES

Projection assistance by JESUS HURTADO

Source material:

- King David, *The Book of Psalms* #23, around 1000 BCE
- Sophocles, Οιδίπους Τύραννος (*Oedipus the King*), 429 BCE
- Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso), *Metamorphōsēs*, 8 CE
- Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Oedipus*, 1st century CE
- Franz Kafka, "Ein Traum" ("A Dream"), 1914-16, and *Die Verwandlung* (*The Metamorphosis*), 1915
- Statements from and about U.S. elected officials and political candidates, 2016-present

The creation of this work has been supported in part by the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture (as part of the LA County Performing Arts Recovery Grant), the Ucross Foundation, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, REDCAT, somefund, the Speranza Foundation, the Whiting Foundation, Los Angeles Performance Practice, Thymele Arts Incubator and the generosity of individual donors like Michelle Seely (in remembrance of Michael and Diana Seely) and Skip Snow.



OutlawPlay extends special thanks to the REDCAT Team (past and present); Automata; Sophina Brown and Dana Hunt (Support Black Theatre); John Henningsen (Thymele Arts); Steven Foley and Nijel X (WACO Theater Center); PXT Studio; Ray Busmann, Edgar Miramontes, Rachel Scandling and Joe Seely. We couldn't have done it without you!

OutlawPlay is a sponsored project of Fractured Atlas, a non-profit arts services organization.

Please note: BBC (Big Black Cockroach) contains mature content, loud sounds, strobe lights, graphic descriptions of violence, and nudity.

Runtime: Approx. 70 minutes, no intermission

ABOUT THE WORK

“When Gregor Samsa awoke in his bed one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself transformed into a monstrous vermin.”

—First sentence of Franz Kafka’s *Die Verwandlung* (*The Metamorphosis*), 1915

“Strolling in a verdant grove, Tiresias saw two serpents coupling. When he smacked them with a stick, they separated and slithered away. At that moment he was transformed from a man into a woman for the next seven years.”

—From Book 3 of Ovid’s *Metamorphōsēs*, 8 AD

In *BBC* (*Big Black Cockroach*), a right-wing American white woman finds herself transformed into what she considers a “monstrous vermin”: a Black man. In 2024, Black Americans continue to face inequality, disenfranchisement and the constant threat of violent death. *BBC* offers a meditation on isolation, imprisonment and imperiled Blackness in America—not only in the 21st century, but throughout a history that began in the holds of the slave ships.

I began writing *BBC* (*Big Black Cockroach*) during the eruption of social unrest at the end of the Trump administration and continued to develop the piece during the uncertainty of the global pandemic. In creating the various iterations of this project, I’ve explored multiple modes of performance—silent film acting, audio drama, naturalism, Theater of the Absurd, standup comedy and storytelling—while shifting between embodying tropes of Black manhood and white womanhood. These dissociations are a variation on the loss of speech and identity experienced by Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis* as he succumbs to an existence as a cockroach. The difference in *BBC* (*Big Black Cockroach*): Black men like me are not “monstrous vermin.”

While working on this new, expanded script for *BBC*, I was inspired by the endings of many of the tales in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, where the protagonists often find escape from untenable crises through transformation rather than death—unlike Kafka’s novella, which ends with the inevitable demise of its protagonist. This time I said “no” to another depiction of tragic Black death. In a further nod to the classics, this new version of *BBC* includes a *deus ex machina*, one that nods to the comic books I voraciously read as a child growing up in the projects in Lower Manhattan.

—Paul Outlaw, June 2024

Reading the news these days is, well, strange—to say the least. Wading through the layers of exploitative violent imagery, corporate advertisements and fake news to find some truth underneath is an exhausting task. Paul Outlaw’s *BBC* (*Big Black Cockroach*) offers a new lexicon to articulate racist violence: one made of flesh and bone, thought and feeling, superhero fantasies and the unlimited terrain of imagination. In *BBC*, white violence past and present live in the most real, most vulnerable, most undeniable place of all—inside Paul himself. Can we as individuals, as a country, as a culture, transform

this intergenerational pain into liberation? In this feat of performance, Kafka's dark surrealism collides with bright American pop culture and the stark, radical honesty of a single body and voice alone onstage. If we can finally look the past straight in the eyes, maybe the future will finally call out to us in return.

—Sara Lyons, June 2024

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Paul Outlaw is a Los Angeles and Berlin-based multidisciplinary performing artist. Spanning an array of mediums including text-based drama, physical theater, performance art, spoken word and American popular music, his works confront the tangled web of societal constructs around race and gender and excavate the enduring legacies of white supremacy and patriarchal violence—both physical and psychological—that have marred the tapestry of Euro-American history. Paul has created an evolving series of performances under the banner of OutlawPlay; his solo theater works and numerous collaborations have been presented in the United States (including at LACMA, MOCA, REDCAT, the Getty, The Lab, Yale Union) and abroad (including at Maxim Gorki Theater/Berlin, Melkweg/Amsterdam and GES-2/V-A-C Foundation/Moscow). Paul is the recipient of various grants, fellowships and residencies, including a City of Los Angeles Individual Artist Fellowship and a Los Angeles County Performing Arts Recovery Grant. He played the title role in Pepe Danquart's *Schwarzfahrer*, winner of the 1994 Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film. Paul is one of the queer changemakers memorialized in One Institute's 2021 exhibition, *Pride Publics: Words and Actions*. | outlawplay.com

Sara Lyons is a Los Angeles-based director who seeks to explode form and politic in critically embodied, often interdisciplinary new theater and performance works. Working frequently in adaptation, social practice and new media as well as theater, their work has been presented nationally and internationally by REDCAT, The Kitchen, Los Angeles Performance Practice, OUTsider, SFX Festival, Ensemble Studio Theatre, HERE Arts Center, La MaMa ETC, Edinburgh Fringe, Antaeus Theatre Company and more. They have received residencies at Lehigh University, Ucross Foundation, REDCAT Gallery, Thymele Arts and PAM Residencies. Current projects include *This Emancipation Thing* (REDCAT), a participatory re-performance of feminist consciousness-raising circles, and Sophia Cleary's *One & Only* (The Kitchen), an experiment in theater for an audience of one. Sara holds an MFA in Directing from Carnegie Mellon University and is an alum of the Hemispheric Institute's EMERGENYC program for artists working at the intersection of performance and politics at NYU. Sara has taught at UCLA, Sarah Lawrence College and Cal Poly Pomona. | sara-lyons.com

Chu-hsuan Chang is a Los Angeles based lighting artist working in live performance, and installation. In addition to lighting, Chu-hsuan's passions include puppeteering, puppet design and lighting instrument design. | chuhsuanchang.com

Joel Goldes is a veteran dialect coach with 25 years experience coaching all accents for film, TV & Broadway. Theatre includes: *Come From Away* (Broadway, First North American Tour, West End,

Australia, Gander and Apple TV+); *The Secret Garden, 2:22: A Ghost Story, Soft Power, Sweat, Immediate Family* and *Tribes* (Center Theater Group, Los Angeles); *Memphis, The Cosmonaut's Last Message...* and *Going to St. Ives* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Orson's Shadow* and *Mask* (Pasadena Playhouse). Selected film and TV include: Upcoming: *The Perfect Couple* on Netflix; *Washington Black* on Hulu. *The Woman King; The First Lady; The Shrink Next Door; 24; Escape at Dannemora; Jingle Jangle; The Company Men; The Crazy Ones* (coaching Robin Williams) and *Hatfields & McCoys* (for which his client Kevin Costner won an Emmy for Best Actor). | TheDialectCoach.com

Brooke Harbaugh is a creative producer, manager and artist working in theater, film and live events. Theater: *Miss You Desert Rat* (Automata); *Marabella, Two Trains Running, King Lear, Bobbie Clearly, Oedipus the King* (CalArts); Film: *Pareidolia in B Minor* (Somnia Pictures); *Her Best, Indah, One Beer* (CalArts); Festival/Live Events: *Black Box Blackout, Creative Resilience* (Spitfire Strategies); *How Light Enters My Home* (Automata); *2021 CalArts School of Theater Virtual Festival Beyond the Stage; Getting Real '24* (International Documentary Association). Brooke has an MFA in Creative Producing from CalArts. | brookeharbaugh.com

Hana S. Kim, from Seoul, South Korea, is an immersive media designer and a visual artist for live performances with experience across film and public art. Broadway: *The Old Man And The Pool, Summer 1976, The Outsiders* (Tony winner); Off-Broadway/New York: *The Harder They Come* (Public Theater), *The Visitor* (Public Theater, Lucille Lortel nomination), *Eve's Song* (Public Theater), *Everything Rises* (BAM), *Magdalene* (Prototype Festival); New Music Opera: *L'Orfeo* (Santa Fe Opera), *Sweet Land* (The Industry), *The Anonymous Lover* (LA Opera); Regional: Geffen Playhouse, OSF, South Coast Rep, Magic Theatre, A.C.T., among others. Awards: Tony Award for Best Lighting Design of a Musical, Princess Grace Award, Sherwood Award (Center Theatre Group), Helen Hayes Award, LA Drama Critics Circle Distinguished Achievement Award, among others. | hananow.com

Jonathan Snipes is a composer and sound designer for film and theater living in Los Angeles. He teaches sound design in the theater and film departments at UCLA and is a member of the rap group clipping. | jonat8han.com

Lanae Wilks has been involved in theater for most of her life and loves to expand her experience in all forms of art in entertainment. She enjoys collaboration, innovation and creating space for her fellow artists. Originally from Baltimore, Maryland, Lanae received her MFA in Stage Management from the California Institute of the Arts. Her credits include *Black Cypress Bayou* (Geffen Playhouse), *Dear Edwina* (Children's Roundabout Theatre), Micaela Tobin's *Apolaki: Opera of the Scorched Earth*, the IAMA New Works Festival, B. Dunn Movement and many more. She wants to thank her family and friends who support her and the art she continues to help create!

REDCAT TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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Associate TD, Lighting: CHU-HSUAN CHANG

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UPCOMING AT REDCAT

Primera Generación Dance Collective: *NOStalgia POP*

June 28 - 29

With eclectic, multilingual, Latinx aesthetics, Los Angeles and Riverside-based Primera Generación Dance Collective exposes “el desmadre” (the messiness) that is their first-generation Mexican American experience. Rooted in popular Latine music, movement, and moments, their newest evening-length multimedia dance work, *NOStalgia POP*, pays homage and cheeky critique to the recuerdos románticos that link Latine bodies together. A collage of ‘80s pop en Español, the “Latin Explosion” of the ‘90s, and millennial Mexican core weave together with media depictions of gente Latina. Four captivating dancers tell the story of how messy, fruitful, joyful, and painful the development of an ever-growing Latin Pop culture memory has been and the ways in which mainstream media shapes and is (re)shaped by Latine nostalgia.



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