

PLAYBILL®

The Royal Underground Theatre Company
Live Oak Theater
Berkeley, CA

THE ROYAL UNDERGROUND THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

POTUS



THE HIT PLAY BY SELINA FILLINGER
DIRECTED BY ANNA OGLESBY-SMITH

SEPT 11-26
LIVE OAK THEATER, BERKELEY

THE ROYAL UNDERGROUND THEATRE COMPANY

JENNIFER BANSON, *BOARD PRESIDENT*

PRESENTS

POTUS

OR, BEHIND EVERY GREAT DUMBASS ARE
SEVEN WOMEN TRYING TO KEEP HIM ALIVE

BY SELINA FILLINGER

**ASOULA 'JASMINE'
AVEGALIO**

RAVEN DOUGLAS

**HANNAH MARTÍNEZ-
CROW**

NICOLE NAFFAA

**KARLA ACOSTA
ORMOND**

MICHELE RABKIN

JULES WEISS

PRODUCER
JERIANNE BANSON

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
HAYLEY KENNEN

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/
SCENIC DESIGN**
COURTNEY SUTHERLAND

LIGHTING DESIGN
COLIN MOGILEFSKY

**SOUND DESIGN/
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHY**
ENRICO BANSON

INTIMACY COORDINATOR
ANGELINA LABARRE

CASTING
MARIA BANSON, MFB CASTING

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS
MICHAEL CARLOS
MAGGIE CARPENTER

COSTUME SUPERVISION
MAGGIE BRENNAN

CHOREOGRAPHY
SASHA HOLTON

DIRECTED BY
ANNA OGLESBY-SMITH

POTUS is presented in special arrangement with Concord Theatricals

THERE WILL BE ONE 15 MINUTE INTERMISSION

SETTING

The White House, Washington DC
Perhaps not the current administration, exactly - but broad strokes of past presidents,
combined with stress dreams of future ones. And, if we're being honest, an
amalgamation of them all...

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Cast (In Order of Appearance)

Harriet	Michele Rabkin
Jean	Karla Acosta Ormond
Stephanie	Jules Weiss
Dusty	Hannah Martínez-Crow
Bernadette	Nicole Naffaa
Chris	Raven Douglas
Margaret	Asoula 'Jasmine' Avegalio

Creative Team

Director	Anna Oglesby-Smith
Assistant Director/Scenic Design	Courtney Sutherland
Producer	Jerianne Banson
Production Stage Manager	Hayley Kennen
Intimacy Coordinator	Angelina LaBarre
Casting Director	Maria Banson, MFB Casting
Costume Supervisor	Maggie Brennan
Lighting Designer	Colin Mogilefsky
Sound Design/Fight Choreography	Enrico Banson
Choreography	Sasha Holton
Assistant Stage Manager	Michael Carlos
Assistant Stage Manager	Maggie Carpenter
Fight Captain	Raven Douglas
Technical Director	Marty Farrell

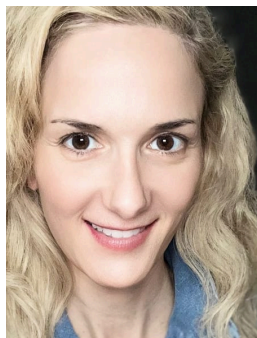
CAST



Michele Rabkin



Karla Acosta Ormond



Jules Weiss



Hannah Martínez-Crow



Nicole Naffaa



Raven Douglas



**Asoula 'Jasmine'
Avegalio**

WELCOME TO THE ROYAL UNDERGROUND!

Thank you for joining us for *POTUS*! We are thrilled to share this production with you. Selina Fillinger's play is fearless, outrageous, sharply funny, and powered by an extraordinary ensemble of women trying to keep an increasingly impossible situation from completely going off the rails. It is exactly the kind of bold, actor-driven work we love bringing to our audiences, with perhaps a little more chaos than usual.

We are especially grateful to our director, Anna Oglesby-Smith, for bringing such energy, intelligence, and fearless comic instinct to this production, and to our remarkable cast, creative team, crew, and volunteers for the tremendous amount of heart they have poured into bringing *POTUS* to life. Royal Underground has always believed that theatre is at its best when it brings people together, makes us laugh, surprises us, and gives us something to talk about afterward. We hope *POTUS* does all of the above.

And we hope you'll come back and join us this November for our next production, the beloved musical *Come From Away*, presented at Revival Hall in Oakland. As the first non-union Bay Area production of the show, we wanted to find our own way into this remarkable piece rather than simply recreate what audiences may already know. Our production will be immersive, putting you closer to the company and right in the middle of the storytelling, because apparently we enjoy making things difficult for ourselves. It will be unmistakably *Come From Away*, but unmistakably Royal Underground.

Thank you for supporting live theatre and The Royal Underground. We're very glad you're here.



Enrico
Banson
Artistic Director



Jerianne
Banson
*Managing
Director*

DIRECTOR'S NOTES



When I first read *POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive*, I was sold from the first line. Such incredible, unapologetic, hilarious characters wrapped up in the chaotic Farce that is American politics? Sign me up! I was instantly in love with the humor and chaos, but by the end of the play it was the women who really won my heart.

Traditionally, farce has belonged to men. For generations women have existed in these stories as love interests, objects of sexual desire, the incessant voice of concern, or the individual task with cleaning up the mess. Selina Fillinger brilliantly reclaims the genre by handing it over to an all female cast and shining a spotlight on the unsung labor so many women take on. While this play unfolds within the White House, this play does not focus on political agenda. Instead, it shows us what happens when people are expected to be endlessly competent, with no room to fall apart. It is about the decision to come together, to put in the work necessary for families, communities, and a country, to thrive. My hope is you leave this evening with sides aching from laughter, a glimmer of hope for our country's future, and a new found appreciation for the extraordinary women who refuse to let the world stop spinning.

This production would not be possible without the tireless efforts of an entire team. It has been an honor to work with such talented, kind, smart, brilliant artists. I am forever grateful for the trust and insight from my cast and crew. Thank you all for supporting local theater, and welcome to the White House!

Anna Oglesby-Smith
Director, *POTUS*

WHO'S WHO



Michele Rabkin

Harriet

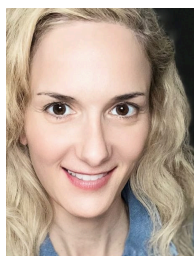
(She/Her) Michele Rabkin, MFA, is an Oakland-based writer and performer. Recent roles include King Alonso in *The Tempest* (Berkeley Shakespeare Company) and Taylor in *Yoga Moms* (Town Hall Theater, Young Playwrights Festival). Her performance in *POTUS* is inspired by all the bad-ass female chiefs of staff she met during her years in higher education administration, as well as the politically savvy women who shaped her growing up in Berkeley, including her mother, who is still waving protest signs at age 90. micheleraabkinperforming.com



Karla Acosta Ormond

Jean

(She/Her) Karla is delighted to make her Royal Underground Theatre Company debut as Jean. Recent credits include *God of Carnage* and *Rumors* (Pacifica Spindrift Players), *Prelude to a Kiss* (Masquers Playhouse), and *The Holiday Channel Christmas Movie Wonderthon* (Plethos Productions). She thanks BBD for keeping real-life crises far less chaotic than this one.

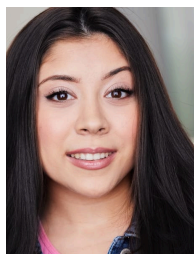


Jules Weiss

Stephanie

(She/Her) Jules was born in San Francisco and grew up in Marin County. She attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, received her B.A. in Drama from San Francisco State University, and she graduated from The Meisner Technique Studio in 2024. She has performed in theatre shows around the Bay Area, including, *Stretchmarks*, an Edinburgh Fringe Festival play, and *Men On Boats*. When Jules isn't performing on stage, she is teaching creative movement, dance and yoga to children around Marin County.

WHO'S WHO



Hannah Martínez-Crow

Dusty

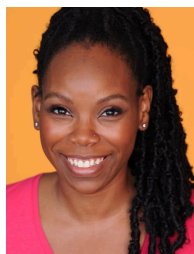
(She/Her) Recent credits: Rumbletazer/Dance Captain in *Cats* (Berkeley Playhouse), Ensemble/Wednesday u/s in *The Addams Family* (Berkeley Playhouse), Ensemble/Dance Captain in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Berkeley Playhouse), Margot in *Legally Blonde* (Ray of Light Theatre), Lilibet/Swing in *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* (Ray of Light Theatre). SDSU MT '23. IG: @hannahmartinezcrow



Nicole Naffaa

Bernadette

(She/Her) Nicole is thrilled to make her debut with The Royal Underground Theatre Company and this amazing cast and production team! Recent credits include *Improvvised Clue* (Synergy Theater), Hagar in *A Country Made of Salt* (Golden Thread Productions), Jean in *Good People* (Altarena Playhouse), which won SFBATCC Awards for Best Ensemble and Best Entire Production – East Bay, Marvalyn/Waitress in *Almost, Maine* (Backyard Players), and Natasha Pendleton in *Summer of Peace Love and Murder* (Plethos Productions). She performed with The Berkeley Players improv troupe for over 10 years and has appeared in short films, web series, and commercials. See her again this November in TRU's *Come From Away*!



Raven Douglas

Chris

(She/Her) Raven is delighted to make her Royal Underground debut. Other credits include Marianne (*Constellations*, *The Pear*), Keisha (*Fairview*, CCCT), Pascal (*The Pear*), Nettie (*The Color Purple*, PTC), Emily Cratchit (world premiere of *Scrooge*, CCCT), Alice (*Alabaster*, Town Hall), Laertes (*Hamlet*, CCCT), and Cha Cha/Ms. Lynch/Radio Singer (*Grease*, Altarena Playhouse). New to theater, Raven's appeared in commercial and film projects, and performed as a lead singer touring southeast Asia. She'd like to thank Bay Area theatre for embracing an outsider so warmly, and overthank her partner for their graceful flexibility throughout her non-adultlike shenanigans. In her free time, Raven enjoys dancing, traveling, and volunteering with community-based organizations.

WHO'S WHO



Asoula 'Jasmine' Avegalio

Margaret

(She/Her) Asoula Jasmine Avegalio has been performing for over 20 years across various stages throughout the country. She took a pause to serve in the Marine Corps, deepen her roots in motherhood, publish a book and is grateful to have returned to her love of theatre again. Avegalio's recent works include Beverly in Contra Costa Civic Theatre's production of *Fairview*, The Lady of The Lake in *Monty Python's Spamalot the Musical* done by Ghostlight Theatre, Shug Avery in Pittsburgh Theatre Company's *The Color Purple Musical* and Trish/ Lauren (U/S) in Throckmorton theatre's musical production of *Kinky Boots*. Stay connected with her on instagram @ulaaa_fierce

Anna Oglesby-Smith

Director

(She/Her) Anna Oglesby-Smith is thrilled to be directing *POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive* and making her Royal Underground debut. Anna is a Bay Area based theater artist with experience in acting and directing. Previous work includes *Loose Knit* (Director), *Stupid F*cking Bird* (Nina), *You on the Moors Now* (Cathy), *Orlando* (Queen Elizabeth), and more. Anna would like to thank the cast and crew of *POTUS* for their trust and talent, Royal Underground for this opportunity, her family and partner for their unwavering support, and all of you for coming out to support local theater and the arts.

WHO'S WHO

Courtney Sutherland

Assistant Director/Scenic Design

(They/Them) Courtney Sutherland is an artist born and raised doing theatre in the East Bay. Courtney is very excited to collaborate with The Royal Underground for the first time and would love to thank Anna for this opportunity. Court is currently the Technical Director at Town Hall Theatre and Las Lomas High School. Court was the Scenic Art Fellow at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for their 2025-2026 season and continues to work in their paint shop to this day. Court has had the pleasure of collaborating with incredible companies acting, stage managing, scenic painting, intimacy directing, and well... whatever else they could learn at Masquers Playhouse, Berkeley Shakespeare Company, Berkeley Playhouse, Cal Scenic, TVTC, San Ramon Valley High School Black Sheep Theatre Co, and The I Can Do That! Performing Arts Center. Courtney would love to thank you for supporting live theatre, there is truly nothing like it. Support local art, show up, and speak your mind. If you want to follow their crazy journey you can find them @courtneysutherland!

Jerianne Banson

Producer

(She/Her) Jerianne Banson, WGA is a producer, director, WGA screenwriter, creative artist, musician, songwriter, photographer, and media storyteller. A creative force behind Royal Underground Theatre, she brings the eye of an artist and the discipline of a producer, shaping bold, emotionally resonant work with vision, rigor, taste, and heart. She is also the founder of The Perpetualist, a lifestyle and storytelling brand rooted in faith, culture, healing, travel, music, style, and reinvention. JerianneBanson.com | Perpetualist.com

Hayley Kennen

Production Stage Manager

(She/Her) Hayley is a Bay Area local who has been a part of the theatre community for over 10 years. She has performed and stage managed for various theatre companies including Fuse Theatre, Poison Apple Productions, Diablo Valley College, Danville Village Theatre, and Martinez Campbell Theater. She would like to dedicate this show to every single woman who has been the only woman in a male dominated field. You are seen and you are absolutely killing it.

WHO'S WHO

Enrico Banson

Sound Design/Fight Choreography

(He/Him) A filmmaker and actor who's written/directed two full-length indie films, *The After* and *Some Night*, which played/opened various film festivals including the LA Int'l Film Festival. Recent stage direction credits include *Eureka Day* (CCCT) *A Few Good Men* (Royal Underground), *Catch Me If You Can* (Masquers Playhouse) *Seminar* (Royal Underground), *Freud's Last Session* (Royal Underground), *People vs Mona* at Masquers Playhouse (11 BATCC Nominations including Best Director), and *Amélie* (Masquers Playhouse). Favorite stage acting credits: Dr. Fine/Dr. Madden in *Next to Normal* (Royal Underground), Stephen in *Farragut North* (Masquers Playhouse), Serge in *Art* (Royal Underground), Roger in *RENT* (San Francisco Regional Premiere/Hollywood Hudson Theatre), and Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Golden Eagle Award Winner, National Shakespeare Competition at Lincoln Center NYC). Proud SAG and WGAW member. Love to family, friends! enricobanson.com

Angelina LaBarre

Intimacy Coordinator

(She/Her) Angelina LaBarre is a Bay Area Intimacy Choreographer, Director, and Professor. Her previous Royal Underground credit includes *Seminar*. Other choreography credits include *In Love and Warcraft*, *Bad Hombres/Good Wives*, *La Casa Azul: Frida's Blue House*, *Dog Sees God* (CCC), *You on the Moors Now*, *Stupid F@cking Bird*, *Spring Awakening*, *The 39 Steps*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Loose Knit*, *Vanya Sonia Masha Spike* (Masquers Playhouse), and *Life Sucks* (Pinole Community Players). Angelina holds an MFA and an M.Litt in Shakespeare and Performance from Mary Baldwin University in partnership with the American Shakespeare Center, and a BA in Theatre Arts from Sacramento State University.

Maggie Brennan

Costume Supervisor

(They/Them) Bay Area backstage debut! Maggie Brennan is a theater/film artist and educator originally from the Appalachian Mountains of northern Pennsylvania. They graduated with honors from Temple University (Go Owls!). Endless thanks to the Royal Underground team; friends Heidi, Kenzie, Shannon, and Carmen; my love, my life, my wife - Kezia.

WHO'S WHO

Colin Mogilefsky

Lighting Designer

(He/Him) Colin Mogilefsky is a recent college graduate stepping into a career in live entertainment. He's excited to be joining the *POTUS* production team and to illuminate the incredible show these actors have for you! Recent design credits include TMC Arts' *Newsies* and *Mary Poppins*.

Sasha Holton

Choreography

(She/Her) Sasha Holton is a Bay Area choreographer, actor, and dancer who you might have seen latest as Pouncival in Berkeley Playhouse's *Cats* and a Phantom in Oasis' *The Rocky Horror Show*. She has been dancing for most of her life and is very excited for you all to see the amazing talents of the cast of *POTUS*! It's been such a joy to work with everyone and she hopes you enjoy the show!

Michael Carlos

Assistant Stage Manager

(He/Him) Michael Carlos is an educator, public health researcher, and multidisciplinary performer based in the Bay Area. A UC Davis Regents Scholar and Meisner-trained actor, Michael is thrilled to be returning to the Royal Underground Theatre Company (*A Few Good Men*, *Seminar*, *Freud's Last Session*). His background spans clinical research, standardized patient work, and academic coaching; teaching STEAM, theater, and cooking; as well as competitive tennis, vocal performance, and dance. Whether coordinating production logistics, guiding students, or practicing recital pieces while testing recipes in the kitchen, he thrives at the intersection of discipline and play. He is grateful to be part of this brilliant team!

Maggie Carpenter

Assistant Stage Manager

(She/Her) Maggie is deeply grateful and excited to be apart of the Royal Underground Family! Her passion for storytelling grew from years spent collaborating with Los Angeles-based musicians, creators, and gamers—Sunny & The Black Pack, where she worked on graphic design, product design, photography, and animation. She taught herself to sew during the COVID-19 pandemic and combines her love of costume, vintage fashion, and design to help bring characters and stories to life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Royal Underground Theatre Company extends its heartfelt thanks to the many individuals, organizations, and supporters whose generosity, time, patience, and encouragement helped make *POTUS* possible.

We are especially grateful to Glen Epperson and everyone at Live Oak Theater, Molly Bell and Korsas Musical Theater, and Shay Oglesby-Smith and Masquers Playhouse for their support and assistance with this production.

Thank you to Finnish Hall in Berkeley for continuing to serve as our rehearsal home and for giving our artists a welcoming place to gather, work, experiment, and create.

Our sincere thanks as well to Josie Bordon and the Borsontino Family for their continued support of Royal Underground and the work we do.

Director Anna Oglesby-Smith would also like to extend her personal thanks to her partner, Favian Ramirez, for his patience and support throughout the process, along with our production crew, volunteers, and extraordinary cast for the tremendous amount of time, energy, trust, and talent they brought to this production.

Finally, to our patrons: thank you for showing up, supporting live theatre, and continuing to take this journey with us. Your support makes it possible for Royal Underground to keep creating bold, intimate, actor-driven theatre here in the Bay Area.

We are deeply grateful to all of you.



All photos by Jerianne Banson



photos by Jerianne Banson



PROUDLY PRESENTS

COME FROM AWAY

**NOVEMBER 13 - DECEMBER 6
REVIVAL HALL, OAKLAND**