

UCI Drama
P R E S E N T S

TO KEEP OUR ROOTS ALIVE

A DEvised PIECE CREATED BY JULIETTE CARRILLO, FÉLIX JOSÉ COLÓN-ROLÓN,
AMIN FUSON, RACHEL GOLKIN, LEAH JACKSON, LUCAS ESPERANZA-GOODMAN,
RESHMA MEISTER, SOPHIA METCALF, MEGHAN MINGUEZ-MARSHALL, HUNTER RINGSMITH,
KARREN SHAMO, ARIZSIA STATON, LUCY VALERO, BRYAN VARTANIAN



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June 5-18, 2021

A Theatre-Film Presented Online



Photo: Emily Zheng

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TO KEEP OUR ROOTS ALIVE



June 5-18, 2021

A Theatre-Film Presented Online

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*This list represents gifts to the Theatre Guild made up to
June 02, 2021. Please accept our apologies for any errors or omissions in this list.
For questions, please call (949) 824-8750.*

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Presents

TO KEEP OUR ROOTS ALIVE

Production Team

Production Designer **Efren Delgadillo Jr.**
Cinematographer **David Marquez**
Sound Designer **John Nobori**
Production Stage Manager **Miriam Mendoza**
Editor **Kaitlyn Pietras**
Dramaturg **Chee-Hann Wu**
Cinematographer for Sushi Scene **Zack Fuson**

Directorial Team

Juliette Carrillo and Lucas Esperanza-Goodman

Created, Developed, Performed By

Félix José Colón-Rolón	Sophia K. Metcalf
Amin Fuson	Hunter Ringsmith
Rachel Golkin	Karren E. Shamo
Lucas Esperanza-Goodman	Arizsia Staton
Leah Jackson	Lucy Valero
Meghan Minguez-Marshall	Bryan Vartanian
Reshma Meister	

Special Appearance By

Peggy Fuson

Director's Notes

Creating a “devised” work is a little like free falling. It’s not for the faint of heart.

To “devise” is to begin a process without a script—a tabula rasa. It could go anywhere or be anything. An ensemble builds a work collaboratively by trusting instincts and allowing the script to form itself. There’s a tremendous amount of mystery to it and a little bit of danger. It could be a total disaster or it could be magic.

In this case, we began with a “hunch” and nothing more. This was a project supported by the four “culture clubs” of the drama department, Brown Bag, Black Door, Theatre Woks and Brick Theatre—and we were excited to explore how identities co-mingle and intersect. Launching in with the topic of “genealogy” and “family lineage,” we investigated related themes through a process of discussions, interviews, improvisations and free-writing.

We did workshops with companies that specialize in devising: Tectonic Theater Company (The Laramie Project) and Frantic Assembly (The Curious Incident of The Dog in the Night). Typically, this type of work is done in a room together—sweating, touching, pondering and arguing. We had none of that. We had only our Zoom room and our Zoom exhaustion to go with it. We had to be extra inventive, open to serendipity, to possibility.

We tried ideas like beginning a piece for someone else to finish, rewriting each other’s text, and creating short videos in our rooms. Google Docs was our ally, as the work was done collectively, intentionally leaving the authors anonymous. We wanted to be as personal as possible while retaining privacy at the same time. We commented, voted, and reorganized the docs, led by the cream that rose to the top.

Eventually it became clear what stories wanted to be told. Our job was simply to listen. As director of the work, I took the “cream” of writing, interviews, and experimental videos and pared the material

down to a 25-page script. The work didn't stop there. Collective rewriting ensued, and the script continued evolving until a few days before filming began.

When a "devised" piece was decided in our season last year, we envisioned theater, of course. But again, our efforts were thwarted by our limited circumstances. Pivoting in Covidian fashion, we embraced the medium, expansiveness, and social distance-ability of film. Our inventiveness was tested again and again as we had to figure out a way to film scene work with COVID restrictions. We managed the hurdles of working outdoors despite extreme weather, unwelcome sounds, and obtrusive animals. But the biggest stumbling block--needing to film socially distanced (ten feet, in this case) and not being allowed to have more than one actor with their masks off in a scene--was particularly challenging. We embraced the hindrance, locking the camera and filming each actor individually to later cut and paste them into the same frame --actors acted to imaginary partners with lines being spoken from off-set. Again, not for the faint of heart!

I am most proud of the collaborative ensemble work of this group of devisers. We practiced letting go of our attachments to material, letting go of ownership and embracing each other's ideas and aesthetics. To this day, I still have no idea where the title came from. It was pulled from someone's writing, but I don't know whose. I'm not sure anyone knows...

I am grateful for the trust, willingness, imagination and generosity of our ensemble. This devised theater piece would have undoubtedly evolved very differently if we had been in a room together. But we found that obstacles can be creative fuel, pushing us into the unknown, allowing us to free fall together--in pursuit of our truth.

Juliette Carrillo

Assistant Director's Notes

During one of our first devising rehearsals for *To Keep Our Roots Alive*, Juliette gave our creative ensemble the writing prompt to build a scene answering the question, “How did you find your heart?” The prompt required us to reflect on who we are and how we, as individuals, connected with the roots of our vulnerable selves in an introspective way.

As a devising ensemble, we kept pondering the question—“How did you find your heart?”—and what always came back to us was family. More particularly, we embraced how the ancestry of each of our families brought us to where we are today. The most extraordinary realizations we had through this exploration of identity include the moments that revealed how we were all connected in one way or another. Even with the beautiful differences that we each possess, the stories of our roots constantly intersected in the most surprising ways. *To Keep Our Roots Alive* tells a story that invites one to look deeply into how our roots are connected with the world around us.

Finally, we discussed the relationship between grandparents and their succeeding generations within one’s family tree. In taking this direction, our narrative naturally explored the themes of identity, culture, memory, family, and the evolution of self. At the core of our devising process, the thematic questions of, “What aspects of your heritage are you fighting to keep alive? What aspects are you fighting to end?” rise to the surface. *To Keep Our Roots Alive* aims to tell a story that honors the preservation of self and advocates for all of us to embrace the rough edges that make us who we are.

Lucas Esperanza-Goodman

TO KEEP OUR ROOTS ALIVE



CAST

Félix José Colón-Rolón
Amin Fuson
Rachel Golkin
Lucas Esperanza-Goodman
Leah Jackson
Meghan Minguez-Marshall
Reshma Meister

Sophia K. Metcalf
Hunter Ringsmith
Karren E. Shamo
Arizsia Staton
Lucy Valero
Bryan Vartanian

TO KEEP OUR ROOTS ALIVE was created at the University of California, Irvine located on the ancestral and unseeded shared territories of the Acjachemen and Tongva peoples. The region extends from the Santa Ana River to Aliso Creek and beyond.

As members of a land grant institution, we acknowledge the Acjachemen and Tongva people as traditional land caretakers, whose efforts to steward and protect the land continues today. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that brings us here today.

It's important for the UCI community to acknowledge the original caretakers of the land, as the necessary first step towards honoring the native people, and begin the healing process.

Theatre Guild Membership

2020-21

We invite you to become a member of the Theatre Guild at UCI. The Theatre Guild has been in existence for over fifty years, and has never played a more crucial role in our department's continued success than it does right now. All funds given to the Theatre Guild enhance our students' experience in our classrooms and in our productions.

Due to Covid-19, theaters across the United States have been facing serious financial challenges and UCI Drama is no different. Your support enables us to sustain our productions, which are a key component of the drama curriculum. Theatre Guild contributions help us provide the highest quality conservatory training to UCI drama students, which prepares them to embark on their professional careers.

Join the Theatre Guild or renew your membership today, and play an important part in supporting the resilience of the dramatic arts at UCI.



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ctsadevelopment@uci.edu

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Department Chair, Season Producer	Don Hill
Associate Chair, Production	Joel Veenstra
Associate Chair, Donor Relations	Marcy Froehlich
Associate Chair, Digital Media	Philip Thompson
Art Direction Mentor	Efren Delgadillo Jr.
Stage Management Mentor	Don Hill
Assistant Director	Lucas Esperanza-Goodman
Assistant Production Designer	Ali Roustaei
Assistant Cinematographer	Matt Johnson

Special Thanks

Sheila Carrillo
Abel Garcia
Alex Marlow
Annie Loui
The Chemka Clan
(especially Jennifer Metcalf and Carolyn Ott for their stories)
Bigg Robb
Lori Southerlend
Anahid Nazarian
Carmen Castillo
María "Tunín" Trinidad
Susan Dajose
Cande y Antonio
Charlotte Vartanian
Chloe Vartanian



HUMAN ERROR

Written by Eric Pfeffinger

Directed by Jane Page

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Coming in 2021

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Elftmann Scholarship
Chantrell Lewis

Medici Circle Scholarship
Heather Lee Echeverria
Avery Evans
Qianru Li
Summer Session

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Abel Garcia
Andrew Landeros

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Rebecca Rodriguez

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Qianru Li
Carina Negrete

Bette & Steven Warner Scholarship
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Allyana Abonador
Maya Efrat
Avery Evans
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Katherine Hay
Estevan Hernandez
Ariella Kvashny
Justine Rafael
Tori Stamm
Ciarra Stroud
Liana Veratudela

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Marcus Beeman, MSO
Ciara Holbach, Department Analyst

CLAIRE TREVOR SCHOOL OF THE ARTS PRODUCTION STAFF

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Assistant Production Manager	Shih-Wei Carrasco-Wu
Production Consultant	David Murakami
Costume Shop Manager	Julie Keen-Leavenworth
Electrics/Lighting Supervisor	Joe Forehand
Sound Supervisor	Jeff Polunas
Properties Supervisor	Pamela Marsden
Shop Foreman	Geronimo Guzmán
Master Carpenter	Dimitri Soto
Scenic Artist	Christine Salama
Costume Shop Staff	Yen Le Trang Teresa Marchand Mary Bergot
Director of Space Planning & Facilities	Jeff Stube
Box Office Manager	David Walker-Doyle
Director of Marketing & Communications	Jaime DeJong
Graphic Designer	Emily Zheng

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Brown Bag Theatre Company

<http://brownbagtheatre.wixsite.com/brownbag-theatre>



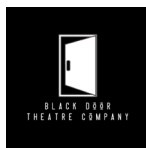
Counter-Balance Theater

<http://counterbalancetheater.com>



Improv Revolution

<https://improvrevolution.org>



The Black Door Theatre Company

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Theatre Woks

<https://www.facebook.com/UCITheatreWoks/>



Brick Theatre Company

<https://bricktheatreco.wixsite.com/home>



30 Plays in 60 Minutes - Schrodinger's Cast

<https://www.facebook.com/SchrodingersCast/>



Director Class Projects

More information at <https://drama.arts.uci.edu/>



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Stephen Barker, Dean

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 1-Dec. 11	Exhibition: <i>Life Worth Living</i>	Art
May 24-Jun. 12	Theatre in Flux: Theatrical Design Reimagined	Drama
June 1-11	Mimosas After the Funeral	Art
June 3-6	The Coup de Comedy Global Improvisation Initiative 2021	Drama
June 3-18	UCI Drama: <i>To Keep Our Roots Alive</i>	Drama
June 12	UCI Commencement	All

All events will be presented online

View the full schedule of events at www.arts.uci.edu



www.arts.uci.edu



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