

**HYDE PARK THEATRE**  
**2020 SUMMER PLAYREADING SERIES**  
**in association with ScriptWorks**  
**presents**  
**THIRTEEN WAYS**  
**OF LOOKING AT A BLACKBIRD**  
**by Rita Anderson**

**September 8, 2020**

**PLAYWRIGHT**

**Rita Anderson** (she/her) is a published and award-winning writer with an MFA Poetry and an MA Playwriting. Rita is Dramatists Guild Regional Representative (Austin/San Antonio) and went on scholarship to The O'Neill. Her play *Frantic is the Carousel* was the National Partners American Theatre nominee, and Rita won the Ken Ludwig Playwriting Award, the top national prize from The Kennedy Center for "Best Body of Work." She has had over a hundred productions and as many literary publications. *Early Liberty*, *Final Conversations*, and *The 27 Club*, internationally published at [www.offthewallplays.com](http://www.offthewallplays.com), are on their "Best Selling Plays" list, and Rita had a playwriting residency with HBMG Foundation at Creede Repertory Theatre (CRT). But the highlight of Rita's emerging career so far was sitting on a playwriting panel with Christopher Durang. Rita was Poetry Editor of the literary journal at the University of New Orleans, and both of her poetry books—*The Entropy of Rocketman* (Finishing Line Press) and *Watched Pots (A Lovesong to Motherhood)*—have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Her work has won the Houston Poetry Festival, the Gerreighty Prize, the Robert F. Gibbons Poetry Award, the Cheyney Award, and an award from the Academy of American Poets. Contact Rita at her website [www.rita-anderson.com](http://www.rita-anderson.com).

**DIRECTOR**

**Simone Raquel Alexander** (she/her) is a Dallas native with Austin and Louisiana roots. She is a freelance artist, arts administrator, arts advocate, and Producing Artistic Director of New Manifest Theatre Company. Simone's

personal artistic vision is dedicated to sharing the art of the people of today through storytelling from a diversity of uniquely specific voices, styles, and perspectives in contemporary theatre. Thanks to my supportive community of family and friends and my wonderful partner, Nehemiah. Check out everything Simone and New Manifest are doing at [simoneraquelalexander.blog](http://simoneraquelalexander.blog) and [newmanifest.org](http://newmanifest.org).

**CAST & CREW**

**Michelle Alexander (Sherry)** (she/her) is an Austin native and is excited to spend some time in this Zoom workshop! She has appeared in several productions around Austin in a variety of theatres, most recently in ZACH Theatre's *Notes From The Field* as a variety of characters; in *Saul Paul's Alien Adventure* at Scottish Rite Theatre; and in *Single Black Female* at Ground Floor Theatre, written by the incomparable Lisa B Thompson. She was previously seen in *RapUnzel* with BrownBoy Productions at Austin Scottish Rite; as Mrs. Fezziwig/Cratchit in ZACH's *Christmas Carol*; and in ZACH's *Mary Poppins and Singin' in the Rain*. Enjoy the ride! [malexander80.wixsite.com/choct](http://malexander80.wixsite.com/choct)

**Hayley Armstrong (Blanca)** (she/her) is thrilled to be working with Hyde Park Theatre on this play. She most recently appeared in *Saul Paul's Alien Adventure* with the Austin Scottish Rite Theater and is a company member with The Vortex Repertory Company where she has appeared in such shows as *Vampyress*, *Terminus*, (B. Iden Payne-Outstanding Drama/Austin Critic's Table-Best Production) *Alice's Wonderland*, *Sing, Muse* (B. Iden Payne-Best

Original Score/Cast Performance), and *Click* (a live and virtual version) by Jacqueline Goldfinger. She has also appeared in Shrewd Productions' *Hold Me Well* and in *Requiem for Tesla* with the Rude Mechs.

**Sammy Jo Cienfuegos (stage directions)** (she/her) is a senior creative writing major at St. Edward's University. She grew up in Brownsville, Texas, bordering Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico, where she was first introduced to theatre. Cienfuegos has a deep love for every nut and bolt that comes along with theatre, with a special affinity for playwriting, and has been a part of play workshops on and off campus, in and out of Zoom.

**Eva McQuade (Claudia)** (she/her/they) has appeared in recent productions including *good friday* (New Manifest Theatre Company & The Vortex); *Más Cara* (Vortex Rep/Teatro Vivo); *Lady Macbeth and Her Pal Megan* (Shrewd Productions, B. Iden Payne award recipient); *Last: An Extinction Comedy* (Vortex Repertory Theatre, B. Iden Payne award nomination); *If Wishes Were Fishes* (Pollyanna Theatre Company); *My Big Fat Bahookie* (Renaissance Austin/Vortex Rep, B. Iden Payne award nomination); *Aye, No!* (Teatro Vivo, B. Iden Payne award nomination); *The Language Archive* (Different Stages, B. Iden Payne award recipient); and *Henry V* (The Baron's Men). I look forward to what the future holds for the theatre, and my place in it. John Steinbeck said, "The theater is the only institution in the world which has been dying for four thousand years and has never succumbed," and I wholeheartedly believe this.

**Kelsey Moringy (stage manager)** (she/her) is a born and raised unicorn of Austin, TX. She studied Performance & Production at Texas State University with an emphasis in stage management & directing. Past HPT shows include FronteraFest and ScriptWorks' *Out of Ink*. Other shows include *Next To Normal*, *Fun Home*, *Angels In America*, *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*, *Dex & Abby*, *TRANSom*, and *There & Back*. Kelsey has been lucky enough to work with other local talent such as Theatre Synesthesia, Penfold Theatre Company, and the sexy geniuses behind Agent Andromeda.

**Megan Thornton (dramaturg)** (she/her) is the literary manager at Hyde Park Theatre. She loves working on new plays.

**Cyndi Williams (Kat)** (she/her) is an Austin-based actor and writer. She was seen last season hobbling around slowly in Hyde Park Theatre's *A Doll's House, Part Two*. Other recent performances include *The Book of Will*, *The Immigrant*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Bloomsday* at Austin Playhouse, where she is a member of the Acting Company. Her Daily Gratitudes on Facebook were workshopped online this spring and are available as a podcast from Austin Playhouse. Film work includes *Room* (2005), *Temple Grandin* and *The Leftovers* on HBO, and her voice work includes *Poison Ivy* and other roles in DC Universe Online.

## SPECIAL THANKS

Christi Moore

Lisa Scheps

Logan Butcher and Madison Sutton of The Quarantine Series

## HPT 2019-2020 Writers' Group

Rita Anderson  
Jenny Connell Davis  
Aimee Gonzalez  
Briandaniel Oglesby  
Greg Romero

**HPT**  
THEATRE  
**Hyde Park**

