

# LA MAMA

EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB

in association with Skysaver Productions present

## *There's Blood at the Wedding*

Created, Designed and Directed by Theodora Skipitares

Composer, Musician, Lyricist \* Sxip Shirey

Books created by Theodora Skipitares



Ellen Stewart Theatre  
66 East 4th Street, NYC, 10003  
May 17 - June 3, 2018

# THERE'S BLOOD AT THE WEDDING

Created, Designed and Directed by Theodora Skipitares

Composer, Musician, Lyricist \* Sxip Shirey

Books created by Theodora Skipitares

Set Design by Donald Eastman and Theodora Skipitares

Dramaturg Andrea Balis

Lighting Design by Yi-Chung Chen

Production Stage Manager Karen Oughtred

Video Design by Kay Hines

Puppet Construction/Technical Design by Jane Catherine Shaw

## Scenic Artists

Piotr Gawelko, Gian Marco Lo Forte, Taylor Clayton-Brooks,

Nishan Ganimian, Brian Glover, Chris Ignacio

Costume Advisor Kim Jenkins

Intern Nia Nation

Press Representative Jonathan Slaff

\*Note from the composer: The lyrics to "*When I Put My Baby In the Ground*" are derived from the collective language of the mothers' whose children have been killed by police.

## CAST (in alphabetical order)

Nishan Ganimian	Additional Puppeteer
Chris Ignacio	Lead Puppeteer
Alexa Jordan	Narrator/Performer
Onome	Singer/Storyteller
Jane Catherine Shaw	Lead Puppeteer
Eric Lawrence Taylor	Narrator/Performer
Kāli Therrien	Additional Puppeteer
Tom Walker	Narrator/Performer

## Recorded Voices:

Noreen Crayton (Mothers), Tim Schellenbaum (Father)

This play was inspired by Lorca's *Blood Wedding*. It's not the plot of *Blood Wedding* that connects these contemporary stories to Lorca, but rather the tragedy that lies at the heart of Lorca's play. The story of a mother's loss of a son to a cycle of violence is both ancient and unfortunately all too contemporary.

## SCENES

Prologue: Lorca  
Scene 1: Mother and Son  
Scene 2: The Book of Philando Castile ("What's Left of a Man")  
Scene 3: Lullaby ("All Babies Must Cry")  
Scene 4: The Book of Amadou Diallo  
Scene 5: The Book of Sandra Bland  
Scene 6: Mother and Son  
Scene 7: The Book of Sean Bell  
Scene 8: Wedding  
Scene 9: The Book of Justine Damond  
Scene 10: The Book of Eric Garner  
Scene 11: Wool, red wool.  
Scene 12: Mothers Protest Song ("When I Put My Baby in the Ground")  
Scene 13: Funeral  
Epilogue: Lorca

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

This past year, two things happened:

One, I was struggling with the research for my next play, trying to express, through the use of performing objects, the stories of some of the men and women that have been killed by police violence in the U.S. in the past few years. I was focusing on six of the several dozen cases: Sean Bell, Philando Castile, Sandra Bland, Justine Damond, Amadou Diallo, among them.

Secondly, I had wanted for several years to take a popular artist bookmaking class at Pratt Institute where I teach. The class, taught by Robbin Silverberg, is small and always full. Last fall I was able to take the class. Within a couple of weeks, something clicked. I started making what I call "performing books", objects (often of non-traditional materials) that unfold in time. I began to experiment with a body camera worn on my chest while my hands helped move the story along inside the parts of the book. The camera livestreamed the video on a projected wall. The books themselves became the archive of the research process, including their visual imagery.

With *There's Blood at the Wedding*, I am at the edge of a major new phase of my work. I am searching for new and unfamiliar forms of storytelling, with the ensemble and especially with my collaborator, composer Sxip Shirey.

**THEODORA SKIPITARES** (Director & Set Design) is an interdisciplinary artist and theater director based in New York. Trained as a sculptor and theater designer, she began creating personal solo performances in the late 1970's, which revolved around the use of handmade objects that were worn on her body. Gradually, she introduced small 3-dimensional representations of herself into these performances, which she understood (later) to be puppets. She has created 25 works featuring as many as 300 puppet figures, live music, film, video and documentary texts. These projects include *Under The Knife*, a site-specific history of medicine and *Body of Crime*, a history of women in prison. In 2014, she devised *The Chairs*, a reflection on Ionesco's absurdist classic, and in 2016, she created *Six Characters*, a response to Pirandello's play.

Skipitares has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, UNIMA, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Rockefeller Fellowship and a McKnight Playwriting Fellowship, among others. Her visual work has been exhibited widely in the U.S., Europe, and Asia, most recently at the Whitney Museum. She has worked frequently in India as a Fulbright Fellow, as well as in Vietnam, Cambodia. Korea and Iran. Skipitares is Associate Professor at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York.

**SXIP SHIREY** (Composer, Musician, Lyricist) is a NYC based performing composer, working in theater, circus, dance and film. Shirey is currently an artist and residence at National Sawdust, where he presented his evening length work *Latency* at this year's Ferus Festival. He is the composer and music director of the internationally touring circus arts productions, *LIMBO* and *LIMBO Unhinged*, which recently finished a 2 months run at the Sydney Opera House. Shirey teaches workshops at the Norwegian Theater Academy and in NYC in "object oriented composition". This year Shirey has two new immersive choir pieces, *The Gauntlet*, premiering at the Cleveland Museum of Art and The Sydney Opera House that he has developed with choreographer Coco Karol.

Shirey is a 2012 United States Artists Simon Fellowship winner. He has presented at *TED Breath*, *Music*, *Passion*, composed music for Neil Gaiman's short film *Statuesque* and created sound design for the app version of *Rules of Summer* by Shaun Tan. Shirey has composed numerous times for Theodora Skipitares.

**DONALD EASTMAN** (Co-Set Design) designed Theodora Skipitares' productions of *Under The Knife*, *Prometheus*, *The Chairs* and *Six Characters*. Upcoming productions include the premiers of *BLUE* a new opera by composer Jeanine Tesori and librettist Tazewell Thompson for the Glimmerglass Festival and *Jubilee*, written and directed by Tazewell Thompson at Arena Stage. This summer he returns to the San Francisco Opera Merola Program with his designs for Stravinsky's *A Rake's Progress*.

**ANDREA BALIS** (Dramaturg) has been working with Ms Skipitares for the past 30 years as a lyricist, writer and dramaturg. In addition to her work with Skysaver Productions Ms. Balis teaches in the interdisciplinary Studies Program at John Jay College.

**YI-CHUNG CHEN** (Lighting Design) originally from Taiwan, holds an MFA in Lighting Design from Boston University. She is currently working as Lighting Supervisor at Martha Graham Dance Company and Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, and consistently designing lights for play, dance, and live performance at various venues. Her design can be seen at New York City Center, Chautauqua Theater Company, Yangtze Repertory Theatre, Shadowland Stages, Theater for the New City, New Ohio Theater, IRT Theater, NY Fringe, Dixon Place, LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, Stella Adler Studio of Acting, Judson Memorial Church etc. [www.yichungchen.com](http://www.yichungchen.com)

**KAREN OUGHTRED** (Production Stage Manager) is a multidisciplinary theater artist, teacher and production stage manager. Stage Management includes: La MaMa, The New School, BAM, HERE, The Public, PS122, Soho Rep, Town Hall, Ohio Theater, 3LD and the National Museum of the American Indian. Karen is a writer, director and performer of interactive museum theatre for youth and seniors for the Mt Vernon Hotel Museum and the Jay Heritage Center, Rye. She co-created *The Memory Project*, storytelling through visual arts, theater & puppetry with Spica Wobbe, where they conduct workshops at senior centers. She is thrilled to be working with Theodora again. [www.facebook.com/thememoryproject.storytelling/](https://www.facebook.com/thememoryproject.storytelling/)

**KAY HINES** (Video Design) has worked as a media artist in video and installation work since the mid-1970s, and as a video cameraperson and editor since 1981, when she and husband, artist, Dieter Froese established a video production company, Dekart Video, specializing in media services for artists and Independents. Hines has received various awards for video and artwork including, an NEA, a NYFA, and a Cine Golden Eagle. She is currently Associate Professor in the Department of Digital Arts, Pratt Institute where she has served on the faculty for the past 15 years.

**JANE CATHERINE SHAW** (Puppet Construction/Technical Design, Lead Puppeteer) is a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, and graduated on the Dean's List with an MFA in Directing from Brooklyn College. She is Curator of La MaMa's yearly Puppet Slam. Ms. Shaw was puppetry co-director and master puppeteer for Mabou Mines' *Peter and Wendy* and built and directed the puppetry sequence for Lee Breuers' *Dollhouse*. She often worked with Ellen Stewart to re-create costumes from historic La MaMa shows from the 60's and 70's. Ms. Shaw was nominated for a 2014 New York Innovative Theatre Award for her work with Theodora Skipitares on *The Chairs*. She creates and directs her own work for puppet theatre, among them, *FRAMED: The Mother Goose Chronicles*, *Calpurnia*, *Coyote Comes To The Big City*, *The Blue Marble*, *Following the Wind*, *Folktales of Asia and Africa*, *Pelandok the Mousedeer*, as well as adult works: *Thirst: Memory of Water*, *The Lone Runner*, *Bed of Light*, and *Universe Expanding*, all of which premiered at La MaMa. She is a member of the La MaMa Kids Committee, helping to grow sophisticated, age appropriate theatrical work, and workshops for young audiences.

**KIM JENKINS** (Costume Advisor) specializes in the sociocultural and historical influences behind why we wear what we wear, specifically addressing how politics, psychology, race and gender shapes the way we 'fashion' our identity. Based in New York, she is a Visiting Assistant Professor at Pratt Institute, Part-time Lecturer at Parsons School of Design and co-hosts a traveling workshop entitled "Fashion & Justice."

**TAYLOR CLAYTON-BROOKS** (Scenic Artist) is a Queens-based performance artist and sculptor whose work explores themes of gender, identity, body commodification, fashion, and the politics of homoeroticism. As a designer and fabricator, he has contributed to projects for Broadway, network television, and Vogue International, as well as serving as Theodora Skipitares' scenic artist for two of her former productions, *Six Characters, a Family Portrait*, and *Blood Wedding*. He has exhibited and performed at the Prague Quadrennial, the Whitney, La MaMa, Five Myles, and Dixon Place, and has upcoming works in partnership with the Queens Museum, Flux Factory, MOMA PS1, and Grace Exhibition space.

**NISHAN GANIMIAN** (Scenic Artist, Additional Puppeteer) is excited to be part of his first production at La MaMa Theatre. His recent design credits include *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* with The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. He has recently finished his undergraduate career at Pratt Institute studying Interior Design and Performance Studies. His affinity for collecting and passion for performing has transitioned into a drag persona named Raggedy Stan, and believe me he's a riot.

**CHRIS IGNACIO** (Scenic Artist, Lead Puppeteer) is an NY based theatre artist, musician, puppeteer, producer and educator. He has toured nationally and abroad since earning his BFA from The Boston Conservatory at Berklee. He is a current Culture Push Fellow, and Queens Council on the Arts: Community Engagement Commissioning grant recipient for his project, *Co-written*, which involves songwriting with young people of color. He is dedicated to working with marginalized communities toward an empowering self-actualization through theater and music. He is grateful to be working again with Theodora, Sxip and the rest of this incredible team.

**ALEXA JORDAN** (Narrator/Performer) is a recent graduate of Vassar College, Class of 2017! She is so excited to be a part of *There's Blood at the Wedding*. Alexa works with the International Human Rights Arts Festival, as their social media and volunteer coordinator. The Human Rights Arts Festival will be producing her first full-length play, *Fine* (an original drama about a therapist and her patients) this fall!

**ONOME** (Singer/Storyteller) (pronounced "awe nuh MAY") is a vocalist, composer, and interdisciplinary sound artist who incorporates improvisation into her practice to expand consciousness, creativity, and personal development. She is an artist-in-residence at Carnegie Hall as a core member of the vocal improvisation lab and ensemble, *Moving Star*. She received her MFA in Performance Studies at Pratt Institute. As Artistic Director for Lush Tongue, her work encompasses vocal ensembles,



sound healing, singing immersions, workshops, vocal coaching, retreats, and concerts. She facilitates community vocal immersions at concert halls, galleries, museums, schools, cultural centers, shelters, prisons, parks, churches, wherever voices gather. For more info, go to [onome.org](http://onome.org).

**ERIC LAWRENCE TAYLOR** (Narrator/Performer) is a recent graduate of Fordham Theater where he is the Denzel Washington Scholar of 2018.

**KĀLI THERRIEN** (Additional Puppeteer) is a puppeteer. She began performing as the youngest of five siblings. Now she performs with Bread & Puppet Theater, Circus Amok! and Alice Farley Dance Theater. Kāli is a collaborator in *Everything is Fine*, which ran at Starr Bar in February. In April she was a guest director in *Object Work* at the Magnet Theater. Most recently she created *BRAIN thing*, her thesis performance exploring language and storytelling, for Pratt Institute's inaugural M.F.A. program in Performance Studies. This summer Kāli is headed to the O'Neill National Puppetry Conference as a resident company member. Find her online @y2kali.

**TOM WALKER** (Narrator/Performer) made his La MaMa debut in 1985 with Julian Beck in *A Beckett Trilogy*, directed by Gerald Thomas. Tom has worked with The Living Theatre for 47 years. He is the company's archivist. He recently participated in The Living Theatre's new creation, *Electric Awakening*, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He has also worked with Reza Abdoh, Frederick Neumann/Mabou Mines, Motus, The Assembly, The TEAM, Fondazione Morra (Naples, Italy), and Grusomhetens Teatr. Recent articles by Tom on theater experiences and criticism have appeared in "Performing Arts Journal" and, upcoming, "European Stages". (CUNY Grad. Ctr.). He received a Fulbright Scholarship in 2016 for archive work in Italy.

## THANK YOU

Ellen Fisher and Dawn Saito for Movement Consultancy, Gwen Carr and the Eric Garner family, Amy Jung, Maiko Kikuchi, Mia Yoo, Mary Fulham, Beverly Petty, Mark Tambella, Juan Merchan, Donald Eastman, Brian Glover, Tim Schellenbaum, Kiku Sakai, Denise Greber, La MaMa and the cast and crew.

*There's Blood at the Wedding* was made possible in part by funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, The Puffin Foundation, and New Music USA.

## The audience makes all the difference!

This production is registered with the New York Innovative Theatre Awards, new awards specifically for Off-Off-Broadway theatre, and your vote will make a big difference.

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# LA MAMA



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*Rendering: 74 East 4th St.*

La MaMa's historic, landmark building at 74 East 4th Street is undergoing an urgently needed complete renovation and restoration to preserve the historic façade, create building-wide ADA accessibility, and provide much needed performance, exhibition and community space for decades to come.

La MaMa, founded by Ellen Stewart in 1961, has been on east 4th Street since 1967. La MaMa embraces every person in its community and is legendary as the place where new artists of all nations, cultures, races, and identities are given opportunities. It is the place where art begins.

To learn more about the renovation, or to make a donation please visit [www.lamama.org/remakeaworld](http://www.lamama.org/remakeaworld)



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May 17 - June 3, 2018

Ellen Stewart Theatre

**La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival**

May 10 - June 3, 2018

Ellen Stewart Theatre & The Downstairs

**La MaMa Kids - Dance Workshop with Ellen Fisher**

Saturday May 26, 2018 at 11am

The Downstairs

**Brooklyn United**

June 7 - 10, 2018

Ellen Stewart Theatre

**La MaMa Squirts: Generations of Queer Performance**

June 8 - June 10, 2018

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Ellen Stewart Theatre