



NEW  
VILLAGE  
ARTS

This is the playbill for:

# [title of show]\*

an original Broadway Musical

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY **Jeff Bowen**  
BOOK BY **Hunter Bell**  
DIRECTED BY **Desirée Clarke Miller**  
MUSIC DIRECTED BY **Erin Vanderhyde**  
MOVEMENT BY **Kevin "Blax" Burroughs**

*\*yes, that's actually the title!*

**AUG 8-SEP 21 / 2025**

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We acknowledge that The Dea Hurston New Village Arts Center operates on the unceded land of the Payómkawichum (Pye-om-ko-wi-chom) (Luiseño) and Kumeyaay peoples. We further acknowledge that NVA was founded upon exclusions and erasures of many Indigenous peoples, including those who are the traditional Custodians and First people of the land on which we work, play, gather, share, and learn. New Village Arts honors the over 20,000 current tribal members living in the San Diego area, and promises to create a safe space for the local Native Communities to share the art, accomplishments, and history of their peoples. This is a starting point in our efforts to be more active in our local communities and we acknowledge that we have much further to go.



PRESENTS

# [title of show]\*

an original Broadway Musical

## [this is the cast]

BECCA MYERS.....[as Susan Blackwell]  
TOMMY TRAN.....[as Jeff Bowen]  
CALEB WOHLGEMUTH.....[as Hunter Bell]  
KYLIE YOUNG.....[as Heidi Blickenstaff]  
ESMÉ BIRNDORF.....[Female Swing]  
CHRISTIAN DUARTE.....[Male Swing]  
NATHAN WAITS.....[as Voice of Larry]

## [these are the creatives]

DESIRÉE CLARKE MILLER.....[Director]  
ERIN VANDERHYDE GROSS.....[Music Director]  
KEVIN 'BLAX' BURROUGHS.....[Movement Consultant]  
NATHAN WAITS.....[Stage Manager]  
ATRIA PIROUZMAND.....[Scenic Designer]  
ALI ROUSTAEI.....[Scenic Designer]  
JANELLE ARNOLD.....[Costume Designer]  
SAMMY Z WEBSTER.....[Lighting Designer]  
EVAN EASON.....[Sound Designer]  
KENDRA BAROS.....[Assistant Stage Manager & Props Designer]  
VANESSA DURON.....[Intimacy Coordinator]  
D. CANDIS PAULE.....[Intimacy Coordinator]  
ROBERT JOHNSON.....[Rehearsal Accompanist]  
NINA GILBERT.....[Pianist/Track Creator]  
MARYKATE REEVES-HOCHE.....[Volunteer Costume Assistant]  
MARCUS RICO.....[Sound Engineer]  
ZACHARY ELLIOT.....[Scenic Painter]  
GREG ERTEL.....[Master Carpenter]

Music & Lyrics by  
**JEFF BOWEN**

Book by  
**HUNTER BELL**

\*Yes, that's really the title of the show!

## [ENSEMBLE SPONSOR]

Peggy Maher Doherty

## [SETTING]

The time is now. The day is here.

[It's a *les mis* reference. Get it?]

[Set in the present, but written in 2009...so expect flip-phone pop culture, Broadway deep cuts, and big 'early 2000s gay internet' energy.]

## [RUN TIME]

90 minutes with no intermission.

[Check out the *Little Shop of Horrors* bathroom; they're my favorite.]

[title of show] was originally produced on Broadway by Kevin McCollum, Jeffrey Seller, Roy Miller, Laura Camien, Kris Stewart, Vineyard Theatre and LAMS Productions at the Lyceum Theatre, where it opened on July 17, 2008.

Originally produced by the Vineyard Theatre, New York City, February 2006  
[title of show] was originally presented by Bridge Club Productions at the 2004 New York Musical Theatre Festival.

## NEW VILLAGE ARTS ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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NVA SUMMER INTERN

CALEB WATERS (he/him)  
FACILITY AND SCENIC ASSISTANT

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RENEE FEGAN  
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## NVA IS EXPANDING OUR BOARD!

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
please contact Kristianne  
Kurner, Founder and Executive  
Artistic Director at [kristianne@  
newvillagearts.org](mailto:kristianne@newvillagearts.org).

## [DIRECTOR'S NOTE FROM DESIREÉ CLARKE MILLER]

Dear Audience,

I'm supposed to write something  
profound here about the creative  
process, about—

Wait, what am I doing? I am writing  
about directing a show about writing  
a show, which means I'm basically—  
Hold on. Let me start over.

[clears throat]

Dear Audience,

[nervous pause]

—okay, let me just say this: watching  
our cast create this musical night  
after night has reminded me that the  
best art happens when people who  
genuinely love each other get in a room  
together and dare to be vulnerable.  
Tommy, Kylie, Caleb and Becca aren't  
just performing friendship on stage—  
they're living it, and you can feel that  
love radiating from every song, every  
joke, every moment of panic when they  
can't remember—

[sound of pages rustling]

Sorry, Becca just handed me a note that  
says I should mention something about  
"the universality of the creative struggle"  
and "how art imitates life imitates art"  
but honestly, if you want to know what  
this show is about, just watch it. We're  
literally doing it right now.



Right here.

On this stage.

In front of you...ont of you...ont of you...  
ont of you...

[looks up from page]

[sound of pencil scribbling]

Sorry, I'm literally writing this as  
the house is opening because, well,  
that's what this show is about—the  
beautiful, messy, collaborative process  
of making something together with the  
people you adore, even when you have  
no idea what you're doing.

Break a leg, everyone. (Especially you,  
audience. You're part of this too now.)

With love and organized chaos,

[signature appears to write itself]

P.S.—If anyone figures out how to  
direct a show that directs itself, please  
let me know. I'm still working on it.



## [SONG LIST]

1. "Untitled Opening Number" .....Company
2. "Two Nobodies In New York" ..... Jeff, Hunter
3. "An Original Musical" .....Jeff, Blank Paper (Hunter)
4. "Monkeys And Playbills" .....Company
5. "TheTony Award Song" ..... Jeff, Hunter
6. "Part Of It All" ..... Jeff, Hunter
7. "I Am Playing Me" ..... Heidi, Others
8. "What Kind Of Girl Is She?" ..... Heidi, Susan
9. "Die Vampire, Die!" ..... Susan, Others
10. "Filling Out The Form" .....Company
11. "Montage Part 1: September Song" .....Company
12. "Montage Part 2: Secondary Characters" .....Heidi, Susan
13. "Montage Part 3: Development Medley" .....Company
14. "Change It, Don't Change It" .....Company
15. "Awkward Photo Shoot" .....Company
16. "A Way Back To Then" .....Heidi
17. "Nine People's Favorite Thing" .....Company
18. "Finale" .....Company



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## [CAST]

### BECCA MYERS (she/they) as Susan Blackwell



Becca is a multi-hyphenate theatre artist: producer, actor, singer, director, and educator who gets joy from everything theatre! Recently credits include: Meg in *Little Women* (Moxie Theatre), Zoom in *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* (Moxie Theatre), The Witch in *Hereville, A Nu Musical* (JEWCE

Comic Experience, JFest). Becca is currently working as the Interim Literary Associate of The Old Globe Theatre and as the Producing Director of the Lipinsky Family San Diego Jewish Arts Festival. In 2018, Becca received the Sandy Fisher Award for Excellence in the Creative Arts which is awarded for exceptional work in theatre, including behind the scenes support, activism, and onstage work. @reblmyers **NVA DEBUT!**

### TOMMY TRAN (they/he) as Jeff Bowen



Tommy is a San Diego local, their favorite credits include: Cliff in *Cabaret* (A-List Theatre Company); Graffiti Pete in *In the Heights* (SDMT); Roger in *Rent* (SDMT Academy); Steve/Jonathan in *Stranger Sings* (Oceanside Theatre Company); Texas in *Trash the Musical* (Playwrights Project); Ash Williams in *Evil Dead: The Musical* (Tenth Avenue Arts Center). In their free time, they enjoy making hot chocolate, drinking hot chocolate, and talking about hot chocolate. The best hot chocolate is one that is shared with friends. **NVA DEBUT!**

### CALEB WOHLGEMUTH (he/him) as Hunter Bell



Caleb is thrilled to be making his debut with New Village Arts! Recent/Favorite credits include *Beauty and the Beast* (Center Stage Productions), *Hello, Dolly!* (Patio Playhouse), and *Something Rotten!* (Center Stage Productions). Caleb is also a current Music Performance major studying voice under Matt Fallesen at Palomar College, and has plans to transfer to a four-year performance program. **NVA DEBUT!**

### KYLIE YOUNG (she/her) as Heidi Blickenstaff



Kylie is beyond thrilled to be back at New Village Arts! She graduated from UCSD with a BA in Theatre. Some of her favorite roles include: Katherine in *The Taming* and Miss Wilkinson in *Move Over Mrs Markham* (Scripps Ranch Theatre), Laker Girl in *Spamalot* (Welk Theatre), Megan in *Puffs* (Tenth Avenue Arts), Dora Bailey/Ensemble in *Singin' in the Rain* (New Village Arts), and Lina in *Cry It Out* (Moxie Theatre). She would like to thank her loved ones for supporting her in all of her performing endeavors! Follow her on Instagram and TikTok: @strangesparkles

### ESMÉ BIRNDORF (she/her), Female Swing



Esmé, originally from San Diego and a recent graduate of the Chicago College of Performing Arts, is thrilled to be making her New Village Arts debut in *[title of show]*! Some of her favorite prior roles include Alice in *Alice by Heart* (OB Playhouse), Jane Doe in *Ride the Cyclone* (Trinity Theatre Company), and Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* (Encore! Theatre). Esmé would also like to thank this incredible cast and brilliant creative team for all of their support and for making this such a wonderful experience. **NVA DEBUT!**

### CHRISTIAN DUARTE (he/him), Male Swing



Christian Duarte is tremendously excited to be making his New Village Arts debut. After graduating from Coronado School of the Arts (CoSA), the San Diego native has received his B.A. in Theatre and Community from UC Santa Barbara. You may have seen him in Cygnet Theatre's *La Cage aux Folles* as Hannah from Hamburg and Teatro San Diego's & Oceanside Theatre Company's production of *Songs from a New World* as Man #2. **NVA DEBUT!**



Make sure to follow **New Village Arts** on social media & follow our Instagram page for all things happening on the **White Family Next Stage!**

@nvanextstage

THE WHITE FAMILY  
**NEXT  
 STAGE**  
 at the Dea Hurston New Village Arts Center



**DESIRÉE CLARKE MILLER (she/her), Director**

Desirée is a director, actor, producer and the Executive Artistic Director of MOXIE Theatre in San Diego, CA. She received her BFA in Acting from AMDA: College and Conservatory of the Performing Arts and is a graduate of the British American Drama Academy. Desirée is also a 2024 Old Globe Theatre Classical Directing Fellow. Select directing credits include Powers New Voices Festival: Community Voices (The Old Globe), *The Counter*, *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord*, *Man and Moon*, and *Mother of the Maid* (MOXIE Theatre), *Monsters Of The American Cinema* (Diversions Theatre), *Gruesome Playground Injuries* (Reading, Coyote StageWorks - Desert Theatre League Award). Desirée also specializes in devised theatre with an emphasis on vulnerable populations. She is currently directing and co-writing a new play titled *This Time* as part of a partnership with Voices Of Our City Choir, La Jolla Playhouse and MOXIE Theatre. Follow her on IG: @thedesireeclarkemiller

**ERIN VANDERHYDE GROSS (she/her), Music Director**

Erin is excited to be back at New Village Arts wearing a different hat! She graduated from SDSU with a bachelors in Theater and Music. She is extremely grateful to New Village Arts for giving a

lot of her first such as her first professional show as Enid/Kate in *Legally Blonde* the musical and now her first regional musical direction production credit. While 2025 has been a year of Music Directing (5th production this year) Erin can still be seen performing around San Diego. Her most recent performance at NVA was in *Color Purple* as a church lady/Sophia understudy where she got to go on and perform that role. She would like to give a huge shout out to her husband, Chris and her son August. I love you both so much.

**KEVIN 'BLAX' BURROUGHS (he/him), Movement Consultant**

Artistic Director at Oceanside Theatre Company, Kevin is described as a "Theatrical Swiss Army Knife" for his roles as performer, director, choreographer and lighting designer. He is honored to return to New Village Arts Theatre as the Movement Consultant for [title of show]. He was last seen working with NVA on *The Color Purple* as the Lighting Designer & Assistant Choreographer. Select Choreographer/Movement Credits include *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (SDMT), *First Date* (OnStage Playhouse), *The Wiz*, *Songs For A New World*, *In Pieces* (Teatro San Diego), *James & The Giant Peach* (Southwestern College), *Carrie The Musical*, *Urinetown*, and others. He is the 2022 Craig Noel recipient of the Outstanding

Specialty Award (recognition for his entire body of work in 2022), a Craig Noel nominated director (First Date), multi-nominee and winner of Broadway World Regional Awards, Co-Founder/Artistic Director for Teatro San Diego, and Resident Lighting Designer for the Southwestern College Dance Department. Other Credits include Oceanside Theatre Company, Carlsbad Playreaders, Moonlight Stage Productions, CCAE Theatricals, San Diego Rep, Cygnet Theatre and others. IG: @blaxparadise

**NATHAN WAITS (he/him), Stage Manager, Voice of Larry, Music Technician**

Nathan has been stage managing and building sets for productions around San Diego for about 10 years. Previously, he has served as the master carpenter for *1222 Oceanfront: A Black Family Christmas* and *Fun Home*, and stage manager for *Desert Rock Garden*, Jez Butterworth's *The Ferryman*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Doubt*, *Fun Home*, *The 39 Steps*, *8-Track: The Sounds of the '70s*, *Miracle on 34th Street: A Live Musical Radio Play*, *The Half Life of Marie Curie*, Sandra Delgado's *La Havana Madrid*, and *The Mountaintop* (New Village Arts). He served as the resident set builder for Scripps Ranch Theatre (*Lucky Stiff*, *Extreme Home Makeover*, *The Outsider*, *I Hate Hamlet*, *The Taming*, and more), the master carpenter for The Roustabouts (*Guntopia*, *Hand to God*, *True West*), and the resident set builder/designer for Sage Creek High School (*Les Misérables*, *Chicago*, *Legally Blonde*, *Into the Woods*, *Shakespeare in Love* and many more). Enjoy the show!

**ATRIA PIROUZMAND (she/her), Scenic Designer**

Atria is a Persian, Southern California-based scenic and production designer. She received her Master's degree from San Diego State University. This production marks her debut at New Village Arts. Her past design and co-design credits include *A New Brain* at the Prebys Stage; *Little Women* and *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* at Moxie Theatre; *Measure for Measure* at New Swan Shakespeare Festival; *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Ziggy*, *Stardust and Me*, and *Love's Labor's Lost* at the Prebys Stage; and *Into the Woods* at Claire Trevor Theatre.

**ALI ROUSTAEI (he/him), Scenic Designer**

Ali is a scenic designer based in Southern California. His recent credits include *Rent*, *Lucky Me*, *Ziggy*, *Stardust & Me*, and *Love's Labor's Lost* at San Diego State University. Other design work includes *Little Women* and *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* (Moxie Theatre), *Mariology* (Critical Mass Performance Group), *Into the Woods* (UC Irvine), and *Future Tripping* (LOFT Ensemble). Ali holds an MFA in Design and Technology from San Diego State University and a BA in Film & Media Studies and Drama from the University of California, Irvine. Visit: aliroustaei.com

**JANELLE ARNOLD (she/her), Costume Designer**

Janelle was born and raised in Portland, Oregon with a background in Apparel Design from Marist College in New York. She has showcased size inclusive ready to wear apparel collections in both Fashion Week San Diego and Portland Fashion Week. Her costume design journey began in Portland, where she worked with World Stage Theatre for their productions of *Who I am Celebrating Me* and *Once on This Island*. Since moving to San Diego she has worked at Sesame Place as a Costume Specialist, the Moxie as a Dresser for *Little Women*, and Costume Designer for *The Counter*. This is her first production with New Village Arts Theatre and she is very excited to join this team of creatives!

**SAMMY Z WEBSTER (he/they), Lighting Designer**

Sammy Webster is a Lighting Designer from Nashville, Tennessee. They have earned a Master of Fine Arts from San Diego State University in Lighting Design and Technology; as well as a Bachelor of Science in TV and Film Production from Middle Tennessee State University. Recent designs include:



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the world premiere of both *When We Are Found* at Penumbra Theatre, and *Cleopatra* at Moxie Theatre, *A New Brain*, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*, and more. Sammy has been the lighting assistant at venues such as: La Jolla Playhouse, Tennessee Performing Arts Center, and Cygnet Theatre. They are an adjunct professor of lighting design at Grossmont Community College and a freelance designer for stories and events they are passionate about. "A Way Back to Then makes me cry every time; keep that inner child alive." To see more of Sammy's work, visit: [Szwdesign.com](http://Szwdesign.com)

#### **KENDRA BAROS (she/her), Assistant Stage Manager & Props Designer**

She is a BA Theatre graduate of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. She has stage managed *I Need A Beer* with the San Diego Fringe Festival, and *A Hearty Poway Legend* for Poway's 60th anniversary. As well as ASM for *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* at Moxie. In College she was an ASM for *Our Town* and *Shelter* at Cal Poly SLO; and is ecstatic to return to NVA for *[title of show]* after working on *La Havana Madrid* earlier this year!

#### **VANESSA DURON (she/her), Intimacy Coordinator**

Vanessa is a queer identifying Intimacy Coordinator, director and actor based in San Diego. Her credits for Intimacy Coordination include *Little Women* (MOXIE Theatre), *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* (MOXIE Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet* (Southwestern College), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Southwestern College), *Cleopatra* (MOXIE Theatre), *Notes On Killing Seven Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Board Members* (MOXIE Theatre).

#### **D. CANDIS PAULE (she/her), Intimacy Coordinator**

D. Candis Paule has worked throughout San Diego as an advocate for actors, and a liaison between actors and production for stage or on-camera scenes that involve simulated sex acts, nudity/hyper-exposed work, and/or intimate physical contact. She offers expertise in order to support the director's vision while working within the performer's personal boundaries. In addition, she works to create a safe space for sensitive subject matter when the material presents content that is possibly triggering.

#### **NINA GILBERT (she/her), Pianist/Track Creator**

Nina Gilbert has been NVA's invisible pianist behind Mary Bennet in *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, and Cosmo Brown in *Singin' in the Rain*. She music-directed *Singin' in the Rain* and *Avenue Q* for NVA, is currently music-directing *Head over Heels* for Coronado Playhouse, and serves as music director for the Congregational Church of La Jolla.

#### **MARYKATE REEVES-HOCHE (she/her), Costume Assistant**

Volunteer within the costume team permanently assigned to the theater. She enjoys working with each of the costume designers on each show as an ongoing learning opportunity. A retired scientist with a passion for textiles.

#### **EVAN EASON (he/him), Sound Designer**

Evan is thrilled to be returning to New Village Arts! Some of his previous work includes: *Miracle on 34th Street: A Live Musical Radio Play*, *The Thanksgiving Play*, *Into the Woods*, *Beehive: The 60s Musical* (New Village Arts), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Backyard Renaissance), *What the Constitution Means to Me*, *Incident at Our Lady of Perpetual Help*, *Intimate Apparel*, *The Cherry Orchard* (North Coast Repertory), *Evita*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* (Cygnet), *Eighty-Sixed*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (Diversivory), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure* (USD/The Old Globe), *Pick Me Last*, *Emily Driver's Great Race Through Time and Space* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Good Trouble* (Blindspot Collective). Evan also works at The Old Globe Theatre as the Assistant Sound Director.

#### **MARCUS RICO (he/him), Sound Engineer**

Marcus graduated from Mt. San Jacinto College with an AA in Audio Technology. Recent NVA productions include *La Havana Madrid*, *I Can Cook, Too!*, *Love, Linda*, *Miracle on 34th Street: A Live Musical Radio Play*, *The Color Purple*, *Fun Home*, *Doubt*, *Leonard Bernstein's New York* (Sound Designer/Sound Engineer), *Into the Woods* (Sound Engineer), *1222 Oceanfront: A Black Family Christmas* (Sound Engineer), *Beehive* (Sound Engineer), *Murder for Two* (Sound Engineer), *Around the World in 80 Days* (Sound Engineer), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Sound Engineer), and *The Roommate* (Co-Sound Designer).

#### **JEFF BOWEN (he/him), Music & Lyrics**

Jeff Bowen wrote the music and lyrics for and starred in the Broadway musical *[title of show]* (Obie Award). Additionally, he has written music and lyrics for *Now. Here. This.* (Vineyard Theatre), *Villains Tonight!* (Walt Disney Company), and the theme songs for the web series *[title of show]* and *Squad '85*. His songs can be heard on the original cast albums of *[title of show]* and *Now. Here. This.*, as well as *Broadway Bares Openings* and *Over the Moon: The Broadway Lullaby Project*. He is a proud member of ASCAP, AEA, the Writers Guild, the Dramatists Guild and the National Audubon Society. He serves as a faculty member of the National Theatre Institute at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center.

#### **HUNTER BELL (he/him), Book**

Hunter earned an Obie Award, a Drama League nomination, and a Tony nomination for Best Book of a Musical for the Broadway musical *[title of show]*. Other credits include books for *Now.*

*Here. This., Found* (Drama Desk Nomination, Outstanding Book of a Musical), *Silence! The Musical* (Lucille Lortel Nomination, Outstanding Musical), *Bellobration!* (Ringling Bros. Circus), *Villains Tonight!* (Disney Cruise Lines), *Other World*, and *Julie Andrews' The Great American Mousical*. He is a co-creator of the web series *the [title of show] show* and has developed television with ABC Studios. Hunter is a proud graduate and distinguished alumnus of Webster University's Conservatory of Theatre Arts, a member of the Dramatists Guild, Writers Guild, and a MacDowell Fellow. @huntbell

#### **KRISTIANNE KURNER (she/her), Founder & Executive Artistic Director**

Kristianne founded New Village Arts in 2001, and she has grown the organization from a starting budget of \$2,500 with two employees to a current budget of \$1.6 million with over 20 employees. Trained as an actor and director, she has worked on every NVA theatrical production. Her directing credits include *Awake & Sing! The Weir*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *True West*, *Sailor's Song*, *The Waverly Gallery*, *A Lie of the Mind*, and the premiere outside of Broadway and London of Jez Butterworth's *The Ferryman*. Her work has received numerous awards, including

San Diego Theatre Critics Circle and KPBS Awards for Theatre Excellence. She is the recipient of the Clare Rose Sabbatical Award from Fieldstone Leadership Network and serves on the Board of the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce. Education: BFA Theatre, College of William & Mary; MFA Acting, the Actors Studio/New School. Kristianne will be directing *The Apiary* later this season.

#### **KALI BOSTON (she/her), Artistic Producer**

Originally from Massachusetts, Kali moved to California to pursue her passion in producing and directing. After graduating from the University of California, San Diego with a BA in Theatre, Kali has been a part of many different theaters and festivals including: *The Mountaintop*, *La Havana Madrid*, *The Half-Life of Marie Curie*, *Miracle on 34th Street: A Live Musical Radio Play*, *8-TRACK: The Sounds of the '70s*, *The Color Purple*, *The 39 Steps*, *Fun Home*, *1222 Oceanfront: A Black Family Christmas* (Producer, NVA), *Jewish Arts Festival 2024* (Production Manager), *Doubt* (Production Manager), *A Weekend with Pablo Picasso* (Assistant Director, NVA), *Heathers: The Musical* (Producer/Director, Zorina Productions). Kali will be directing the hit Broadway musical *Hairspray* later here at NVA this season!

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THE WHITE FAMILY NEXT STAGE is New Village Arts' hub for dynamic events that go beyond traditional theatre. Named in honor of the White family's generous support, this space is designed to inspire creativity, connection, and lifelong learning. From improv nights to educational workshops, the Next Stage brings people together through the power of shared experiences.

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## ABOUT DEA HURSTON



New Village Arts had the profound honor of working alongside the late Dea Hurston, a visionary arts leader who passed away on July 7, 2024. For over 30 years, Dea was a driving force in San Diego's arts ecology as an underwriter, arts commissioner, and community advocate.

As a young girl, Dea was denied access to music lessons and artistic opportunities due to the racist attitudes and laws of her time. She transformed those early barriers into a lifelong mission: to open doors for others. Dea championed opportunities for women and artists of color, such as actors, directors, designers, and playwrights, and she left an indelible mark on the region's arts landscape.

In January 2023, we proudly dedicated our building as the Dea Hurston New Village Arts Center, marking it as the first

arts center in the United States outside of New York to be named in honor of a Black woman. Dea's legacy also lives on through the Dea Hurston Fellowship, which provides paid training, mentorship, and professional artistic opportunities for women, BIPOC, and other underrepresented theatre artists and students in San Diego.

While Dea's endless work in the theatre community is widely known, it is her sense of humor, wit, and strength that stay with us. You couldn't get through a conversation with her without laughing until you were in tears. Her joy was contagious, and when you needed her, Dea had a wonderful ability to make you feel like the only person in the room and gave you all of her attention.

Dea's impact endures every day, in this building, in our programs, and in the countless lives she touched.



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### 2024-2025 Dea Hurston Professional Fellows:



Lilea Alvarez

Mentored by Delicia Turner-Sonnenberg  
Photo Credit: Sai Surel



Bryttney-Mischele Salvant

Mentored by Eric Tippeconnic  
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Miki Vale

Mentored by Marc Akiyama, Kevin "Blax"  
Burroughs, and Evan Eason  
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*"I have been amazed at the quality of NVA performances, the number of performances that offer a new perspective or challenge my thinking, and I absolutely love NVA's commitment to featuring a diverse group of incredibly talented actors—from the well known to those up and coming."*  
—Peggy Maher Doherty,  
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*"We are proud to have supported NVA for 20 years and are thrilled to see how it has become a significant part of the San Diego performing arts scene."*  
—Jay & Julie Sarno



*New Village Arts holds a very special place in our hearts—it's where we got married on New Year's Eve 2023, surrounded by creativity, love, and the vibrant spirit of community. As lifelong lovers of the theatre, we are drawn to the power of storytelling to connect people, spark dialogue, and inspire change.*

*We are deeply committed to supporting New Village Arts' mission of promoting diversity and inclusivity. We believe that everyone deserves a space where they can feel seen, heard, and valued—and this theatre does just that. The arts have a unique ability to uplift and empower, especially for those who need a place to feel safe and supported.*

*New Village Arts is more than a theatre; it's a home for the human spirit. We feel honored to be part of this beautiful, bold, and inclusive community.*

—Brian & Victoria Myers

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- REACH OUT to Founder and Executive Artistic Director Kristianne Kurner at 760-845-8020 or [kristianne@newvillagearts.org](mailto:kristianne@newvillagearts.org). She's happy to meet and discuss the best options for your giving!

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