

**Upcoming performances
Fall 2022**

Pippin: The Musical

Guest director: Joey Caverly

Music Director: Chelsea Zak*

Performances: November 3, 4, 5 2022
8 p.m.

Location: Martel (Heinlein Stage)

Faculty co-advisors:

Amanda Culp and Christopher Grabowski

Senior Project Members:

Becca Chin, Alice Downer, Halle Jones,
Cameron Long, Chelsea Zak

Presented through special arrangements with Music Theater International

Sponsored by the Joan Kostick-Andrews '52 Memorial Fund for Musical Theater

Hilda

Director: Kiera Di Gaetano*

Performances: December 1, 2, 3 2022
8 p.m.

Location: Powerhouse Theatre

Faculty Advisor: Amanda Culp

Senior Project Members:

Simeon Bremer, Keira DiGaetano,
Fox, Charlotte Harter

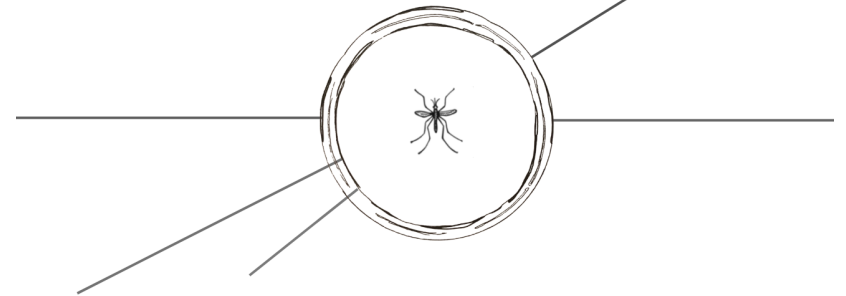
*denotes senior project in Drama

Reservations can be made two weeks in advance
of the performance.

Email: boxoffice@vassar.edu

Individuals with disabilities who are seeking accommodations should contact the Box Office in advance.

The Experimental Theater of Vassar College



MOSQUITOES

by Lucy Kirkwood

Directed by Louis Blachman '23

October 6, 7, 8 2022

8 p.m.

Powerhouse Theatre

Faculty Advisor: Peter Gil Sheridan

Senior Project Members:

Louis Blachman, Balfour Clark, Theo Duclo,
Lena Pepe, Clae Rountree

Presented through special arrangements with Dramatists Play Service, Inc.
Sponsored in part by the E.J. Safirstein '83 Memorial Fund.

CAST

Alice	Clae Rountree* '23
Jenny	Lena Pepe* '23
The Boson/Henri	Balfour Clark* '23
Luke	Theo Duclo* '23
Natalie	Kaila Dunn '25
Karen	Alexandra Polur Gold '25
Ensemble	Joe Baldwin '24
	Vi To '24
	Yuchen Zhou '23
	Erin Mee '24

*denotes a senior project in Drama

PRODUCTION

Director	Louis Blachman* '23
Assistant Director	Ella Talerico '25
Stage Manager	Carina Jiang '24
Scenic Designer	Riley Bates '24
Costume Designer	Matt Andres '23
Lighting Designer	Erin Mee '24
Sound Designer/Board Operator	Ella Talerico '25
Props Designer	Grace Cazzaniga '24
Dramaturg	Lena Pepe '23
Composer/live pianist	Liam Oley '25
Light Board Operator	Jackson Bernreuter '25
	Solomon Hess '24
Sound Projections Operator	Ella Talerico '25
Costume Build Crew	Meghan McLane '24
Light Crew	Jackson Bernreuter '25
Composer / live pianist	Liam Oley '25
Actor Representative	Kaila Dunn '25
Costume Run Crew	Celeste Brinkhuis '24
	Georgia Macy '25

SPECIAL THANKS

Tamar Wolfson, Levi Sterling, Rachel Ropella, Leona Das, Anya Saffir and Charley Layton

DRAMA DEPARTMENT FACULTY AND STAFF

Director of Theater	Christopher Grabowski
Costume Design	Kenisha Kelly
Production Manager	Patience Haskell
Technical Director	James Hunting
Scenic Advisor	Omri Bareket '19
Costume Shop Manager	Leigh Davis
Publicity/Box Office/Front of House	Joan Gerardi

DRAMA DEPARTMENT INTERNS

Production Management	Maggie Young '25
Stage Management Intern	Kelly Hatfield '23

DRAMA BOX OFFICE STAFF

Assistants:	Sophia Fredericks '26
	Tim Nguyen '23
	Alejandra Robins '24

Drama Department Photographer:	Ana Leon Urrutia '26
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USHERS

Olivia Arenburg '26, Jake Briggs '26, Tess Foley-Cox '26, Cailin Harrington '25, Ambica Kale '26, Henryk Kessel '25, Jeeho Kim '25, Angelina Papa '24, Lindsey Solo '25, Sophia Steadman '26, Alexander Swift '26, Laura Weiss '26, Peter Yin '25

DRAMA DEPARTMENT WORK STUDY STUDENTS

Costume Shop

Drama Academic Interns:

Matt Andres '23, Celeste Brinkhuis '24

Costume Shop Technicians:

Evelyn Boyle '23, Simeon Bremer '23,
Nyomen Fowler-Puja '23, Mahalia Hunter '23,
Georgia Macy '24, Yasmin Mohammed '23,
Madison Powell '23, Eden Radifera '26,
Athena Randall '25, Foster Schrader '25,
Taylor Talcott '23, Jazmine Williams '26

Costume History & Design Research Assistant:

Presley Wheeler '23

Costume Collection Research Assistant:

Hannah Weintraub '25

Electrics Shop

Drama Academic Interns:

Laurel Hanson '23, Xander Setchko '24

Electrics Shop Technicians:

Erin Mee '24, Eden O'Connell '23,
Ki'tsai Zangpo '25

Scene Shop

Shop Intern:

Riley Bates '24

Shop Assistants:

Becca Bogstad '26, Grayson Bullard '26, Lucinda Carroll '24, Zach Cohen '24, Jack Francis '23, John Vincent Gador '24, Xander Setchko '24, Aiden Skelly '26, Jasper Smith '25, Avery Turnbull '26, Kendall Wienecke '24

DIRECTOR'S NOTE by Louis Blachman '23

I come from a lineage—how, I'm not quite sure—of some very smart, scientifically-inclined people. My mom started a math festival (now held in 20 countries!) to get kids interested in math. Her father was an electrical engineer and ham radio enthusiast. My dad, quite literally, went to MIT at 16. His parents worked for NASA. I, for whatever reason, didn't receive that same aptitude—hence my name appearing on this program. I mean, I took Intro Astronomy for my quantitative requirement.

Without any of this intellectual prowess, I have a deep-rooted admiration for the work of the scientists and engineers, as well as for the ways their sharp brains and keen view of world progress becomes part of the fabric of one's family. Luckily, my parents have nurtured my love of the performing arts, and in doing so, fallen in love with the theater too. Ultimately, theater and science aren't so different, really—theater requires the discipline and precision of science while science requires the same craft and creative problem-solving of theater. One might say that creating theater follows the scientific method: a hypothesis (an initial vision), the experiment (our performance), in which different variables collide unexpectedly (the ideas of the actors and creative team), and a conclusion (where you clap). A love for science—and those who make it their life's work—is in every aspect of the production you're about to see before you.

Not all hold this same truth. Though this play is set between the years of 2006 and 2008 in England and Switzerland, it's all too clear that the distrust of science and reason that has permeated American society in recent years—as well as the discussion of what constitutes a fact—has become even more relevant. The collisions between scientific truth and pseudoscience; fact and feeling; theory and experimentation; and the human toll of science and progress are integral to our production as well as the world we live in today.

It's an honor and a privilege—not lost on anyone on the cast or creative team of this production—to perform in-person after years of distance and separation. I am immensely grateful to the other senior thesis members, cast, creatives, and the Department for their tireless and devoted work to pulling off this ambitious, extraordinary play. Welcome to Mosquitoes. Let the experiment begin.

LJB

DRAMATURGY NOTE by Lena Pepe '23

“Just it’s like waves”

In the opening line of her piece, Lucy Kirkwood exhibits the brilliance with which this play was constructed: as an experiment of what happens when you bring science into the most intimate features of human life, or, in Jenny’s case, into her uterus. Through a theatrical structure that replicates the wave of a heartbeat on a monitor, Kirkwood dives deep into the struggle between rational and irrational thought, intellect and emotion, and what it means when opposite sides of a dichotomy collide. Not only does Kirkwood imbue science into the plot, her language in these intricately crafted scenes mimic a literal wave—pulling the audience through quick, fragmented dialogue as the parabola rises, and bringing us back down the slope with breaths that calm the nervous system. In a play so intertwined with scientific thought, we are begged the questions—when scientific attempt for discovery and providing answers gives us no solution, what are we left with? In a society flooded with information and obsessed with answers, what happens to our rational thought in the face of fear of both the known and the unknown?

Mosquitoes was originally commissioned by the Manhattan Theater Club in New York through the Sloan Initiative, a commission that supports new plays which explore scientific or technological themes. Kirkwood was excited by the challenge this commission posed, given her self proclamation of “not having a brain that naturally goes towards science.” She gained inspiration for the play from the technological happenings surrounding her: the Large Hadron Collider turning on, new questions about immunizations, and medical science beginning to take a more prominent place in the media. It took Kirkwood about 7 years to write the play and she claims that the structure only truly clicked in her mind after Brexit. The departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union, and the effect it had on England, helped Kirkwood mold the complexity of the conflict between the central relationship of the sisters.

Kirkwood is a British Playwright and screenwriter who, in 2018, was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in its “40 under 40” initiative. She grew up in East London and earned her degree at the University of Edinburgh. Since the start of her career, Kirkwood has been widely recognised for her remarkable plays, ranging from *Chimerica* first seen in 2013 at the Almeida in London, to *The Children*, a 2018 Tony Award nominee for Best Play. Kirkwood’s most recent work, titled *That is Not Who I Am* which she marketed under the pseudonym Dave Davidson, opened in June 2022 at the Royal Court Theatre.

To Kirkwood, this is a hopeful play, even if it might not be obvious. And I will leave you with her words as you dive into this masterpiece. “It is braver to imagine what happens next, it is harder to imagine what happens next, but we have to do that, however frightened we are.

Glossary of terms: CERN - European Council for Nuclear Research

What is the Higgs Field and Higgs Boson?

“In the Higgs boson’s case, the field came first. The Higgs field was proposed in 1964 as a new kind of field that fills the entire Universe and gives mass to all elementary particles. The Higgs boson is a wave in that field. Its discovery confirms the existence of the Higgs field.

Particles get their mass by interacting with the Higgs field; they do not have a mass of their own.

The stronger a particle interacts with the Higgs field, the heavier the particle ends up being. Photons, for example, do not interact with this field and therefore have no mass. Yet other elementary particles, including electrons, quarks and bosons, do interact and hence have a variety of masses.”

When a particle passes through the Higgs field, it interacts and gains mass. Without the Higgs field nothing in the world would exist because no particles would gain mass. The Higgs boson is an excitation of the Higgs field, and finding the boson proves that the Higgs field exists.

What is the Large Hadron Collider?

“The Higgs boson can’t be “discovered” by finding it somewhere but has to be created in a particle collision. Once created, it transforms – or “decays” – into other particles that can be detected in particle detectors.

Physicists look for traces of these particles in data collected by the detectors. The challenge is that these particles are also produced in many other processes, plus the Higgs boson only appears in about one in a billion LHC (Large Hadron Collider) collisions. But careful statistical analysis of enormous amounts of data uncovered the particle’s faint signal in 2012.”

Why does the Higgs matter?

Observing the Higgs boson, and proving that the Higgs field exists, provided the scientists with proof of this elusive particle which gives every other particle mass, and thus creates the foundation for all matter that forms us and everything around us in the universe.

What is IVF (In Vitro Fertilization)?

“A medical procedure whereby an egg is fertilized by sperm in a test tube or elsewhere outside the body.”

IVF is the most commonly used, and most effective form of, assisted reproductive technology. When using IVF, a couple is able to use their own sperm and egg or sperm and egg from a donor. The most common reasons people use IVF are factors pertaining to infertility, age, genetic predispositions and health conditions.