

## Upcoming Spring 2023 performances

### WITCH

by Jen Silverman

directed by Claire McHarg

Feb 23, 24, 25, 2023

8:00pm, The Martel Theater

Senior Project Members: Kelly Hatfield, Louise Ambler, Jack Francis, Emma Skinner, Rose Trammell, Presley Wheeler  
presented through special arrangements with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.

### STEERMAN NEW PLAY FESTIVAL

*Bemused* by Ellery Cordes '23

March 29 and April 1, 2023 8:00pm, The Powerhouse Theater

*Gate Shut Panic* by Zoe Nelms '23

March 30 and 31, 2023 8:00pm, The Powerhouse Theater

### TBA

directed by Christopher Grabowski

April 26, 27, 28, 2023

8:00pm, The Martel Theater

### MARILYN SWARTZ SEVEN '69

#### ANNUAL PLAYWRITING COMPETITION READING

new play TBA

recipient of this years award: TBA

April 2, 2023

2:00pm

The Strep Studio

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

Email: [boxoffice@vassar.edu](mailto:boxoffice@vassar.edu)

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

The Experimental Theater of Vassar College

# HILDA

by Marie NDiaye

new translation by Simeon Bremer\*

directed by Keira DiGaetano\*

December 1, 2, 3 2022

8:00 p.m.

Powerhouse Theater

Faculty Advisor: Conrad Schott

\*Senior Project Members:  
Simeon Bremer, Keira DiGaetano,  
Fox, Charlotte Harter

\*denotes senior project in Drama

Run Time:

Approximately 90 minutes with no intermission

Masks optional:

Guests are encouraged to wear mask to protect themselves and others but is no longer required.

Content warning:

blood will be in this production

## CAST

Mrs. Lemarchand  
Frank  
Corinne

Fox '23\*  
Thomas Rombach '25  
Charlotte Harter '23\*

## PRODUCTION

Director  
Translator/Dramaturg  
Stage Manager  
Scenic + Properties Designer  
Sound Designer  
Light Designer  
Costume Designer  
Light + Sound Board Operator  
Set Build Crew  
Propertiess Build Crew  
Run Crew  
Costume Run Crew

Keira DiGaetano '23\*  
Simeon Bremer '23\*  
Anica Acuña '24  
Kendall Wienecke '24  
Senior Project Team  
Charlotte Harter '23\*  
Claire McHarg '24  
Madelyn Ockner '25  
Thomas Rombach '25  
Kaila Dunn '25  
Lou Griesman '24  
Shanti Fowler-Pajua '23  
Madison Powell '24  
Eden Radifera '26  
Athena Randall '26  
Yesmina Townsley '23

\*denotes senior project in Drama

## SPECIAL THANKS

Patricia-Pia Celerier, Idlewild, Zoe Nelms, Home Brewed  
and Theo Duclo

## DRAMA DEPARTMENT FACULTY AND STAFF

Director of Theater	Christopher Grabowski
Dramaturg	Amanda Culp
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
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Drama Department Photographer:	Ana Leon Urrutia '26
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## USHERS

Jarod Hudson '26, Gus Pointer Mace , Levi Srebalus '26, Faith Mosley '26, Sara Morejon '26, Yuchen Zhou '24, Sabina Lopez-Jensen '26, Lilly Masters '26, Talia Mayo '25, Madeleine Nicks '26, Avery Nahf '26, Joe Lippman '26, Grayson Bullard '26

## 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:

Grayson Bullard '24, Harry Malins '26, Erin Mee '24, Eden O'Connell '23, Ki'tsai Zangpo '25

### Scene Shop

Scenic Intern: Riley Bates '24

Shop Intern: Jack Francis '23

Shop Assistants:

Becca Bogstad '26, Grayson Bullard '26, Lucinda Carroll '24, Zach Cohen '24, Kaila Dunn '24, John Vincent Gador '24, Xander Setchko '24, Aiden Skelly '26, Jasper Smith '25, Avery Turnbull '26, Jamie Walsh '25, Kendall Wienecke '24

## DIRECTORS NOTE BY KEIRA DIGAETANO '23\*

*Hedda Gabler, The Stepford Wives*, every role that Cate Blanchett has ever played—that's just a sample of the references that came up in response to *Hilda*. When Simeon reached out to me about working on this project, I remember flipping to a random page, reading one of Lemarchand's dizzying monologues, and immediately responding to his email. I've always been drawn to this specific brand of sneering, domineering woman, captivated by their self-sabotaging insistence on pushing themselves towards their own breaking points. So much of what we explored in rehearsal revolved around humanizing Lemarchand—what signs does she let slip about her emotional core, how much vulnerability can we justify her showing. Personally, my soft spot for Lemarchand lies in her implicit queerness. She has absolutely no means with which to deal with her attraction to Hilda, no language to explain it—all that she can do is go on and on about Hilda's appearance, Hilda's genuine soul. In this way she ultimately loses power against the audience, we can see what she completely lacks the ability to recognize, what answers the constant question of what exactly about Hilda is so compelling to her: she is irrevocably attracted to Hilda. With this lens, the text clicks into place—Lemarchand clashes with Frank in asserting masculinity, she can't ever let go of Hilda until she is able to express her feelings.

Early on in the process, Claire, our costume designer, mentioned that they were designing the costumes around the only person the script ever offers physical descriptions of—Hilda. The concept of forming our space around the one character without a voice stuck with us throughout the process of creating our world. The aesthetic of this suburban dream, sterile and bright, poses the question of *Hilda's* most glaring absence—how would the presence of this elusive figure immediately change the world, how we see it, how Lemarchand moves about? We created this production with the visuals of this absence in mind. *Hilda* originated as a radio play, and translating this text to the stage allowed us both extensive creative freedom and also presented a looming challenge. Working off of quite literally just the dialogue of the piece is not an opportunity I've often encountered—stage directions are absent much in the same way that Hilda herself is. Lemarchand is trapped in a world so isolated and bleak—free of husband or maid, sans textual instructions on how to move through the world—that she has no choice but to watch the web of control she's made for herself slowly unravel in front of her. Testing Lemarchand's limits with this extraordinarily talented team has been such a joy. I invite you to join us in this suburban hellscape, witnessing the consequences of manufacturing control where there should be none, woman against woman.

## About the playwright



photo by Heike Steinweg

Born in France in 1967, Marie NDiaye (‘n-dee-eye) is a major force in contemporary francophone literature. Her sharp writing and distinctive style have earned her accolades from France’s grand literary institutions. NDiaye first made history in 2003 when her play *Papa doit manger* (en: Dad Has to Eat) entered the repertory of the elite national theatre troupe The Comédie Française. She was the first living playwright in twenty years to hold that honor and the first living woman ever to have a play performed at The Comédie Française. NDiaye astounded the world again in 2009, this time taking home the prestigious Prix Goncourt literary award for her politically poignant novel *Trois femmes puissantes* (en: Three Strong Women). Her works lay bare the structures that uphold modern identities and explore how class and race operate under late-stage capitalism. Published in 1999, *Hilda* is NDiaye’s first play and her fifth work published overall.

## A NOTE FROM THE TRANSLATOR SIMEON BREMER ‘23 \*

### Translator’s note

Marie NDiaye’s style is the first thing that attracted me to *Hilda*. She employs a surreal pastiche that mocks the performativity of everyday interactions. On the surface, Mrs. Lemarchand appears to be a caring and concerned employer, but the audience can’t help but feel a chill every time she talks. Something isn’t right in this world. In some instances, the ways in which NDiaye plays with the dichotomy between what is real and what the characters claim to be real is simply hilarious. In other instances, it’s grotesquely morbid. The production of *Hilda* that you are seeing tonight brilliantly incorporates NDiaye’s eerie, morbid, and kitschy writing into its visual expression. As in many of NDiaye’s works, language is the primary motor of this play. (In fact, *Hilda* was originally written for the radio.) Mrs. Lemarchand only has to use her upper-class tone and *bons mots* to violently kidnap her maid. Frank, Corinne, and *Hilda* on the other hand – robbed of both the power of language and the right to fight back – are left powerless in the wake of her destruction. Because of the key role that language plays in the original text, translating this play was an extremely delicate task of capturing the tone of NDiaye’s writing. After several drafts and an enormous amount of support from this production team, I am beyond overjoyed to present this brand-new English-language adaptation of Marie NDiaye’s masterpiece, *Hilda*.