

BABES WITH BLADES THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

THE S PARADOX

WORLD PREMIERE BY JILLIAN LEFF



BABES WITH BLADES THEATRE COMPANY

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BWBTC'S 2024 PROGRAMMING IS PARTIALLY SUPPORTED BY

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proudly presents

THE S PARADOX

By Jillian Leff*

Winner of the 2021-2022 Joining Sword & Pen Playwriting Competition
and the Margaret W. Martin Award

Director Morgan Manasa*
Fight & Intimacy Director..... Samantha Kaufman
Scenic Designer..... Rose Johnson
Lighting Designer Laura J. Wiley
Costume Designer Rachel M. Sypniewski
Props Design Evy Burch
Sound Design L.J. Luthringer
Stage Manager Taylor Stageberg
Technical Director Line Bower*
Production Manager..... Rose Hamill
Assistant Stage Manager..... Theo Yaeck
Production Assistant Payton Shearn

** Denotes BWBTC Ensemble Member*

This production uses realistic staged violence in the telling of the story.

**PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING OF ANY KIND
IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED**

*BWBTC would like to extend special thanks to Hershey Suri and Idle Muse Theatre
Company.*

CAST

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

SloaneKayla Marie Klammer
Dez Elisabeth Del Toro
Ava Cat Evans
William Steve Peebles
S Maureen Yasko*
Older Dez..... Sonja Lynn Mata
Nameless Ensemble & Others..... Tina-Kim Nguyen, Deanna Palmer
..... Jessica Pennachio and Thomas Russell
Understudies..... Luz Espinoza (Dez / Older Dez),
..... Tina-Kim Nguyen (Ava), Deanna Palmer (Sloane)
..... Jessica Pennachio (S), Thomas Russell (William)
.....and Emily Sturges (Nameless Ensemble)

WHO'S WHO



ELISABETH DEL TORO (she/her; Dez) is stoked to be back with the rockstars at BWBTC! Most recently Elisabeth was in the Understudy's production of *The Best Damn Thing*. BA from the University of Chicago, MSc from the University of Glasgow. Represented by Grossman and Jack Talent. Full resume and weird little bits at elisabethdeltoro.com



LUZ ESPINOZA (she/her; US Dez/Older Dez) is a Mexican theatre artist and educator from la frontera. She recently received her Acting MFA from Northwestern University. Recent credits include *Marisol*, *The Revolutionists*, *Shakespeare's R&J*, *Exit Strategy*, *Sin Agua*, *Recess*. "Each year monarch butterflies travel north across borders to find the right place for them to live" .



CAT EVANS (they/she/him; Ava) is a 3 time Jeff Nominee and Queer. They received their BFA in Acting from Northern Illinois University. Notable works: Tad in *5th City* (MPAACT), *JANE: Abortion and the Underground* (Idle Muse Theatre Company), *Joan and the Fire* (Trap Door), *Laughing Song* (Theatre Y), *Medea Material* (Trap Door), *The Crucible* (Edge of the Wood). www.catrinaevans.com



KAYLA MARIE KLAMMER (she/her; Sloane) is thrilled to be back onstage with BWBTC! Recent Chicago theater credits include: *Richard III*. Regionally, she has worked with Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati, Tecumseh Outdoor Drama, & the National Theatre for Children. She's also been working her way into the stunt community in Chicago & has doubled for a couple films! Kayla is a graduate of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln where she received BAs in both Theatre & Dance. In her free time, you can catch her curled up on the couch reading a romance novel or cooking/baking in the kitchen! Much love to my sweet family & friends.

www.kaylamarieklammer.com



SONJA LYNN MATA (she/her/ella; Older Dez) is incredibly excited to make her BWBTC debut! Previous Chicago credits include work with Definition Theater, The New Coordinates and Opera-Matic. Nationally, Sonja has toured extensively with Theater Unspeakable in *The American Revolution* (Sam Adams) and *Moon Shot* (Walter Cronkite), performing at The Kennedy Center. She is a graduate of Ohio University with a BFA in Theater Performance and has completed the PTP at Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theater. She has studied and performed with the National Theater and Dance Company of Ghana in their national capital, Accra.

Sonja is an actor-creator who enjoys devising new ensemble-based work. She is a clown at heart and thanks her family, friends and partner Chris for their support. [IG: sonjathepayasa](https://www.instagram.com/sonjathepayasa) www.sonjalynnmata.com



TINA-KIM NGUYEN (she/her; Nameless & Others) is excited to work with BWBTC for the first time. She is a Chicago-based theatre artist with a BA in Acting from Columbia College Chicago, where she also studied stage combat and dramaturgy. Recent credits include *Disney's Winnie the Pooh* (Rockefeller Productions), *Among the Dead* (Jackalope Theatre), and *The Wonder* (EFCT). Tina is also a member of BATSU!, an ongoing improv comedy show. Love to Mom & Dad, Gregory and sweet baby Boba T. Tina is represented by Gray Talent Group. www.tinakimnguyen.com



DEANNA PALMER (she/her; Nameless & Others, US Sloane) is incredibly excited to make their BWBTC debut! Deanna is a graduate of Columbia College Chicago where she received her BA in Acting and a minor in Stage Combat. In her free time she loves to rock climb, do yoga, and bake. She would like to send love to her friends and family and to her boyfriend Jacob.



STEVE PEEBLES (he/him; William) is making his BWBTC debut! Previous Chicago credits include *London Road* (Shattered Globe Theatre), *Macbeth* (Three Crows at Redtwist), *Spamalot!* (Mercury Theater Chicago) as well as work with Chicago Shakespeare, Crew of Patches, Boho Theater, First Folio Theater, and Theater at the Center. Regionally, he has toured with Montana Shakespeare in the Parks and performed with P45 in Traverse City, MI. Steve is a graduate of North Central College. He is an artistic associate with Shattered Globe Theater and a Moth Radio Hour GrandSlam Champion.



JESSICA PENNACHIO (she/her; Nameless & Others, US S, Fight Captain) is incredibly excited to make her BWBTC debut! Chicago credits include work with Collaboraction, Chicago DanzThreatre Ensemble, Rough House Theatre, and Mudlark Theatre. Jessica has a B.A in Theatre Performance from UNC Charlotte where she studied Physical Theatre, Circus, and Shakespeare. She then completed the Actor's Gymnasium Professional Circus Training Program focusing in Partner Acrobatics and minoring in Juggling. She is proud to be an Advanced Actor Combatant with the SAFD and regularly assists

stage combat classes at the Actor's Gym and Open Gate Movement Arts. She looks forward to seeing where this journey takes her!



THOMAS RUSSELL (he/they, Nameless & Others, US William) was born and raised in Chicago and is a fight choreographer and actor. Recent credits include the *The Wonder* (Eclectic Full Contact Theatre, Rancy U/S), *The Legacy of Sherwood Forest* (Littlebrain Theatre, Guillermo/Guy), and the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire. He's choreographed violence for local colleges and high schools, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Midsommer Flight, TimeLine, the BWBTC Fighting Words Festival, and The Gift. They're incredibly grateful to make their acting debut for BWBTC, and they're so

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SCAN ME

happy to have the endless support of his family, friends, and loved ones. Enjoy the show!



EMILY STURGES (they/them; US Nameless & Others) is thrilled to make their debut with the BWBTC! Previous Chicago work includes working with the Olde School Shakespeare Collective. They are also a seasonal stunt performer at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire. They graduated from the Webster Conservatory with a BFA in Musical Theatre. When not studying the blade, you can find them crocheting, dancing, and practicing Jiu Jitsu.



MAUREEN YASKO (she/her; S) is a Chicago-based Jeff Nominated fight director, intimacy director, actor, musician, and teaching artist. An Artistic Affiliate of BWBTC, Maureen recently played Bosola in *The Duchess of Malfi*. You may have also seen her in *Promise of a Rose Garden*, *Julius Caesar*, *Bo Thomas...*, *L'Imbecile*, and *Titus Andronicus*. Maureen directed fights and/or intimacy in BWBTC's *Plaid as Hell*, *Richard III*, *Women of 4G*, and *Witch Slap!* She serves as the Resident Intimacy Director & Associate Fight Director



FINE ART PORTRAITURE & PERFORMANCE PHOTOGRAPHY

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of *Midsommer Flight*, where she has also appeared in such roles as *Lady Macbeth* and *Malvolio*. Maureen is a Certified Teacher of Stage Combat with the Society of American Fight Directors, a Certified Yoga Instructor, and holds a BA in Theatre, music minor from GA Southern--Armstrong. Love to Smitty and Dee.

PRODUCTION TEAM

LINE BOWER (they/them; Technical Director) is a Chicago-based technical director, carpenter, and scenic painter. Above all, they are a proud member of BWBTC! They received their BA in Theatre Technology & Design from Columbia College Chicago, where they became the school's first student technical director of a mainstage production. Recent TD credits include: *Port of Entry* (Albany Park Theatre Project), *Jane: Abortion and the Underground* (Idle Muse Theater Company), *Plaid as Hell* (BWBTC), *Sancocho* (Visión Latino), and *Richard III* (BWBTC).

EVY BURCH (they/she, Props Designer) is excited to be working with BWBTC. Previously they have also worked with Redtwist Theater.

ROSE HAMILL (she/her; Production Manager) freelance production manager who has worked with multiple Chicago storefront theatres; The New Colony, The Factory Theater, Wildclaw Theatre, Windy City Playhouse, and Firebrand Theatre among them. From 2018-2022 she served as the Managing Director of Broken Nose Theatre, where she has either stage or production managed their productions of *At the Table*, *Plainclothes*, *Girl in the Red Corner*, & *After the Blast* among others. Rose is excited to be back again with BWBTC after serving as PM for The Duchess of Malfi last year. She holds a B.A. in Technical Theatre from Columbia College Chicago, with minors as a Teaching Artist and in Arts Administration and completed a Philanthropy and Nonprofit Organization Management certificate from Northwestern University in 2023.

ROSE JOHNSON (they/them, Scenic Designer) is so excited to work with BWBTC for the first time. Previous design credits include *Agnes of God*, *Wolves*, and *The Great Khan* (Redtwist theater), *Party at the Pantheon* and *Lane Call* (The Factory Theater), *Murder*, *Rewrote* (Hell in a Handbag Productions), and *The Once and Future Festival*. They are an ensemble member at Redtwist Theater, and received a BA in Theatrical Design & Technology at Columbia College Chicago. Upcoming shows include *The Hatmaker's Wife* (Theatre Evolve) and *Hamlet* (Red Theatre).

SAMANTHA KAUFMAN (she/her; Fight & Intimacy Director) is an intimacy director, fight director, actor, and teaching artist. She is based in Chicago and works internationally. Samantha is a Certified Intimacy Director, teaching artist, and curriculum developer with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators. A Certified Teacher with the Society of American Fight Directors. A Jeff award nominated fight choreographer, and an award winning actor, she is also a certified Michael Chekhov teacher with the Great Lakes Michael Chekhov Consortium. She has been a resident artist with Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Prague Shakespeare Company. Regionally, Samantha has worked with theatres

such as Lyric Opera of Chicago, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, Cleveland Playhouse, among others. She has her MFA from Florida Atlantic University. SamanthaJKaufman.com

JILLIAN LEFF (she/her; Playwright) is a Chicago based playwright and actor, whose work has been produced in Chicago, Los Angeles, Florida, and Indiana. The world premiere of *Small World* (co-written with Joe Lino) was a Jeff Award Nominee for New Work. She is an Ensemble Member with BWBTC, where she has appeared in *Richard III* (Buckingham), *Women of 4G* (Pierce), and *The Good Fight* (Cicely), and is excited to work with BWBTC as a playwright again after workshopping her play *The Mark* through Fighting Words. She has a BFA in Acting from Ball State University and is an Advanced Actor Combatant with The Society of American Fight Directors. Find her on the internet @jilleff. All the love and thanks to Theresa.

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L.J. LUTHRINGER (he/him; Sound Designer) is so grateful to do his first show with BWBTC! A three time Jeff nominee and winner of the 2012 KCACTF Outstanding Sound Design, L.J. enjoys helping to realize original shows or Chicago premieres such as *Mlima's Tale* and *Marys Seacole* (Griffin Theatre Company), *Blue Over You* (Spot On), *The Awake* (First Floor Theater Company), *Alias Grace* (Rivendell Theatre Ensemble), *ENGAGE!* (Stellar Productions), *The Tragedy of He-Manlet* (New Millenium Theatre Company), and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and*

Mr. Hyde (Idle Muse Theatre Ensemble). His portfolio can be found on a broken hard drive buried in his closet out of frustration.

MORGAN MANASA (she/her; Director) a graduate of the Chicago College of Performing Arts and Theatre Conservatory at Roosevelt University, has been a theatre-maker in Chicago for over 20 years. Morgan is an ensemble member of BWBTC where she last directed Arthur M. Jolly's *The Lady Demands Satisfaction* (Jeff Nominated). Most recently she directed *JANE: Abortion and the Underground* (Jeff Nominated), *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Jeff Recommended), and *In The Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)* with Idle Muse Theatre Company. She dedicates this production to Linsey Falls. Thank you for supporting live theatre! www.morganmanasa.com

PAYTON SHEARN (she/they, Production Assistant) is so happy to be working with BWBTC once again! Previous Chicago credits include: *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Young People's Theater), *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Actors Training Center), *Passing Strange* (Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre), *Dory Fantasmagory* (Young People's Theater), *When The Sun Melts Away* (Token Theatre), *Me...Jane* (Wirtz Center). Payton is a recent graduate of Northwestern University, where she studied Theatre Management and Gender and Sexuality Studies. They were also on the board of Lipstick Theatre, Northwestern's intersectional feminist theater company, serving as the Production Manager for two seasons and the Artistic Director for one. As always, all the love and thanks to their parents, brother, and chosen family.

TAYLOR STAGEBERG (she/they; Stage Manager) is a former Oregonian, lifelong theater lover, and an amateur adult. Recent projects include *Murder ReWrote* (Hell in a Handbag), *Laments of a Brown Bird Summer* (Haven Chicago's 6th season of Director's Haven), *Agnes of God* and *The Great Khan* (Redtwist Theater) where they are also an ensemble member. She would love to express endless gratitude to family, friends, her cat, and Nich. They are thrilled to be making their BWBTC debut and hope you all enjoy *The S Paradox!*

RACHEL M. SYPNIEWSKI (she/her; Costume Design) is thrilled to be back with BWBTC! Other companies she has worked with include Goodman, Kokandy, Music Theater Works, Theater Wit, Backstage Breckenridge Theater, Midsommer Flight, Trap Door, Oak Park Festival Theater, Broken Nose, Black Button Eyes, Jackalope, Lifeline, Porchlight, Griffin, Strawdog, the Factory and Redtwist. She also has designed at Wheaton College, Governor's State University, North Central College, St. Patrick's High School, Indiana University Northwest, Loyola Academy, and the Chicago Academy for the Arts. She is a ten-time Non-equity Jeff nominee, having been awarded twice.

LAURA J. WILEY (she/her; Lighting Designer) is a lighting and video designer working primarily with theater and dance. She is the resident projection and lighting designer for Idle Muse Theatre Company, with whom she has worked with since 2011. Wiley often incorporates live video into projection designs along with abstract images and textures, using technology as scenic piece, moving light and as an individual element. She holds a Bachelors in Science concentrating on theatrical lighting and projection design from Southern Oregon University.

THEO YAECK (they/them; Assistant Stage Manager) is very excited to be working with BWBTC for the first time, as well as making their Chicago debut! Theo is a graduate of Miami University where they received a BA in Theatre with a minor in Musical Theatre. They would like to send all their love to their wonderful friends and their cat Sasha.

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(and the only one that uses stage combat as a consistent storytelling tool.)

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ABOUT JOINING SWORD & PEN AND THE MARGARET W. MARTIN AWARD

The Joining Sword & Pen international playwriting competition launched in 2005 to generate more scripts that featured women in roles involving stage combat. Created in collaboration with Artistic Advisor and Fight Master in the Society of American Fight Directors David Woolley who sponsors the competition, scripts inspired by a specific image are submitted and go through a blind judging process. The winning script goes through BWBTC's new play development program, but also receives a full production, cash prize and the Margaret W. Martin Award.

Margaret W. Martin was ahead of her time. In the 1960s and 70s, she maintained her full time job, taught piano, and raised a family of six children (4 girls, two boys) all while she traveled the globe from the States to Saudi Arabia, across Europe and Vientiane Laos during the height of the Vietnam war. She founded the American International School – Riyadh (K-12) in Saudi Arabia in 1963, and it has flourished as an institution since then. The Margaret W. Martin Award is in honor of Artistic Advisor and SAFD Fight Master David Woolley's mother.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Babes With Blades Theatre Company produces theatre in venues located on the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. Many other tribes such as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac, and Fox also called this area home. This region that we now commonly refer to as "The Chicagoland Area", has long been a center for Indigenous people to gather, trade, and maintain kinship ties. Today, one of the largest urban Native American communities in the United States resides in Chicago. Members of this community continue to contribute to the life of this city and to celebrate their heritage, practice traditions, and care for the land and waterways. If you are originally from outside of Chicago, you can discover who's traditional homelands you inhabited by going to [Whose.Land](#).

BABES WITH BLADES

THEATRE COMPANY

ENSEMBLE

Kristen Alesia	Line Bower
Alison Dornheggen	Kim Fukawa
Carrie Hardin	Madison Hill
Kelsey Kovacevich	Jillian Leff
Morgan Manasa	Stephanie Mattos
Jennifer L. Mickelson	Jennifer Mohr
Izis Mollinedo	Hazel Monson
Lauren Paige	Hayley Rice
Megan Schemmel	Kathrynne Wolf
Maureen Yasko	Ashley Yates

BOARD

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Babes With Blades Theatre Company uses stage combat to tell stories that elevate the voices of underrepresented communities and dismantle the patriarchy. Through performance, script development, training and outreach, our ensemble creates theatre that explores the wide range of the human experience, and cultivates broader perspectives in the arts community and in society as a whole.

BabesWithBlades.org