



THE

CAUCASIAN

CHALK CIRCLE

Written by
Bertolt Brecht

Adapted and Directed by
Alexander Gelman

Season Performances Presented By
SHAW MEDIA
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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

School of Theatre and Dance

College of Visual and Performing Arts

NIU School of Theatre and Dance presents

The Caucasian Chalk Circle

Written by Bertolt Brecht

Adapted and Directed by Alexander Gelman

Director: Alexander Gelman

Lighting Designer: Brandon Wardell

Properties Designer: Dave Doherty

Intimacy Choreographer: Bethany Mangum-Oles

Fight Choreographer: J. Cody Hunt

Stage Manager: Lizzie Ciszczon

This production is approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes
and will have one intermission.

Cast

Ryn Aston	Architect, Worker, Mama Georgia, Servant 37, Natella's Servant #1, First Neighbor Woman Gertrude, Other Curtain Holder, Old Peasant Woman, Ursula, Child Transporter, Peasant John
Logan Blake	Private Numbskull, Governor, Old Judge
Gina Cioffi	Natella, David, Soso, Bagheera (solider), Sandy The Limping Urchin, Moira, The Rich Peasant
Skye Corey	Mother-in-law, Kazbeki, Paula the Pigeon, Old Married Man, Marching Soldier 4, Disgruntled Servant, Barbie Wrangler 1, Dancing Soldier 8, Wannabe Executioner
Gabby Gozdecki	Singer
Gino Hernandez	Innkeeper, Monk, Merchant, Second Lawyer, Doctor
Sania Henry	Rich Lady, Doctor, First Lawyer
J. Cody Hunt	Az dak
Becca Katz	Old Man, Cheerleader, Old Hysterical Woman, Wedding Guest, Old Married Woman, Little Girl, Big Cheese
Jalen (KJ) Kent	Shalva
Paul James Lang	Child
Derrick Longstreet	Maro, Man, Nanny, Peasant A47, Peasant B42, Numbskull 2.0, Lavrenty, Doctor, Rich Farmer, Rich Peasant 2
Emma Mansfield	Corporal, Petitioner #14, Captain Walkie Talkie, 'ssssslice,' Corporal, Melanie Brooks (wedding guest), Child, Grand Duke
Cristian Onate	Adjutant, Delegate, Baby Swiss, Agitated Merchant
Jonathan Perkins	Simon
Julia Prieto-Escabado	Cook, Aniko, Older Child, Peasant Woman, Pigeon, Soldier
Kristen Serbia	Grusha
Jaylin Turner	Rich Lady, Nephew, Messenger

Cast Bios



Ryn Aston this is their first production with NIU. They are a second-year B.F.A. acting major and are so excited to be in the production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. This cast and director have been wonderful to work with. Much love to the cast, Lizzie, Alex, and most importantly, Yarn.



Logan Blake is a third-year B.F.A. acting major. He has a tremendous passion for the craft and is thrilled to be in this show. At NIU, he has previously been seen in the 24-Hour Theatre Festivals, the 72-Hour Film Festival, the improv shows, *Sonnets for an Old Century*, *Need to Know*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Life is a Dream*. Blake would like to thank his family, friends and faculty for their endless support and wisdom over the years. He hopes that everyone enjoys the show as much as he enjoys working on it.



Gina Cioffi (She / Her) is a second-year M.F.A. acting candidate from San Diego, California, with a bachelor's degree in theatre from University of California, San Diego. Last semester marked her debut on the NIU stage with *Big Love* in the role of Thyona/Movement Captain, in addition to directing the 2022 and 2023 New Student Jamborees alongside classmate Julia Prieto. Cioffi's current passion lies in the construction and collaboration of new plays that center femme bodies, minds and ambition. Some favorite credits include Teresa in *Italian American Reconciliation* (Scripps Ranch Theatre), Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde: The Musical* and Des in *SERE* (UCSD), in addition to staged readings of *53% Of* and *Fill Fill Fill Fill Fill Fill Fill*. Thank you, Dad for flying out to witness the work, Rick for running alongside me and my artistry, and Colette for every collaboration and unconditional support.



Skye Corey is a second-year B.F.A. actor and is thrilled to be joining the cast of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Previous NIU productions include *Amelia Goes to the Ball* and *The Medium*. Recent outside credits: *But I'm a Cheerleader* (Ghostlight Ensemble), *Alone Together* (Goodman Theatre), and *A Christmas Carol* (Metropolis PAC). Love to Mom, Callie, Mokie and Ko.

Cast Bios



Gabby Gozdecki is a third-year B.F.A. acting student at Northern Illinois University. Gozdecki just returned from a summer at the National Theater Institute. There, she participated in the Theatermakers Summer Intensive where she originated six new roles in six new plays. Her recent roles at NIU include Bella and Eleanor in *Big Love* by Charles Mee, and Joan in *Melancholy Play* by Sarah Ruhl, both directed by Bethany Mangum-Oles. When Gozdecki is not on stage, she enjoys researching and writing about theatre. Last year, she won the Gotthold Ephraim Lessing Essay prize for the best essay of the year written by an NIU School of Theatre and Dance student. Gozdecki is thrilled to take on a role in this Brecht piece because of her passion for theatre for social change.



Sania Henry is a second-year B.F.A. acting candidate and this is her first theatre production of any sort. She would like to recognize her cohort, the Acting Studio of Chicago and the opportunity to be a Black woman on stage for the spirit she carries into this project.



Gino Hernandez is currently a senior majoring in political science and minoring in English and theatre studies. He has been a part of the 24-Hour Play, 72-Four Film Fest, Far Readings, Ukrainian stage readings, and last semester's Third Onion *Factory Games*. He has done a few small projects as an extra and is even working on an upcoming film project. He looks forward to everyone seeing all the hard work he and his cast members have done for *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and overall enjoying this wonderful tale they have to tell. This is his first official production for the school and he's very grateful to be a part of making it come to life.



J. Cody Hunt is proud to be pursuing his M.F.A. in acting. NIU credits include Man in *In A Word*. Regional credits include *Unto These Hills* at The Mountainside Theatre, North Carolina; *Sleeping Beauty* at Birmingham Children's Theatre, Alabama; and Blue Gate Musicals, Indiana. Hunt was a fight choreographer, stunt performer and fight captain for shows like *SAMSON* at Sight and Sound Theatres, and played the role of Jesus in *JESUS* in Pennsylvania and Missouri. His Chicago credits include Chicago Kids Company; *Lost In Time*, Magnified Gift Theatre; *Low Hanging Fruit*, Fearless Fiction Productions. Film/TV: *Union*, 2012; *Romans XIII*, 2014; *JESUS LIVE* televised broadcasts, 2018 and 2021. In 2021, Hunt's short film, *The Moment*, received the Phenomenal Achievement Award at the Dreamz Catcher International Film Festival where it was also nominated for Best Mobile Film. He received his B.A. in drama with a concentration in performance at Jacksonville State University in Alabama. Hunt would like to thank his wife and family for their endless support.

Cast Bios



Becca Katz is a second-year theatre studies minor. Her most recent credit includes Chorus/Musician in *Life is a Dream* here at NIU. When she isn't on stage, Katz can be found almost always crocheting something new. It's an addiction, and her family and friends are very close to staging an intervention. In all seriousness though, she would love to dedicate this performance to her mother. It was her combination of fearlessness and humor surrounding Katz growing up that made her into the confident actor that she is today. And for that, Katz would like to thank her dearly. Love you, Mom. Now buckle up and enjoy the show! It's bound to be a wild one.



Jalen Kent, also known as KJ, is a B.A. sophomore at NIU. His mother and father inspired him and his three sisters to be a part of the performing arts industry at an early age. He first set his foot on stage at the age of 6, which is where his passion for acting started to grow. He started performing more in front of even bigger crowds when he joined the South Shore Drill Team of Chicago at the age of 15. He has performed at the 2020 NBA All-Star game, in front of Lori Lightfoot and at the 2021 Inauguration. He was previously a part of the run crew in *She Kills Monsters* as the light operator and played Grocery Boy in *The Children's Hour*. He is proud to say that this is his second production, and he hopes everyone enjoys the show.



Paul James Lang (He / Him) is a second-year M.F.A. acting candidate, originally from the Northeast and is now happy to call the Midwest home. He received his B.F.A. in musical theatre from The Boston Conservatory. Some of Lang's favorite credits include Giuliano in *Big Love* at NIU, as well as Horst in *Bent*, Sir Andrew in *Twelfth Night*, the Envoy in *The Balcony* and several different characters in TheaterWorks USA's touring production of *Junie B. Jones*. He is thrilled to be returning to the NIU stage with this wonderful, thoughtful and, as the playwright would put it, epic piece of theatre. Thank you so much to Alex and our brilliant team behind the scenes, as well as my family for all their love and support.



Derrick Longstreet is a B.A. junior at Northern Illinois University. Longstreet has worked on *In A Word* (A.D), *Unfaded Wonder* (principle) and *The Neighborhood Kids* (director) coming soon. Longstreet is pleased to have joined this group and debut his first appearance in NIU productions. Follow him on Instagram for more information about his projects and himself @dl_is_d_star_Enjoy!

Cast Bios



Emma Mansfield is a fourth-year B.F.A. in acting candidate performing their final role at NIU. Their most recent project was spending the summer with Kingsmen Shakespeare Festival in Thousand Oaks, California. Mansfield also previously worked with The Arcola Theatre's Youth Theatre and Mental Health Company in London, England. NIU credits include Segismundo in *Life is a Dream*, Tilly in *She Kills Monsters* and Mary in *The Language Archive*.



Cristian Alonzo Onate is a fourth-year B.F.A. acting candidate. He made his NIU debut as Nightingale in *Conference of The Birds*, directed by Cecilie Keenan and as Miles in *She Kills Monsters*, directed by Kendra Holton. Most recently, he was a part of the chorus in Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *Life is a Dream*, directed by Stanton Davis. He's excited to share the creativity and passion brought to life with this story and hopes that others can feel the same experience he felt throughout this process.



Jonathan Perkins is a fourth-year B.F.A. acting candidate and is thrilled to share his final production at NIU. This past summer, he was with the Texas Shakespeare Festival and worked on *The Comedy of Errors* as Angelo, *Pride and Prejudice* as Colonel Fitzwilliam, ensemble in *Lear* and the world premiere of *Todrick the Not-So-Terrible* as King Abniss the Apathetic. Along with performing in these shows, he was also the swing for *Something Rotten!* He is also a voice actor, recently wrapping up the final season of Congo Square Theatre's audio series *The Clinic* as Shad. Other credits include Ross in *Macbeth* and Slender in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Hoosier Shakespeare Festival); Joe Cardin in *The Children's Hour*, Don Pedro in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Eagle in *The Conference of the Birds* (NIU). Shout out to his acting cohort at NIU — you guys mean the absolute world to him. Much love to everyone in the production and those who have constantly supported his artistry — this show is dedicated to you all. Keep being your authentic selves forever and always.



Julia Isabella Prieto is a second-year M.F.A. acting candidate from Fresno, California. She obtained a B.A. in theatre arts from California State University-Fresno. She was recently seen in NIU's *Big Love* directed by Bethany Mangum-Oles last spring. Some memorable credits include *The Thanksgiving Play*, *Lydia* and *The Rocky Horror Show*. She sends so much love to her family and friends back home.

Cast Bios



Kristen Serbia is a senior B.F.A. acting candidate and is so very glad to be back in the Blackbox at Northern Illinois University's School of Theatre and Dance. Recent NIU credits include Clarin in *Life is a Dream*, by Pedro Calderón de la Barca and directed by Stanton Davis; Frances in *Melancholy Play*, by Sarah Ruhl and directed by Bethany Mangum-Oles; Hoopoe in *The Conference of the Birds*, by Sholeh Wolpe and directed by Cecile Keenan; and Brenda in a staged reading of *La Ruta* by Isaac Gomez. She recently made her Chicago theatrical debut at Oak Park Festival Theatre's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Peter G. Andersen, where she was featured on stage as an apprentice actor and the understudy for Lysander. She is honored to be creating art on the stage and growing as an actor during such dark and uncertain times. She would like to dedicate this performance to her family; for without their love, support and encouragement of her wildest dreams and ambitions, she wouldn't be here today. And to director Alexander Gelman for entrusting her with Grusha's story. Jeremiah 29:11



Jaylin Turner is a second-year B.F.A. acting student. She is looking forward to being in more productions as time goes by. She would like to thank her family and friends for supporting her and thank her castmates for being a wonderful ensemble.



Yarn this is Yarn's first production ever. He does have stage fright, and he has had much practice in preparing for his role. He hopes you enjoy his first ever performance as Cow.

Production Team Bios

Lizzie Ciszczon (Stage Manager) is a third-year B.F.A. technical theatre and design major. Her previous work at NIU was being the assistant stage manager on the Spring Dance Concert. She is very excited to be working on *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* as the stage manager. Much love to the cast and director for all the work they do.

Alexander Gelman (Director and Adaptor) is a Russian-born and American-trained director. He has worked as a director and translator of plays from Russian to English. He has worked at such theatres as American Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage Company, Canterbury Opera (Christchurch, New Zealand), Chicago Lyric Opera, Utah Opera, Ashlawn-Highland Music Festival, Chattanooga Opera Association, Hartford Stage Company, The Acting Company, New York Shakespeare Festival, Minneapolis Children's Theatre Company, Emmy Gifford Theatre and The Juilliard School of Drama. Previously, Professor Gelman served as director of the School of Theatre and Dance (2001-2021).

Brandon Wardell (Lighting Designer) is a lighting and scenic designer based in Chicago. He is an ensemble member at Steep Theatre Company, an artistic associate with Griffin Theatre Company, and associate professor of lighting design at Northern Illinois University. Recent designs include *Light Falls*, *Birdland*, *Lela & Co.* and *Earthquakes in London* (Steep Theatre Co.); *Two Trains Running* (Court Theatre); *Blues in the Night* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Steppenwolf Theatre Co.); *A Number* (Writers Theatre); *Cardboard Piano* and *The Vibrator Play* (TimeLine Theatre Co.); *Men On Boats* (American Theatre Co.); *Solaris*, *Titanic*, *London Wall*, and *Men Should Weep* (Griffin); *The Game of Love and Chance* (American Players Theatre); and *Million Dollar Quartet* (Finger Lakes Musical Theatre Festival). Wardell earned his M.F.A. from Northwestern University.
brandonwardelldesign.com

Production Staff

Scenery

Scenic Coordinator - Sahin Sahingolu

Scene Shop Supervisor - Adam Rager

Scene Shop Graduate Employees - J. Cody Hunt,
Paul Lang, Alicia Margerum, Tyler Page

Scene Shop Undergraduate Employees - Mike Kozel, Jade Doherty

Scene Shop 295 Students - Ryn Aston, Taneya Ball, Megumi Goto, Derek May

Run Crew - Delaney Langan, Taylor Maurchie Banks,
DaQuise McDonald, David Mortenson

Costumes

Costume Design Advisor - Jeremy W. Floyd

Costume Director - Lori Hartenhoff

Costume Shop Supervisor - Elizabeth Galba

Costume Shop Graduate Employees - Elias Dennis, Ski Sciaraffa

Costume Shop Employees - Alyssa Altadonna, Alix Burkhardt, Bea Thompson

Costume Shop 395 Students - Alix Burkhardt, Emily Christanson

Costume Shop 235 Students - Sophie Ainsley, Emily Christianson,
Danisha Gilmore, Stella Gurevich, Yukina Nguyen

Costume Shop 210 Students - Serenity Deida, Maggie Godfrey,
Brianna Jankowski, Becca Katz, Delaney Langan, Briana Leni, MaKena Mueller,
Natalie Olson, Denver Starzynski, Skylar Thompson

Lighting

Lighting Design Advisor - Brandon Wardell

Resident Head Electrician - Chris Kurszewski

Lighting Shop Graduate Assistants - J. Cody Hunt, Paul Lang, Tyler Page

Lighting Shop Employees - Logan Bryant, Conall Doherty, Tim Peters

Student Electricians - THEA 210, 241, 295 and 395 students

Properties

Properties Director - Dave Doherty

Properties Graduate Assistants - Eric Brockmeier,
Alicia Margerum, Ski Sciaraffa

Property Shop Employee - Sarah Blickem, Kane Crotty,
Danisha Gilmore, Carrie Szostak

Production Management

Technical Direction Advisor - Tracy Nunnally

Production Assistant - Jordan Clifton

House Management Supervisor - Cornelia Hayes

School of Theatre and Dance Faculty and Staff

Alexander F. Adducci (Emeritus)
Richard Arnold (Emeritus)
S. Alan Chelser (Emeritus)
Kaitlyn Cheng
Judith Chitwood (Emerita)
Gibson Cima
Roxanna Conner
Stanton Davis
Frankie DiCiaccio
David Doherty
Lila H. Dole (Emerita)
Jeremy W. Floyd
Paula Frasz (Emerita)
Elizabeth Galba
Kent Gallagher (Emeritus)
Kathryn Gately (Emerita)
Alexander Gelman
Richard Grund
Lori Hartenhoff
Kathryn Hubbard (Emerita)
Jennifer Ingle-Grund
Paul Kassel
Chris Kurszewski

Marc Macaranas
Bethany Mangum-Oles
Lorri Marshall
Kay Martinovich
Terrence McClellan (Emeritus)
Randall Newsom (Emeritus)
Tracy Nunnally
Matt O'Brien
Melanie Parks (Emerita)
Donald W. Polzin (Emeritus)
Richard Poole (Emeritus)
Adam Rager
Patricia Ridge (Emerita)
Deborah Robertson (Emerita)
Michel Rodriguez Cintra
Sahin Sahinoglu
Stephanie Sailer
Robert Schneider
Sarita Smith Childs
Jere Tulk (Emerita)
Emily Vitrano
Brandon Wardell

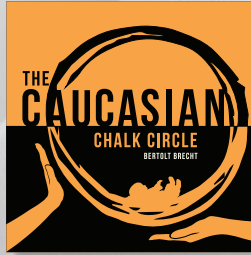
2023-24 NIU

Theatre and Dance Productions

NIU students admitted free of charge.



Rage Play
Sept. 29-Oct. 1 and Oct. 5-7



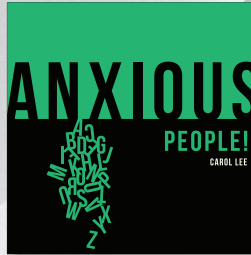
The Caucasian Chalk Circle
Oct. 13-15 and 19-21



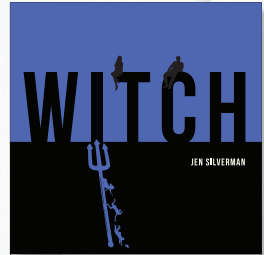
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Nov. 10-12 and 16-18



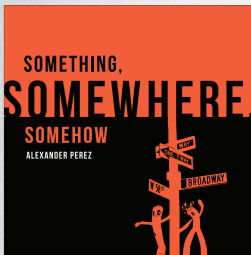
Fall Dance Concert
Nov. 30-Dec. 3



Anxious People!
Feb. 9-11 and 15-17



Witch
Feb. 23-25 and Feb. 29-March 2



Something, Somewhere, Somehow
April 5-7 and 11-13



Spring Dance Concert
April 25-28



Scan for tickets.



Northern Illinois University