UC BERKELEY’S DEPARTMENT OF THEATER, DANCE, AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES PRESENTS

STUPID FUCKING BIRD

BY AARON POSNER
SORT OF ADAPTED FROM THE SEAGULL BY ANTON CHEKHOV
DIRECTED BY CHRISTOPHER HEROLD

A VIRTUAL / STREAMING PRODUCTION
APRIL 24 – MAY 1, 2021
STUPID FUCKING BIRD

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DIRECTED BY CHRISTOPHER HEROLD

STUPID FUCKING BIRD is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

Original music by James Sugg.

STUPID FUCKING BIRD was developed and received its world premiere in June 2013 at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Washington, D.C.

(Howard Shalwitz, Artistic Director; Jeffrey Hermann, Managing Director)
Director’s Note

Aaron Posner’s remarkable play, Stupid Fucking Bird, examines not only foundational human concerns such as love, loss, hope, despair, resilience, failure, and the elusive search for happiness, but also the way in which art (both as we create and engage it) might serve as a companion, and even a guide, on our journeys through those terrains.

When, in the early spring of 2020, TDPS originally decided to include the play in our spring 2021 season, the calamity of The Pandemic was still only a dark cloud on the distant horizon. Then, of course, everything changed, and it slowly became apparent that we would, all of us, have to figure out some way of continuing in an utterly altered landscape. We decided to proceed with Stupid Fucking Bird. In this way, the play, in its original textual incarnation, moved into a complex intersection with the current circumstances in which it would be produced.

From a number of performance options, we chose to do a recorded Zoom production—with all its potential attributes and challenges. This decision was made not merely out of necessity (with rolling lockdowns in effect), but more profoundly in the hope of illuminating the meaning of the play while also creating something which might stand as a representation of what it has been like to live, work, and create during this era—to, in effect, continue.

The results of our splendid collision with Zoom as a delivery mechanism for creativity (both as a process and a product) are powerfully evident in the work. The actors and the lush locations loom before us like liquid hallucinations—seemingly corporeal one moment and ghostly the next. This is the inherent nature of the visual backgrounds which transform a limited, real space into a vast, imagined one. Voices may sound near and clear, or sometimes distant and muted. Costumes, lights, cameras, microphones, and props were mailed to the actors, and, with virtual guidance from designers and staff, they served as their own technicians. Most of the individuals involved in the production were never present in the same room together, but we nevertheless saw each other in the
most private spaces we inhabit—our homes, suddenly transformed into rehearsal and performance venues. We were simultaneously distant and intimate—a relationship which you might also experience in viewing this production.

Ultimately, in a surprising and, I think, beautiful way, these processes and qualities (both the attributes and the challenges) have become inextricably interwoven with the work—exemplifying and manifesting not only the meaning and questions lying at the heart of the play, but also the period in which this particular production was created. That synthesis, I imagine, is what we were looking for all along.

I will be forever amazed not only by the determination of these actors, designers, and staff to simply do their work, even as circumstances frequently challenged us, but also by the grace and generosity with which they did it.

Most of all, I am grateful for the time spent together in what will surely be remembered as an era of profound loneliness and dislocation.

Perhaps there is, after all, salvation in art.

CTH
April 2021
San Francisco/Berkeley/Zoom
CAST
IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

CONRAD
Tai White

DEV
Matthew Nelson

MASH
Eleanor Hammond

NINA
Abril Centurión

EMMA ARKADINA
Camilla Leonard

DOYLE TRIGORIN
Peter Stielstra

DR. EUGENE SORN
Sofie Herbeck
## CREATIVE TEAM

**SCENIC DESIGNER/PRODUCTION DESIGNER**
Emily Johnson

**COSTUME DESIGNERS**
Lucy Brooke  
Malia Sittler

**LIGHTING DESIGNERS**
Jack Carpenter  
Hayden Kirschbaum

**SOUND DESIGNER/MUSIC COMPOSER**
Lana Palmer

**VIDEO EDITORS**
Glynn Bartlett  
Miyuki Bierlein

**PRODUCTION COORDINATOR/STAGE MANAGER**
Kaitlin Weinstein

**ASST. PRODUCTION COORDINATOR/ASST. STAGE MANAGER**
Wendy Lau

**VIDEO SUPERVISOR**
Eugene Palmer

## STAFF & FACULTY ADVISORS

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**
Jamila Cobham

**ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER**
Emily Fassler

**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**
Joshua Frachiseur

**MASTER CARPENTER**
Christopher Weddle

**SCENIC ARTIST**
Glynn Bartlett

**PROPERTIES DIRECTOR**
Peet Cocke

**THEATER SUPERVISOR**
Eugene Palmer

**COSTUME DIRECTOR**
Wendy Sparks

**HEAD COSTUMER**
Jane Boggess

**ASSISTANT COSTUMER**
Miyuki Bierlein

**COSTUME DESIGN ADVISOR**
Annie Smart

**STAGE MANAGEMENT ADVISOR**
Laxmi Kumaran

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**
Robin Davidson, Myriam Cotton, Ben Dillon, Jean-Paul Gressieux, Megan Lowe, Michael Mansfield

**PRODUCTION REPRESENTATIVE**
Philip Kan Gotanda

**DEPARTMENT CHAIR**
Joe Goode
ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

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