



Flat Earth Theatre

10TH
ANNIVERSARY
SEASON 2006 – 2016



Electronic Press Kit

SUPPORTED IN PART BY:



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 10, 2016

Flat Earth flirts with middle school gender roles and sexuality in: *TALES OF A FOURTH GRADE LESBO*

WHAT

Flat Earth Theatre presents the East Coast premiere of Los Angeles-based playwright Gina Young's nostalgic examination of gender and sexuality, *TALES OF A FOURTH GRADE LESBO*.

WHEN

THREE WEEKS ONLY: Friday, March 11th @ 8pm; Saturday, March 12th @ 8pm; Sunday, March 13th @ 2pm; Friday, March 18th @ 8pm; Saturday, March 19th @ 8pm; Sunday, March 20th @ 2pm; Monday, March 21st @ 7:30pm; Thursday, March 24th @ 8pm; Friday, March 25th @ 8pm; and Saturday, March 26th @ 8pm

WHERE

The Arsenal Center for the Arts, Black Box
321 Arsenal Street, Watertown, MA, 02472

TICKETS

\$20 in advance; \$25 at the door; \$10 student rush.
Available at <https://flatearth.ticketleap.com/tales/>

PRESS NIGHT

Sunday, March 13th @ 2pm

FOR PRESS TICKETS

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WATERTOWN, MA (February 10, 2016) – Flat Earth Theatre kicks off their tenth anniversary season with the East Coast premier of ***TALES OF A FOURTH GRADE LESBO*** by Gina Young, with additional writing by Amanda-Faye Jimenez. Celebrated collaborator Mariagrazia LaFauci (*Doubt: a Parable*; *Bach at Leipzig*) directs this humor-and nostalgia-filled pastiche of early '90s pop culture that thoughtfully captures the joy and torment of adolescence.

Following the creative process of friends Gina, Amanda, and Seven as they collaborate to write a play, ***TALES OF A FOURTH GRADE LESBO*** explores what it means to grow up a queer woman in the '90s through the eyes of those who have lived it. There are rules in this universe: seventh graders always win dance competitions, lunch table divisions are absolute, and there is only one right way to wear a backpack. Through vignettes, dance, and original song parody, our three storytellers navigate the wilderness of leopard-print leotards and Jane Fonda workout videos as they relive the awkwardness of early sexual awakenings.

"We're trying to make the world a safer place for queer kids. Actually, for ALL kids," says playwright Gina Young, "because the words 'fag' and 'dyke' are not only hurled at gay kids to make them ashamed; they're also

used to insult anyone who steps outside of gender norms – boys who are sensitive and creative; girls who are athletic or brave. I hope this play can make us all think about the ways that we prevent other people from expressing themselves.”

According to director Mariagrazia LaFauci, “This is a script that invites you to bring yourself and your personal experience into it, because it is so deeply personal, about the kinds of anxieties that all kids everywhere face. Our cast has such a wide spectrum of experiences, but we have all had moments working on this script where we’ve said, ‘that is so me.’”

TALES OF A FOURTH GRADE LESBO begins Flat Earth’s 2016 season, “Ten Years at the Edge of the World,” three shows that highlight the role of the outsider. This season marks the company’s 10-year anniversary, and also features Boston-based playwright Patrick Gabridge’s *BLINDERS* in June, an absurdist romp through the American political circus culminating in a media-drenched presidential election, and Suzanne Lebeau’s *THE SOUND OF CRACKING BONES* in the fall, the devastating story of two child soldiers’ abduction, captivity, escape, and salvation.

TALES OF A FOURTH GRADE LESBO will run March 11th – 26th at the Arsenal Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal Street in Watertown, MA. Tickets can be purchased at <http://flatearth.ticketleap.com/tales/> for \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, or \$10 student rush. **TALES OF A FOURTH GRADE LESBO** is supported in part by a grant from the Watertown Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

STAFF & CAST

TALES OF A FOURTH GRADE LESBO’s design team includes Ben Lieberman (Set Design), Arwen Miller (Costume Design), Benjamin Blum (Lighting Design), Lindsay Eagle (Property Manager), and Korinne T. Ritchey (Dance Choreographer). The Producer is Amy Lehmitt, the Stage Manager is Elizabeth Ramirez, and the Technical Director is Adam Teti (assisted by Leigh Downes). The cast features Malari Martin, Julia Alvarez, Kathleen C. Lewis, Katharine Braun-Levine, Leah Carnow, Micah Greene, Arielle Kaplan, Arthur Gomez, Matt Arnold, Alex Roy, and Lucas Commons-Miller.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

From ginayoung.com: Gina Young is an interdisciplinary artist whose work blurs the lines between music, theatre and time-based art. She has written and directed seven plays, all of which incorporate music. Her play *Femmes: A Tragedy* won the Jane Chambers Award for Playwriting and was hailed as “slyly riotous” and “dazzlingly reconceived” by The Hollywood Reporter. Her most recent work, *sSISTERSs*, was developed through the Studio Series at REDCAT and was a Finalist for the Drama League’s Beatrice Terry Residency. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild. Gina lives in Los Angeles where she spends a lot of time dancing (she’s not good at it) and making lists (she’s exceptionally good at it). Her primary artistic interest is queering both content and form.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Mariagrazia LaFauci is a Boston-born-and-bred director, actor, and theatre educator. She is a 2012 graduate of Brown University, and the founder of the academic and extracurricular theatre programs at Saint Joseph Preparatory High School. Recent directing credits include *Bach at Leipzig*, *Doubt: A Parable*, and *Twelfth Night* with Flyleaf Theater Company, and *Arabian Nights*, *You’re a Good Man*, *Charlie Brown*, and *Our Town* with SJPHS. mariagrazialafauci.com

ABOUT FLAT EARTH THEATRE

Flat Earth Theatre (flatearththeatre.com) has been collaboratively crafting thought-provoking theatre in greater Boston since 2006. The goal is to challenge audiences with a theatre experience that inspires them to question their preconceived notions about the world. Featured productions include the award-winning staging of *The Pillowman* with the IRNE-nominated shadow puppetry of Woellert&Clark, the dimension-traveling production of *Rocket Man*, and last year’s critically acclaimed *The Farnsworth Invention*.

About the Cast

Malari Martin – Gina

Malari Martin is pleased to be a part of her first Flat Earth Theatre production! Malari recently graduated from the Boston Conservatory with a BFA in Musical Theatre. Past performances include: *Curtains* (Carmen Bernstein), *Vieux Carré* (Mrs. Wire), *Les Misérables* (Fantine), *Grease* (Rizzo), *[Title of Show]* (Susan), and *Grey Gardens* (Edith). Special thanks to her parents, her boyfriend Ben, her roommates, the jags, and the entire cast and crew of this production.

Julia Alvarez – Amanda / Brandy

Julia is super pumped to be making her debut with Flat Earth Theatre, and even more thrilled to be rocking a side ponytail and 90s neon once more! Recent Boston credits include; Rozia from “*Letters to Sala*” (Northeastern Holocaust Awareness Week), *Boston Bohemia* (Fort Point Channel Theatre), and *Blood Wedding* (Apollinaire Theatre). She also completed two tours with Portland ME based company “*Speak About It Inc.*” where she performed shows for college and high school age students, promoting consent culture and healthy relationships. She sends her thanks to all the cast and crew on this show, and hopes you enjoy the dancing!

Kathleen C. Lewis – Seven / Whitney

Kathleen Lewis is a Boston-based actor that hails from north country Maine, where she studied theater arts at Bowdoin College. She is currently devising a project using Bavarian Fairy Tales with a group of experimental physical theater artists from Boston, NYC, and Maine to be showcased in the Spring of 2016. Her most recent performance was as a intergalactic hacker for the Kevin Mullins space opera *Citizens of the Empire*. She is a member of Beau Jest Moving Theatre, a Boston-based physical theatre company that finished touring an original film noir play titled *Apartment 4D* in Maine in February. She has had the pleasure of working with a number of Boston theater companies including Boston Public Works, Post-Meridian Radio Players, Fort Point Theatre, and Boston Bohemia to name a few, and is very excited to have the opportunity to be working with Flat Earth Theatre again!

Katharine Braun-Levine – Pink Triangle Girl / Eebie / Ann

Katharine is thrilled to make her debut with Flat Earth Theatre and such an amazing show, cast, and crew! Recent credits include *That Night in the Field* (Theatre@First), *Chances* (OTP's SLAMBoston), *Side Show* (Emerson Umbrella), *Stop Kiss* (TCAN), and numerous credits with Hovey Players, including *Measure for Measure*, *The Tempest*, Summer Shorts and 24-Hour Play Festivals. Katharine currently dances at The Studio: DCFA and participates in Brandeis University dance performances as an alumna. She is a teacher in her other life. The only purpose is to flow.

Arielle Kaplan – Kara / Julie

A graduate of Brandeis University, Arielle is delighted to be making her debut with Flat Earth in such a wonderful show. Recent work includes: Debby in *Old Jews Telling Jokes* (Regent Theatre), Paulina in *The Winter's Tale* (The Upstart Crows), and The Geminae in *A Funny Thing... Forum* (GLMT). As a violence designer, Arielle's work has been seen recently with Boston Public Works (*Citizens of the Empire*). Upcoming work includes Abigail Knapp in *Goodnight, Captain White* (History Alive). www.ariellekaplan.weebly.com

Micah Greene – Brittany / Kristy

Micah Greene is excited to be making her Flat Earth Theatre debut! Recent credits include: Pattie, Kimberly Akimbo (Moonbox Productions); Kate Monster/Lucy T. Slut, Avenue Q (Arts After Hours); and Mephistopheles, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (Wax Wings Productions). Micah wishes to thank MG, the amazing cast and company of Flat Earth for bringing her middle school memories back to light, and her husband Patrick and their son, Jude, for their endless support and love. She will next appear as Crissy in psychedelic rock-musical *Hair* with The Umbrella Theater Company in Concord, MA. www.micahggreene.com

Leah Carnow – Tiffany / Penelope

Regional acting credits include *It's A Wonderful Life* (Wheelock Family Theatre), *Ragtime* (Fiddlehead Theatre Company), *Guys and Dolls* (Longwood Players), *Kiss Me Kate* (Longwood Players), *God Hates Musicals* (Ministry of Theater), *Travelogue* (Open Theatre Project), and *The Bacchae* (Tubiforce/Komoi Collective). Leah also appears as Jenny in the webseries *Staying in Boston*. As a director, Leah most recently assistant directed *Bad Jews* at Speakeasy Stage. Leah received her B.A. in Theater Arts and Creative Writing from Brandeis University. Favorite roles at Brandeis: *The Comedy of Errors* (Luciana), *Company* (Kathy), *Lot's Daughters* (Gertie), and *The House of Blue Leaves* (Little Nun). www.leahcarnow.com

Arthur Gomez – Bobby

Arthur is excited to be making his Flat Earth debut with *Tales of a Fourth Grade Lesbo*. Prior credits: *Every Christmas Story Ever Told* - Jim, Gloucester Stage; *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* - Man I, Firehouse Center for the Arts. He would like to thank everyone who came to support live theatre. He'd also like to thank his girlfriend for her undying support. Enjoy the show!

Matt Arnold – Billy

Matt Arnold is an avowed '90s kid who grew up on a steady diet of Nintendo, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and Carmen Sandiego. His previous Flat Earth credits include *The Farnsworth Invention* (Stan), *Terra Nova* (Bowers) and *The Memorandum* (George). He has also appeared in *Unreliable Narrator's Human Contact* (Brent Baker) and *Come On Over's The Shepherd's Singularity* (Gabriel Givens). He has also designed fights for Flat Earth, *Unreliable Narrator*, and *Theatre@First*.

Alexander P. Roy – Chuck

Alex Roy is a Boston-based actor/director from Springfield, NJ. After completing his Theatre studies at Roanoke College (Salem, VA) in 2011 he moved to the city and has worked and performed with several companies throughout the Boston area. These groups include The Wheelock Family Theater, The Nora, New Rep, Apollinaire, Fresh Ink, Fort Point Theatre Channel, and Science Fiction Theatre. His last production was assistant directing *Scenes From An Adultery* at the New Repertory Theater. This is Alex's first production with Flat Earth and he couldn't be more excited!

Lucas Commons-Miller – Alan

Lucas began acting at age 7 after school in the Cambridge Performance Project. On the Flat Earth stage, he last appeared as a various characters of London street life in *Pygmalion*. He has also played *Macbeth*, the *Count of Monte Cristo*, and *Algernon* in *The Importance of Being Earnest* among many others. He is a go-go dancer at goth club nights. He also plays guitar in an industrial band, Triax Coalition.

About the Staff

Mariagrazia LaFauci – Director / Sound Designer

Mariagrazia is a freelance theatre director and educator, and a lifelong Bostonian. A 2012 graduate of Brown University, she majored in art history but found her home in the theatre department. Favorite directing credits include *Bach at Leipzig*, *Arabian Nights*, *Doubt*, *Our Town*, and *Twelfth Night*. Mariagrazia would like to thank all of her 4th graders for their sharing their time, talents, and embarrassing childhood stories. www.mariagrazialafauci.com

Elizabeth Ramirez – Stage Manager

Elizabeth Ramirez has been stage managing and directing in the small theater scene since graduating from Boston University, and she is very excited to work with Flat Earth for the first time! Stage manager credits include *Polish Joke* (Titanic Theater Company), *The Winter's Tale* (Maiden Phoenix), *Echoes* (Brown Box Theater Project), *Turn of the Screw* (Simple Machine), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Longwood Players), *The Haberdasher* - ASM (Argos Productions). Directing credits include *UNYFI*, *Plaza Suite*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac* (The Calliope Project), and assistant directing for three productions with Ministry of Theater.

Amy Lehmitt – Producer

A member of Flat Earth Theatre since 2009, Ames has found a comfortable niche behind the scenes, stage managing many Flat Earth productions, producing *The Pillowman* and *Rocket Man*, and penning the radio adaptation *Lovecraft's Unnamable Tales*. Her adaptation of "The Masque of the Red Death" was performed with the Post-Meridian Radio Players in *Tomes of Terror: Nevermore*. She also chairs the play-reading committee, serves as the company's Secretary, and writes when she can.

Adam J. Teti – Tech Director

Adam has shown an interest and a passion for the science and engineering in theater his whole life and has been working with and a company member of Flat Earth Theatre since 2010. Whether behind a light board or with hammer in hand, he always works to help the vision and the art shine through.

Leigh Downes – Assistant Tech Director

Leigh graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 2009 with degrees in Electrical Engineering and Theater and returned to Watertown to work as an AV Engineer. He's an alum of the Watertown Children's Theatre, former RIT Players' President, and advocate of deaf theater at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at RIT. He has been working tech for live music, theater, and dance for over fifteen years, specializing in sound systems and set construction.

Ben Lieberman – Set Designer

Ben Lieberman is a Boston-based lighting and set designer and visual artist. Recent designs include *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You* (Artists' Theater of Boston); *It's Not About My Mother* (Fresh Ink Theatre); *Lab Rats*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Echoes* (Brown Box Theatre Project); *Laughing Wild* (Hub Theatre Company); *Far Away* (Whistler in the Dark); *The Haberdasher!* (Argos Productions); and *The Aurora Project* and *Solace* (Science Fiction Theatre Company). Ben graduated from Marlboro College in 2012.

Arwen Miller – Costume Designer

Arwen Miller has created costumes at North Shore Music Theatre, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, and the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. She has done freelance costuming and makeup for the Post Meridian Radio Players, Theatre@First, and *The Slutcracker*. You can see more of her work at <http://arwenivy77.blogspot.com/>. She'd like to thank her friends and family, Nate, and the cat.

Benjamin Blum – Light Designer

Benjamin has designed lights for over a decade in the New England area for scholastic, collegiate, community, and professional productions. An award-winning lighting designer, set designer, and stage manager, Benjamin's selected past productions include *The Winter's Tale*, *Julius Caesar*, *Les Misérables*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Twelfth Night*. As a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 11, Benjamin has worked in many venues including the Blue Hills Bank Pavilion, the Orpheum Theater, the Boston Opera House, and the TD Garden. Benjamin thanks the director and Flat Earth for the opportunity to work at the ACA with such a talented cast and crew.

Lindsay Eagle – Props Designer / Marketing

Director, Actor, Producer, and Flat Earth Company Member, Lindsay is excited to bring *Tales of a Fourth Grade Lesbo* to the Boston stage. Favorite directing credits include *Citizens of the Empire: A Space Opera* by Kevin Mullins, *From the Deep* by Cassie M. Seinuk (Boston Public Works), *Radium Girls*, *What Once We Felt*, *Rocket Man* (Flat Earth), and short plays and readings with companies across Boston. Onstage, Lindsay most recently appeared in Bridge Repertory Theatre's *Julius Caesar* as a singing Soothsayer. She will direct *The Good Body* by Eve Ensler with The Hub Theatre Company in July and *The Sound of Cracking Bones* by Suzanne Lebeau with Flat Earth in the fall. www.lindsayeagle.com

Korinne T. Ritchey – Dance Choreographer

Korinne T. Ritchey celebrates the opportunity to bust out some old-school dance moves with the fourth graders. Other Flat Earth credits include *The Farnsworth Invention* (Lizette, et al.) and *Rocket Man* (Rita), and coming up next, she will be directing Patrick Gabridge's *Blinders*. More recent credits include directing *Terminus* for the HCE Players, acting in the New England premiere of *Love in a Glass Jar* (Eve), and serving as Artistic Associate / contributing choreographer for Six One Seven Dance Collective. Korinne completed a Master's degree in theatre education at Emerson College where she focused on directing and currently works in Disability Support Services and as an adjunct theatre professor at Middlesex Community College.

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was developed through the Studio Series at REDCAT and was a Finalist for the Drama League's Beatrice Terry Residency. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild. Gina lives in Los Angeles where she spends a lot of time dancing (she's not good at it) and making lists (she's exceptionally good at it). Her primary artistic interest is queering both content and form.

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the IRNE-nominated shadow puppetry of Woellert&Clark, the dimension-traveling production of *Rocket Man*, and last year's critically acclaimed *The Farnsworth Invention*.

My Secret Recess

by Mal Malme

Editor's Note: This article first appeared on the Tales of a Fourth Grade Lesbo companion blog, which features personal stories from community members as well as the cast and crew. Visit <http://4thgradelesbo.tumblr.com/> for more stories such as this.

When I was in elementary school, there was a small patch of woods, more like a few clumps of trees, in the corner of the playground, behind the swings and the slide. Once in a while, during recess, I would go there when I felt like being alone, when my mind needed to race more than my legs.

A sunny fall day, I was eight, in third grade, I had retreated to the mini forest. I wove in between each tree, feeling my hand scrape across the cool bark. I was so lost in my head, a kick ball could have slammed into it, and I might not have noticed. I was im-



mersed, sifting through the evidence. Trying to figure out *what was wrong with me*.

I had crushes on girls, like all the time. Right then, it was Mandy, who spoke funny and had just moved here from Florida. And of course, a huge crush on my teacher, Ms. Dougherty, whose shoes I had puked on during the first week of school. Crushes on girls were nothing new. I had had crushes on girls since kindergarten.

I hated girls clothes. Especially dresses and skirts, and anything frilly, or lacy. I begged, more like, cried my eyes out, to get my Mom to buy me Toughskin jeans from the boys' department at Sears, because that's what my brother got, and the girls' colors were gross.

I liked the same toys as my brother. We choreographed many elaborate GI Joe adventures. When the newly designed GI Joes came out, their plastic bodies were all muscly under their combat fatigues. I remember thinking that I wanted to have muscles like that.

As I circled around the trees again and again, I convinced myself that I had the answer:

*God had screwed up.
He made a mistake.
I was supposed to have been born a boy.*

It was the only thing that made sense to me. There was a brief moment of relief that I had figured it out. I had spent the entire recess thinking through it all. For a few seconds, I felt grounded. My feet solid on the earth, amidst my quiet clump of trees.

But then the weight of it hit me, the pressure in my chest began to build, the terror spread through me.

I *had* to keep it a secret. I couldn't tell a soul. Or I would lose everything. I would have to try hold it in. Try to fit in. Maybe even, *try to change*.

As I stood in line at the end of recess, waiting to go back inside, one of the kids scrunched up her face at me.

"Are you a boy or a girl?"

I'd spend the better part of my life trying to figure that out. Even now, at the age of 50, the conversation continues.

"Mal looks like a boy," my 6 year old niece said a couple of weeks ago, grinning at me from across the aisle, as the bus bumped along a city street.

"I look like me," I said, smiling back.

Mal Malme is the co-founder of Queer Soup Theater (queersouptheater.org) and co-creator of The Pineapple Project, an original theatre piece for children that explores the gender creativity in all of us.

Flat Earth's Tenth Anniversary Season continues with two more shows highlighting the role of the outsider...

BLINDERS

BY PATRICK GABRIDGE

The world is abuzz over a scientific miracle: two genetically identical humans, unrelated but more twin than twins, exactly the same in every way! No one can tell them apart... except journalist Karen Sayer, whose declaration to the brainwashed public that they don't look anything alike destroys her career and throws her sanity into question. As the duplicates parlay their commercial success into burgeoning political power, Karen's quest for truth takes her on an unexpected mission with some unlikely allies and even stranger enemies.

Darkly absurd and laugh-out-loud funny, *Blinders* is a cautionary tale about the American political circus, just in time for election year.

JUNE 10 – 25, 2016

ARSENAL CENTER FOR THE ARTS

THE SOUND OF CRACKING BONES

BY SUZANNE LEBEAU

Much like countless children across the globe, Elikia and Joseph have been torn from their homes and families, pressed into service and submission in a brutal civil war. This is the child soldiers' testimonial, the story of an unlikely flight towards freedom where welcome remains uncertain.

Hauntingly evocative and devastatingly beautiful, *The Sound of Cracking Bones* presents a lyrical recollection of two children's capture, escape, and rescue, in the words of the girl who has learned to see the gun as an extension of her arm.

DATES & LOCATION
TO BE ANNOUNCED