



Flat Earth Theatre

KING OF SHADOWS

by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa

Press Kit

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A digital version of this press kit is available for download at:
flatearththeatre.com/shows/season-13/king-of-shadows/press-kit.pdf

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Flat Earth Theatre presents
King of Shadows
By Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa

WHAT

Flat Earth Theatre concludes its 13th season “The Real Unreal” with Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa’s chilling modern fable, **KING OF SHADOWS**.

WHEN:

THREE WEEKS ONLY: Friday, June 7th @ 8pm; Saturday, June 8th @ 8pm; Sunday, June 9th @ 2pm; Monday, June 10th @ 7:30pm; Friday, June 14th @ 8pm; Saturday, June 15th @ 8pm; Sunday, June 16th @ 2pm; Thursday, June 20th @ 7:30pm; Friday, June 21st @ 8pm; and Saturday, June 22nd @ 8pm.

WHERE

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

TICKETS

<https://www.flatearththeatre.com/shows/season-13/king-of-shadows/>
Box Office Phone: 617-923-8487, Adults – \$25* | Students – \$12.50†

PRESS NIGHT

Monday, June 10th @ 7:30pm

FOR PRESS TICKETS

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(617) 923-8487

WATERTOWN, MA (May 7, 2019) - Flat Earth Theatre concludes its 13th season “The Real Unreal” this June with Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa’s chilling modern fable, **KING OF SHADOWS**, directed by acclaimed local actor, director, and playwright Michael Hisamoto in his debut collaboration with Flat Earth.

When well-intentioned grad student Jessica invites streetwise runaway Nihar into her home, she unwittingly stumbles into a strange, sordid fantasy that imperils her otherwise idyllic life. The fanciful tale he weaves unveils a debauched realm of exploitation and terror that threatens to unravel Jessica’s worldview, but is any of it true, or merely the delusions of a troubled young mind? Playwright Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, known to television audiences as the creative mind behind *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* and *Riverdale*, draws inspiration from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* to conjure a world more strange than true; a distempered fairyland which seeps through the cracks of reality.

“Everyone in **KING OF SHADOWS** is running from their past,” explains director Michael Hisamoto, “pasts which haunt them into making choices in an attempt to change the status quo. I see the people in my life making choices like this all the time: living in fear of the past, fear of failure, fear of loss, fear of being insignificant. ... The play ultimately becomes a story of how we can run towards a better future instead of away from a painful past.”

* Plus Fees

† Student ID Required

Hisamoto, familiar to local audiences primarily for his work on stage as an actor, leads a cast featuring local actors Laura Chowenhill, Trinidad Ramkissoon, Abigail Erdelatz, and Matthew Crawford. “As I made the choice to move behind the table from a career as a professional actor to director, I now find myself confronted with this exact same reality: when is it time to take a leap of faith and how can we make that decision in hope, not fear?”

KING OF SHADOWS will run June 7, 2019 through June 22, 2019 at the Mosesian Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal Street in Watertown, MA. Tickets may be purchased for \$25, or \$12.50 for students at <https://www.flatearththeatre.com/shows/season-13/king-of-shadows/>.

KING OF SHADOWS concludes Flat Earth’s 2018–19 season “The Real Unreal,” which began last Fall with the IRNE Award–winning ***Delicate Particle Logic***, in which Jennifer Blackmer fuses art and science to unpack questions about the discovery and subsequent usage of atomic fission; and continued in March with the critically-lauded, Elliot Norton–nominated ***Not Medea*** by Allison Gregory, a captivating reimagining that pulls the Greek classic apart at the seams. Flat Earth’s 13th season spotlights unreliable narrators, and seeks the intrinsic truths found in the gap between real and unreal.

STAFF & CAST

The cast features Boston-area actors Laura Chowenhill as Jessica, Trinidad Ramkissoon as Nihar, Abigail Erdelatz as Sarah and Matthew Crawford as Eric, all of whom make their Flat Earth Theatre mainstage debut. Director Michael Hisamoto is joined by a veteran creative team including scenic designer Ryan Bates, costume designer Erica Desautels, lighting designer PJ Strachman, sound designer Bram Xu, props designer Emily Penta, and puppetry consultant Libby Schap. The team is supported by stage manager Amy Lehrmitt and technical directors Adam Teti and Leigh Downes. The production is produced by Flat Earth co-founder Jake Scaltreto.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama. His plays include: *Doctor Cerberus* (South Coast Rep, LA Theatre Works), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Roundhouse Theatre), *Good Boys and True* (Step-pewolf, 2econd Stage Theatre, the O’Neill), *Based on a Totally True Story* (MTC), *The Velvet Sky* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre), *The Muckle Man* (City Theatre), *Dark Matters* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, the O’Neill), *Rough Magic* (Hangar Theatre), *The Weird* (Dad’s Garage Theatre), *The Mystery Plays* (2econd Stage, Yale Rep, Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Award), and the GLAAD Media Award–nominated comedies: *Golden Age* and *Say You Love Satan*. Upcoming projects include *The Dracula Cycle* at Dallas Theatre Center and the new musical *American Psycho*. In addition to his playwriting, Mr. Aguirre-Sacasa serves as Chief Creative Officer of Archie Comics, and is the executive producer and developer of television’s *Riverdale* and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Michael Hisamoto is a Boston-based actor, playwright, educator, and director. Recent acting credits include *Hold These Truths*, *Stage Kiss*, *Virginia Woolf’s Orlando*, *Fast Company* (Lyric Stage), *Allegiance* (SpeakEasy Stage Company), *Charlotte’s Web* (Wheelock Family Theatre), *Yellow Face* (The Office of War Information), *The Ordinary Epic* (Cro-se to Home Productions), and *The Important Thing about Earthquakes* (Watertown Children’s Theatre). In addition to his acting work, Michael was a Playwriting Resident at the Kennedy Center’s American College Theatre Festival, and has directed or assisted on numerous productions across Boston including projects for the Lyric Stage Company of Boston, The Huntington Theatre Company, The Open Theatre Project, and Boston University. Michael believes in educating the next generation of artists, teaching and having taught at multiple institutions, including residencies in the education departments of the Huntington Theatre Company and Lyric Stage Company of Boston and happily offers career consultation free of charge to young artists of color. Michael is a graduate of The Orange County School of the Arts and Boston University. A proud member of Actor’s Equity Association. michaelhisamoto.com

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About the Cast

LAURA CHOWENHILL – Jessica

Laura Chowenhill is a proud Master's graduate of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Most recently Laura was featured in Greater Boston Stage Company's holiday performance of *It's A Wonderful Life*. Past theatre credits include Erica in *Heritage Hills Naturals*, Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Amalia in *She Loves Me*, and Brutus in *Julius Caesar*. She also holds a BF in Musical Theatre from Belmont University. Love to Richard.

TRINIDAD RAMKISSOON – Nihar

Trinidad Ramkissoon is honored to be making his debut at Flat Earth in the production of *King of Shadows*. He floated through the doors of Central Square Theatre at the tender age of 13. The journey that began at CST propelled Trinidad to Boston and beyond— including Broadway where he represented the area as a finalist in the August Wilson Monologue Competition. Locally, he was last seen in Actors' Shakespeare Projects's production of *Macbeth*. Trinidad believes gifts are best unpacked when they have been recycled. With platforms provided by The Huntington Theatre Company, ArtsEmerson, Actors' Shakespeare Project and Company One, Trinidad shares his gifts as a Teaching Artist; serving Boston Public School students. Shoutout to all my babies!!!!

ABIGAIL ERDELATZ – Sarah

Abigail is thrilled to be making her Flat Earth Theatre debut in *King of Shadows*. She received her BA in Theatre Arts from Gordon College and her certificate in Classical Acting from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Previous roles include Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Sheila Birling in *An Inspector Calls*, Young Woman in *Machinal*, and Constanze in *Amadeus*, as well as participation in the Boston Playwright's Theatre's 10-Minute-Play Festival. Special thanks to family and friends for their constant love and support.

MATT CRAWFORD – Eric

Matt is incredibly stoked to be making his Flat Earth debut in *King of Shadows*. Having recently graduated from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, he's excited to be venturing into the Boston theater scene. He's proud to have studied at the British American Drama Academy and under the tutelage of many accomplished industry professionals. Thank you so very much to the wonderful team that is allowing our art to take shape. www.mattjcrowford.com

About the Staff

MICHAEL HISAMOTO – Director

Michael Hisamoto is a Boston-based actor, playwright, educator, and director. Recent acting credits include *Hold These Truths*, *Stage Kiss*, *Virginia Woolf's Orlando*, *Fast Company* (Lyric Stage), *Allegiance* (SpeakEasy Stage Company), *Charlotte's Web* (Wheelock Family Theatre), *Yellow Face* (The Office of War Information), *The Ordinary Epic* (Croise to Home Productions), and *The Important Thing about Earthquakes* (Watertown Children's Theatre). In addition to his acting work, Michael was a Playwriting Resident at the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival, and has directed or assisted on numerous productions across Boston including projects for the Lyric Stage Company of Boston, The Huntington Theatre Company, The Open Theatre Project, and Boston University. Michael believes in educating the next generation of artists, teaching and having taught at multiple institutions, including residencies in the education departments of the Huntington Theatre Company and Lyric Stage Company of Boston and happily offers career consultation free of charge to young artists of color. Michael is a graduate of The Orange County School of the Arts and Boston University. A proud member of Actor's Equity Association. michaelhisamoto.com

ERICA DESAUTELS – Costume Designer

Erica is a Boston-based costume technician and designer who is thrilled to return to Flat Earth! Her technical work has been seen at Boston Ballet, Boston Lyric Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Disney Cruise Lines and many other large and small stages. Her designs have been recently seen in *The 39 Steps* (Moonbox Prod.), *Penny Penniworth* (Titanic Theater Co.), *Sense and Sensibility* (Maiden Phoenix), *Laura* (Stoneham Theater), *Dog Act* (Theatre On Fire), *Citizens of the Empire* (Boston Public Works), *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Carrie: The Musical* (Stoneham young company), *Polish Joke* (Titanic), *The Farnsworth Invention & The Nether* (Flat Earth), and *Chalk* (Fresh Ink Theatre), among others.

EMILY PENTA – Props Designer

Emily is very glad to be working on *King of Shadows* as the Properties Designer, marking her fourth production on the design team with Flat Earth Theatre. Her previous credits with FET include *Antigone* (Props), *A Bright Room Called Day* (Tech Director, Props), and *Fat Pig* (Build Crew). Thank you to the support of my friends and family throughout this process, and thank you to Flat Earth Theatre for always creating a positive experience.

PJ STRACHMAN – Lighting Designer

Recent designs include Flat Earth's *Delicate Particle Logic*, *Antigone*, *A Bright Room Called Day*, *Silent Sky* and *Fat Pig*, Blue Spruce's *The OK Diaries*, L.A.B.'s *A Story Beyond* and *Yellow Bird Chase*, Gloucester Stage's *My Station in Life*, *Every Christmas Story Ever Told* and *Dueling Divas*, Boston Public Works' *Los Meadows*, Bad Habit's *The Real Inspector Hound*, *How Soft the Lining*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Speech and Debate*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *The Goat or, Who Is Sylvia*, *Orlando*, *Translations*, and *Top Girls*, Wax Wings' *The Man from Willow's Brook*, Kevin Cirone's *Creative License*, and many other area shows. She is the regular designer for Gann Academy and coproducer at Blue Spruce Theatre. Photos of her work can be seen at www.pjalex.com. Upcoming works: *Elektra* (Liars and Believers 2019/2020), *Pandora* (as lyricist, production by Blue Spruce in 2019).

BRAM XU – Sound Designer

Bram Xu is a graduate of Boston University's College of Fine Arts, and is excited in their collaboration with Flat Earth. His most recent sound design credits include Boston University's *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* and *Our Town*. You may find more examples of his work at www.bramxu.com.

AMY LEHRMITT – Stage Manager

Ames has stage managed over twenty projects for Flat Earth Theatre since joining the company in 2009. She has also produced many others, including last fall's IRNE-nominated *Delicate Particle Logic*, and penned the radio adaptations *Lovecraft's Unnamable Tales* and *Lovecraft's Tales Outside Time & Space*. Her adaptation of "The Masque of the Red Death" was performed with the Post-Meridian Radio Players in *Tomes of Terror: Nevermore*. Next up, she is writing an original sci-fi radio play, *Fine-Tuned Universe*, in development for next season. Ames resides in Medford with her boyfriend / company founder Jake and two cats named Jim.

RYAN BATES – Scenic Designer

Ryan Bates is a Boston-based scenic designer. Recent credits include *We Will Not Be Silent*, *Ideation*, *Brecht on Brecht*, *Thurgood*, *The Testament of Mary*, *Via Dolorosa*, and *The Snow Queen* (New Repertory Theatre); *Dark Room*, *The Launch Prize*, and *Salome* (Bridge Repertory Theatre); *The Journey* (InMotion Theatre); *Or* (Maiden Phoenix/Simple Machine); *Los Meadows* (Boston Public Works); *Dear Elizabeth* and *Melancholy Play* (The Umbrella); *Blasted* (Off the Grid Theatre Company); *The Last Five Years* (Arts After Hours); *That Time the House Burned Down* (Fresh Ink); *Academy Fight Song* (Centastage); *Angels in America* (Boston University Opera Institute); *4000 Miles* and *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* (Gloucester Stage Company). Ryan received his MFA in Scenic Design from Boston University and a BA in Theatre and Art History from Middlebury College.

JAKE SCALTRETO – Producer

Jake is a director, designer, and producer based in Boston, and is a cofounder of Flat Earth. He has previously produced numerous shows with Flat Earth including *Radium Girls*, *What Once We Felt*, and *Pirate Lives! The Musical!* He also produced *Citizens of the Empire* with Boston Public Works.

LIBBY SCHAP – Puppetry Consultant

Libby is a Boston-based actor, puppeteer, writer, and producer. Recent performing credits include *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (imaginary beasts); *Matt & Ben* (LL Production Co); *Midnight Zoo* (Puppet Showplace Theater); *4.48 Psychosis* (NOLA Playhouse); and *Avenue Q* (WCLOC). Her original work *Flying Lessons*, a shadow puppet show, has newly been awarded The Jim Henson Foundation Production grant to be toured in 2019. By day, she is a puppeteer with The Kids on the Block school tour, which teaches young students about disability awareness and bully prevention. www.libbyschap.com

About the Playwright

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama. His plays include: *Doctor Cerberus* (South Coast Rep, LA Theatre Works), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Roundhouse Theatre), *Good Boys and True* (Steppenwolf, 2econd Stage Theatre, the O'Neill), *Based on a Totally True Story* (MTC), *The Velvet Sky* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre), *The Muckle Man* (City Theatre), *Dark Matters* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, the O'Neill), *Rough Magic* (Hangar Theatre), *The Weird* (Dad's Garage Theatre), *The Mystery Plays* (2econd Stage, Yale Rep,

Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Award), and the GLAAD Media Award–nominated comedies: *Golden Age* and *Say You Love Satan*. Upcoming projects include *The Dracula Cycle* at Dallas Theatre Center and the new musical *American Psycho*. In addition to his playwriting, Mr. Aguirre-Sacasa serves as Chief Creative Officer of Archie Comics, and is the executive producer and developer of television's *Riverdale* and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*.

About Flat Earth Theatre

Mission Statement

Flat Earth Theatre crafts experiences that challenge the worldview of both artist and audience. Through evocative, intimate staging and visceral, intelligent performances, we inspire the community to question their preconceived notions and expand their perspective. We stage productions of neglected and underperformed scripts, as well as new and in-development pieces, and conceive unique takes on more conventional works. Flat Earth Theatre thrives in its egalitarian approach, engaging the diverse ideas and skills of its company members and collaborators to create thought-provoking theatre that informs and entertains.

History

Flat Earth Theatre was established in the summer of 2006 by Kevin Mullins and Jake Scaltreto, long-time friends from Watertown seeking a creative outlet. Now in its thirteenth season, Flat Earth has established itself as a distinctive voice in Boston theatre. Over the years, the goal organically emerged to focus on challenging audiences to question their preconceived notions about the world. The company focuses on intellectual themes – often scientific, literary, or historical – as well as topical issues that explore elements of society that inspire thought and discussion.

Flat Earth has no Artistic Director. Rather, all decisions from season selection down are made by company consensus. Each member contributes their own talent and perspective to shape the identity of the company. Flat Earth functions as an egalitarian community of artists, a consortium of creative minds brought together in the pursuit of great theatre.

Featured productions include the IRNE Awards–sweeping *The Farnsworth Invention* (2015); *Silent Sky* (2017), recipient of

the 2017 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Fringe Production; and *Fat Pig* (2017) for which Lindsay Eagle was awarded Best Fringe Actress at the 22nd Annual IRNE Awards, as well as Outstanding Actress at the 2018 Elliot Norton Awards.

Our Theatre C.R.E.D.

Collaborative – As an egalitarian company, collaboration among production teams and company members is at the core of decision making. All planning starts with discussion in which every member has equal opportunity to express their opinion and be part of the conversation, and all resolutions are determined through the accord of those involved. Flat Earth Theatre's objective is that everyone has ownership of the outcome, whether that be in how a show looks, what plays are selected, or how the company is run.

Resourceful – Flat Earth showcases creative approaches to complex theatrical matters, onstage and off. We create productions of formidable quality, but remain budget conscious by pushing our artists to think outside the box, embrace their inventiveness, and be truly original in their work.

Evocative – Through our productions and other interactions, Flat Earth Theatre strives to challenge both audience member and artist to reassess what they know about the world around them. Unfamiliar themes and little-known stories awaken an interest in our audience to learn more and discuss with others, and they leave the theatre transformed by what they have just experienced.

Daring – Flat Earth's risk-taking style pushes us in unexpected directions, enabling us to craft theatrical works with an approach unique to our company. Our ambitious choices push us into new, exciting territory and give audiences an experience not often seen on Boston stages.

BRINGING THE SHADOWS TO THE KINGDOM OF SHADOWS

When Flat Earth first sat down with director Michael Hisamoto to discuss his vision for *King of Shadows*, Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa's chilling modern fable, our collective imaginations ran wild with the idea of bringing the kingdom of shadows into the theater through puppetry. Actor, puppeteer, filmmaker, and writer Libby Schap joined the team to help make that vision a reality.

We caught Libby at a recent rehearsal, and she shared some thoughts about how puppetry became a big part of her life, and what makes it such a key component of this show.

Flat Earth Theatre: *How long have you been involved in puppeteering and puppetry design, and what inspired you to enter this field?*

Libby Schap: As a child I was actually afraid of puppets, but in 2009, I decided to leave my full-time job and needed to find work quick. There was an audition where they were looking for puppeteers to join a school tour – a show that teaches students about disability awareness and bully prevention. I didn't have experience as a puppeteer, but I went in for it anyway. Luckily, I got the job and I've been working there ever since! This led to taking classes, developing shows, and a new-found love for puppetry.

FET: *Why was puppetry brought in as an element to this production of King of Shadows?*

LS: The script for *King of Shadows* has so much rich imagery embedded in the text. Michael Hisamoto wanted to bring that imagery to life; for the audience to see another world that exists in these characters' lives. Puppetry is a wonderful medium for exploring a world in a safe and magical way, so I think it was a perfect match for this concept. Also, it helped having the word "shadow" in the title, to know which type of puppetry to use.

FET: *What styles or traditions of puppetry have you (and Michael) drawn on in creating the moments in this show?*

LS: We used shadow puppetry, mostly sticking with the use of body silhouettes and projections. This means the performer's body becomes the puppet, instead of flat-surfaced cut-outs, as you might see in traditional shadow puppetry. Recently, there have been a lot of new trends in shadow puppetry, so some inspiration came from theater companies currently experimenting with shadows (i.e. Pig Pen Theater Company, Manual Cinema).

FET: *Anything else you're working on these days that people interested in King of Shadows might also want to see?*

LS: This year, my creative partner, Caitlin Brzezinski, and I were awarded The Jim Henson Founda-



tion production grant. In September, our show *Flying Lessons* will have its world premiere at Puppet Showplace Theater. *Flying Lessons* is about three women discovering a shadow world of their secret desires in a puppet show with moving screens, flying puppets, and dancing puppeteers. For more information and show dates, visit our Facebook page! (<https://www.facebook.com/FlyingLessonstheshow/>)

FET: *What's the moment you're most excited to see audiences react to in King of Shadows (if there's something you can share without giving too much away!)?*

LS: There is a moment in the play when Sarah takes the memory of her parents out of her mind to hold on to it. Sarah's character is guided a lot of the show by the lack of her parents and having to grow up in a household defined by their absence. In this scene, through the shadow puppetry, Sarah finally gets to interact with her parents – in a way that I think is pretty magical!

See more of Libby's work at her website, <https://www.libbyschap.com/>