

The logo for the Oakland Theater Project, featuring the text "OAKLAND THEATER PROJECT" in white, uppercase letters inside a dark green, textured circular shape. The background of the entire poster is a blue-tinted portrait of a woman with short dark hair, looking upwards and to the left. The image is decorated with white snowflake-like patterns and faint green pine branches.

OAKLAND
THEATER
PROJECT

Bay Area Premiere

COST OF LIVING

by Martyna Majok

MAR 3-24

Note from the Director



There is something about tackling American ‘class’ on stage that I find genuinely moving. The passionate nature, the underdog charisma, the human dignity that roots fast while it defends all its loves without the luxury of

wealth invites a certain kind of theatrical poetry that feels unabashedly American in its artform.

Martyna Majok’s *Cost of Living* steps into that formidable American tradition and brings a new marginalized group into its folds: modern day Americans with disabilities – specifically, one who has money and one who does not. One who is born with a disability and begins their life with Cerebral Palsy, and one who at 41 suddenly becomes paraplegic. As Christine Bruno, portraying Ani tonight, said to me during the rehearsal process, “the disabled is the only club where anyone can become a member at any time.”

But these are just the beginning of the complicated and rich circumstances that playwright Martyna Majok paints in a landscape teeming with brazen wit, deep grief, and a stack of bills that have to get paid.

I call this a ghost story, a kind of memory play.

You’ll first meet Eddie at St. Mazie’s bar and he’ll offer to buy you a drink if you’ll hear his tale. Should you pull up your chair and stay, his space will move across two different New Jerseys – the refined edges of Princeton and the industrial jungle of Jersey City. These characters have no time for self-pity, or moping, because they believe in merit. If they could all just catch a break...

The turnkeys in this world are touch and trust. They unlock a kind of electric current that, when it surges, bears an intimate sensitivity long forgotten. Centered in that current, the characters are even more than seen, they are finally felt. It is not the wave, but the undertow that connects them.

I am incredibly grateful to OTP for the opportunity to have spent good time with these brilliant actors and their rich lived experiences. Each of them has fleshed the characters out through their own viewpoints and unique ‘life goggles’ – as all the best actors do. I am a richer human being for having spent weeks in their company. My hope is that you feel a touch of that richness too – that special kind of wealth that theater lifts in our spirit.

Emilie Whelan

Director

Oakland Theater Project

Executive Director & Co-Artistic Director	Michael Socrates Moran
Co-Artistic Director	William Hodgson
Associate Artistic Director	Lisa Ramirez
Managing Director	Colin Mandlin
Senior Director of Patron Experience & Development.....	Arielle Powell
Technical Director.....	Ashley Munday
Outreach and Communication Director.....	Alexa Burrell
Production Manager.....	Mylo Cardona
Head Carpenter	Brendan Yungert
Grant Manager & Company Administrator.....	Maxi Himpe
Communication Manager	Liam Kirk
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Co-Founders

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**William Hodgson • Halili Knox • Diana Lee • Colin Mandlin
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Oakland Theater Project presents

Cost of Living by Martyna Majok

Cast

Jess	Carla Gallardo
John	Matty Placencia
Eddie.....	Daniel Duque-Estrada*
Ani.....	Christine Bruno*

* Member of Actors' Equity Association. This theater operates under an agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



The performance runs 1 hour and 40 minutes without intermission.

Production Team

Director, Set Designer	Emilie Whelan
Props Designer	Lilia Kuroda
Costume Designer	Marina Polakoff
Lighting Designer	Kevin Myrick
Sound Designer.....	Ray Archie
Stage Manager	Kamaile Alnas-Benson
Intimacy Choreographer	Bessie Zolno
Production Assistant.....	Mestehafe Eyob
Assistant Stage Manager	Elle Dexter
Technical Director.....	Ashley Munday
Production Manager	Mylo Cardona
Master Electrician	Ashley Munday
Lighting Technician.....	Sam Fehr
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Carpenter	Shy Baniani
	Sulé Shangoshola
	Mark Erickson
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	Arielle Powell
Concessionaire	Marjorie Cleveland
Photographer	Ben Krantz Studio
Playbill Production.....	Third Act Services
Videographer.....	Adam Elder
Special Thanks	Howard Flax (FLAX art & design)
	Nina G
	Emilie Whelan
	John Benson (Center for Independent Living)
	Michaela Goldhaber (Bay Area Women's Theatre Festival)
	Lisa Ramirez
	Bekka Fink

Production Sponsor: Pepi Ross & Jason Marks

Cost of Living is presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC, servicing the Dramatists Play Service imprint. (www.dramatists.com) .

The world premiere of *Cost of Living* was produced by the Williamstown Theatre Festival in July 2016 (Mandy Greenfield, Artistic Director; Michael Sag, General Manager)

Masks will be required at Friday performances throughout the season, and are optional for all other performances.

The Oakland Theater at FLAX art & design, 1501 Martin Luther King Jr Way, Oakland, CA 94612
510-646-1126 • info@oaklandtheaterproject.org • oaklandtheaterproject.org

Biographies



Christine Bruno
Ani

Christine is an award-winning New York-based actor, teaching artist, and disability equity consultant for the entertainment industry and has worked across the U.S. and internationally. She received her MFA in Acting and Directing from The New School. Selected credits include the Off-Broadway world premieres of Mariana Correño King's *Truckers* and Bekah Brunstetter's *Public Servant*; *The Taming of the Shrew* (The Public Theater); Jose Rivera's world premiere adaptation of Genet's *The Maids*; *Raspberry* (U.K. musical tour); *The Glass Menagerie* (The Fulton Theatre); Resounding LLC's *The Tempest*; *Law & Order*; *God Friended Me*; 2021 festival favorite Best Summer Ever on Hulu ®. Christine serves on the SAG-AFTRA National and NY Local boards and is Chair of the NY Local SAG-AFTRA Performers with Disabilities Committee. She is a lifetime member of The Actors Studio, The Actors Center, and a teaching artist for New Studio Broadway and Playwrights Horizons studios at NYU and Queens Theatre's Theatre for All actor training program. She is thrilled to be making her OTP debut and returning to the Bay area stage after many years. Proud member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA. Christine dedicates her performance to the late Jean Shelton.
@christinebrunony



Daniel Duque-Estrada
Eddie

Daniel makes his Oakland Theater Project debut. In the Bay Area, Duque-Estrada has worked with the Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, CalShakes, Shotgun Players, and Aurora Theatre Company. Other theaters include The Oregon Shakespeare Festival (two seasons), The Dallas Theatre Center (Brierly Resident Acting Company Member), and Trinity Repertory Company, where he is currently a Resident Company Artist. Off-Broadway: The Woman's Project and PlayCo. He holds an MFA in Acting from Brown University/Trinity Rep.



Carla Gallardo
Jess

Carla is a Bay Area actor, and is thrilled to be working with her OTP familia once again! Some credits include: Valeria, Andrea, & Empleada "Aliada Ideal" in *Doméstica Realidad*, & Trinidad-Juana in *Las Azurdüy* (La Lengua Teatro), Eden / The Lost Child in *Exodus to Eden*, She in *Book of Sand (a fairytale)*, & Ariel #3 in *The Tempest* (Oakland Theater Project), Gabriela in

References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot (Custom Made Theater), Olivia Santiago in *The Box* (Pulitzer Center/Marin Shakespeare), & Ensemble in *Retablos* (Word 4 Word). Within the theater community, she works with youth all over Northern California in programs surrounding theater skills, & educational awareness on a myriad of topics with Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theater, the San Francisco Mime Troupe's Youth Theater Project, OTP's Theater Club Residency, & Word 4 Word's Youth Program. On her downtime, she enjoys quality time with her loved ones, sipping on some cafecito, exploring nature, and finding places to dance!



Matty Placencia
John

Matty is an actor and artist from Alameda, California. They have been playing music and making films since childhood. A graduate from UCLA, they were involved in the Film & Photography Society as well as LCC Theatre Company. In 2018, they were the editor for the Campus Movie Fest film "Le Jour", which made its way to the 2019 Cannes Film Festival Short Film Corner. This is Matty's theatrical debut as an actor.

Emilie Whelan

Director, Set Designer

Emilie has been with Oakland Theater Project since 2015.

Directing and Acting credits with

OTP include: *Waiting for Lefty*; *GROUNDED*; *The Radicalization of Bradley Manning*; *Othello*; *A Streetcar Named Desire*; *Hamlet*; *Mother Courage and Her Children*; *Romeo and Juliet*; *Macbeth*; *Gary: A Sequel to Titus Andronicus*. She is the Director of Advancement with West Edge Opera.

Lilia Kuroda

Props Designer

Lilia (all pronouns) is obsessed with the trinkets left behind by wizards and fairies. This is their first time ever working as a Props Designer, though treasure hunting has been their lifelong profession. Catch them planting jewels in a strange forest or mending a quilt of pickpocketed dreams. And remember, there is no life you'll know that compares to pure imagination. Living there, you'll be free. If you truly wish to be.

Marina Polakoff

Costume Designer

Originally from Moscow, Russia Marina is a Bay Area-based costume designer who has won multiple international fashion design competitions, and has extensive education in fashion and costume design. Her designs have been published in many fashion magazines in the USA and Europe, as well as exhibited in art galleries. For the last several years she has focused on designing costumes for stage. She worked with many SF/Bay Area companies, including Lamplighters Music Theater, New Chamber Opera of San Francisco, ARS Minerva, Festival Opera, Island City Opera, Diablo Ballet, and Velocity Cirques.

Kevin Myrick

Lighting Designer

Kevin is an Artist and Technologist. Kevin was one of the first to combine video projection and personal

computers, stream video online, and was a pioneer in community television. Kevin was Technical Director and resident designer for over 20 years at the Buriel Clay Theatre in the African American Arts & Culture Complex, working with resident companies (AfroSolo, Cultural Odyssey, The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, The African-American Shakespeare Company, Push Dance). Myrick has designed Lighting, Sound and/or Projections, most recently for The African-American Shakespeare Company (*Richard II*, *Echoes of Us*), TheatreFirst (*The Last Sermon of Sister Imani*, *A Marriage*), Ray of Light Theatre (*Caroline or Change*), Youth Musical Theatre Company (*Batboy*, *Rent*), Throckmorton Theatre (*Ragtime*, *Footloose*, *The Sound of Music*), Lorraine Hansberry Theatre Company (*Single Black Female*, *Intimate Apparel*), San Francisco Playhouse (*Hieroglyph*, *Twelfth Night the Musical*), Altarena Theatre (*Slow Food*), Center Repertory Company (*Sweet*) and Aurora Theatre Company

Ray Archie

Sound Designer

Ray is the Executive Director of Notes to the Soul and head engineer of Brooklyn Sound Lab. Ray plays cello, bass, & piano and has performed internationally with Leonard Bernstein, Michael Tilson-Thomas, LSO, SFSO, & many others. Ray is an award-winning engineer/producer who has worked in television and radio for over 20 years, regularly presents AES and EBU conventions, and has recorded 30+ albums, 25+ audiobooks, and 100's journalism pieces for the major publishers.

Kamaile Alnas-Benson

Stage Manager

Kamaile is a recent UC Berkeley graduate and lifelong

Bay Area local. She is excited to be back in the booth after having recently stage-managed OTP's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Acting credits include Betty/Cheever/Judge in *The Crucible* (Oakland Theater Project), Karma in *Pool of Unknown Wonders* (UC Berkeley), William Dunn in *Men on Boats* (UC Berkeley), and Nadya in *Pussy Riot, or Everything is PR* (Laney College). Much love to her family and to Jack for keeping her sane and fed during tech week.

Bessie Zolno

Intimacy Choreographer

Bessie is honored to be working with OTP for the first time on this beautiful show! She currently splits her time between Tel Aviv and the Bay Area and is passionate about helping performers safely navigate heightened moments on stage. She also works as a violence choreographer and mental health coordinator and is an associate faculty member with the Association of Mental Health Coordinators. She is thrilled to be able to support young artists and professionals alike in this work. She has worked with several student groups including Berkeley Playhouse Conservatory, YMTC, San Mateo High, Oakland Tech, Berkeley High, and Contra Costa School for the Arts. Upcoming and recent projects include *Hamlet* (Vallejo Shakes), *Just A Pinch* (Matriarchy Theater), *Rent* (Hillbarn Theater), and *Our Town/ Divine Sarah* (Ross Valley Players). bessiezolno.com

Colin Mandlin

Co-Founder,
Managing Director

Colin proudly serves as co-founder and managing director of Oakland Theater Project. He has helped to steward

the organization through its startup phase, created systems to increase access and inclusion, and built the business infrastructure necessary to uplift the powerful theatrical experiences of our artists. Colin is thrilled to be embarking upon a three-year growth plan that will help to solidify OTP as a marquee theatrical destination in Oakland. Previously, he served in AmeriCorps and worked in nonprofit education supporting at-risk students from dropping out of school and staying on track to graduate. Colin gained invaluable experience as a manager and rose through the ranks to interim managing director of impact to oversee a department of one-hundred-thirty-five people. Colin earned his BFA in theater arts at Boston University and a master's in public policy and administration from California State University, Sacramento.

William Thomas Hodgson
Co-Founder,
Co-Artistic Director

William Thomas Hodgson is an artist and educator based out of Oakland, CA and is Co-Artistic Director of the Oakland Theater Project. He received his M.F.A. from U.C. San Diego and is a former member of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival acting company. Recent directing credits include *This Land Was Made*, *The Radicalization of Bradley Manning* (OTP), *Fun Home* (Berkeley Playhouse), and *Passing Strange* (Shotgun Players). William's regional acting credits include *Romeo* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), *It Can't Happen Here* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), *Calligraphy* (TheatreWorks Silicon Valley), Silvius in *As You Like It* (California Shakespeare Theater), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (La

Jolla Playhouse), *An Octoroon* (Mixed Blood Theatre), James Hemmings in *Thomas and Sally* (Marin Theatre Company), *Trufaldino Says No* (Shotgun Players), and *I Am My Own Wife* (Oakland Theater Project). He previously attended the Santa Fe University of Art and Design (SFUAD) and Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts (PCPA). William has taught for the Berkeley Repertory School of Theatre, Berkeley Playhouse, American Conservatory Theater, the University of California, San Diego, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He has received several awards including a BroadwayWorld Award for Best Actor and San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle awards for Best Actor and Outstanding Direction.

Michael Socrates Moran
Co-Founder,
Co-Artistic Director

Michael is the co-founder and co-artistic director of Oakland Theater Project. He has led the organization to critical acclaim and produced and directed a number of award-winning productions since it opened in 2012. Michael earned a BFA in theater arts from Boston University and an MFA in directing from the University of California, San Diego. His directing credits with the OTP include the West Coast premieres of *Dance of the Holy Ghosts* by Marcus Gardley and *To the Bone* by Lisa Ramirez, the world premieres of *Rashomon* and *Pool of Unknown Wonders* by Philip Kan Gotanda, and such classics such as *Death of a Salesman*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. Michael is also an award-winning actor and a faculty member

in the theater department at the University of California, Berkeley.

Oakland Theater Project was founded by Michael Socrates Moran, William Thomas Hodgson, and Colin Mandlin in 2012. Formerly named Ubuntu Theater Project, it was founded on the value of Ubuntu, which means "I am because we are" and therein "my humanity is tied to yours." OTP seeks to explore the ways in which theater can act as a vehicle to reveal and invigorate the latent interconnectedness in humanity and society. To achieve this, the organization is rooted in radical inclusivity, empowering diverse artists and staff, and offering every professional production at pay-what-you-can pricing. Oakland Theater Project is an award-winning company comprised of a highly diverse company of artists who represent, reflect, and serve the diverse residents of Oakland. Oakland Theater Project has received critical acclaim for its productions, winning multiple TBA Awards, and San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle and BroadwayWorld awards. Additionally, Oakland Theater Project was featured as part of TedX Palo Alto, our leadership team was named to the YBCA 100 by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and Michael Moran, co-founder, executive director, and co-artistic director, was given the 2020 Alameda County Arts Leadership Award. OTP is the only professional theater company in Oakland producing year-round theater and is committed to celebrating the city, creating compelling works that unearth the human condition and unite audiences through revelatory, heart-pounding theater. oaklandtheaterproject.org

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