presents

the Chicago premiere of

THE RIDICULOUS DARKNESS

adapted from a radio text by Wolfram Lotz
translated by Daniel Brunet
directed by Ian Damont Martin*

FEATURING
Meagan Dilworth, Nichole Green, Kenya Ann Hall, RjW Mays,
Lisa Troi Thomas, Jasmine Traylor and Brittani Yawn

choreographer
Tuesday B. Perry

lighting designer
Simean “Sim” Carpenter

technical director
Chad Hain

scenec designer
Lauren Nigri

sound designer/composer
Michael Huey*

dramaturg
Dani Wieder

costume designer
Noël Huntzinger*

properties designer
Jonathan Berg-Einhorn

stage manager
Liz Larsen

production manager
Ellen Willett*

assistant director
............................................................................................................................Ada Alozie
assistant stage manager
............................................................................................................................Sarah Decker
assistant costume designer
............................................................................................................................Allyson Leisure
assistant technical director
............................................................................................................................Eva Trunzo
casting
............................................................................................................................Brittany Ducksworth*, Matt Fletcher*
master electrician
............................................................................................................................Becs Bartle
video editor
............................................................................................................................C. A. Davis
promotional photographer
............................................................................................................................Michael Tutino

March 24 – April 28, 2019

*denotes Sideshow ensemble member or artistic associate

Premiere Season Sponsors:

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The Ridiculous Darkness is made possible in part by grants from Bader Philanthropies, the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, and the MacArthur Funds for Arts & Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.
UNDERSTUDIES
Andie Dae, Ashley Crowe, Ashley Joy, Brooke Reams and Chelsea Turner

SPECIAL THANKS
Chicago Inclusion Project, City Lit Theatre, Jeffrey Grauel, Evan Hatfield, Steppenwolf Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater and Chay Yew

ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES
Sideshow is happy to provide the following accessible services for the performances listed:

Audio Description and Touch Tour
Sunday, April 14: 1pm Touch Tour, 2:30pm performance

Open Captioning
Sunday, March 31: 2:30pm performance
Friday, April 5: 8pm performance
Sunday, April 21: 2:30pm performance
Friday, April 26: 8pm performance

A NOTE FROM THE DRAMATURG

“I always respond to everything simply with cynicism in order to keep everything from reaching me.”
– Pellner, The Ridiculous Darkness

In this play, Sergeant Oliver Pellner explains that he has adopted a policy of disbelief, as to not let what he discovers affect him. He is protecting himself, his own way of coping with each new horrifying piece of information he is subjected to. This is not new; some of us do it on a daily basis to survive the onslaught of violence, injustice, and heartbreak that confronts us through our phones, computers, TVs, and perhaps in our neighborhoods and cities. If the world is so hard to swallow right now, why are we doing a war play?

The theatre, too, has applied this idea of distancing oneself from feeling, but to a slightly different end. In the 1930’s and 40’s, Bertolt Brecht conceived of a style of acting which would produce an “Alienation Effect,” asking the actor to show instead of become the character they were portraying. “It is not his own part, he is not completely transformed,” Brecht explained; the actor “underlines the technical aspect [character behavior] and retains the attitude of someone making suggestions.” Brecht’s hope was that, by removing performers and audiences from the emotional toll of an event, all could engage in a deeper, more objective dialogue about the problems of the world.

The Ridiculous Darkness is part of this tradition of political theatre, interrogating the infrastructures of global colonization and war. In addition to this Brechtian style, the play also draws from the radio play genre, and of course the source materials of the novel Heart of Darkness and the film Apocalypse Now. While there is a smorgasbord of influences here, playwright Wolfram Lotz also leaves the text open to the contributions of each individual production. He writes at the beginning of the text: “Changes in the dramaturgy, cuts, the addition of external text and similar actions on a large scale are not only allowed, but advisable...Have fun.” The play has been performed with as few as four actors and as many as 100. This gave our production permission to tell our story, for Chicago.

Who should tell this story of survival in the context of our city? Ian’s production places the retelling of this narrative in the hands of seven black women. The performers are investigating the effects and aftereffects of colonization, but more importantly are showing the ways in which life, for many, is still war. War isn’t historical. It is happening everyday and all around us. The problem with this war, however, is that for some it is invisible. Our society loves violence, but does not know how to recognize all the forms it takes. So we have no choice but to do a war play. This production is engaging in the theatrical tradition of emotional distance and alienation as an argument for feeling. How would life be different if we weren’t constantly tasked with distancing ourselves from it?

— Dani Wieder, Dramaturg
CAST BIOGRAPHIES


Nichole Green appeared in the Jeff Award- and Black Theatre Alliance Award-nominated ensemble of Shakín’ the Mess Outta Misery (Pegasus Theatre Chicago). Her performances are dedicated to those who endured, so she could thrive. Nichole is seeking representation. “Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.”—Arthur Ashe.

Kenya Ann Hall is an actress, writer and dramaturg based in Chicago, raised in Oakland, CA. Her most recent acting credits include: The Revolutionists (Strawdog Theatre Company, u/s), Mother of the Dark Water (MPAACT, Tour, u/s), Mr. Moral’s Stories… (El Bear), Cornerstone, New World Play Festival (NWAC), Electra Garrigo (Right Brain Project), Mary Shelley Sees the Future (Runaways Lab Theater), Collaboration’s Peacebook Festival, and Herculaneum (Blue Goose Theatre). She is a proud graduate of Northwestern University.

RjW Mays is excited to perform for the first time at Sideshow Theatre Company. She was awarded a BTAA for her performance as Phaedra in Kingdom at Broken Nose Theatre, where she is an artistic associate. She has worked on several Stages in the Chicagoland area, including 16th Street, ETA, FJT, Polarity, Interrobang, Northlight and Timeline. She was the face of Trident Gum in 2014 and can be seen in the upcoming Comedy Central series Southside in the summer of 2019. She is humbly grateful for the many blessings that HAVE been bestowed upon her. #determinationneverquits

Lisa Troi Thomas is very excited to be making her Sideshow Theatre debut with The Ridiculous Darkness. She has previously been seen in One Nation InDeVosible (Second City), The Collective (Chicago Home Theatre Festival), El Stories (Greenhouse Theatre), and Prowess (Jackelope Theatre, u/s). She received her BA in acting from Columbia College, and she is represented by Big Mouth Talent. She also wants to thank her Nana for all her support and encouragement!

Jasmine Traylor is extremely excited to be involved with the Sideshow Theatre for the first time! Originally from Indianapolis, Jasmine graduated from Indiana University with a degree in theatre and political science. Her credits include Mayme in Intimate Apparel, Danielle in the original production of Dontrell Who Kissed the Sea, and Thorn in the Chicago debut of Malefactions. Most recently, Jasmine was involved in Oak Park Theatre Festival’s production of The African Company Presents Richard the Third as an understudy for Sarah and Annie. Jasmine is very thankful for the opportunity to work with this wonderful group of artists!

Brittani Yawn is originally from Cleveland, OH and earned her BA in theatre from Miami University. She has performed in shows and readings with Hell in a Handbag Productions, Broken Nose Theatre, Stone Soup Shakespeare, The Annoyance Theatre, and IO. Brittani is an ensemble member of Huggable Riot (Wake Up Call, Judgmental Institutions, Miracle on 45th’s Tweet).
Wolfram Lotz (Playwright), born 1981 in Hamburg, grew up in the Black Forest region of Germany. He studied literature, art and media science in Konstanz and creative writing at the Deutsches Literaturinstitut in Leipzig. He writes plays, audio plays, lyric and prose and received several awards, including the Kleist Award for his play The Big March. His radio play The Ridiculous Darkness has been adapted and produced around the world and received the Nestroy Theatre Prize from the Association for Viennese Theatre.

Ian Damont Martin (Director) is a theatre/filmmaker who is pleased to represent Sideshow as an artistic associate. Ian is the associate artistic director of Haven Theatre and also the program manager of Enrich Chicago, an organization that works to realize anti-racism and racial equity in the Chicago arts community. Ian has worked with Goodman Theatre, Middle Coast Film Festival, The Gift Theatre, Jackalope Theatre, the DuSable Museum, the National Society of Arts and Letters, Indiana University, Ivy Tech Community College, Midsommer Flight, Bloomington Playwrights Project, Youth Theatre Journal, and the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Cincinnati. He received his BA in theatre and drama from Indiana University and his diploma in drama from the School for Creative and Performing Arts in Cincinnati, OH. Ian gives love and thanks to the women of color who made him the man he is today.

Ada Alozie (Assistant Director) is a graduate of the University of Chicago, having majored in anthropology. She was bitten by the theatre bug in her last year, so now strives to immerse herself in as much theatre as her puny, female body can handle. A writer, she is drawn to playwriting. A nerd, she is drawn, too, to dramaturgy.

Jonathan Berg-Einhorn (Properties Designer) is a Chicago based designer and artisan. Jonathan has previously worked with companies such as Goodman Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Paramount Theatre and Lookingglass Theatre. Scenic design: Alice in Wonderland, The ARC Trials (Mudlark Theatre); Curious George: The Golden Meatball (Hope Summer Repertory Theater); Brooke Astor’s Last Affair (Chicago Musical Theatre Festival); The Seven Deadly Sins, Endgame (Boston University). Properties design: Haymarket (Underscore Theatre); Scientific Method, I Wanna Fucking Tear You Apart (Rivendell Theatre Ensemble); HeLa (Sideshow Theatre); Johnny 10 Beers’ Daughter (Something Marvelous); Bomber’s Moon (William Street Rep); I Know My Own Heart (Pride Films and Plays). Jonathan holds a BFA in scenic and costume design from Boston University. jonathanbergeinhorn.com

Simean “Sim” Carpenter (Lighting Designer) is a young African American designer originally from Baltimore, MD. He has been designing theater/stages since the age of 13. He is currently a freelance teaching artist, lighting, projection and set designer in Chicago. As a designer and assistant designer, his credits include: Hannah & Martin, In the Blood, HeLa, A Soldier’s Play, Dutch Masters, THAT Night, Eclipsing Festival, 20,000 Leagues Under the Seas, Native Son, Cat in the Hat, Eurydice, CRAZY, Christina the Girl King, Legally Blonde, DePaul Dance Company, After Mrs. Julie, Man of La Mancha, Hookman, Pippin, and Ramayana.

Sarah Decker (Assistant Stage Manager) is thrilled to be making her debut with Sideshow Theatre Company. Recent credits include Sense and Sensibility with Western Illinois University, Almost an Evening with Western Illinois University, and Distracted with Western Illinois University. She has a BA in directing from Western Illinois University. She would like to thank her parents for making this possible.

Chad Hain (Technical Director) is working with Sideshow on his fourth production. Previous credits include No More Sad Things, Tilikum and You for Me for You. Chad works full time for Steppenwolf Theatre Company as associate technical director. He is thrilled to be back for this production and to work with the amazing team that is Sideshow.

Michael Huey (Sound Designer/Composer) is a composer who has had the pleasure of working with such companies as Filament Theatre, Sideshow, Steppenwolf, Lookingglass, Chicago Dramatists, North Park University, and many others across the city of Chicago. He is an artistic associate of Sideshow Theatre Company. officiamichaelhuey.com

Noël Huntzinger (Costume Designer) is an artistic associate at Sideshow Theatre Company, where her credits include: HeLa, truth and reconciliation, Antigoneic, and the remount of Stupid Fucking Bird. Noël is a resident artist at Filament Theatre and has worked extensively with Interrobang Theatre Ensemble. Other favorite spots she has designed include:
Goodman Theatre, Boise Contemporary Theatre, Chicago Lyric Opera Unlimited, About Face Theatre, Pride Arts Theatre, A-Squared, Muse of Fire, Shattered Globe Theatre and Collective Theatre Ensemble. In addition to theater, she has designed pieces for choreographers Ginny Sykes, Wendy Clinard, the George Balanchine Trust and the Antony Tudor Trust. Film design credits include Olympia and Cliff. Noël is a graduate of Oklahoma University. noelhutzinger.com

Liz Larsen (Stage Manager) is excited to be working on her first show with Sideshow Theatre! Chicago stage management credits include Lookingglass Theatre Company, the Art Institute of Chicago, Court Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Haven Theatre, Chicago College of Performing Arts, University of Illinois - Chicago, and 16th Street Theatre. Liz is a proud graduate of Oklahoma City University, BFA theatre design and production: stage and production management. Thanks to Ian, Dani, our Ridiculous company, and my Chicago family for support and care!

Lauren Nigri (Scenic Designer) is a Chicago based designer and Northwestern MFA graduate in stage design. Recent design credits include: Curve of Departure (Northlight Theatre); A Midsummer Night's Dream (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); Hinter, The Few (Steep Theater); Nice Girl, Betrayal (Raven Theatre); Souvenirs (Milwaukee Repertory Theater); The Scorpion Sting (Lyric Opera/Lyrical Unlimited); What We're Up Against (Compass Theatre); Sleeping Beauty (Marriott Theater); Harrow House (Rough House); Adding Machine, A Musical (The Hypocrites); Violet (Griffin Theater);. Recent associate designs include: Ma Rainey's Black Bottom (Writers Theatre); The Steadfast Tin Soldier (Lookingglass); Beauty Queen of Leenane (Northlight Theatre) and Southern Gothic (Windy City Playhouse). She was awarded as one of ten design exhibitors chosen for the United States at the 2015 Prague Quadrennial. laurennigri.carbonmade.com

Tuesdai B. Perry (Choreographer) is humbled to join Sideshow Theatre Company for The Ridiculous Darkness. Hailing from Gary, Indiana, Tuesdai holds a BA in directing and writing from Western Illinois University. Tuesdai invests her time as a theatre creator and educator for ages 4+ from Northbrook to Oak Lawn, and a few places in between. Selected choreography credits: The Colored Museum (Western Illinois University), You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown (Variety Theatre Company), Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella (Northbrook Theatre Junior Company), Seussical (Virtuoso Performing Arts). “This show is for every name uniquely crafted and selectively chosen, swaddled in love, that now reverberates through the drums of revolution. For mother, Rachel, Leon, my students, MY NAME. And to all: love, light, and solidarity.” #RepresentationMatters

Eva Trunzo (Assistant Technical Director) is a Missouri native and recent transfer to Chicago. Their previous experience include apprenticeships at Triad Stage, Lake Dillon Theatre, and are currently apprenticing at Steppenwolf Theatre Co.

Dani Wieder (Dramaturg) is a director and dramaturg of performance and film in Chicago. Recent theater credits include People in the Wind (Haven Theatre), In the Canyon by Calamity West (dramaturg, Jackalope Theatre), Still Hungry by Isaac Gomez (Jackalope Theatre), La Ronde (American Theatre Company, CORE), Josephine the Mouse Singer by Franz Kafka (Curious Theatre Branch, Rhinofest), Look Down, Keep Counting (The Runaways), Miss Julie and All choiceless She (University of Chicago). She studied theater and performance, and gender and sexuality studies at the University of Chicago. Upcoming: directing “Cool for Five Seconds,” a short film by Calamity West. daniwieder.com

Ellen Willett (Production Manager) is thrilled to be working with Sideshow again after such fun with Antigonick, Mai Dang Lao, The Happiest Place on Earth, You for Me for You, and Tilikum. She is an artistic associate with Sideshow, Steep, and Remy Bumpo, a company member with The Inconvenience, and regularly makes theatre and events with the talented folks at Definition, The Fly Honey Show, Strawdog, the Grant Park Music Festival, and many more. For fun, she plays hockey with the South Side Storm, fosters hound dogs, and takes any opportunity to sail on the lake.
The Center Ring is Sideshow’s giving program. We would like to extend a special thanks to our current Center Ring members, whose generosity has made this production possible. These gifts were made between February 15, 2018 and February 15, 2019.

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A GARDEN PARTY FOR SIDESHOW THEATRE COMPANY
SAVE THE DATE
Sunday, May 19
sideshowtheatre.org/gala
“Theatre for the Curious.”

Sideshow Theatre Company, an Illinois non-profit, was founded in 2007 in Chicago, Illinois. It is the mission of Sideshow Theatre Company to mine the collective unconscious of the world we live in with limitless curiosity, drawing inspiration from the stories, memories and images we all share to spark new conversation and bring our audience together as adventurers in a communal experience of exploration.

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