

Pangea World Theater

presents

written by **Eugène Ionesco**

directed by **Dipankar Mukherjee**

Rhinoceros



PANGEA
WORLD THEATER

April 4-19, 2025

The Southern Theater



Pangea World Theater strives to build a just world by creating multi-disciplinary theater that embodies decolonizing practices of solidarity, sustainability and equity.

Acknowledgements

Pangea World Theater gratefully acknowledges that we are on the sacred traditional lands of the Dakota people. It is an honor to live, work and create art and community alongside Dakota, Ojibwe and other Indigenous people in the Twin Cities.

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Pangea World Theater is a proud member of Twin Cities Theater of Color Coalition (TCTOCC), along with Penumbra Theater, Teatro del Pueblo, New Native Theater, Theater Mu, Ikidowin Youth Theater Acting Ensemble, and New Arab American Theater Works. It is a coalition to engage in shifting conversations of Equity and Social Justice and remapping Philanthropy.

Pangea World Theater is also a member of the Consortium of Asian American Theater and Artists, National Performance Network, Network of Ensemble Theaters, Theater Communications Group, and a collaborating partner of the national Intercultural Leadership Institute.

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Rhinoceros

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 directed by **Dipankar Mukherjee**

April 4th-April 19, 2025

The Southern Theater

1420 Washington Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55454

Ionesco is an iconic voice in the canons of literature. We are privileged to journey with this brilliant mind during this time. Ever so often, humanity is called upon to pause, analyze, embody and be in action. Rhinoceros, a provocative journey, asks us searing questions about our own humanity and integrity.

Dipankar Mukherjee, Director

Cast

Berenger Ernest Briggs
 Jean Tyler Stamm
 Papillon/The Old Gentleman Bruce Abas
 The Grocer & Cafe Proprietor/The Fireman/Influencer. Nate Kay
 Botard/The Housewife Kirby Bennett
 Daisy Sayli Khadilkar
 Dudard/The Grocer's Wife Mallory K Lewis
 The Logician/Mrs. Boeuf Julie Ann Nevill
 The Waitress/Influencer Shruti Priti Ramesh
 Influencer. Sudarsna Mukund

Rhinoceros Staff & Support

Artistic Personnel

Dipankar Mukherjee Director
Sir Curtis Kirby III Assistant Director
Claire Frederick Directing Apprentice
Jennifer Cortes. Directing Apprentice
Sandra Agustin Choreographer
Sudarsna Mukund Movement Captain
Brackley Frayer Lighting Designer
Kurt Jung Electrician & Lighting Assistant
Vladimir Garrido Composer & Live Musician
Diego Vasquez Rios Sound Designer
Abigail Vaughan Costume Designer
Orin Herfindal Set Designer & Lead Carpenter
Meena Natarajan Dramaturg

Production Staff

Suzanne Victoria Cross. Stage Manager
Noelle Awada Assistant Stage Manager

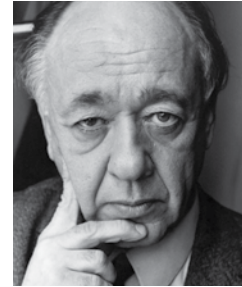
Additional Support

Nemer Fieger Public Relations
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Content guidelines

Instances of strong violence and coarse language. Abrupt, loud noises and flashing lights might be jarring for some viewers. References to alcoholism and mob mentality.

The Playwright & The Play



Eugène Ionesco (Playwright)

Eugène Ionesco was a Romanian-French playwright, born on November 26, 1909, in Slatina, Romania. He is best known for his contributions to the Theatre of the Absurd, a movement that emerged in the 1950s, characterized by its exploration of existential themes, illogical scenarios, and the breakdown of communication. Ionesco's early life was marked by the complexities of his multicultural background and the political turmoil of his native Romania, which influenced his worldview. He spent his childhood mostly in France, before returning to Romania to study. After finishing his degree, Ionesco lived in Paris again, but with World War II, he fled to Romania. Eventually, he ended up in Paris again when Romania started to face problems with fascism in the 1940s. Ionesco is often referred to as the "uncrowned king of absurd theater", publishing many plays within that genre. Journalists and critics compare his work to those of Samuel Beckett and Molière, while acknowledging that Ionesco's style is unique to this day. Ionesco is broadly remembered for his most famous plays, such as "Rhinoceros" or "The Lesson," but he published over 20 plays and a variety of novels, political essays, diaries and autobiographies.

About Rhinoceros

Rhinoceros is a play by Eugène Ionesco, written in 1959 that combines whimsical humor with unsettling tragedy to question human nature at the most fundamental level. Over the course of three acts, the inhabitants of a small town turn into rhinoceroses; ultimately the only human who does not succumb to this mass metamorphosis is the central character, Berenger, a flustered figure who is initially criticized in the play for his drinking, tardiness, and slovenly lifestyle and then, later, for his increasing paranoia and obsession with the rhinoceroses. The play and this production will explore the themes of conformity, fascism, social responsibility, mob mentality, philosophy and morality.

Ionesco wrote both the novel and play versions of Rhinoceros as a response to the rise of totalitarianism and conformity he observed in post-World War II Europe, particularly in the context of the Nazi occupation and the spread of Communism.

However, Ionesco maintained that this play was not against any particular political party. He rather wanted to address general themes like humanity, dehumanization, and conformity.



Scan the code for our Performance Guide or visit bit.ly/RhinoGuide



Ernest Briggs* (Berenger)

Ernest Briggs is a proud Native American (White Earth Nation) professional actor, writer, director and producer from the Twin Cities who has worked in Minneapolis, Chicago, Los Angeles and Florida (Film, TV, Stage, & commercial) for over 15 years. Ernest was named a 2022 Warner Bros. Discovery Early Access Early Career Bootcamp Fellow. Ernest has been on the stages of the Guthrie Theater, Park Square Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, SideKick Theater, the History Theatre, South Coast Repertory,

Tilted Windmills Theatricals and Native Voices at the Autry to name a few. Ernest has had supporting roles in such independent feature films as *Unholy Communion*, *Downtown Owl*, *Atarax*, *A Method*, *Area of Conflict*, *To Say Goodbye*, *Sold Out* and *Nina of the Woods* to name a few. Ernest received his Master of Fine Arts in Acting from the University of Florida and attended the American Academy of the Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles. When not acting Ernest spends his time with his wife, 5 year old daughter and 3 year old son.



Tyler Stamm (Jean)

Tyler Stamm is a muppet who takes himself too seriously. After graduating from Viterbo University, he worked with Missoula Children's Theater traveling the country before landing in Minneapolis after an internship with In the Heart of the Beast. He's worked as an educator, painter/designer/illustrator, carpenter, actor, director, and producer. For five and a half years, he forged beautiful community and play spaces for kids with Adventures in Cardboard (2018-2023). Some favorite

roles he's performed include Mercutio in *Romeo & Juliet*, both Benedick and Don Pedro in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Tupolski in *The Pillowman*, Andrei in *Three Sisters*, Clown 1 in *The 39 Steps*, and his roles with Pangea as Odysseus in Marina Carr's *Hecuba* and Gerardo in *Death and the Maiden*. Tyler is here to make art with excellent people, reimagine power structures, and foster community in honoring our ancestors and creating space for our young people.



Bruce Abas (Papillon/Old Gentleman)

Bruce Abas has most recently been seen playing Richard Nixon for Theatre X at the Landmark Center, The Husband in *Machinal* for Clevername, and an Irish storyteller in *The Weir* for Out of the Mist Celtic Theatre. Bruce has appeared on many stages throughout the Twin Cities and is delighted to finally work for Pangea World Theater.



Nate Kay (Grocer-Cafe Proprietor/Fireman/Influencer)

Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Nate Kay has been honing his talents as a performing artist for the past 10 years. He is really passionate about being a vessel to tell impactful stories through the arts.



Kirby Bennett (Botard/Housewife)

Kirby is delighted to be making her Pangea World Theater debut! She has performed regionally at numerous companies including Park Square Theatre, Six Points Theater, Old Log, Jungle Theater, Commonweal Theatre Company, Frank Theatre, History Theatre, Paul Bunyan Playhouse and more. Kirby is the founding and emeritus Artistic Director of Girl Friday Productions, for which she produced and performed in their acclaimed productions of *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *Idiot's Delight*, *The*

Matchmaker, *Street Scene* and many others. Most recently she produced and performed in *Life Sucks*, Girl Friday's hit co-production with Open Eye Theatre; and performed in *Over the River and Through the Woods* with Sidekick Theatre.



Sayli Khadilkar (Daisy)

Sayli Khadilkar has always had a passion for theater, which was nurtured in early days in high school and college through theater workshops and plays in India. She has performed in experimental play directed by Mr. S. Dubey, who was known as the father of Indian theater and presented 60 live performances of this play. *Rhinoceros* will be my fourth production with Pangea. Previous Pangea performances include plays *5 Weeks*, *Returning to Haifa* and *I am Enough*.



Mallory K. Lewis (Dudard/Grocer's Wife)

Mallory (they/ them) is making their Pangea World Theater debut in *Rhinoceros*. Recently, they were in the short *A Good Night's Sleep*. They also performed in the original works of *Seance Sisters*, *The Definition of Loss*, and *Extreme Roadshow*. When they are not on stage, they are probably working with their students, playing with their two cats, or getting hot pot.



Julie Ann Nevill (Logician/Mrs. Boeuf)

Julie Ann Nevill (she/her/hers) is very happy to be making her debut with Pangea World Theater in this show. She has previously performed with Park Square Theater, The Jungle Theater, Theater Pro Rata, Walking Shadow Theatre, Six Points Theater, Gremlin Theater, Daleko Arts, and Paul Bunyan Playhouse, among others in the Twin Cities and surrounding areas. She has also performed in 11 seasons at Acadia Repertory Theatre in Maine. Julie Ann graduated from the University of Minnesota-

Morris with a BA in Theater. She enjoys life with her husband, Scott, and their two cats, Loki and Tache.



Shruti Priti Ramesh (Waitress/Influencer)

Shruti is a budding actor, director and writer. After graduating NYU with a BFA in Acting, as well as a double minor in creative writing and journalism, she relocated to Minneapolis in October 2024. She believes in theater for resistance, innovation and rehabilitation. She is currently pursuing an artistic internship at Pangea World Theater. She is preparing to make her Minneapolis theatrical debut in April 2025, as an ensemble member of Pangea's

upcoming production of Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*.



Sudarsna Mukund (Influencer & Movement Captain)

Sudarsna Mukund is a movement artist and computer vision engineer. She began her training at Boston Ballet School and continued her education as a trainee with American Repertory Ballet. She has performed in productions such as *Urban Nutcracker* in Boston, *Swan Lake*, *Orpheus* and *Eurydice*, and *Carmen* at the State Opera Plovdiv in Bulgaria, and *Fires of Varanasi* in Kerala, India. She has also performed in several theater and opera

productions, including *Hecuba* with Pangea World Theater and *Maria de Buenos Aires* with State Opera Plovdiv, Bulgaria. In addition to performing, she has taught ballet in several schools around the Northeast US. She enjoys working across diverse movement styles and modalities, including Bharatanatyam and improvisational movement. She is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Computer Science at the University of Minnesota and hopes to create connections between computer vision and dance.

Artistic Personnel & Production Staff



Dipankar Mukherjee (Director)

Dipankar Mukherjee is a professional director from Calcutta, India, with 25 years of directing experience. He serves as the Artistic Director of Pangea World Theater, which he co-founded in Minneapolis as a progressive space for arts and dialogue. In 2023, he received the McKnight Distinguished Artist Award. His artistic approach is shaped by his commitment to social justice, equity, and spirituality, alongside relevant political issues. Dipankar has directed in India, England,

Canada, and the U.S. He has been awarded the Humphrey Institute Fellowship to Salzburg and served as a Ford Foundation delegate to India and Lebanon. He also received the Bush Leadership Fellowship to study non-violence and peace methodologies in India and South Africa, and was invited to the White House as part of the Asian American and Pacific Islanders Delegation. In workshops he leads, Dipankar facilitates processes that challenge colonial, racist, and patriarchal norms, seeking collaborative alternatives.



Sir Curtis Kirby III (Assistant Director)

Sir Curtis Kirby III (Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe and African American descent), is enjoying his fifth year directing the Ikidowin Youth Theater Ensemble (IYT), a program for the Indigenous Peoples Task Force. He was honored to be selected as Emerging Artist for a TPT special, which aired in June 2019. Kirby is mentored by Dipankar Mukherjee, Artistic Director of Pangea World Theater, has been the assistant director for several productions, and participated in the National Institute for

Directing and Ensemble Creation. He has worked with Bonnie Morris of Illusion Theater and Ty Defoe for a show at The Guthrie Theater. IYT has been invited to perform at national conferences such as The National Boarding School Conference in Carlisle, PA, and the National Spit Tobacco Conference, where they premiered a new work, Beishigo Asemaa.



Claire Frederick (Directing Apprentice)

Claire is an active member of the Twin Cities Theatre community, whether it be onstage, offstage, or within the running of theatre organizations. She's always had a love for history and education and believes that through the performing arts children can have fun learning history as well as an awareness of the performing arts. Having designed costumes for Pangea for *Death and the Maiden* last fall, she returns to work with Pangea in this new role.

Artistic Personnel & Production Staff



Jennifer Cortes (Directing Apprentice)

Jennifer Cortes is an enrolled member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe tribe and Mexican. She has been in theater for 8 years and is now the Youth Theater Assistant at Indigenous People Task Force, as well as an intern with Pangea World Theater. Jennifer also creates indigenous beadwork and fashion!



Suzanne Victoria Cross (Stage Manager)

Suzanne Victoria Cross was born and raised in North Minneapolis, graduated from St. Cloud State University with a BA in Theater and Community Psychology. Suzanne is a local actor, stage manager and teaching artist in the Minneapolis area. She has worked with many local theater companies and has been the lead instructor for multiple teaching artist residencies in the Twin Cities. She also identifies as the primary caregiver for her mother who is currently navigating the progression of Alzheimer's over the last 12 years. Her methodology is centered in honoring and actively engaging with our elders and that stage management is a social justice and community organizing artistic practice. Suzanne has a strong passion for the role theater can play in the development of an individual and a community as a whole and that we are never done creating magic. She is currently the Production Manager for Pangea World Theater.



Noelle Awada (Assistant Stage Manager)

Noelle Awada (she/her) is a theater artist based in the Twin Cities. She studied Theater Arts with a minor in Spanish at Hamline University, later obtaining an MBA from the same. Noelle studied abroad in Cienfuegos, Cuba for a short while in her undergraduate program. She has worked in administration with Penumbra Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, the Jungle Theater, as well as the Minnesota Historical Society. She completed an internship with Pangea in Winter 2024. Her main interest is in stage management, which she pursued while in college and shortly after graduation. Born and raised in St. Paul, Minnesota, Noelle is proud and honored to work with an organization that does such important and meaningful work, so close to home.

The Artistic Personnel & Production Staff



Sandra J. Agustin (Choreographer)

Sandy grew up in South Minneapolis, the youngest of eight to a Pinoy immigrant father and Euro-mix mom and calls herself a Cre8tive Navigator. Movement is her first language as she sees the world through energy and non-verbal communication. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Dance Therapy, and has choreographed, taught, performed, coached, shifted energy and facilitated using arts based methodologies for over 40 years. She shares a 30+ year love and respect for Pangea and the way it walks its way through the world. Sandy is an animal advocate and Certified End-of-life doula, and encourages everyone to engage in open conversations around death, dying and healing. Cre8tiveNavigatorsllc.com



Brackley Frayer (Lighting Designer)

Brackley has taught at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Dartmouth College, West Virginia University, and the University of Florida. Regional design credits include work with Seven Stages-Atlanta, the Hippodrome Theatre, The Texas Shakespeare Festival, The New York Lyric Opera Company, Texas Opera Theatre, Players Theatre Columbus and the Las Vegas Dance Company Opus. Frayer has designed for all of the Swamp Gravy productions, with performances in Colquitt, GA, the Cultural Olympiad in Atlanta, and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and Pieced Together and Cross Tides at the Yoder Barn Theater in Newport News, VA. He is a member of United Scenic Artists- Local 829. Frayer earned an MFA from the Yale School of Drama.



Vladimir Garrido (Composer & Live Musician)

Vladimir Garrido-Biagetti was born in South America in the city of Arica-Chile. He is a musician, folk dancer, community activist, director, producer, and sound engineer living in the Twin Cities since 2005. Folk music from the Andes Mountains and "La Nueva Canción Latino-Americana" influenced Vladimir's first musical creations back in his homeland and still shapes the music he creates nowadays. Vladimir currently directs the senior choir called Sabios Cantores from Giving Voice in Minneapolis and St Paul, the local band Alma Andina, the mother and son duet Ina-Yukka, and the Blue Condor Production Studio in St Paul.

The Artistic Personnel & Production Staff



Diego Vasquez Rios (Sound Designer)

Diego Vasquez Rios was born in Mexico City, Mexico and migrated to the United States when he was very young with his mom, dad, and three siblings. He has worked as an audio and visual technician in Minneapolis and sound designer for Pangea World Theater, including *Murmurations* in 2023. Diego has a unique ability for listening to the smallest details to create an impactful mix. He enjoys recording music of his own and loves to stay active by running and lifting weights.



Abigail Vaughan (Costume Designer)

Abby Vaughan is an interdisciplinary artist and costume designer recently relocated to the Twin Cities from Portland, Oregon. She has had the privilege of working as a designer and maker with performance artists and theaters in Minnesota and throughout the Pacific Northwest including Portland Center Stage, Portland Opera, Full Circle Theater, and Illusion Theater. Forever interested in collaboration and community, Abby's work reflects our collective imagination and storytelling practices. She is thrilled to be collaborating with Pangea World Theater and Teatro del Pueblo on this incredible work.



Orin Herfindal (Set Builder & Lead Carpenter)

Orin is a native Minnesotan, a father of four and an artist. Orin studied at the University of Minnesota, yet most of his knowledge and skills are developed from working at life. He has been on the design team of the Science Museum and the Children's Museum. His past work with Pangea includes set design for *Little Boy*, *5 Weeks*, and *Mother Courage* among others. He finds that working with Pangea World Theater is wonderful because he is able to assist the artists in creating the space where they tell their story.

Special Thanks

Sishir Bommakanti
Glenn Morehouse Olson
Christopher Fischer

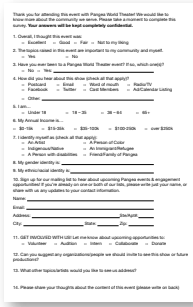
Gratitude for Our 2024-2025 Season Sponsors



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural fund.

How was the show?

We appreciate your feedback about the show. Plus, information about and from our audiences helps us apply for grants. Please complete the enclosed survey or go online to share your thoughts about *Rhinoceros*.
THANK YOU!



Scan the code or visit bit.ly/RhinoPWT to complete the survey online.

THEATER CAMP JULY 21-25
PUPPET CAMP JULY 28-AUGUST 1

MORE INFO

MU EXPLORATIONS

Mix & match summer theater camps for 3rd-9th graders!
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Upcoming Events with Pangea World Theater's Lake Street Arts!

IT TAKES A HIVE
Collage Workshop
April 26, 1-3:30PM
Pangea World Theater

GOING TO SEED
Poetry and Art
June 28, 4:30-6:30 PM
3026 Minnehaha Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Registration opens soon!



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

Rhinoceros

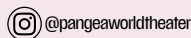
As our audience and community, we rely on your continued support to make works like *Rhinoceros* possible. If you believe that relevant work like *Rhinoceros* keeps you accountable to creating a better world, you can take action today by contributing to Pangea World Theater.

Pangea donors sustain this circle and make the art you see onstage and in your community possible.

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and in a better world.



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