



Mirrors by Azure D. Osborne-Lee, from Parity's 2020 production at New York Theatre Workshop Next Door.

Photography by John Quilty.

October 7, 2020

the annual parity commission

parity productions

awards ceremony & celebration

2020

Announcing the 2020 Annual Parity Commission winners

From our Founder and Artistic Director

Change rarely comes quietly. And now, change is beating upon all our doors and it is, indeed, an imperative. At Parity, we are auditing and adjusting our operations to better serve those who have been marginalized for too long. And while this change is necessary and correct, what must not change is our collective ability to make and experience art. Right now, the arts aren't just important—they are vital, they are our lifeblood, they are entirely necessary for us as human beings whether we are experiencing them live or in the comfort of our own homes.

Through debilitating national crises, Parity has continued to make art one mindful step at a time. With COVID-19 devastating the theatre industry (and shuttering our own run of Azure D. Osborne-Lee's *Mirrors*), our way forward is to come together. We've kept developing, kept producing, and kept creating—paying our artists every step of the way.

Through it all our playwrights persist too, despite setbacks and heartbreaks. Azure's play earned a spot on the Kilroy's List, Else Went has been named to the Public Theater Emerging Writers Group, Liz Kerin has published her first novel, Gina Femia's plays continue to be read and performed around the country, and Shualee Cook and Mêlisa Annis are writing the books for new musicals. We're incredibly proud of our past Commission winners and can't wait to share with you this year's Commission winners Jonathan Alexandratos and Amanda L. Andrei.

Ludovica Villar-Hauser
Founder and Artistic Director

Program

6:00pm

Cocktail Hour

6:30pm

Welcome by Ludovica Villar-Hauser
Founder and Artistic Director

Excerpt from *Mirrors* by Azure D. Osborne-Lee

Excerpt from *Stop-Motion* by Liz Kerin

Musical Interlude featuring guest artist Nandi K.

Parity Champion Award presented to Ashley Garrett
presented by Paula Ewin

Outstanding Service to Parity Productions Award
presented to Isabella Jane Schiller
presented by Ashley Garrett

Parity in Motion Award presented to Marcia Pendelton
presented by Dani Martineck

Soon (Comes Creepin'), Negro Spiritual
Arrangement: Ashley Noel Jones
Performed by Joyia D. Bradley, Natalie Jacobs,
and Ashley Noel Jones

Musical Interlude featuring guest artist Nandi K.

Jennifer Kranz
Producing Artistic Director & Company Dramaturg

Award to Amanda L. Andrei
presented by Shualee Cook

Excerpt from *Black Sky* by Amanda L. Andrei
featuring Joyia D. Bradley

Award to Jonathan Alexandratos
presented by Gina Femia

Excerpt from *Turning Krasniqi* by Jonathan Alexandratos
featuring Mia Hutchinson-Shaw and Zo Tipp

Musical Interlude featuring guest artist Nandi K.

After Parties

9:00pm

End of Program

the annual parity commission

awarding two commissions per year to women and tgnc playwrights

In addition to our productions, each year **we award two commissions per year to women and trans and gender nonconforming (TGNC) playwrights** who have demonstrated a singular talent for storytelling. The selected playwrights receive \$2,500 each and extensive developmental support for their play, with an option for Parity to produce the work.

Selected playwrights receive regular feedback on their award-winning play. They also receive one “closed door” reading with the Parity team, and at least one public reading and/or developmental production of the commissioned work, with the intention of a world premiere production.

Parity Productions reads submissions blind, selecting work that is in harmony with our artistic mission.

Past Commission-winning Playwrights

2017



Mèlisa Annis

2018



Liz Kerin

2019



Shualee Cook



Else C. Went



Azure D. Osborne-Lee



Gina Femia

Winners of the 2020 Annual Parity Commission



Amanda L. Andrei (she/her) With roots in the Philippines and Romania, Amanda L. Andrei hails from Virginia/Washington D.C. and currently resides in Los Angeles. Her plays are epic, irreverent, and medicinal. Full-length plays include *Lena Passes By* (Quarterfinalist 2020 Screencraft Stage Play Competition), *Black Sky* (Madison New Works Lab; Semifinalist 2019 Screencraft Stage Play Competition; Finalist 2020 New American Voices Festival), *Crocodile* (The Last Escape), and *Every Night I Die* (Winner 2010 International Bottle Tree Award). Her work has been developed by Pasadena Playhouse, Playwrights Arena, La MaMa, Artists at Play, Son of Semele, In Full Color, Relative Theatrics, Bucharest Inside the Beltway, La-Ti-Do, and others. She is a member of the Echo Young Playwrights group, The Vagrancy Writers Group, Playground LA's Writers Pool, and Dramatists Guild of America. She

is a proud alum of VONA, Atlantic Center for the Arts, and was recently named a Sylvia Clare Brown fellow at Ragdale. She is a teaching artist with Fringe Benefits and producer at Aguas Arts Ink. College of William & Mary (BA), Georgetown University (MA), University of Southern California (MFA). She is thrilled to be working on *Black Sky* with Parity Productions!

Presented by Shualee Cook.

Please find Shualee Cook's bio on page 10.



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Winners of the 2020 Annual Parity Commission



Jonathan Alexandratos (they/them) is a Non-Binary writer based in New York City. Their stage work is interested in how ancient Queerness lives in the present. This often means exploring pop culture as a cathartic device in modern, Queer relationships. Recently, their solo show, *Toys 101*, about the intersection of toys (dolls, action figures) and gender non-conformity, was produced via Zoom by Strange Sun Theatre. Prior to that, Jonathan's play *We See What Happen*, the story of Jonathan's grandmother's immigration to the U.S. from Greece as told by bootleg action figures, won the Greenhouse Award from Strange Sun Theatre, after being developed in the Ingram New Works Lab at Nashville Repertory Theatre, where Jonathan was a resident, and at Mission to (dit)Mars, where Jonathan was a Playwright-in-Residence. This led to

Jonathan winning a Queens Council on the Arts New Works Grant to complete their play *Words Cannot Describe This*, about their mother's family's journey from Albania and Greece to the United States. Beyond the stage, Jonathan has spoken about toy collecting and gender in many places, including PBS, podcasts like *Queersplaining*, *Is It Transphobic?*, and *The Deconstruction Workers*, and on sites such as *Tor.com* and *Toy Wizards*. Jonathan's edited collection of academic toy essays, *Articulating the Action Figure: Essays on the Toys and Their Messages*, was published by McFarland in 2016. They co-run *Page 23*, the academic literary arm of Denver Pop Culture Con.

Presented by Gina Femia.

Please find Gina Femia's bio on page 10.



Honorable Mentions



Katherine Gwynn
Skin Song
katherinegwynn.com
[New Play Exchange](#)



Jessica Kahkoska
In Her Bones
jessicakahkoska.com



Rachel Linton
Fandom for Robots
[New Play Exchange](#)



Lindsay Partain
Sabrina and the Thunderbird
[New Play Exchange](#)



Mallory Jane Weiss
Pony Up
malloryjaneweiss.com



Natalie Zutter
Split Second
[New Play Exchange](#)

Deneen Reynolds
Babes in Ho-lland

Thank you to this year's Commission readers

Diane Chen
Suzanne Darrell
Elijah Guo
AnJu Hyppolite

Jennifer Kranz
Danya Martin
Dani Martineck
Gregory Murphy

Tyler Riley
Isabella Schiller
Ludovica Villar-Hauser
George Weinhouse, M.D.

Kate Cannova

P R O D U C T I O N S



We proudly support Parity Productions in their mission
to champion gender parity in the theatre
and amplify under-represented voices

ACE

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Upcoming Productions

Mirrors by Azure D. Osborne-Lee was part of Next Door @ New York Theatre Workshop's 2019/2020 season. Due to COVID-19, performances of *Mirrors* from March 12th through March 22nd were canceled. Parity will present a taped version of the performance in 2021.



Mirrors

Set in the sleepy Mississippi town of Etheridge in the summer of 1960, *Mirrors* depicts the lives of three African-American women bound by love and loss and family, and the secrets of their shared past. When 17-year-old Alma Jean finds her mother dead, she must pack up her life and move in with her mother's ex-lover, a woman she doesn't know. Her new guardian, Bird Wilson, is

the town pariah and unused to sharing her home. Will mourning the death of a shared loved one bring Alma Jean and Bird together or push them further apart?



Azure D. Osborne-Lee (he/him, they/them) is an award-winning Black queer theatre maker whose work has been produced and/or developed by Parity Productions, Trans Lab @ The Public and WP, The Tank, The Flea Theater, BAX|Brooklyn Arts Exchange, BAM, JACK, Rising Circle Theater Collective, The Fire This Time Festival, Horse Trade Theater Group, The Castillo Theatre, The New Ohio Theatre, National Black Theatre, Freedom Train Productions, Downtown Urban Arts Festival, Lambda Literary Foundation, The Helix Queer Performance Network, and regionally. Azure D. Osborne-Lee is a 2018 winner of our Annual Parity Commission. azureosbornelee.com

Stop-Motion

Tragedy can tear families apart – or it can bring them together... really together. *Stop-Motion* occupies that in-between space—the space between tragedy and comedy, family drama and magical escape. Xan, who spent her 20s acting as her mother's sole caretaker, must navigate the aftermath of a terrible accident (as well as some long-neglected family relationships). Privately, she reveals herself to us through a whimsical stop-motion film she's been working on while contending with grief, duty, and the limits of escapism. *Stop-Motion* probes the idea of how an individual - and a family - can evolve in the face of tragedy and perhaps, move forward together - even if it's one frame at a time.



Liz Kerin (she/her) A graduate of NYU Tisch, Liz has a background in screenwriting and fiction as well as theatre. Her play *Stop-Motion* was previously selected for development with Theatricum Botanicum and The Road Theatre in Los Angeles. Awards/Honors include Premiere Stages, Unicorn Theatre, FringeNYC, and the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. Liz Kerin is a 2018 winner of our Annual Parity Commission. LizKerin.com



In Development



Cercle Hermaphroditos

In 1895 New York, trans man Ambrose Carlton finds a rare opportunity to beat the restrictively gendered system around him when he meets Laureline Reeves, founder of an underground social club for trans femmes known as the Cercle Hermaphroditos. Ambrose hopes to find a lady at the club he can legally marry, then play the roles expected of them in public while pursuing the life they want in private. But finding the proper match

becomes more difficult than he expected, especially after the club is raided by police and the fragile safe place Laureline has created threatens to break apart for good. Based on true historical events.



Shualee Cook (she/her) has been writing theatre in the Midwest for so long that she's starting to forget how to speak Californian. She has been a resident playwright at Tesseract Theatre in Saint Louis, and Stage Left Theatre in Chicago. Plays in performance and development include *Earworm*, *Cercle Hermaphroditos*, *An Invitation Out*, *Sunset Artists of the American West*, *Tempest In A Teapot*, *Osgood Rex*, *The Geography of Nowhere*, and *Music of the Goddess*. Shualee Cook is a 2019 winner of our Annual Parity Commission.

you know, that Bakery out in Bensonhurst that don't got a name

Dell and Micki are sisters who work in a bakery. Been working there their whole lives, their mom owns the place. Even though they're only four years apart, it may as well be 40, they're that different. Dell is sixteen going on sixty, an old soul struggling to understand why their father died – he definitely didn't commit suicide, even if that's what they all say. Micki is twenty going on sixteen, excited to be embarking on a new relationship – even if she ain't supposed to. No matter, at least Dell's got Eden, her new friend opening her up to new experiences like blow jobs and alcohol. When Micki chooses her boyfriend over her family, the girls' lives are twisted into a turmoil neither could've ever predicted.



Gina Femia (she/her) has written 32 full-length plays and has received awards including the Leah Ryan Prize and Doric Wilson Award. Among her many affiliations are EST Youngblood (alum), Spicy Witch Productions, Page 73's Interstate 73 and Project Y Writers' Groups, New Georges, and New York Madness. She is the 2020 recipient of the Otis Guernsey New Voices in the American Theater Award and has been nominated for the Cherry Lane Theatre Mentor Project. Gina Femia is a 2019 winner of our Annual Parity Commission.



2020 Honorees

Theatre is a collaborative art form. And Parity would not be where we are today with the help of some very special “behind-the-scenes” collaborators. Our honorees are passionate advocates for gender parity in theatre and we’re delighted to shine a spotlight on all the tremendous work they’ve done for us and the theatre community at large.



Parity Champion

Ashley Garrett, Parity Board Member,
Chair of Development Committee

Ashley Garrett (she/her) is a photographer who specializes in the performing arts. Previously, Ashley marketed credit cards at MasterCard and managed the All Souls Soup Kitchen, serving 22,000+ meals annually. Ashley is on the boards of NYC Autism Charter Schools, Harvard Business School, Pipeline Theatre, and Statement Arts. Ashley has an AB in theater from Smith College and an MBA from Harvard Business School.

Parity in Motion

Marcia Pendelton, Marketing & Audience
Development for *Mirrors*

Marcia Pendelton (she/her) is the founder and president of Walk Tall Girl Productions (WTGP), a boutique marketing, audience development and group sales agency for the performing arts with a special emphasis placed on the theater. Established in NYC in 2000, the company’s mission is to make the arts accessible to the widest possible audience.



Outstanding Service to Parity Productions

Isabella Jane Schiller,
Parity’s Former Director of Development &
General Manager

Isabella Jane Schiller (she/her) is an actor and producer born/based/bred in Manhattan. She is currently developing a screenplay and is in pre-production on another short, for which she is a producer and actor. A Core Member of The Skeleton Rep, Isabella also serves on the board of Jezebel Productions. She is honored to be recognized by Parity. isabellajaneschiller.com

Special Thanks

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Turning Krasniqi by Jonathan Alexandratos

Turning Krasniqi is the story of Hannah Krasniqi, a high school senior in a small, conservative Kentucky town who transitions to become a burrnesha, a gender in his ancestral homeland of Albania. There are several problems with this, of course. Hannah has never been to Albania. Almost no one has transitioned to become a burrnesha in decades, leaving only a fairly antiquated ritual as guidance. And Hannah has barely spoken to anyone during his entire high school career, leaving him with a pretty weak support system. Can Hannah get the support he needs in order to overcome his transphobic principal and transition according to the ancient rules of the burrnesha transition? *Turning Krasniqi* finds the answer to this question buried in old Albanian traditions that blossom into modern, universal truths about being who you are.



Mia Hutchinson-Shaw (she/her) (Krista) Off-Broadway credits include *The Lucky One* (The Mint Theater Company) and *The Birds* (59e59). Other New York appearances include Urban Stages and NYC Fringe. Regional credits include Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Virginia Shakespeare Festival, and Grandstreet Theater. Mia has appeared on the BBC Scotland Pilot *Shielding Nights* and in a handful of short films. miahutchinsonshaw.com

Zo Tipp (they/them) (Hannah) is a jewish-japanese-american queer actor/singer. NY: INTAR: *Bundle of Sticks*, CSC/Oregon Shakes: Play On! festival, Rattlestick: Pride Plays. Upcoming screenings at New-Fest 2020: *Top and Bottom* (Angela Cheng), *Sideways Smile* (Hang Nguyen), *Dissonance* (Kim Garcia). IG: @zotipp zotipp.com



Black Sky by Amanda L. Andrei

In a near future world where the government trains teenagers to manage disasters, five young women embark on a training scenario in the Appalachian Mountains to fix a regional electrical grid. As they hide secrets about their pasts and what is installed in their bodies, leadership and friendship become fractured. And when a freak electromagnetic storm hits the grid and injures the teens, they must fight for their bodies, relationships, and lives, struggling with a question that faces many of us today: how do we grow up in a world that is falling apart?



Joyia D. Bradley (she/her) (Woman; Song Performer)

Recently, she finished production on *Son* (feature), EBP's workshop production of *Cressidye* based on Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida* (Pandarus) and Sextant Productions *The Potemkin Play* (Interrogation Officer). She is gearing up for her first directorial feature, *Rex Unplugged*, based on *Oedipus Rex*.

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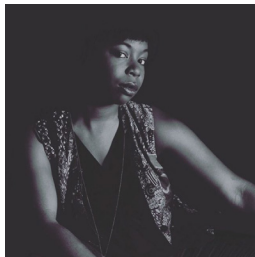
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Production and Music Team



Kendall Allen (she/her) (Stage Manager) is a Philly-based Stage Manager and Director... but right now she's her mother's Valet, a Gardener, and an amateur Bread Baker! Select Theatrical Credits Include: *Being/With: Home* (Fringe Festival, 2020), *Stop-Motion* (Parity Productions), *Taxilandia* (Baryshnikov Arts Center), and *Cartography* (Nat'l. Touring Production). She has created original works for projects like EXTRA, Slut!, and a Podcast called Jonah's Arc.

Natalie Jacobs (she/her) (Performer) is a former Division 1 athlete who most recently was in ABC's drama series *For Life* and the stage play *Mirrors* at Next Door at New York Theatre Workshop. Follow her artistic journey on IMDB and her life outside the arts at @Natty.Jae on Instagram.



Ashley Noel Jones (she/her) (Music Director, Performer) is an actor/musician/Arts Educator and graduate of NYU's Tisch School. She is the Director of All Elementary Afterschool and Summer Programming for the Compass DYCD Arts & Literacy Program in Brooklyn & Queens. FILM: *Anomaly*, *Storm Before The Quiet*, Grammy nominated James Bay's album/short film *Electric Light*, *Limetown*, Season 2. THEATER: Next Door @ NYTW, The Public, A.R.T./NY, Williamstown, Corkscrew Festival, NOLA Project. MUSIC: Mercury Lounge, World Cafe Live, Rockwood, featured by Instagram, AirBNB, Hilton Hotels. Social media: @noelashley

Nandi K. (they/them) (Musician) is a southern-born, Queer, Non-binary, musician and activist with a passion for Black Liberation and fried chicken. They're the creator and host of the Black Friends Dinner Podcast as well as Project Manager at Hope & Hard Pills by Andre Henry. Their EP 'NandiJay' was released in 2016. They've been seen at NYC's Rockwood Music Hall, Arlene's Grocery with the 'Mike B & the Soul Glo Orchestra' as well as Under St. Marks and the Kaine Theater. Most recently, they signed on as Director of Creative Media at The DiDi Delgado Experience, a wealth redistribution, and workshop development program.



The Sylvia Sleigh Endowment to Parity Productions

While Sylvia Sleigh (1916-2010) was ahead of her time in myriad ways as an artist and an advocate, we acknowledge and recognize that her language reflects a binary understanding of gender. We believe that were she alive today, she would have embraced more inclusive gender language.

“At a certain point I realized what my mission was. And that was to help women, to stress the importance of equality.”

- Sylvia Sleigh, renowned Welsh-born, feminist visual artist



In 2016, Parity Productions received an unprecedented endowment of artwork by the famed, progressive, Welsh-born artist Sylvia Sleigh. The sale of these works support Parity’s mission to elevate the voices of women and TGNC artists in the cultural dialogue of theatre through both our art and advocacy work, by creating opportunities for women and TGNC theatre artists and empowering a shift toward gender parity in the theatre industry.

Sylvia Sleigh’s works have been shown all over the world and hang in the National Portrait Gallery in London, The Art Institute of Chicago and other major museums across the United States. Parity’s endowed Sleigh works are offered for sale through The Parity Store.



At the Cafe



The Rectory, Pett, Sussex



Paul Rosano

For a complimentary digital catalog of The Sylvia Sleigh Endowment, please email us at TheParityStore@parityproductions.org



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- **ON HER SHOULDERS** — rediscovering female playwrights from the past

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