

blu

by Virginia Grise

Directed by Cambria Herrera



UC San Diego

ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Theatre and Dance

winter 2023

blu

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directed by Cambria Herrera

CAST

Blu	Jacob Ayala
Soledad	Gabrielle Marie Johnson
Gemini	Karla Leon
Eme	Ángel Nieves
Lunatico	J. Nuñez
DJ	Nic Rodriguez Villafaña
Hailstorm	Lisette Velandia
Understudy for Gemini	Lula Britos
Understudy for Soledad and Hailstorm	Mayra Carrillo
Understudy for Lunatico	Josh Páez
Understudy for Eme and Blu	Danniel Ureña

CREATIVE TEAM

Scenic and Projections Designer	Michael Wogulis
Costume Designer	Grace Wong
Lighting Designer	Elba Emicente Sanchez
Sound Designer	Padra Crisafuli
Production Stage Manager	Karina Ortega
Choreographers	Ulises Aguirre, Gabriella Marie Johnson Jade Power-Sotomayor, Danniel Ureña
Assistant Directors	Lula Britos, Steve Llamas
Assistant Scenic Designers	Anjolie Ochalek, Maia Stevenson
Assistant Costume Designer	Anabel Olguin
Assistant Lighting Designer	Vida Huang
Assistant Sound Designer	Roselle-Angeline Castro
Assistant Stage Managers	Lily Fitzsimmons, Gillian Lelchuk
Swing Stage Manager	Jenn Hernandez
Production Assistants	Jenn Hernandez, Joshua Paez
Scenic Crew	Chloe Jin Lee, Yufang Lei, Anthony Noh
Costume Crew	Chelsey Andrade, Keegan Barquilla Faith Garcia, Carlos “Los” Silva
Light Board Op	Georgia Hutton
Sound Board Op	Daylon de Alva

CONTENT WARNING

This production depicts domestic violence, gun violence, gang violence, strong language, rape, death, abortion, suicide, incarceration, cannabis use, and the Iraq war. It will also include the use of haze, herbal cigarette

smoke, gunshot sounds, and strobing lights. Concerned patrons are advised to contact Front of House staff, prior to entering the theatre space.

ABOUT THE SHOW

blu is about whether a family living in a barrio can stay together and choose life, hope, and each other despite gang, military, and domestic violence. A young mother, Soledad, wrestles with what family can mean in the face of death and divorce. Her two-spirit partner reminds her of ancient traditions of reclamation and her 14-year-old daughter creates new realities through dreams of resurrection, offering Soledad a way forward. *blu* is a poetic re-telling of the eternal struggle between desire and war, violence and peace, and the sun and the moon... Join us for a performance underneath the telephone wires with a live DJ curating oldies, hip-hop, salsa, reggaeton, spoken word, and indigenous dance as we ask, "Why do we keep killing each other and our own dreams?"

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This is a play for anyone who:

- Lost someone too soon
- Or repeated the mistakes of their parents...
- Or taught their mistakes to their kids
- Or fought to be alone
- Or was taken from their family
- Or struggled to dream of a better day
- Or hurt the ones they love
- Or loved the ones who hurt them...

This play is for everyone.

It's also a special love letter for the queer and hurting brown kids. To those of us who don't feel we can fully fit in at home or at school, at our grandma's house or our friend's house. For those of us who have seen our brothers stolen to prison or war and our siblings, tías, or mothers abused. For those of us who have done our best to make sense of our future in the face of unjust violence that plagues our community.

I see you, love you, and this play is my prayer for you. A prayer that one day we will re-write the story and the violence will end.

I maintain this hope that the violence will end because I've become close to the Mexica story of the moon: Coyolxauqui. She is a warrior who was violently killed by her brother, Huitziolopochtli, when she dared to protest his reign of war. He cut off all her limbs. She bleeds to this day. But when he tossed her off the mountain into the lake, she resurrected and became the Moon. She gloriously dances across every night sky, always in motion, watching over us. She reminds me, that in the face of any violence: we can rise with glory.

VIST US AT WWW.THEATRE.UCSD.EDU

THE DIRECTOR

Cambria Herrera is a Xicanx third-year MFA candidate. All of their work rises from their core inspiration: queer and female artists of color from the past and present. In Portland, Oregon they co-founded and facilitated The AGE Theatre Collective and mentorship program to empower the resiliency of female and non-binary theatre artists of color. UC San Diego credits: *Fifty Boxes of Earth*, *In The Red and Brown Water*, a queer adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, *Dainty* (staged reading), *Meladi Thive and Her Words of Comfort* (audio play), *Town Hall* (virtual). Recent credits include: *Fandango for Butterflies (And Coyotes)* at La Jolla Playhouse (Associate Director) World Premiere Adaptation of *King Arthur* at Long Beach Opera (Assistant Director), *Yellow, Yellow, Yellow* at Red Balloon Theatre Collective (Director and Co-producer), *Romeo and Juliet* at Penguin Productions (Director), *Peter/Wendy* at Bag&Baggage Productions (Tiger Lily), and *As One* at Portland Opera (Assistant Director).

THE CAST

Jacob Ayala (Blu) is a fourth-year undergraduate psychology student. He loves Jersey Shore.

Mayra Carrillo (U/S Soledad, Hailstorm), originally from Fresno, CA, is a fourth-year theatre major with a focus on Latinidad. She is a first generation college student and is committed to using theatre as a tool for activism of all kinds and hopes to continue to inspire the creative minds of tomorrow's youth.

Gabrielle Marie Johnson (Soledad, Choreographer) is an undergraduate student.

Karla Leon (Gemini) is a third-year undergraduate student majoring in theatre and minoring in digital video and film production. Select credits: *Dying Art* (Company157), *Monica's World* (TTV), *Kismet* (TTV), *To & From* (TTV).

Ángel Nieves (Eme), also known as CITY PIGEON, is a fourth-year transfer student. UC San Diego credits: *Pia's Wondrous Adventures in Tlaxlandia*, *Napoli!*, *Trojan Women*, *Twelfth Night*. Other select credits: *Take Back Graffiti Hall*, *Pia's Wondrous Adventures in Tlaxlandia*, *Sparks Showcase*; *1 LIFE* (self-produced).

J. Nuñez (Lunatico) is a third-year theater major from Ontario, California. UC San Diego credits: *Napoli!* (ACD), *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles* (Josefina), *Uncle Vanya* (PA), *Meladi Thive and Her Words of Comfort* (AD, WNPF '21), *Neighborhood 3:Requisition of Doom* (Mother Type), *Men on Boats* (Dunn), *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Marty).

Nic Rodriguez Villafañe (DJ) is a first-year PhD student. They are a Flori-Bori, Philly Rican writer, DJ and brujx in the Luccumi practice. For more than a decade they have served communities as an organizer and researcher in social justice movements. Their scholarship explores phenomenological impacts of diaspora Boricua and Afro Caribbean performance arts. A former Leeway Foundation Arts & Change grant recipient, their writing has been featured in an array of creative, academic, and editorial publications such as; *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *NASW Press Journal For Social Work*, and *The Gordian Review*. Nic holds an MFA in

Creative Writing from Rutgers University Newark. Some of their current creative projects include; serving as a co-editor for *Sana, Sana: Latinx Pain and Radical Visions for Healing & Justice*, an anthology which will be published by Common Notions Press July 2023; they are a musical collaborator and sound designer for *Eso No Tiene Nombre*, a woman show created and performed by award winning poet Denice Frohman at Intercultural Journeys Theatre; and are finishing their debut manuscript of poetry.

Lisette Velandia (Hailstorm) is a third-year undergraduate theatre and psychology major. Additionally, she has studied at the British American Drama Academy's Midsummer Conservatory Program and at Sacramento Theatre Company's YPC. UC San Diego credits: *limp wrist on the lever*, *Sotoba Komachi*, *As You Like It*, *Everybody*. Other select credits: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Tempest*, *A Christmas Carol* (Sacramento Theatre Company), *Doll* (Company 157).

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Ulises Aguirre (Choreographer) is an undergraduate student.

Lula Britos (Assistant Director, U/S Gemini) is a third-year transfer theater major from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Recent credits include: *The Seer* at UC San Diego (ASM), *Animal Farm* at CCSF (ASM), *Rhinoceros* at CCSF (Daisy).

Roselle-Angeline Castro (Assistant Sound Designer) is a fourth-year undergraduate student at UC San Diego as an interdisciplinary computing and the arts for music major and a theatre minor. Select credits include: *The Rocky Horror Show* (Co-Director/Vocal Director), *Heathers: The Musical* (staged reading, Vocal Director), *Spring Awakening* (Thea), *Hiraya: a devised piece* (Cheryl-Ann), *Pippin* (Leading Player).

Padra Crisafulli (Sound Designer) [they/them] is a first-year MFA candidate in sound design, a director, and a New Jersey-Pennsylvanian. They hold a BFA in Directing from Carnegie Mellon University, and work in various capacities in plays, operas, podcasts, art installations, and games. They are a Hæth Grant Recipient through Possum Creek Games. UC San Diego credits: *Fallworks '22* (AS+VD). Other credits: *Late: A Cowboy Play* (SD + Composer), and *Mortal Digits: A Caged Bird Stands on the Grave of Dreams* (Directing, Sound, and Creative Contributor) at the Qualcomm Institute. www.padracrisa.com

Lily Fitzsimmons (Assistant Stage Manager) is a first-year MFA student from St. Louis, MO. She earned her BA from Grinnell College in Sociology and Theatre & Dance. After graduating, she spent the past two years working as a freelance Stage Manager, Event Manager, and COVID Safety Manager between St. Louis and Chicago. UC San Diego credits: *Machinal* (ASM). Selected credits include: *Seagull* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *King James* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *King Lear* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival), *the projects* (Stage Left Theatre), and *La Bohème* (Union Avenue Opera).

Elba Emicente Sanchez (Lighting Designer) is a second-year MFA student. She was born in Mexico and holds a BA in Dance from Universidad de las Américas Puebla (UDLAP). In 2010, she founded her own lighting company "iluminicente" in the City of Puebla, Mexico. Since then, she has participated in several national and international festivals such as Performatica (Mexico), Festival Internacional de

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Teatro México in Montreal (Canada), Festival Internacional Cervantino (Mexico), The Bates Dance Festival (USA), among other participations. Throughout her career, she had the opportunity to impart some lectures in Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain). In recent years, she worked as a Head of Logistics and Lighting Designer in Cultural Activities at UDLAP, in the same way as a Technical Director of the dance company Ballet Incluyente. UC San Diego credits: *New Directions 2022* (LD), *Promithes*, *Promithes* (LD), *Nonna Kills the President* (LD), *winterWORKS '22* (LD); *Everybody, 51Barrio*, *Sotoba Komachi* (ALD). UDLAP credits: *Victor/Victoria*, *Regina*, *All shook up*, *Ballet Gala*, *The Nutcracker*, *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *Popurrini*, *algo de un tal Rossini*, *Zentzontle Sinfónico*, *las notas del zapateado*, *Nupcias Mexicanas*, *De la madera al son*. Ballet Incluyente credits: *Ciudad de hilos*, *La danza de la resistencia*, *Soy de otro planeta*, *El jardín del cocodrilo*, *Lazos de cebolla*.

Vida Huang (Assistant Lighting Designer) is a first-year MFA student from Los Angeles. She was originally from Taiwan, and she earned her BA from California State University of Long Beach in technical theatre. After graduating, she got hired by the National Theatre and Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan. She worked as an assistant stage manager and lighting technician for two and a half years. As a result, she gained much experience in all performance genres. She also learned a lot about managing a venue and maintaining different lighting equipment. She hopes one day, she can gather all her interest into her design. UC San Diego credits: *Dance Nation* (ALD). Other credits: *Late: A Cowboy Play* (LD), *2022 Mini Organ Concert: The Golden Age of the Organ* (LD, National Theatre and Concert Hall), *In the Penal Colony* (ALD, CSULB), *A Live Mixtape* (Co-LD, CSULB).

Gillian Lelchuk (Assistant Stage Manager) is a third-year MFA candidate graduating this month and soon to be working in Oregon at Portland Center Stage. She'd like to thank everyone on the blu team for an incredible show to end grad school with. UC San Diego credits: *Dance Nation* (PSM), *In the Red and Brown Water* (PSM), *Men on Boats* (PSM), *Miles for Mary* (SM), *Backwaters* (PSM), *Epicene: A Queer Extravaganza* (PSM); *Letters from Cuba* (ASM). Selected credits include: *Newsies* (Theatre Lab); *A People's History* (Capital Fringe Festival); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Fools and Madmen); *Daddy Long Legs* (Monumental Theatre Co.); *American Moor* (Anacostia Playhouse).

Jenn Hernandez (Production Assistant/Swing Stage Manager) is a second-year transfer student studying theatre. She has been stage managing for 5 years and started her career at Fullerton College. She is currently a stage manager at SeaWorld San Diego where she works on shows and events. Other credits include: *Brighton Beach Memoirs* at Lamplighters Theatre (PSM), *Air Turbulence* (PSM) at Powpac Theatre. Fullerton College credits: *Bright Star* (ASM) and *The Curious Incident of a Dog in the Nighttime* (SM). She is also working on a lab called *Placeholder* at UC San Diego.

Steve Llamas (Assistant Director) is an undergraduate student.

Anjolie Ochalek (Assistant Scenic Designer) is a fourth-year undergraduate student. UC San Diego credits: *Machinal* (Crew), *BAAL* (Ast. Scenic Designer). Other credits: *The Game's Afoot* (ASM).

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Anabel Olguin (Assistant Costume Designer) is a first-year MFA student. She is originally from Phoenix, Arizona, and she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Education from Grand Canyon University in 2015. She worked as a theatre teacher from 2015- 2022 where she directed and designed for shows such as *Fame Jr.*, *Zombie Prom*, *Rehearsal for Murder*, and *Freaky Friday*. She simultaneously worked as a company member at Brelby Productions where she worked on shows including *Evil Dead the Musical* (SD), *Big Fish* (SD), *Luna and Solis* (performer), *Jasper in Deadland* (Props Assistant), *Dogfight* (SM).

Karina Ortega (Production Stage Manager) is a second-year MFA student from Anthony, New Mexico. She received her BA in Theatre Arts from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM. After graduating in 2019, she interned at The Hippodrome Theatre in Gainesville, Florida as an Assistant Stage Manager for their 2019-2020 season. UC San Diego credits: *Pia's Wondrous Adventures in Tlaxandia* and *Hells Canyon* (PSM), *Men on Boats* (ASM). Selected credits include: *FRIDA* (El Paso Opera), *Othello: The Remix* (Scaffolding Theatre Co.), *RENT*, and *My Fair Lady* (American Southwest Theatre Company).

Josh Páez (Production Assistant, U/S Lunatico) is a fourth-year transfer student at UC San Diego double majoring in theatre and dance with a minor in Chicax and Latinx Studies. UC San Diego credits: *Pia's Wondrous Adventures in Tlaxlandia*.

Jade Power-Sotomayor (Choreographer) is a Cali-Rican educator, scholar and performer who works as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance at UC San Diego. Engaging with discourses of embodiment and embodied practices of remembering and creating community, her work focuses on the fluid reconstitution of Latinx identity ultimately produced by doing and not simply being. Overall, she seeks to promote an in-depth engagement with Latinx performance-making as a framework for taking up the most salient issues of our time: colonialism, anti-Blackness, xenophobia, economic disparity, patriarchy and misogyny, queer and transphobia, ableism and mental health access, climate catastrophe and environmental justice. More than just including historically occulted voices as a form of ethnographic encounter, she looks to these instances of performance for what they reveal about the structures of power and social dynamics that have shaped the world we collectively share. Her research interests include: Latinx theatre and performance, dance studies, nightlife, eco-dramaturgies, epistemologies of the body, feminist of color critique, bilingualism, and intercultural performance in the Caribbean diaspora. Publications can be found in *TDR*, *Performance Matters*, *Latino Studies Journal*, *Latin American Theatre Review* and *The Oxford Handbook of Theatre and Dance*. Dr. Power-Sotomayor also works as a dramaturg, and co-directs and performs with the San Diego group Bomba Liberté.

Maia Stevenson (Assistant Scenic Designer) is a first-year undergraduate structural engineering major from Carlsbad, California. Maia hopes to continue her involvement in theatre and use her degree to design performance and creative spaces for designers, directors, actors, and crew members alike to share their art.

Daniel Ureña (Choreographer, U/S Eme & Blu) is a fourth-year theater and dance double major and Chicax and Latinx minor. UC San Diego credits: *Fifty Boxes of Earth*, *51Barrio*, *Sotoba Komachi*. Select credits: *The Rocky Horror Show* (Co-Director/Choreographer), *The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson*

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Musical workshop (Assistant Director), *CASA* (Playwright/Co-Director), *Blinded* (Playwright/Director), *RENT* (Mr. Jefferson/Drug Dealer), *Little Shop of Horror* (Orin Scrivello), *Songs For A New World* (Ensemble), *Pippin* (Ensemble).

Michael Wogulis (Scenic & Projections Designer) is a third-year MFA candidate from Laguna Beach, California. He holds a BA in both Theatre and Communications from UCSD. UC San Diego credits: *Machinal*, *Hells Canyon*, *Napoli!*, *New Directions*, *Town Hall* (virtual), *winterWORKS '21* (virtual), *The Nether* (virtual) *Mr. Burns: A Post Electric Play* (virtual), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Dry Land*, *Our Town*, *Balm in Gilead* (ASD), *Peer Gynt* (ASD), and *A Raisin in the Sun* (ASD).

Grace Wong (Costume Designer) is a fourth-year undergraduate theatre major from Arcadia, CA. UC San Diego credits: *Hells Canyon*, *Everybody* (ACD), *Peerless*, *Trojan Women: A Version*, *Epicene*, *Exotic Deadly*, *Mojada*, *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*, *The Underground* (ACD). Other credits: *Loves Labours Lost*, *Les Miserables*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Giver* (Arcadia Stage).



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