FUKING

BY SUZAN-LORI PARKS

DIRECTED BY PETER A. CAMPBELL
A Note from the Theater Program

Thank you for joining us for this performance of *Fucking A*.

The mission of Ramapo’s Theater Program is to provide students with an innovative and collaborative education that fosters creativity and critical thinking in the art of storytelling. This production involves students from across the College, engaged together in the grand interdisciplinary engagement of a theater production. Our program focuses on interdisciplinary, intercultural, international, and experiential learning, providing opportunities for students to immerse themselves in the history, theory, and culture of theater, film, and performance, and to integrate those pursuits into practical, hands-on, project-based work in the context of the Liberal Arts.

Through working on productions like these, students develop a deep understanding of the art and craft of theater, including the artistic, technical, and narrative elements that bring stories to life. They gain practical experience as they collaborate with fellow students, faculty, and staff in a supportive and dynamic learning environment.

Our goal is to prepare students to be innovative collaborative storytellers in the contemporary professional theater, film, and emerging media environments, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and creative vision necessary to produce compelling and meaningful work. We believe that by working on productions like *Fucking A*, which foster a passion for storytelling and a commitment to collaboration and innovation, our students will experience the ways that working on art can make a positive impact on the world.

We hope you enjoy the show!
The Faculty and Staff of the Theater Program

Daniel Archibald, Theater Technical Director
Peter A. Campbell, Convener, Professor of Theater History & Criticism
Austin Blake Conlee, Assistant Professor of Theater (Costume Design)

Allie Polan-Clarke, Berrie Center Technical Director
Maria Vail, Professor of Theater (Acting)
Terra Vandergaw, Associate Professor of Theater (Acting)
Production Team

Director            Peter A. Campbell
Music Directors     Sascha Kaplan & Adrian Zaremba
Dramaturg           Reese Pasquarello
Lighting Designer   Sam DiBari
Costume Designers   Gianna-Marie Edwards & Ashlyn Smith
Sound Designer      Caleb Ford
Stage Manager       Jordan Pelovitz

“Fucking A” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com
Cast

Hester      Paras Patsalos
Canary Mary Elizabeth Leboeuf
Mayor       Andrew Eichorn
First Lady  Denys Henriquez
Monster     Mason Bell
Butcher     Andrew Hobbie
Scribe/Jailbait Jesse Cardoza

First Hunter/Waiting Woman/Freed Prisoner Moss Killion
Second Hunter/Guard/Freed Prisoner Mike Rovito
Third Hunter/Waiting Woman/Freed Prisoner Julie Mayor
Freedom Fund Lady/Stage Directions Sascha Kaplan
174 years ago, Nathaniel Hawthorne’s book *The Scarlet Letter* was published. The book follows Hester Prynne in Puritan New England, who is accused of committing adultery. As a punishment for her sins, Hester must wear a scarlet A on her chest so everyone in town knows of the crime she committed at all times.

Almost 150 years after Hawthorne’s book was published, playwright Suzan Lori-Parks was in a canoe with her friend when she declared “I am going to write a riff on *The Scarlet Letter* and I’m gonna call it *Fucking A!*” Having never read *The Scarlet Letter* before this, Parks got to work on doing her research and ultimately wrote two plays that riff on *The Scarlet Letter: In The Blood* and *Fucking A*. Together, these plays were called *The Red Letter Plays*. Parks says that *Fucking A* is not an adaptation or retelling of *The Scarlet Letter*: “Like a contrafact, if you know jazz. You take chords and you write your own melody” is how Parks will commonly describe her approach to the play. Parks is also an accomplished musician and songwriter, and she wrote 11 original songs for this play, in a style similar to that of the playwright Bertolt Brecht, whose ideas of an epic theater that is not illusionistic but instead shows how the theatrical world is constructed, is also an inspiration for the play.

Whereas in *The Scarlet Letter* the cloth A on Hester’s clothing stands for adultery, in *Fucking A* the A is branded on Hester’s skin and stands for abortionist. After her young son was arrested for stealing a bit of food, Hester was given the choice to either go to prison or to become an abortionist. She chose the latter, hoping to gain enough money to eventually bail her son out of prison. Throughout the play, we witness a corrupt prison system, the complex role of abortion in a patriarchal and misogynistic society, and the shamelessness of those in power. The play takes place in an unspecified dystopian land. Yet 25 years after its original production, the play depicts a world that is frighteningly familiar to contemporary America, a similarity that Parks could not have predicted when originally writing this play.

When participating as an audience member in this production, we ask you to not ignore these similarities but instead to question what they mean for us in the future. Is this the only way things could or should be done?

—Reese Pasquarello, Dramaturg
“The genius of the current caste system, and what most distinguishes it from its predecessors, is that it appears voluntary. People choose to commit crimes, and that's why they are locked up or locked out, we are told. This feature makes the politics of responsibility particularly tempting, as it appears the system can be avoided with good behavior.

But herein lies the trap.

All people make mistakes. All of us are sinners. All of us are criminals. All of us violate the law at some point in our lives. In fact, if the worst thing you have ever done is speed ten miles over the speed limit on the freeway, you have put yourself and others at more risk of harm than someone smoking marijuana in the privacy of his or her living room. Yet there are people in the United States serving life sentences for first-time drug offenses, something virtually unheard of anywhere else in the world.”

Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness
The Importance of Making Space for Difficult Things
By Peter Campbell

In 2022 *American Theatre* magazine published an interview with Pulitzer and Tony Award winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks titled “Make Space for the Difficult Things.” Her play *Fucking A* is about some very difficult things: a corrupt society that is built on misogyny, sexual violence, and the abuse of women; a carceral state where imprisonment and arbitrary punishment is normalized; and the complex role that abortion plays in such a world. Parks even invents a language for the play, TALK, that is used by women to discuss centrally important things in their lives like sex, birth, and abortion – basically anything having to do with their female bodies. It is a language that women have created in order to discuss such things, as the men refuse to. While women in this world do not have autonomy over their bodies, they are still held responsible for them, and for the consequences of actions that involve them that are often not in their power to control.

This theatrical example demonstrates how not talking about something, not representing it, can be a powerful form of erasure: not representing something on stage is a way of denying that it exists. In our staging we are “making space” for the representation of violence without necessarily showing it to you in some sort of imitative physical action that might be traumatic and potentially distract from the consequences of that violence. We are calling this kind of staging a “concert version.” According to Wikipedia, a concert version is a performance of a piece of theater or opera in concert form, with minimal set design or costumes, and mostly without theatrical interaction between singers or actors.

But we also want to have this performance as a conversation with you, the audience. Here we use the idea of concert in a different way: in concert, together; jointly. There is no fourth wall here, no illusion of some other world. We are all here in the theater together. We are making space for this story, and also producing it in a way that we hope makes space for you to respond and consider. We do not want you to forget that you are watching actors. That you are spectators. That this is a work of art that has been created and constructed by a playwright, in a certain time and a certain place. That we are now producing it in a slightly different time and place.

Here. Now.

Thank you for making space for us and our work. And let us know what you think.
Cast Biographies

**Andrew Eichhorn (Mayor)** is a freshman political science major with a minor in theater. This is Andrew’s second Ramapo theater credit. At Ramapo, he was previously Karnak in *Ride The Cyclone*. Other credits include Colonel Mustard in *CLUE*, & Orin Scivello D.D.S in *Little Shop of Horrors*. Andrew is very excited to perform with this fantastic cast and would like to thank Peter Campbell and the rest of the production team for all of their hard work. Andrew lastly would like to thank his family & friends for their constant support of his theatrical endeavors and hopes everyone enjoys the show.

**Denys Henriquez (First Lady)** is a grad student at the MSW program in Ramapo College. She is currently working at a mental health residence with a schizo-population. She used to work as an extra in tv shows, her first play was *One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest* where she performed as party-girl Sandra and lobotomized patient Ruckly, performed as Dr. Frank’N’Furter in Rocky Horror Picture Show for Cosmic Light Cabaret, performed as Adriana in a staged reading of *The Comedy of Errors*, and is also involved in another Ramapo production of *The Wolves* as Soccer Mom. Her future performance will be Huma Abedin in *When Monica Met Hillary* at Hackensack. She would like to thank the Ramapo theater department for welcoming her with open arms. She would also like to thank God for helping her dreams come true.

**Elizabeth LeBoeuf (Canary Mary)** is a Sophomore Music Production major and Theatre minor working towards her Master’s in Creative Music Technology. Her previous Ramapo Credits include *Ride the Cyclone* (Jane Doe) and *Rhinoceros* (Daisy). Elizabeth cannot express enough how privileged she is to be performing alongside such a talented, hardworking, and fun cast and crew. She hopes the audience can relate to the show’s messages--and of course, enjoys the music!
Jesse Cardoza (Scribe/Jailbait) is a freshman at Ramapo College and has previously worked on Ramapo’s production of A Comedy of Errors (Antipholus of Ephesus). Jesse would like to wish his cast mates good luck and thank the director and crew for their hard work.

Julie Mayer (Third Hunter/Waiting Woman #2/Freshly Freed Prisoner) is a freshman digital filmmaking major with a double minor in creative writing and theater, and very excited to be in her first Ramapo College production! In addition to that, she has also played a part in Villagers Theater production of Legally Blonde (Waitress/Pforzheimer/Harvard Law Student/Bookish Client/Chutney Wyndham). She has previously been a part of Play Theater with Amy Fiore, featuring in shows like Big Fish (Amos Calloway), Cats (Bustopher Jones), and more. She has also participated in Park Middle School theater productions such as HONK! (Ensemble), The Little Mermaid (Ensemble), and Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (Ensemble). She has participated in her school production of Christmas Carol (Turkey Girl) as well as Stagecraft’s production of Christmas Carol (Ghost of Christmas Present/Ms. Dilber). She would like to thank the whole cast, crew, and staff for making this show possible! Break a leg!

Sam-Moss Killion (First Hunter/Waiting Woman #1/Freshly Freed Prisoner) is a Queer artist who has been in several productions here at RCNJ. They are most known for his portrayal in such roles as Narrator~Sunless, Miles~Common Grounds and Grocer’s Wife~ Rhinoceros. This is Sam-Moss’s last performance here at Ramapo as she is receiving her BA in creative writing later this May. Sam-Moss wants to thank everyone who has helped them on their journey here at Ramapo College and he will miss being in the amazing environment that helped shape them into the actor she is.

Paraskevi "Paras" Patsalos (Hester) is an English and Literary Studies Major and Music minor. She is a member of Ramapo’s ensemble choirs, CantaNOVA and Skylark. Paras is proudly on the Ramapo Chorale Club’s E-board as a Librarian. You may have seen her in previous productions, such as Everbody (she was Evil and Beauty, and in some ways she still is) and as a member of the music pit for last Spring semester’s play Rhinoceros (she banged on a drum). Paras thanks everyone involved for their roles in bringing this to life. She hopes you enjoy the show.
Artist Biographies

Dr. Peter A. Campbell (Director) is Professor of Theater History and Criticism at Ramapo College. Professional productions include (Orestes) The Son and Can’t Get There From Here, which were developed in residency at MASS MoCA, and medea & medea/for medea, iph.then, and Yellow Electras at the Incubator Arts Project in New York City. His work as a writer, director, and dramaturg has been produced at venues including La Mama, The Chocolate Factory, P.S. 122, The Public Theater’s Under the Radar Festival, the Institute for Contemporary Arts in Boston, the Connelly Theater, Under St. Mark’s, and The Red Room. His play Orestes/West, which was commissioned by Greasy Joan & Company in Chicago, was a semi-finalist for the Eugene O’Neill Center National Playwrights’ Conference. He has published essays in venues such as Theatre Topics, Contemporary Theatre Journal, Modern Drama, and Theatre History Studies, and founded the online journal Theatre/Practice. Fucking A marks the 8th production he has directed at Ramapo College since arriving in 2007.

Jordan Pelovitz (Stage Manager) is a junior theater major with a concentration in design and tech. She has previously worked on Ramapo’s productions of DNA (Assistant Stage Manager), Sunless (Sound Designer), Common Ground (Stage Manager), The Antipodes (Student Master Electrician), Rhinoceros (Sound Designer), and Ride the Cyclone (Assistant Stage Manager). She is very excited to stage manage her first Ramapo mainstage! She would like to thank Peter Campbell for the opportunity, Allie Polan-Clarke and Daniel Archibald for the constant support and mentorship, her roommates Sascha and Paras for joining her on the ride, and her other roommate Grace for putting up with all of them. She wishes luck to the cast and crew and hopes you enjoy the show!
Sascha Kaplan (Music Director/Freedom Fund Woman) is a senior Music Performance major. She has previously been in Ramapo's productions of *Rhinoceros* (Rino Orchestra) and *Common Ground* (Amber). When she's not hanging out in the theater world, Sascha can be found performing in cantaNOVA (voice), Ramapo Chorale (voice), and Ramapo's Chamber ensemble (violin). She is also the President of the Ramapo Choral Club. She would like to thank Peter Campbell, Jordan Pelovitz, and the rest of the production team for welcoming her onto this project. She would also like to thank Adrian for being the littlest piano man and her roommates for being the coolest guys.

Adrian Zaremba (Musical Director) is a sophomore double major in Music Performance and Computer Science. This is his first time working on a Ramapo production. He is super excited to have the opportunity to be a part of the music for F*cking A, and would like to thank Sascha Kaplan and Jordan Pelovitz for recommending him for this role.

Ashlyn Smith (Costume Designer) is a Senior Design/Technical Theatre major, she is very grateful to have been given the opportunity to design for the college alongside the wonderful production team. She has previously designed student run productions and been a part of the Wardrobe Crew at Ramapo College and at The Cumberland County Playhouse in Tennessee. She is so excited to be working alongside Gianna-Marie and she hopes everyone enjoys the show!

Gianna-Marie Edwards (Costume Designer) is a Senior Contemporary Arts/Technical Theatre major. She has previously worked on many RCNJ productions including *The Duchess of Malfi* (Wig master) and *Ride the Cyclone* (Wig and Makeup supervisor). She has worked alongside Ashlyn Smith for many costume builds and is so grateful to be designing her first production with her. She would like to thank Peter Campbell for the opportunity to work on this show and thank her friends for the constant support throughout the production!
Sam DiBari (Lighting Designer) is a junior theater major with a concentration in stage management and directing. Her previous Ramapo credits include: Ride The Cyclone (Stage Manager), The Coming World (Stage Manager), Duchess of Malfi (Co-Student Master Electrician), Rhinoceros (Assistant Stage Manager), Marisol (Stage Manager), DNA (Stage Manager), The Importance of Being Earnest (Assistant Stage Manager). Other credits include: Trade in Value at the NYC Chain Theater Winter One Act Festival (Stage Manager), Purgatory at the NYC Chain Theater Summer One Act Festival (Stage Manager) and Ragtime The Musical at Bergen County Players (Production Intern). She wishes the best to the cast and crew of F*cking A!

Reese Pasquarello (Dramaturg) is a junior theater major with a double concentration in Directing and Theater Studies. His previous Ramapo credits include: Ride The Cyclone (Noel Gruber), The Coming World (Director), Duchess of Malfi (Assistant Director), The Antipodes (Sandy). He would like to thank his Grandmother, his Father, his Grandfather, Ronnie, Dena, Nate, and Maria for always supporting and inspiring him. Enjoy.

Caleb Ford (Sound Designer) is a freshman music production major, and has previously worked on Ramapo’s production of Ride The Cyclone (Sound Tech). He is grateful for the opportunity to work on this show, and is excited for the performance. When he isn’t untangling cables in the booth, he can usually be found singing or playing volleyball. He wishes the cast and crew good luck, and would like to remind the audience that if a mic doesn’t work, it isn’t his fault.

Namibia Cruz (Assistant Stage Manager) is a freshman theatre major with two concentrations in stage management/directing and design and tech. Fucking A is her first time ASMing at Ramapo and she is extremely grateful for the opportunity to do so and immerse herself in the Ramapo theatre community. She would like to thank her family for supporting her choice to study theatre instead of physics! She sends lots of good wishes to the cast and crew for a happy and successful run!
Production Crew

Light Board Operator  Desiree S. Bounds
Sound Board Operator  Brooke Clifton
QLab  Rachel Mitchell
Laundry  Jamie Marques
Production Staff

Theater Technical Director  Daniel Archibald
Berrie Center Technical Director  Allie Polan-Clarke
Master Electrician  Sam Dibari
Assistant Stage Manager  Namibia Cruz
Scene Shop Student Assistants  Sam Dibari, Ryan Gordon, Jordan Pelovitz, Joseph Austria, Desiree Bounds, Namibia Cruz, Jess Howley, Rachael Ross, Sky Tabora, & Stephen Porter
Costume Shop Student Assistants  Gianna-Marie Edwards, Ashlyn Smith, & Reese Pasquarello
Poster Design  Jules-Arden Bernard

Additional Assistance from students in Theater Practicum:
Julia Debiak, Moss Killion, Vincent Mann, Devon Roberts, Jake Tennant, & Aniri Wilson
Special Thanks

Rachel Budin
Luissa Chekowsky
Lisa Lutter
Maria Lizzi
Ken Goldstein
Karley Berrios
Lisa Campbell
Paul Pittman
Mason Murphy
Ramapo College Music Program

The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production and distributing recordings or streams in any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited, a violation of the author(s)’s rights and actionable under United States copyright law.
The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program, is generously funded by David M. Rubenstein. Special thanks to The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust for supporting the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts’ Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. Additional support is provided by The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein; and the Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols Foundation. Kennedy Center education and related artistic programming is made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts. This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels. Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance. Last year more than 1,500 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.