



Placer Repertory Theater

Performing arts, cultural & economic enrichment for Placer County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Placer Repertory Theater Resident Playwright Wins Fellowship; Stage Readings July, August

On the evening of June 29 as the Sacramento Region Community Foundation officially announced the Gloria Burt Sacramento Region Arts Fellowship 2022 recipients at an arts event in Sacramento, fellowship recipient Teresa Stirling Forsyth, Placer Repertory Theater's resident playwright and producing artistic director, stood before a Rocklin audience and performed a curtain speech to open the *Haunting History* show, which featured a stage reading of *Ghosts of Placer County*, the very project in development for which she is awarded the Gloria Burt Fellowship.

Ms. Forsyth responded to a call for Gloria Burt Fellowship applicants in May of 2022; a joint project of the Sacramento Alliance for Regional Arts (SARA), Blue Line Arts, and the Foundation that honors Gloria Burt, area arts advocate. Five Fellows were selected, including Ms. Forsyth, and the various projects supported include performance art, visual arts, electronic media, and literature. The *Ghosts of Placer County* project was selected from the literature category and will offer additional stage readings in July and August as part of its development.

Ms. Forsyth performed initial outreach to civic and governmental entities for historical research of ten Placer County population areas and developed drafts one and two of the new work, *Ghosts of Placer County*, supported in part by two Arts Council of Placer County individual artist grants. The Gloria Burt Fellowship will help defray development costs to bring this new work to its full fruition, including a professional quality digital recording of a production that may be shared with schools and libraries. "I am honored and humbled to be selected as one of the fellowship recipients," said Ms. Forsyth, whose prior plays have toured nationally and internationally to venues including the Kennedy Center.

According to the playwright, *Ghosts of Placer County* is a dark comedy about how individual and community history haunts us and how we haunt history to define ourselves. "It is also about how important it is to document history and pass knowledge down through the generations," said Kevin Foster, who plays Trailblazer guide Kenny Greene in the show. The play also explores relationship dynamics, and the evolution of a mother/daughter relationship even as it celebrates the contributions of both indigenous and immigrant populations within Placer County.



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The stage readings and table readings of this play in development are being helped along by a talented local cast of professional actors. Anne Merino stars as Dr. Dessa Dagmar. Anne is an adjunct faculty member for William Jessup University who received her theatrical training at Chicago's Goodman Theatre, Second City with Del Close and Jim Belushi and later trained under Alan Rickman at the British American Drama Academy. The cast is rounded out with Katherine Stroller, AEA actor/writer/character movement coach, Brennan Villados who you may have seen at Freefall Stage, Celebration Arts or Big Idea Theater, and Ari Knyazev, recently the lead in the State Theatre Acting Company's production *The Game's Afoot*.

The next opportunities to see stage readings of scenes from this play are at the July 27 and August 24 CoLLABoration LABs, 401B Vernon Street in Roseville at 7 PM. For more information, contact Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/collaboration-lab-tickets-242572710507>. A stage reading of the full script is set for Sunday, August 7 at 7 PM with the Playwrights Collaborative at the Howe Avenue Theater. Contact the Playwrights Collaborative for more information.

Audiences may recall Placer Repertory Theater as the professional theater company that produced the "New Beginnings" event in July 2021, which featured a new play about the historic Placer County railroad roundhouses in Roseville and Rocklin as part of Placer Rep's goal to write one new local history play annually.

Placer Repertory Theater (<https://PlacerRep.org>) is a regional award-winning professional theater company that serves Placer County and the greater Sacramento metro area. A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Placer Rep's mission is to offer educational and quality-of-life enriching professional performing arts and cultural programs relevant to the people of Placer County, while supporting local organizations and acting as an economic engine for the area. Follow Placer Repertory Theater on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @PlacerRep, and subscribe to our YouTube Channel to access our digital recordings.

Publishers: Contact Kevin Foster, Outreach Director, at Outreach@PlacerRep.org, or Teresa Stirling Forsyth, Producing Artistic Director, at ArtisticDirector@PlacerRep.org.



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BIOS – THE TEAM



TERESA STIRLING FORSYTH – *Haunting History* Producer / *Ghosts of Placer County* Playwright

With an MFA in Dramatic Arts and an MS in Business Management & Leadership, this former Silicon Valley high-tech VP and critically acclaimed professional director/playwright also plays the role of Producing Artistic Director for Placer Repertory Theater. Previously, the artistic director for two San Francisco theater companies and founder/board president of an economic development nonprofit organization, her performing arts background includes directing/playwriting for national and international touring productions with renown performing artists, such as Brenda Wong Aoki, and companies like Dell'Arte Players. As an educator, she has instructed and/or directed at UC Davis, U of San Francisco, U of Minnesota, and other institutions. Projects on which Forsyth worked performed at venues such as the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian, Dallas Theatre Center and other renown venues, and received Dramalogue Awards, Critics Circle Awards, Indy Award: Best Spoken Word Album, Broadway World Awards, as well as numerous grants from the NEA, NEH, CAC, ACPC and corporations. Most recently for Placer Repertory Theater, she is the playwright/director for *Sherlock Holmes: The Sign of the Four*, *Persuasion: a holiday romantic comedy*, and producer/director/dramaturg for *New Beginnings: the new play about the historic Placer County Roundhouses*. Member: Dramatists Guild (DG), Stage Directors & Choreographers Society (SDC), Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), TCG, NNPN/New Play Exchange.



KEVIN FOSTER – Outreach Director, *Haunting History* performer

Kevin Foster is an area local excited to work at Placer Repertory as Outreach Director. He began training in acting at UC Davis while earning his B.A. in Music Performance. After graduating, he performed at Davis Musical Theater Company in *Peter Pan*, *The King and I*, *Damn Yankees*, and the Elly Award winning production of *Chicago*. His other credits include *The Importance of Being Earnest* at Chautauqua Playhouse and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* at Sacramento Theater company, where he has taught youth performing arts classes. He currently teaches for Rockstar Music Academy in Lincoln and is working on his solo show commissioned by Placer Rep for a 2022 world premiere. Kevin also may be seen in Placer Rep's digital short series *Sherlock Holmes: Domestic Mysteries* on YouTube, in Placer Rep's "The Jane Austen Soiree" and "An Evening with Sherlock Holmes," in 2021, and recently won a Broadway World award as a supporting actor in *Persuasion / A Jane Austen Holiday*.



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ANNE MERINO – Board Secretary, *Haunting History* performer

Merino began her career dancing for notable companies such as American Ballet Theatre and the London Festival Ballet. A prolific choreographer, she won the Vanguard Award for Choreography. Merino's traditional theatrical training was received at Chicago's Goodman Theatre, Second City with Del Close and Jim Belushi and later trained under Alan Rickman at the British American Drama Academy. As an actress, and former member of AEA, SAG/AFTRA, Ms. Merino performed with The Groundlings and Tim Robbins' The Actors' Gang and is a member of the theatre department faculty at William Jessup University. As a writer, she recently won film festival awards for her screenplay, "The Season of the Wolf," and received critical acclaim for her recently released novel, Hawkesmoor.



KATHERINE STROLLER – *Haunting History* performer

Katherine is thrilled to be joining Placer Rep for this new work, *Ghosts of Placer County!* She received her B.A. in Dramatic Art from UC Davis and is a graduate of Foothill Theatre Conservatory. Favorite past roles include Portia from *The Merchant of Venice*, Mindy from *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*, Cathleen in *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and The Woman from *The Woman in Black*. When she is not acting, Katherine is a character movement coach and writer. She is a proud member of AEA. Learn more at katherinestroller.com.



BRENNAN VILLADOS – *Haunting History* performer

Brennan Villados is a performer based out of Sacramento, California. His most recent acting credits include *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with Freefall Stage, *A Soldier's Play* with Celebration Arts, and *Marat/Sade* with Falcon's Eye Theatre. Brennan made his directorial debut in 2019 with *Romeo and Juliet* for Freefall Stage's Shakespeare in the park. He attended The American Academy of Dramatic Art and has worked for the UC Davis School of Medicine Standardized Patient Program for the last eight years. His other favorite roles include Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* with Falcon's Eye Theatre, Patrick Stone in *Inventing Van Gogh* with Big Idea Theatre, Eddie in *Fool for Love*, and Tom in the one-man show

Poster of the Cosmos, both for Blank Canvas Theatre. This is his first production with Placer Repertory Theater.



Arie Knyazev – *Haunting History* performer

Ghosts of Placer County is Arie's first opportunity to work with Placer Repertory Theater. Recently he starred as the character William Gillette in Ken Ludwig's play *The Game's Afoot*, produced by the State Theatre Acting Company at the Auburn State Theatre in Auburn, CA. A software engineer by day, he says he would happily give up his lucrative high-tech career to become a starving professional actor. Welcome Arie!



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ANNOUNCEMENT

WHO:

Teresa Stirling Forsyth of Placer Repertory Theater, Gloria Burt Fellowship winner

WHAT:

Ghosts of Placer County stage readings

WHERE:

Collaboration LAB, 401B Vernon Street, Roseville, CA (scenes)

Howe Avenue Theater, 2201 Cottage Way, Sacramento CA (full script)

WHEN:

Wednesday, July 27, 2022 @ 7 PM (scenes)

Wednesday, August 24, 2022 @ 7 PM (scenes)

Sunday, August 7, 2022 @ 7 PM (full script)

FMI / To REGISTER:

CoLABoration LAB

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/collaboration-lab-tickets-242572710507>

GRAPHICS BELOW:



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Teresa Stirling Forsyth



Anne Merino



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Ghosts of Placer County. The cast and playwright prepare for a stage reading.



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Kevin Foster in Placer Rep's 2021 history play, "New Beginnings: a play about the Historic Placer County Roundhouses"

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