Nowhere
Company Class Production

Written by Fall 2021 Company Class
Sarita Alvarado
Kassandra Dunaj
Alexander Hernandez
Olivia Kiefer
Grace Lawrence
Emily Nichter
Ava Taube

April 13-15, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. and April 16, 2022 at 2 p.m.
Varner Lab Theatre

Oakland University resides on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabe, known as the Three Fires Confederacy, comprised of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi. The land was ceded in the 1807 Treaty of Detroit and makes up southeast Michigan.

In recognizing the history and respecting the sovereignty of Michigan’s Indian Nations, Oakland University honors the heritage of Indigenous communities and their significant role in shaping the course of this region. Further, we recognize the wrongs done to those forcibly removed from their Homelands and commit to fostering an environment of inclusion that is responsive to the needs of First Peoples through our words, policies, and actions.

The preservation and perpetuation of customs and traditions of Indigenous nations are essential to our shared cultural heritage. A deep understanding of Native peoples’ past and present informs the teaching, research, and community engagement of the university in its ongoing effort to elevate the dignity of all people and serve as shared stewards of the land.
Note from the Director

As I write this, six families in Sacramento are mourning the deaths of relatives who were victims of a mass shooting that occurred less than 24 hours ago. Twelve others were injured in the shooting that took place in the early hours outside of a strip of bars where people gathered, enjoying the night and the company of others. A seemingly benign event, mundane and blissfully simple. It seems to be the way these things start. Did you hear about this event? Did you register it? Did you click on the link or scroll past it? Maybe, possibly, it wasn’t mentioned at all. Maybe, more likely, we have become numb to this kind of news. What happened in Sacramento not 24 hours before I started to write this is the latest in a long chain of similar events. As we seem to move steadily past the worst of the pandemic, I ask; is this how we envisioned “getting back to normal”?

We had just come out of a lockdown period in spring of 2021. We were all still processing, still reeling from the events of the year before; the shared vulnerability, the fears, the fatigue, the bracing of what could come next. We were restless. We were powerless in the face of a virus that could hit any one of us at anytime with potentially catastrophic results. I turned on NPR one morning, per my habit, to catch up on the news. There was the report of a mass shooting that happened the day before. To be honest, I can’t remember where it happened. There was a cluster of shootings in that period. It could have been the one in Boulder, Colorado that killed 10 people, including a 9 year old boy. It could’ve been the one in Essex, Maryland where 4 people were killed in a convenience store. It could’ve been one that happened in Indianapolis on either March 13th, where 4 people were killed, or on April 15th where at least 8 people were killed. It could’ve been the one in Orange, California on March 31st where 4 people were killed or in San Jose on May 26th, where 9 were killed. I don’t know what day it was when I tuned in, what event was the freshest. But I do remember feeling the profoundest grief for humanity.

In our rush to move past the pandemic we seemed to have forgotten the bigger threat that has been looming over our country since that shocking day in Columbine in 1999. I stood in my kitchen and tried to swallow the fact that in America, getting back to normal meant hearing or reading about another instance of gun violence, consuming this information while making tea or eating breakfast, or getting ready to go to school, or kissing our kids good-bye before they head off, leaving us to resume our daily lives. I wondered if it was not a question of ‘if’ but ‘when’ gun violence would claim me or someone that I love.

These questions were what I brought to the table when we as a faculty in the Department of Theatre were discussing our 21-22 production season. I suggested that we let the students speak on the issue and write a play on what the topic of gun violence meant to them. Last fall a group of 7 students did just that. They researched data and personal stories. They read plays, they read articles, they listened to guest speakers share facts and information on crime and gun safety. The students talked about their fears and/or numbness. They began to write. They were in the midst of all of this when in Oxford, just 14 miles away from the classroom they sat in three days a week, researching and writing the play you are about to see, a 15 year old took a gun to his high school and opened fire. The young shooter at Oxford High School killed 4 classmates and injured seven others. The gun he used was a gift from his parents. Incidents like this remind me that the topic of gun violence isn’t a political issue, it is a human rights issue. Let us not be too clouded by rhetoric or divisiveness to ignore this point. We must all acknowledge that something must be done, that we can and must do better. In order to do better, we must come together and agree that we have a real problem here. What are we going to do about it? I fear for the safety of our students. I fear for the safety of my family who I love beyond measure. I fear for your safety, reader. I fear that you will be taken senselessly because we are too afraid to act or to do the right thing. Something must be done.
The town of Nowhere is the town of everywhere. It is our community and also communities that don’t look like ours. The citizens of Nowhere are grappling with questions of faith, the law, and human rights. I hope this play invites you to do the same. I hope this conversation inspires us to move forward in a way that is agreeable to all sides. May the day soon come when we can sit together as a larger community and ask: What does a sensible solution look like?

Cast List

Morgan Campbell
Brooke Ferreira
Denise Campbell
Tom Campbell/Mike/Anonymous Shooter/Townsperson 1
Garrett Campbell/Jay/Reporter 3/Townsperson 3
Mr. Feldman/Noah/Reporter 2
Mayor Price/Laurie/Reporter 1
Riley/Townsperson 2/Eli/Police Officer
Pastor Paul/ Francine/Townsperson 4

Grace Lawrence
Anna De Valois Konno
Aurora Ave-Lallemand
Zachary Andrew
Braden Haggarty
Casey Van Dyke
Alexander Hernandez
Emily Reschke
Molli Elwell

Cast Bios

Alexander Hernandez is a freshman at Oakland University majoring in Musical Theatre. He plays the role of Mayor/Laurie/Reporter #1. Alexander is also a Writer and Dramaturg of Nowhere. He has appeared in the Oakland University production of Passage by Christopher Chen as Mosquito/Ensemble.

Anna De Valois-Konno is honored to be playing the part of Brooke Chavez in Company Classes’ original production of Nowhere. Anna is a sophomore BFA Acting major. You may have recently seen her as “M” in Passage or as a Porter/Waiter in The Servant of Two Masters. She would like to thank all involved in this production for making it a truly memorable experience, and her loved ones for all their support.

Aurora Ave-Lallemand is super stoked to be a part of her second production here at OU. She’s not sure how she ended up in more than one, but she’s more than grateful to have this opportunity. She played Sir John in Sense and Sensibility, and is Denise in this show! She’s so happy to be performing with her peers in this show!

Braeden Haggerty is in his senior year as a Musical Theatre Major and is happy to be performing for Oakland University’s company class production of Nowhere. He is playing the roles of Garrett/Jay/ Townsperson 3/ Reporter 3. Braeden is very excited and blessed to be a part of this talented cast and is proud of everything they have accomplished throughout the semester. Braeden was also in Oakland’s production of The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee! As Leaf Coneybear, the student lead production of Ryan Scott Oliver’s 35mm, How I Became A Pirate, the shortened version of How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying and Oakland’s 2019 production of James And The Giant Peach. He is beyond
thankful to be supported by both his family and his friends because he would not be here if they hadn’t believed in him. He hopes to continue to make them proud in the future!

**Casey Van Dyke** (Mr Feldman/Noah)- Casey is a sophomore acting major at OU, and she is thrilled to be a part of this piece. Here at Oakland, you may have seen them originate the role of Rachel in Theatre Girls, as well as an ensemble member of Company Class during her freshman year. Other credits include Ellie Blake in Freaky Friday, Trish in Bonnie and Clyde, and Helen Sinclair in Bullets over Broadway. She’d like to thank her parents and her girlfriend for their endless love and support, as well as her fellow collaborators and artists that have worked hard to make this piece happen.

**Emily Reschke** is a freshman at Oakland University and she is an acting major and a dance minor. She is playing Riley and many other characters in the ensemble in our production of *Nowhere*. She is also the movement choreographer and coach. Some of her credits include Julie from VP in the ten minute plays festival put on by Oakland University, Babette from Beauty and the Beast, and Jack from Into the Woods. She also has four years of choreography experience. She is so proud of all the hard work put into this show by all her fellow castmates along with the writers, producers, and directors of this show. She hopes you enjoy the show.

**Grace Lawrence** is a freshman Musical Theatre student, and is proud to act in her first show at Oakland University. Last semester, she also had the honor of being one of the writers on this project, and is thrilled to see it finally performed. Grace graduated from East Grand Rapids High School in the Spring of 2021, where she was an Honor Thespian and performed in over twelve productions. She is excited for what the future holds, and hopes to turn her passions for acting and writing into a full time career.

**Molli Elwell** is a first-year BFA Acting student from Seattle, WA. She is honored to join Company Class’ production of *Nowhere*, and is in complete awe of the student writers and cast members for their intentional artistry.

**Sarita Alvarado** is very excited to be assistant directing *Nowhere* alongside Monica Lopez Orozco. They recently participated in KCACCTF’s ten minute play festival where they directed The Plot Beneath My Feet written by Kendall Kerrington-Young. For this, they were awarded the NPP Director’s Award. As well as directing, Sarita is also an actor. You may have previously seen them in Sense and Sensibility as Fanny Dashwood/Gossip and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee as Olive Ostrovsky (understudy).
**Zachary Andrew** (Tom and ensemble) is a freshman acting major with a minor in jazz studies here at Oakland University. This is his first ever show at this school and he couldn’t be more excited! Previous experience includes Harry the Horse in *Guys and Dolls* and Linus in *You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown*. This experience has been amazing for Zach, he has learned so much about acting and what it takes to put on a production of a play. He would like to thank his parents and his sister for supporting his choice to pursue this career. He has had so much fun and he cannot wait to see what the rest of his time here at Oakland has to offer!

**Writer Bios**

**Kassie Dunaj** (Senior Acting BFA) is thrilled to have been part of the process of creating *Nowhere*. Kassie has had her ten-minute play *Why We Broke Up* performed in the Directing 10-Minute Play Festival. She also had her full play, *Exes*, performed in 2021 during the Outside the Box Festival. Seeing this important work come to the Lab Theatre, and being just one of a group of brilliant writers was a great experience for Kassie, and she wants to thank the entire team for giving their passion and love to this project.

**Olivia Kiefer** (co-writer) is a Senior BFA Acting Major at Oakland University. She is beyond thrilled to witness this production come to life! This was her second time writing for a production here at Oakland; you may have seen her first written, Zoom production of *Recommended: You Would Like This...* in 2020. Most recently she was the Dramaturg and Assistant Director for *Pippin*! She wishes great things for this production and all involved!

**Emily Nichter** is a junior BFA Acting student with a double major in Creative Writing with an emphasis in Screenwriting. Being a part of the writing process for this play last semester was so fulfilling and she can’t wait to see this important and compelling story come to life through these actors. She’d like to thank the rest of the writing team, Monica, David, and everyone else involved who made this production a reality!

**Director Bio**

**Monica Lopez Orozco** is on visiting faculty in the Department of Theatre at Oakland University where she directed a live radio drama of *Failure: A Love Story* by Philip Dawkins in spring of 2021. Ms. Lopez Orozco also most recently directed a virtual reading of *The American Life of Diego Rivera y Kahlo* by Detroit playwright Emilio Rodriguez. The reading was a part of The Vagrancy’s (Michigan Chapter) BLOSSOMING new play series. She will next be directing *La Ruta* by Isaac Gómez at Smith College where she will soon be joining the faculty ranks. In addition to directing, Ms. Lopez Orozco is a Chicago based actor who has appeared at Goodman Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, and Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, among others. She has also appeared in numerous commercials and on television in *Chicago Med* (NBC) and *Soundtrack* (Netflix).