



Northwestern | WIRTZ CENTER

# MARISOL

**JULY 22 – 24, 2022**

Northwestern University's  
Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts  
proudly presents

# MARISOL

By José Rivera

Director  
BRIAN BALCOM

Scenic Design  
NORA MARLOW SMITH

Costume Design  
ALAINA MOORE

Lighting Design  
GABRELLE STRONG

Sound Design  
DEON CUSTARD

Production Stage Manager  
BETH KOEHLER

Stage Manager  
OLIVE FERGUSON

Assistant Director  
ZACH FORBES

Assistant Director  
SARAH WELFORD

Assistant Producer  
HAMID DEGHANI



The Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts is a member of  
Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for  
the American Theatre.

Program Editor: Leo McGuinness

Northwestern University  
Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts  
10 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, IL 60208  
Box Office Phone: 847-491-7282  
wirtz.northwestern.edu

Marisol runs 90 minutes with no intermission.

**Audience content warnings:** Recommended for mature audiences due to strong language and disturbing content. Gun shots, fog/haze, and strobe lights.

COVID-19 GUIDELINES: The Wirtz Center complies with COVID-19 guidelines by Northwestern University, as well as local, state and federal governments. For more information, [please visit Northwestern University's Covid-19 site.](#)

Original New York production by The New York Shakespeare Festival. Originally commissioned and developed by INTAR Hispanic American Arts Center through a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. World Premiere in the 1992 Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Subsequently produced by La Jolla Playhouse and Hartford Stage Company.

## SETTING: NEW YORK CITY. TOMORROW.

### CAST

Angel .....Jazzlyn Luckett Aderele  
Lenny..... Kevin Aoussou  
Woman with Furs..... Kate Compton  
Marisol .....Lucero Espinoza  
June ..... Concetta Russo  
Man With Golf Club, Man With Ice Cream, Man With Scar  
Tissue ..... Elliot Sims

### DIRECTOR'S NOTES

We sit in the eye of the storm, letting the horrific politics and societal catastrophes of “these unprecedented times” blow by. The world feels like it’s falling apart. What once seemed impossible is happening, but it can be too easy to tune out the noise. Like Marisol at the beginning of her story, we focus on our own mental and physical bubbles. We carefully construct our jewel boxes of safety, the contained spaces where we can live and work, without interacting with outside devastation.

But what happens when the impossible happens to us? What happens when our guardian angel leaves us? When the world is unrecognizable and we’re turned out on the streets?

When a celestial war shatters the sky above and salts the earth below, Marisol must fight for survival. She finds strength within herself and energy in the connections she makes with others. And though she’s one tiny human in the midst of so much horror, these new weapons give her astonishing power.

Brian Balcom  
Director

### PRODUCTION TEAM

Director ..... Brian Balcom  
Assistant Director..... Zach Forbes  
Assistant Director..... Sarah Welford  
Set Designer ..... Nora Marlow Smith  
Costume Designer ..... Alaina Moore  
Lighting Designer ..... Gabrielle Strong  
Sound Designer..... Deon Custard  
Production Stage Manager ..... Beth Koehler  
Stage Manager ..... Olive Ferguson  
Violence/Intimacy Director ..... Courtney Abbott  
Assistant Violence/Intimacy Director ..... Michael Dias  
Assistant Producer ..... Hamid Dehghani

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**We are on sacred ground. Northwestern University is on the traditional homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires—the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa—as well as the Menominee, Miami, and Ho-Chunk nations. Before it was stolen from them through colonization and forced removal, this land was a site of trade, travel, gathering, and healing for more than a dozen other native tribes. The state of Illinois is still home to more than 100,000 tribal members. In the spirit of healing and making amends for the harm that was done, we acknowledge the native and indigenous peoples who called this land home. And we pledge ourselves as members of the Northwestern School of Communication to turn our statements into action and build better relationships with native and indigenous communities in Evanston, in Chicago, and throughout the region.**



## COMPANY BIOS

**COURTNEY ABBOTT (INTIMACY & VIOLENCE DIRECTOR)** Chicago credits include: *In Every Generation* (Victory Gardens); *Wife of a Salesman* (Writers Theatre); *Solaris* (Griffin); *The Jigsaw Bride* (First Folio); *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* (Citadel); and *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* (NU). Courtney is a proud alum of Northwestern and Ohio University. Current: *Choir Boy* (Steppenwolf); *Hurricane Diane* (Theater Wit). Next up: *Little Shop of Horrors* (Citadel).

**JAZZLYN LUCKETT ADERELE (ANGEL)** is a Chicago native, multidisciplinary creative, and MFA Actor here at Northwestern. Selected credits include *The Piano Lesson*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Tragic Ecstasy of Girlhood* (premiere), and *Diana of Dobson's*. Jazzlyn has created for the Hollywood Fringe Festival, holds a BA in Theatre from the University of Illinois at Chicago and has trained at Art of Acting Studio (LA), Antaeus Academy (LA), and Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (UK).

**KEVIN AOUSSOU (LENNY)** is a second year Masters of Fine Arts Actor at Northwestern University (2023), an alumnus of Winthrop University (2018), and the National Theater Institutes Moscow Art Theatre Semester (Fall '16). Thank you to my loved ones for their support!

**BRIAN BALCOM (DIRECTOR)** is a disabled, Asian-American director working in Chicago and Minneapolis. With a BFA in directing from Carnegie-Mellon University, he started a small theater company dedicated to commissioning work from fellowship recipients at the Playwrights Center. He produced and directed several new plays and his company was invited to present at The Southern Theatre and Guthrie Theatre. In Minneapolis, he also worked with Gremlin Theater, The Playwrights Center, Walking Shadow Company, Artistry, and Mu Performing Arts. Since moving to Chicago he was a recipient of a Steppenwolf Theatre Company Multicultural Fellowship and has directed readings and plays at Route 66 Theatre Company, Broken Nose Theatre, The Gift Theatre, Silk Road Rising, A-Squared Theatre, Jackalope Theatre, Theater Wit, La Jolla Playhouse (CA), and American Stage Theatre Company (FL). He currently heads the Access Project at Victory Gardens Theater.

**DEON CUSTARD (SOUND DESIGNER)** is a Chicago-based theatre designer and full-time Ph.D. student in Northwestern University's theatre

department. Current research interests are focused on the functions of comedy & violence and where they intersect identity markers in plays by Shakespeare and other early modern dramatists. Recent projects include Northwestern University: *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *Dance Nation* (sound designer), *Something Rotten!* (dramaturg); Santa Fe Playhouse: *Everybody* (sound designer) Goodman Theatre: *Incendiary*, *In the Sick Bay of the Santa Maria* (New Stages asst. designer); Trap Door Theatre: *Queen C* (sound designer); Bates College: *Twelfth Night*, *God of Carnage* (director), *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches*, *Grand Concourse* (sound designer).

**KATE COMPTON (WOMAN WITH FURS)** is going into her third year in the MFA Acting Program at Northwestern. Before coming to Chicago for the program, she lived and worked in Los Angeles doing Film, TV, and Commercial work. She is an improviser who has studied with The Second City and Groundlings. She is a founding member of the creative collective, Tuesday Night Films, where she gets to work with some of her favorite people on the planet. She also holds a BFA in Acting from Michigan State University.

**HAMID DEGHANI (ASSISTANT PRODUCER)** is an Iranian director and playwright. He has received several awards as a director, playwright, and actor from international festivals in Iran. His directing highlights in Iran include two original scripts, *From the Environs of Milad* and *Sohrab's Transgression*, *Nathan and Tabileth* by Barry Bermange, and *Leila* by Morteza Hossein Zadeh. Since moving to the U.S. in 2018, he has directed *A Moment of Silence* by Mohammad Yaghoubi and *Eurydice* by Sarah Ruhl. Hamid also assistant directed with Mary Zimmerman at the Met Opera for *Eurydice* and Shana Cooper during Court Theatre's production of *The Lady from the Sea*. In 2020, Hamid co-founded Grass Studio Theatre and performed three collectively devised pieces – *Picnic*, *Story in a Box*, and *Reportage of a Room* – at various outdoor locations.

**LUCERO ESPINOZA (MARISOL)** is a second year MFA actor at Northwestern. Previously, she could be seen in one of the Downtown Ensemble plays, *Precious Little*, and at the Campfire Theatre Festival in Idaho. She is an actor from the U.S./Mexico border where she directed *A Bicycle Country* for the Chamizal's Siglo De Oro Theatre Festival. She

holds a BFA from The University of Texas at El Paso. "The stars don't tell the future, they tell stories"-S.

**OLIVE FERGUSON (ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER)** is a Chicago-based stage manager who graduated from Oakland University in Michigan in 2020. Marisol is her third Wirtz project. Her previous credits here include *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* and *Water by the Spoonful*. She'd like to thank everyone on the team for being so warm and welcoming, and she sends an extra special thanks to Beth, Rebecca, and Francis for being such wonderful partners on this journey.

**ZACH FORBES (ASSISTANT DIRECTOR)** is a rising fourth-year theatre and legal studies major in the theatre management module from Tacoma, Washington. Previous assistant directing for Wirtz: *peerless*, *Buried Child*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, and *The 90th Annual Waa-Mu Show: The Secret of Camp Elliot*, for which he was on the writing team. Other Northwestern credits include: *Escapeland* with AMTP (Phil), *Marching On!* A William Finn Revue (Director), *Daddy Long Legs* (Producer).

**BETH KOEHLER (PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER)** is a non-Equity Stage Manager based in Chicago with experience in both theatrical productions and live events. Her previous theatrical experience includes *Life After*; *Good Night, Oscar*; *A Christmas Carol* and *Bernhardt/Hamlet* at the Goodman Theatre, *Dream* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and *Where We Stand*; *Bad Dates*; *Or*; and *A Christmas Carol* at Portland Stage Company. Her previous live event experience includes Ear Taxi Festival, Northwestern's CommFest Gala and Northwestern's Commencement Ceremonies in 2018-20. She was a Stage Management Apprentice at Portland Stage Company and graduated from Northwestern University as a part of the Theatre Management Module.

**ALAINA MOORE (COSTUME DESIGNER)** is a Chicago-based multidisciplinary artist currently pursuing her MFA in Stage Design at Northwestern, where she recently designed the costumes for *Something Rotten!* and *Men on Boats*. Previous stage credits include work with Raven Theatre (Joseph Jefferson Nomination for Best Costume Design, *The Playboy of the Western World*), Mercy Street Theatre, and Nothing Without A Company. Notable work for the screen includes costume and production design for the short film *Bride of Frankie*, for which she won

numerous festival awards. She is a graduate of Columbia College Chicago. Love to Chris, always.

**CONCETTA RUSSO (JUNE)** Concetta is a Boston native and a graduating MFA acting candidate. Most recent Northwestern credits include, Brodie in *Precious Little* and Lina in *Cry It Out*. Regional credits include Pantalone in *Servant of Two Masters* and Gertrude in *Hamlet* at Shakespeare & Company. Concetta is also a seasoned teaching artist. She is deeply proud of this work and this artistic ensemble.

**ELLIOT SIMS (MAN WITH GOLF CLUB, MAN WITH ICE CREAM, MAN WITH SCAR TISSUE)** is excited to be back on the NU stage after last appearing in *peerless* by Jiehae Park. He is currently finishing his second year of the MFA Acting program. He is also a writer, artistic director, and producer. Elliot recently started production on an animated short film in which he wrote, produced, and acted in entitled; "The Companionship of Family." Elliot is represented by the wonderful team at NV Talent.

**NORA MARLOW SMITH (SET DESIGNER)** is a Chicago and New York based scenographer. She just completed her MFA in Stage and Costume Design at Northwestern University. Nora is thrilled to be working with with this incredible creative team on such a moving and pertinent story of human survival. Past Northwestern credits include *Water by the Spoonful*, *In His Hands*, *Last Stop on Market St*, *Fun Home*, *Flight of the Phoenix*, and *peerless*. Other works include *Wake Sign* (IRT, NYC), *Grand Rounds* (LaMama Experimental Theater Club) and *Antigone* (Amherst College). Nora is the 2022 recipient of the Michael E. Merritt Award for Design and Collaboration. See more from Nora in this month's production of *Dance Nation*. [www.noramarlowsmith.com](http://www.noramarlowsmith.com)

**GABRIELLE STRONG (LIGHTING DESIGNER)** is a multi-disciplinary queer artist. Her work has included but is not limited to theatre, dance, opera, art installations, generative work, and film. She has designed domestically and internationally. In 2019, she was awarded the John Woodbridge Award from Northwestern University and was a 2020 Hemsley Award Finalist. Gabrielle was awarded her MFA at Northwestern University in 2020. She currently serves as the Adjunct Faculty for Lighting Design at University of Illinois-Chicago.



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