

THE NICETIES

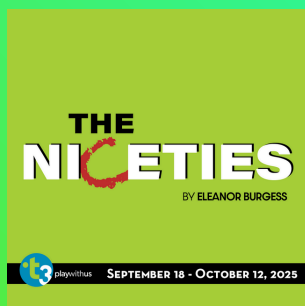
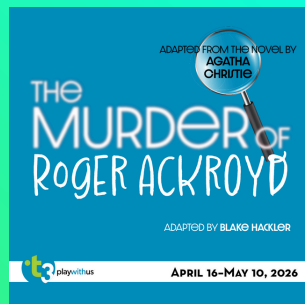
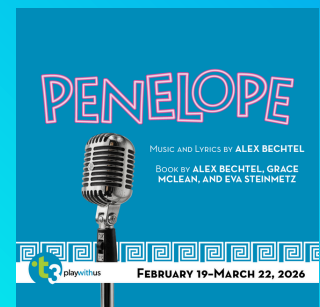
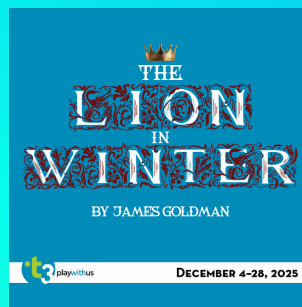
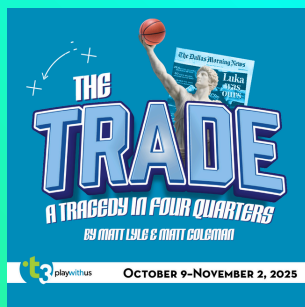
BY ELEANOR BURGESS

Directed by
Sasha Maya Ada

September 18 - October 12, 2025



25-26 Season



For more information about T3 , please visit www.theatre3dallas.com,
call the T3 Box Office at (214) 871-3300 x 1 or email us at boxoffice@theatre3dallas.com



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This playbill is a publication of Theatre Three, Inc.
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The Niceties



Photo by Jeffrey Schmidt



The Niceties

by Eleanor Burgess

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Sasha Maya Ada

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Erin Malone Turner

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Lauren Wheat

LIGHTING DESIGNER

John Moss II

COSTUME DESIGNER

Christie Vela

SOUND DESIGNER

Claudia Martinez

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JANINE BOSKO

Krista Scott*

ZOE REED

Nicole Renee Johnson

**indicates members working under
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this production*

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STAGE MANAGER

Jenny Dang*

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Kelechi Imoh

SPECIAL THANKS

Dallas Opera

Dana Cobb

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Luna Lux

Liza Gonzalez



Photo by Jeffrey Schmidt

Bios

Eleanor Burgess's (Playwright) plays include *The Niceties*, *Wife of a Salesman*, *Start Down*, *Chill*, *Sparks Fly Upward*, and *Galilee*, 34. Her work has been produced at theaters across the United States, including Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Rep, Geffen Playhouse, McCarter Theatre Center, Huntington Theatre Company, Writers Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, Geva Theatre Center, InterAct Theatre, Portland Stage, the Alliance Theatre and the Contemporary American Theatre Festival, as well as the Finborough Theatre in London. She has developed work at Playwrights Horizons, the New Group, and The Ensemble Studio Theatre, and been a member of the Dorothy Strelsin New American Writers Group at Primary Stages, Page 73's writers' group Interstate 73, The Civilians' R&D Group, and New York Theatre Workshop's 2050 Fellowship. She has also written for film and television, including work on *Perry Mason* for HBO, *WeCrashed* for Apple TV+, and *Interview With The Vampire* for AMC, and screenplays for *Bad Robot*, *Amblin*, and *Anonymous Content*. Originally from Massachusetts, she studied history at Yale College and Dramatic Writing at NYU/Tisch.

Sasha Maya Ada (she/her, Director) is thrilled to join T3 in their 63rd season! Audiences may recognize her intimacy direction in last season's *Intimate Apparel*. Her artistic and restorative work spans across the metroplex, from the regional theatre landscape to the heart of the juvenile justice system. A TCG: Alan Schneider Director Award Nominee ('22), Sasha was also a directing mentor for Teatro Dallas' inaugural Nuevo Mundo New Director's Festival. She could not end this blurb without mentioning the incredible impact her mother, partner, and mentors B and Anne have had in her journey. She is a proud recipient of their belief and support. @sashamayaada @altardplayhouse

Erin Malone Turner (Assistant Director) is thrilled to make her Theatre Three debut, especially with this play. She is a New Orleans born, Dallas-based playwright and occasional actor/director/producer. Her featured plays across DFW include: "for the rest of our lives" (Arts Mission), "ingrained" & "the secret keepers" (Bishop Arts Theatre Co), and "through a glass darkly" (Amphibian Stage). Her TACA Grant-funded commissioned play "what fits inside a human heart" had its world premiere with Soul Repertory Theatre in Oct. 2023, and was nominated for an Irma P. Hall Black Theatre Award for Best Play. She was mentored by Audra McDonald from 2021-2023, and has been a member of two DFW playwrighting cohorts. Her work can be found on New Play Exchange.

Lauren Wheat, she/her, (Scenic Designer) is excited to design for T3 again for this 2025-26 season! She is a graduate of Baylor University Theatre majoring in Scenic Design/Scenic Art and is pursuing her MFA in Scenic Design at SMU. She has designed at a variety of DFW theatre companies including Dallas Children's Theater, Stage West, Dallas Theater Center, and Shine Performing Arts Studio, and has worked as a Scenic Artist for Watertower Theatre and Uptown Players. Her last design with T3 was for their production of *God of Carnage*. Lauren would like to thank her family and her parents for their endless love and support.

John Moss II He/Him (Lighting Designer) John is grateful to be back designing his third production for T3. He designed *The Mystery of Irma Vep* and *Debbie Does Dallas!* John has designed for Dallas Children's Theater, Firehouse Theater, Bishop Arts Theater, Theatre Britain, and most recently The Joyful Noise Christian Theater where he is the resident Lighting Designer.

Christie Vela (Costume Designer) is the Associate Artistic Director at Theatre Three. She is a founding member of the Diane and Hal Brierly Resident Acting Company, Kitchen Dog theatre as an Artistic Company Member, Second Thought Theatre as an Artistic Associate. you've seen her work as a director, actor and designer at The Undermain Theatre, Shakespeare Dallas, Cara Mia Theatre, Stage West, Water Tower Theatre, Echo Theatre, Amphibian Theatre, Dallas Children's Theatre, UNT as a guest director. Christie has also acted in film, commercials. She's a commercial director and accomplished voice-actor. She most recently directed her first feature film *The Finale* (available on Amazon) and is one of the hosts of *TERROR AND TACOS*, a podcast about horror movies and local taquerias. She's the mother of two brilliant and terrifying theatre- makers in their own right and is married to John M Flores, the kindest and smartest man alive.

Claudia Jenkins Martinez is a Sound Designer based in Dallas Texas. Recent works include: *The Last Five Years*, Circle Theater; *Twelfth Night*, Pittsburgh Public Theater; *Xanadu*, Theatre Three; *Laughs in Spanish*, Horizons Theater(Atlanta); *H*Illo K'tty Syndrome*, Undermain Theater. Much love to Austin and Georgia. @claud_jenkinmartinez

Bios Continued

Jenny Dang (She/Her) is a Dallas based stage manager. She is very excited to be back at T3. She holds a BFA in Theater with a concentration in Stage Management from Texas State University. Along with her passion for stage managing, Jenny's experience spans production and non-profit general management. Jenny is one of the founders of Watering Hole Collective, a local artist collective driven by a passion to promote and support DFW artists in their creative endeavors. Jenny would like to thank The Niceties creative team, cast, and Kelechi for their collaborative efforts and for a delightful process.

Kelechi Imoh, she/her (Asst. Stage Manager) is excited to be back at T3! After graduating from Collin College and UTA, she was an apprentice for the '23-'24 season. She was a Production Assistant for "Lizzie", "God of Carnage", and "Pirates of Penzance". She was also a Box Office Agent for the '24-'25 season. Kelechi has worked on the technical side for shows at Theatre Arlington. When she's not backstage Kelechi also performs. Previous credits: Wife in "Munyenge" (Moody Performance Hall), Foley Artist and Jukebox Jordan in "Death Take: 1" and "Mystery at the Old Cafe" (Pegasus Theatre), and Sarah in "DEVOURER" - a short film (December's Back).



Krista Scott (Janine) recently performed her original one-woman play, *Wilde Women* at the 2025 Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland. Theatre Three: *The Immigrant*. Water Tower: ANN (Understudy; 5 performances) and *The Game's Afoot!* DTC: *Pipeline*. Circle Theatre: *The Hatmaker's Wife*, *Kodachrome*, *Luna Gale*, *Boeing! Boeing!* Amphibian Stage: *King Liz*, *First Day of School*, *All This Intimacy*. Trinity Shakespeare: *Richard III*. Shakespeare Dallas-Complete Works: *All's Well...* Theatre Arlington: *WIT* (Column Award winner) and *Noises Off!* Numerous DFW directing and dialect coaching credits; Professor of Theatre at TCU, Associate member of SDC, Certified Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework™, Co-Creator/Owner of ActingAccents.com.



Nicole Renee Johnson (Zoe) is thrilled to be returning to Theatre Three! Recent credits include *Intimate Apparel* (Theatre Three), *Julius Caesar* (Shakespeare Dallas), *Anne of Green Gables* and *Fireside* (Royal Family Productions), and *One Man, Two Guvnors* (Circle Theatre). She has a BFA in Theatre Performance from Baylor University, and sends all her love to her friends and family for their steadfast support. She also sends a huge thank you to this team for developing a safe and creative space while working on this challenging yet pertinent play.

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Prism Movement Theater | La Maupin: The French Abomination | Photo by Courtney

In the fall of 2015, the Intercultural Affairs Committee at Yale University sent a campus-wide email advising its students against wearing culturally insensitive costumes for any upcoming Halloween parties. The Committee cited prior incidents of such, arguing that “in many cases the student wearing the costume has not *intended* to offend, but their actions or lack of forethought have sent a far greater message than any apology could after the fact.” In response, Professor Erika Christakis, of Yale’s Silliman College, wrote an email of her own. Addressing the students directly, she argued that advisories like the Committee’s, even if well-meaning, nonetheless represent an “institutional (which is to say: bureaucratic and administrative) exercise of implied control over college students.” Christakis admitted that she herself didn’t know what constituted an offensive costume versus an inoffensive one; but it was not up to her, she argued, to decide that before the students, being adults, could decide it for themselves.

It is worth noting that Christakis was only being consistent: she had intervened in matters of personal expression before, including some years prior when she defended the right of a young person to wear a shirt bearing a pro-LGBTQ+ slogan (“Jesus Is Not A Homophobe”). But the incident at Yale started an uproar, culminating in Christakis’s decision to teach at Yale no longer. And it was out of this incident that Eleanor Burgess wrote *The Niceties*.

Of course, *The Niceties* bears no resemblance in particular to the incident at Yale. Neither the precocious student Zoe nor the distinguished professor Janine, the play’s sole characters, discuss anything like a Halloween party. Instead they meet to discuss a draft of an essay Zoe has written on the American Revolution, whose thesis argues that the Revolution was only successful because, in practice, it preserved the institution of slavery. Janine, while not dismissive of the claim, is not fully convinced of it either, not without hard evidence. The disagreement between the two reveals a deep political fault, with Zoe’s radicalism on one side and Janine’s moderation on the other; and out of this fault emerge the questions which lay at the heart of the Yale incident: what role do institutions play in our lives? Is it their place to decide how to view history, or day-to-day events? And do we shape them, or do they shape us?

THE NICETIES

BY ELEANOR BURGESS

The Niceties debuted in the 2018-19 season, as a co-production between Boston's Huntington Theatre Company, New Jersey's McCarter Theatre Center, and New York City's Manhattan Theatre Club. It was well-received. Critics praised the facility with which Burgess rendered each side of the play's conflict; and one, writing for Boston's *The Arts Fuse*, called *The Niceties* "a political play that doesn't pay lip service to questioning authority and privilege - it goes right at their arrogance."

Still, many of the same critics also thought the force of the play was dampened by Burgess seeming to favor one side over the other. The present author declines to identify which side that is, if either - you've got to decide that for yourself! - and notes that *The Niceties* is set in the spring of 2016. Indeed, Burgess insisted on setting the play at a time when, per a 2021 interview with the Huntington Theatre Company, both characters "are pretty sure they'll convince each other, and pretty sure this can go well."

It is of course true that the United States has only become more polarized than it was at the time Burgess penned the play. But we would do well to remember as well that a professor like Janine is not only arguing in her capacity as a scholar: she is also a representative of the place that hires her. Janine might offer Zoe career advice in good faith, and it may even be good advice; yet it is advice for surviving in a moneyed institution. It is not difficult to imagine that the "elite university in the Northeast" where Janine works, and where Zoe is a student, would today be slashing funding to its humanities departments in accordance with the caprices of the market or the latest government directive.

Perhaps we ought to ask just how liberating a "liberal arts education" is. How well-equipped is any institution to teach us how to liberate ourselves? Can they be places of real learning, and not control, implied or otherwise? Can they be places where we can convince each other, where things can go well?