



# DEER

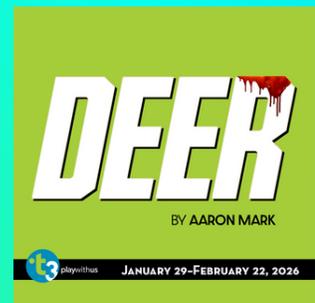
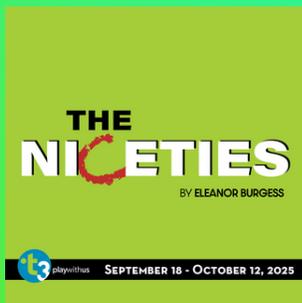
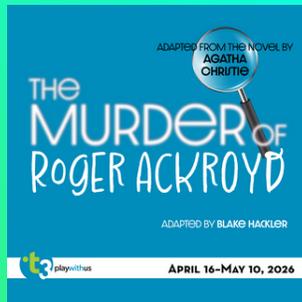
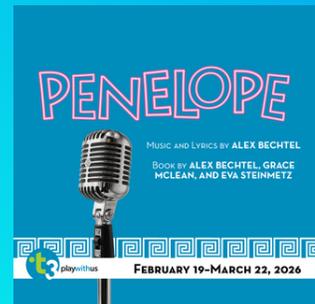
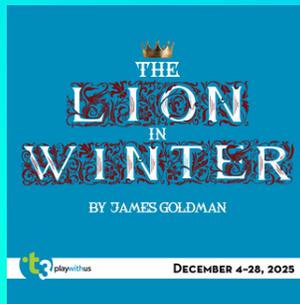
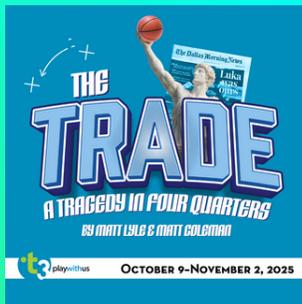
by Aaron Mark

Directed by  
Christie Vela

January 29- February 22, 2026



# 25-26 Season



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



**T3 is supported by its Board of Directors, by subscribers, by funds from the City of Dallas Office of Arts & Culture, TACA, Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District, and Hoblitzelle Foundation. This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. A major contribution from the estate of Marlene Webb, a longtime subscriber, has established the Theatre Three Endowment Fund in support of the building and its equipment.**



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**Deer**

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*Photo by Jeffrey Schmidt*



# Deer

by Aaron Mark

## ARTISTIC STAFF

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**Christie Vela** †

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**Shatorey Watson**

SCENIC DESIGNER

**Jeffrey Schmidt**

LIGHTING DESIGNER

**Jenny Barrett**

COSTUME DESIGNER

**Christie Vela**

SOUND DESIGNER

**Dylan Hearn**

FIGHT DIRECTOR

**David Saldivar**

## CAST

CYNTHIA

**Shannon J McGrann\***

KEN

**Chad Cline**

## PRODUCTION STAFF

STAGE MANAGER

**Reagan Fitzgerald\***

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

**Brooke Lee**

## SPECIAL THANKS

Dallas Opera

**Isa Flores**

**Luna Lux**

†



*\*indicates members working under Actors' Equity Association contracts in this production*



Photo by Jeffrey Schmidt

# Bios

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**Aaron Mark (Playwright)** is a New York-based playwright, showrunner, screenwriter, and director. He is the creator-writer-director of the hit fiction podcast, *The Horror of Dolores Roach*, starring Daphne Rubin-Vega and Bobby Cannavale, and he also also created and showran the Amazon Prime Video TV adaptation of *Dolores Roach* for Blumhouse Television, Spotify, and GloNation, starring Justina Machado and Cyndi Lauper. Aaron has written & directed 3 acclaimed one-person horror plays Off-Broadway: *Empanada Loca* (LAByrinth Theater Company with Daphne Rubin-Vega; 3 Drama Desk nominations, Outer Critics Circle nomination), *Squeamish* (All For One at Theatre Row with Alison Fraser; OCC nomination), and *Another Medea* (All For One at the Cherry Lane and Wild Project with Tom Hewitt), all published by Dramatists Play Service and produced internationally. Other plays include *Deer*, also published by DPS, and *The Vanishing Negative*, starring Betty Buckley, for Audible. Theatre directing credits include Ben Rimalower's long-running, award-winning *Patti Issues* and *Bad with Money*; *The Mystery of Irma Vep* and *Deathtrap* for Berkshire Theatre Group; and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* for BC/EFA at New World Stages. Aaron is a NYTW Usual Suspect and a proud member of WGAW and SDC.

**Christie Vela (Director, Costume Designer)** currently serves as the Associate Artistic Director at T3, is a founding member of the Brierley Resident Acting Company at Dallas Theater Center, a company member at Kitchen Dog Theatre, and an artistic associate at Second Thought Theater. You've seen her work as a director/actor in the Metroplex at Dallas Theater Center, Kitchen Dog, Second Thought, Echo Theatre, Amphibian Stage, Undermain Theatre, Shakespeare Dallas, Circle Theatre, and Stage West. She frequently directs outside of Dallas at Trinity Rep in Rhode Island. Christie also recently directed her first feature film *The Finale*, available now for streaming on Amazon. She's thankful to John, Isa, Dante, Jones, Scully, Roxie and Stella for their patience & support.

**Shatorey Watson (Assistant Director)** is excited to join the creative team of *Deer* as her first Dallas professional production. She would like to thank T3 for giving her the opportunity to be apart of this production and Christie for being such a great leader! She also would like to thank her support system for uplifting her and reminding her of why she does theatre! She looks forward to what the future holds for her in the Dallas theatre community!

**Jeffrey Schmidt, he/him (Scenic Design)** Recent credits include directing, designing and filming T3's *The Immigrant*, and designing *Xanadu*. He has worked with many of the professional theaters in the metroplex including Dallas Theater Center, Casa Mañana, Shakespeare Dallas, Trinity Shakespeare, Kitchen Dog Theater, Undermain Theatre, Dallas Children's Theatre, Second Thought Theatre, StageWest, and WaterTower Theater to name a few. Jeffrey has worked professionally in broadcast, film, stage and behind the scenes for over 25 years. Recently, he's made appearances on *Queen of the South*, *American Crime*, *Land Man*, and worked on a live cinema project called *Distant Vision* with Francis Ford Coppola. He's Artistic Director of T3 and co-founder of the acclaimed The Drama Club..

**Jenny Barrett, She/Her (Lighting Designer)** is a technical theatre nerd. She is currently a Technical Theatre Coordinator at Dallas College, and the Resident Lighting Designer for the Eastfield Dance Company. Previously she designed Lights for Oklahoma Children's Theatre, was the Assistant Technical Director and Scenic Charge at Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma, and was the Lighting Supervisor at Oklahoma City University.

**Dylan Hearn, he/him (Sound Designer)** is a graduate of Savannah College of Art and Design with a B.F.A. in Sound Design. He is working as the Production Manager at T3, a place where diverse artist make diverse work, and inclusivity thrives. He loves making weird sounds in multiple different mediums like animation, film, and theatre. The people in the office love his work. Dylan has experience as an Audio Engineer, Sound Designer, Re-recording Mixer, and his favorite, otamatone player. Again, the people in the office love his work. His love of both theatre and film pushes him to be a sound designer that blends the two realms of media and creates something new.

## Bios Continued

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**David Saldivar (Fight Director - He/Him)** is a certified Advanced Actor Combatant with the Society of American Fight Directors, an Associate Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, and a licensed pyrotechnician in Texas. He has choreographed numerous productions in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, Austin, Houston, and the greater Texas region. He is the current lead instructor for monthly Fight Nights at Theatre Three in Dallas, Texas. When he is not working on projects he spends his time finding hole in the wall taquerias with friends. For his entire resume you can see it here, [www.theatricalsyndicate.com](http://www.theatricalsyndicate.com)

**Reagan Fitzgerald (Stage Manager)** is a freelance Equity Stage Manager in DFW and the Production Manager at Circle Theatre. Stage Management credits include: *The Last Five Years*, *A Strange Loop*, *The Hatmaker's Wife*, and *Destroying David* (Circle Theatre); *Khan!!! A New Musical* (Presented by MusicalWriters.com); *Exit, Pursued By A Bear* (Texas Wesleyan University); *Christmas at the Southern Palace* (Six Flags Over Texas); *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Oklahoma City University). Assistant Stage Management credits include: *All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914* (Stage West); *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812* (Theatre Three); *Hundred Days* (Circle Theatre); *High School Musical Theatre Awards* (Broadway Dallas); *Head Over Heels* (Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma). They send love and thanks to their family, friends, and dog Lemonade!



**Shannon J McGrann (Cynthia, but you can call me Cindy if you like that better)** has been performing for many years in the DFW area. Venues include: Theatre Three; The Dallas Theater Center; Dallas Children's Theater; WaterTower Theatre, Lyric Stage; Amphibian Stage; Second Thought Theatre; Stage West; Uptown Players; and Theatre Arlington. Her television/film credits include: *1923*; *Plus/Minus*; *Love and Death*; *Rock Me*; *The Price of Fame: Carrie Fisher*; *The Good Guys*; *Lone Star*; *The Marina Oswald Story*; and many regional and national commercials. She is represented by The Campbell Agency.



**Chad Cline (Ken)** Being back in Theatre too is like putting on my favorite LL Bean Flannel, it feels right! Past shows at T3 & Ttoo include *The Trade*, *RAPTURED*, & *Big Scary Animals*. You can also catch Chad with Dry Clean Only improv group in Theatre Too. Chad has been represented by The Mary Collins Agency for 26 years and really likes omelettes.

# T3 Patrons- Annual Fund

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## **BACKSTAGE BENEFACTORS**

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

# DEER



**"Seemingly normal people" - that's the term used by Theatre Three associate artistic director Christie Vela. Cynthia and Ken are "seemingly normal people." Cynthia is a counselor at a public school and Ken is a novelist; they live on New York City's Upper West Side; and they have a house in the Poconos. But one evening, Cynthia and Ken are on the road to that very same Pennsylvania getaway when they strike a deer with their car. The incident sends Cynthia and Ken on a collision course of their own, through which the couple is shown what lies just beneath "seemingly normal."**

**So goes *Deer*, the vicious two-hander by Aaron Mark, directed by Vela. According to Mark, this incident really took place: a friend of his, returning to New York City after a trip to the Poconos, reported that she had struck a deer on the road. Mark was immediately fascinated. He wondered at the moral implications: if any of us found ourselves in this situation, if we had to finish off an animal, could we do it? And if so, what might we learn about ourselves? How ugly are we willing to get?**

**And, according to the now-defunct TheaterJones blog, the play seems to have had a development cycle as unique as its origins. Despite having undergone several private readings, *Deer* was published before it saw a full production. Dramatists Play Service selected it after having already published another of Mark's plays, *Empanada Loca*. Then, in 2017, *Deer* made its world premiere at Fort Worth's Stage West Theatre (then starring John S. Davies and Lisa Fairchild). Audiences were quick to note the play's gleeful intensity, with one critic remarking that, "strangely enough, the more we play along with this creepy joyride, the more valid it feels."**

# DEER

Which is precisely the dynamic that excites Vela. But, like Mark, Vela was drawn to the story of Deer by real life events, albeit indirectly. The script first came to her, leapt out as if onto the highway, in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic; the uncertainty of the real world then made the uncertainty of the play all the more visceral. And why not? Many at that time were locked in somewhere, much like Cynthia and Ken. Similarly, the pandemic led many to question the stability of the institutions that govern our lives. We might ask if deadly, ugly events - running over an innocent animal, public health crises - don't reveal what is deadly and ugly within ourselves. "The system we've set up as the system to succeed," Vela says, "it's bullshit. Does [Cynthia] know it's bullshit? She's got to!"

(And, of course, the present author would be remiss not to ask if love and marriage are not among these institutions. He wishes, as well, to remind the reader that tickets to Deer, presented in the intimate Theatre Too, make an excellent Valentine's Day present.)

To Vela, it's in extreme situations like these that we stand to learn the most about ourselves, "about who you are and how far you're willing to go to free yourself." In other words, we're taught when we snap. But what does it mean to snap? Vela, for her part, believes that the answer isn't so simple: all it means is a rupture with one's own life. Whether that rupture is violent, or just letting go of the things that "seem normal," Deer presents us with an opportunity to decide for ourselves, to look deep inside at our own bloody guts before a wayward car sends them spilling out.