



MAINSTAGE SEASON 2017-18

Columbia College Chicago Theatre Center presents

FARID UD-DIN ATTAR'S

THE CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS

WRITTEN BY PETER BROOK
AND JEAN-CLAUDE CARRIÈRE
DIRECTED BY JOHN GREEN

Columbia
COLLEGE CHICAGO

Artistic Director

Jacqueline Penrod

Interim Chair of Theatre

Peter Carpenter

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OF THE BIRDS

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APRIL 18, 2018 / STUDIO 404 / 72 E. 11TH STREET

Choreography

Lesley Keller

Costume Design

Tom Kieffer

Props Design

Devon Green

Dramaturge

Riad Ismat

Lighting Design

Lena Aubrey

**Fight Choreography/
Stick Work**

David Woolley

Set Design

Mariah Pendleton

Sound Design

Daniel Hosfield

Production Stage Manager

JuJu Laurie

Puppet Design

Therese Ritchie

Makeup and Mask Design

Glenese Hand

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BIRDS

Hoopoe

Kat Harbison

FLOCK 1

The Conference

Dove

Sareh Ma'ani

Falcon

Janet Henriques

Widow Bird

Koshie Mills

Nicobar Pigeon

Carson Schroeder

Heron

Tina-Kim Nguyen

Sparrow

Karla Martin

FLOCK 2

Puppet Birds

Dove

Becca Parsons

Falcon

Redding Tews

Widow Bird

Emma Younger

Nicobar Pigeon

Naiya Davis

Heron

Cristina Rodriguez

Sparrow

Sarah Kinn

FLOCK 3

Spirit Birds

Dove

Sheryl Williams

Falcon

Madelyn Stuenkel

Widow Bird

Gina Martin

Nicobar Pigeon

Taylor Griffith

Heron

Marcia Eastmond

Sparrow

Chloe Adamo

CHARACTERS

1st King, Peacock, Gravedigger, Chamberlain

Ja'kira Abdul

Slave, Partridge, Nightingale, Soldier

Mayrany Aranda

2nd Beggar, Duck, Saint, 1st Moth

Julia Aquistapace

2nd Slave, Dervish, 1st Thief, The Spinner

Cynthia Harmon

Owl, Old Man, Player, Mother

Danielle Lynch

3rd King, Princess, Blind Man, Young Man

Jade Moreno

Princess, Bat, Woman, Young Woman

Amari Phillips

1st Beggar, Waiting Woman, Traveller, Astrologer

Chloe Stevenson

FROM THE DRAMATURG

Farid ud-Din Attar's great mystical poem, *Mantiq-ut-Tayr*, ("Conference of the Birds") is among the most significant of all Persian literature written in the 12th century. A marvelous, allegorical rendering of the essence of Sufism, it starts with the birds of the world gathering to search for an ideal king, the legendary Simorgh. The wise hoopoe leads the birds, each of whom represents a human fault which prevents humans from attaining enlightenment. Throughout the arduous journey, many birds express their reluctance; but with eloquence and insight, the hoopoe calms their fears, using parables about tyrannical kings and princesses to stimulate them to continue their search. When they finally reach the dwelling place of the Simorgh, instead of seeing him, they see the reflection of their images in an implicit lake.

The core of Sufism is seeking the truth through God. The ultimate goal of a Sufi is to identify with God through discovering God within his soul. Unfortunately, this idea was misjudged and the first Sufi martyr Al-Hallaj was amputated and burned alive as a heretic when he said: "I am the truth." Attar's masterful use of symbolism is a key, driving component of the piece. Attar did not like philosophy and wanted to express his thoughts in a poetic and symbolic way.

Peter Brook and Jean-Claude Carrière adapted Attar's long poem into a play titled *The Conference of the Birds*, which they published in 1979. Brook toured the play around rural Africa with an international cast before presenting two extremely successful productions to Western audiences—one in New York and one in Paris.

– **Riad Ismat**
Dramaturg

THE COMPANY

Ja'kira Abdul (*King #1, Grave Digger, Peacock, Chamberlin*) is a sophomore Acting major with a Voice Acting minor from Madison, Wisconsin. She was most recently seen in Columbia College Chicago's New Stew production of *She Bear*, directed by Ashley Neal. She played multiple roles including Witch, Narrator, and Wicked women #1.

Julia Acquistapace (*Beggar #2, Duck, Saint, Figure #1*) is a senior theatre artist from San Francisco, California. Previous Columbia productions include *As You Like It, Woman at A Threshold, Beckoning*, and *The National Theatre*. Julia made her directing debut last semester with the student produced and devised pieces *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Intimate Justice*. Her one-act play *Loise* was also workshopped last year as a part of the Fresh Ink Play Festival.

Chloe Adamo (*Sparrow - Flock 3, Ensemble*) is a junior in the Musical Theatre program from Seattle, Washington. Past shows at Columbia include *The Three Sisters* and *Candy is Dandy but Liquor is Quicker*.

Mayrany Aranda (*Slave, Partridge, Nightingale, Soldier*) is a Latina born and raised in Chicago and junior majoring in Acting. This is Mayrany's college debut performance.

Naiya Davis (*Nicobar Pigeon*) is from Boston where she was part of the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity program at Wayland High School from 2012-16. Davis was a spokesperson for a Ted Talk, using the platform to address social issues through art. Naiya is currently in her sophomore year at Columbia College Chicago pursuing degrees in Acting and Cultural Studies.

Marcia Eastmond (*Heron/chorus*) is a sophomore Acting major from south Chicago. Her favorite performances include KCP's *Annie* (Miss Hannigan) and *Macbeth* (Weird Sister) and Columbia College Chicago's *Come Unto These Yellow Sands* (Sphinx/Chorus) and *Fine Lines* (Renee).

Taylor Griffith (*Nicobar*) is a sophomore Acting with International Performance Studies major from Lincoln, Nebraska. Previous Columbia College Chicago productions include *Peer Gynt* directed by Jeff Ginsberg and *Intimate Justice* directed by Julia Acquistapace. Griffith trained at Double Edge Theatre last summer.

Kat Harbison (*Hoopoe*) is a graduating senior, born in Harrisburg, Kentucky and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana. Previous credits include *I'll Call That Living* (The Den Theatre), *City in My Mind* (Rose Bruford College), *Doctor Faustus* (Columbia College Chicago), *Antigone* (Experimental Laboratory), *Glockenspiel* (Columbia College Chicago), *Peter Pan* (Columbia College Chicago), and *My Sister in This House* (Columbia College Chicago). Harbison will be a featured performer in the 2018 Columbia College Chicago *Senior Showcase*.

Janet Henriques (*Falcon*) performed the role of Susy in the Spring 2017 production of *Wait Until Dark*.

Cynthia Hindmon (*Dervish, Thief #2, Spinning Man, Ensemble*) is a first-year Musical Theatre major from Merrillville, Indiana. She was recently in *People of Color Columbia* and *The Musical Theatre New Stew*.

Sarah Kinn (*Sparrow, Ensemble*) is a first year Acting student from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This is Kinn's first Mainstage performance at the college. Most recently, she was seen in Columbia College Chicago's New Stew performance of *Hello!*, as well as Mole in First Stage's *Mole Hill Stories* in Milwaukee.

Danielle R. Lynch (*Owl, Old Man, Player, Mother*) is originally from across the lake (AKA Michigan). Lynch is a junior majoring in Musical Theatre with minors in Voiceover, Arts Management, and American Sign Language. Danielle is currently an intern at The Floating Opera Company. This is her first production at Columbia College Chicago.

Sarah Ma'ani (*Dove - Flock One*) is a junior Musical Theatre major and Photography minor from Buenos Aires, Argentina. *Conference of the Birds* is her first Mainstage production at Columbia College Chicago. Some film directing projects she's been featured in include *Mel & Lee, Say Something Funny*, and *Natasha*.

Gina Martin (*Widow Bird*) is a sophomore Musical Theatre Performance major from Country Club Hills, Illinois. She was last seen in Columbia's New Stew performance of *Get on Your Feet*. This is her first mainstage production at Columbia.

Karla Martin (*Sparrow, First Flock*) is a first-year Musical Theater major. She was born and raised on the beautiful island of Puerto Rico where she discovered her passion for the performing arts. She set off to Chicago in order to further her studies in music, dancing, and acting. *Conference of the Birds* is her first college production.

Koshie Mills (*1st Flock Widowbird/Chorus*) is a senior Acting major from Downers Grove, Illinois. She was most recently seen in Columbia College Chicago's *One Act Play Festival*. Some favorite performance credits include College Theater's *Julius Caesar*, *Girls Like That*, and *Pippin*. Mills also was a participant of Buffalo Theatre Ensemble's 2016 Actor's Shadow Program for the production *Don't Dress for Dinner*. Mills was a featured performer in the 2018 Columbia College Chicago *Senior Showcase*.

Jade Moreno (*3rd King, Princess, Blind Man, Young Man*) is a sophomore Acting major from Texas. She was most recently seen in the Columbia College Chicago production of *Fefu and Her Friends* as Paula.

Tina-Kim Nguyen (*Heron*) is a second-year Acting major and Directing minor from Converse, Texas. This is her first Columbia College Chicago Mainstage production. Tina was recently the assistant stage manager on last semester's *One Act Play Festival*. Previous acting credits include *Take It Back!* at The Annoyance Theater and *Anatomy of Gray* (June) at Karen Wagner High School.

Becca Parsons (*Dove, Puppeteer, ASL Chorus*) is a sophomore Musical Theatre and Deaf Studies double major from Northern Virginia. She played the Storyteller in *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* at Columbia. Virginia stage credits include Rebecca Gibbs in *Our Town*, Hope and Villian in *Almost, Maine*, and Lowbutt in *Honk!*.

Amari Phillips (*The Princess, The Bat, Young Woman, and Man with Sieve*) was born and raised in Chicago before moving to Carol Stream, Illinois where she attended Glenbard North High School. Phillips has a cosmetology certification for makeup and hair. Phillips is currently in her sophomore year at Columbia College Chicago and is a Theatre major.

Cristina Rodríguez (*Heron Flock 2*) is a junior majoring in Musical Theatre with a Teaching Artist minor. Her performance credits include *Los Milagros* directed by Katrina Dion, *La Carne Asada* directed by Vanessa Garcia, and has recently helped devise *The Boat Play* with FYI Theatre.

Carsen Schroeder (*Nicobar Pigeon*) is a sophomore pursuing a BFA in Acting. Her previous Columbia productions include *If We Were Birds*, directed by Kass Ferland Haroun, *Come Unto These Yellow Sands*, directed by John Green, and *Chekov's Gun*.

Chloe Stevenson (*Slave, Waiting Woman, A Traveler, The Astrologer*) is a first-year film major from Oklahoma City. This is her first show at Columbia College Chicago.

Madelynn Stuenkel (*Falcon*) is a sophomore Acting major from Brighton, Michigan. Her previous appearances at Columbia College Chicago include the 24 Hour Play Festival, *Fool for Love* (May) directed by Ella Silverman, and *Come Unto These Yellow Sands* directed by John Green.

Redding Tews (*Falcon Flock 2, Ensemble*) is a sophomore Comedy Writing and Performance major from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This show marks Tews' mainstage debut, but previous Columbia College Chicago productions include *Frogs* (Remix), *Chekhov's Gun*, and *The Egg: An Original Musical*. Next year, Tews plans on spending a semester away at The Second City, where she will be a student in the Comedy Studies program.

Hannah Wien (*Slave #1, Thief #1, Walking Bird, Moth #2*) is a first-year Theatre major from Indianapolis, Indiana where she was a member of a local theatre company, Young Actors Theatre, for eight years. Wien's focus at Young Actors Theatre was on devised work where she took part in over 20 shows. Most recently she was in the devised shows *A Line in the Land* directed by Catherine Wade and *Before the Nineteenth* directed by Georgetanna Smith Wade.

Sheryl Williams (*Flock 3 Dove*) is a transfer student from Phoenix, Arizona. She is a Musical Theater major minoring in stage combat and is a teaching assistant for the stage combat program. She was recently fight choreographer on *God of Carnage* with Teresa Elj and has appeared in Columbia College Chicago shows *Martyr*, *The Surgeon and Her Daughters*, and *As You Like It*.

Emma Younger (*Widow Bird, Flock 2*) is a sophomore Acting major from Portland, Oregon. She was most recently seen at Columbia in *Peer Gynt*, and *The Frogs* (a Directing 4 project). Other performance credits include columbinus (Rebel), and Mouse in Space (Suzy Slyrat) with Oregon Children's Theatre, *Proof* (Catherine) and *Coraline* (Coraline) with ACMA/Portland.

Juju Laurie (*Production Stage Manager*) is a senior Theatre Technology major from New Orleans, Louisiana. His past stage management credits include *If We Were Birds*, *Reefer Madness*, and *Cabaret*. His assistant stage manager credits include *Violence and Son*, *Title of Show*, and *Fefu and her Friends* at Columbia.

John Green (Director) Recent productions include *Pornography* for Flinders University, South Australia, *Love and Information* and *Come Unto These Yellow Sands* for Columbia College Chicago, *The Reunion* and *9 Fridas* for the International Voices Project, and *Sacred Sands*, a multi-year site-specific project on the Indiana Dunes that combines ecology with performance.

Riad Ismat (Dramaturg) is a Syrian writer/director, with many published books, including his latest on actor training. He won Deutsche Welle's prize for best Arabic short story, and Arab Broadcasting award for best historical series. During his Fulbright fellowship, he worked as assistant to Joe Chaikin. He directed extensively for Damascus National Theatre and the Academy of Dramatic Arts, especially plays by Shakespeare and Tennessee Williams, besides the premiere of his *Arabian Nights* in Cardiff, UK. Ismat teaches at RTVF, Northwestern University.

Lesley Keller (Choreographer) is a movement artist graduating in May 2018 with an Interdisciplinary Dance/Theater BA degree. She is researching how theatre and dance intersect and the integration of film in live performance. She previously collaborated with director John Green on *Come Unto These Yellow Sands* last spring. Keller is a member of Bittersweet Arts Company.

Mariah Pendleton (Scenic Design) is a junior Set and Lighting Design major from Zionsville, Indiana. Other set design credits at Columbia College Chicago include *Harlowe*, *Mr. Marmalade*, and *26 Miles*.

Daniel Hosfield (Sound Design) is a senior Theatre Design major who transferred to Columbia College Chicago from Phoenix, Arizona. Hosfield is an aspiring sound designer and hopes to work in Chicago after graduation. Some of his design credits include Phoenix College's *Sweet Charity*, *Rumors*, *Reefer Madness the Musical*, and Columbia College Chicago's *Caroline or Change*, *New Stew Fresh Play Prize*, *Dying for it*, [*Title of Show*], and *Mr. Marmalade*.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE THEATRE DEPARTMENT: PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Manager

Pete Dully

Technical Director

Grant Sabin

Stage Management Advisor

Nykol Dedreu

Scenic Design Advisor

Jaqueline Penrod

Lighting Design Advisor

Heather Gilbert

Master Electrician

Marc Chevalier

Voice Coach

Susan Gosdick

Voice Coach Assistants

Janet Henriques

Carsen Schroeder

Director of Technology

Josef Szaday

Costume Advisor

Frances Maggio

Costume Shop Management

Patricia Roeder

Tom Kieffer

Makeup Advisor

Glensese Hand

Marketing

Dawn Renee Jones

Movement Consultant

Michael Brown

Assistant Stage Managers

McRaye Scheller

Izzy French

Natalie Day

Production Assistant

Yuyao Zhao

Running Crew

Peter Jang

Elijah Mead

Production Management Work Aids

Joe Dolmon

Izzy French

Aryn Henderson

Madison Kesselring

Juju Laurie

Matt Masino

Elie Rodgers

Hannah Siglin

Ella Silverman

Scene Shop Work Aides

Oreum Chang

Lauren Giolli

Mary Moyers

Mariah Pendleton

Therese Ritchie

Dominique Zaragoza

Prop Work Aides

Devon Green

Austen Harmon

Lighting Work Aides

Lena Aubrey

Benjamin Carne

Elizabeth Gomez

Stephen Melia

Joshua Otto

Stephen Melia

Costume Work Aides

Daina Almario-Kopp

McRaye Scheller

Jasmine Slade

Annaliese Voci

Stage Combat Work Aides

Teresa Elj

Tristin Hall

Administrative Office Work Aides

Jules Cunningham

Benjamin Dib

Benjamin Peachey

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