

Quail Bell presents

Mi Abuela: Queen of Nightmares

A Stage Play By Christine Stoddard

June 15-26, 2022

Gene Frankel Theatre

New York, NY

Uncovering a dead woman's secrets masked by fairy tales...

About the Play

*Trigger warning: This play references sexual assault.

Maya, a young Salvadoran-American woman, navigates trauma and family mythology through magic and folklore as she comes of age in Phoenix, Arizona. Her story explores mother-daughter relationships, mixed race identity, being the first-generation child of an immigrant, growing up without a father, and using fantasy as a coping mechanism, while featuring movement and dance. And there are owls, jaguars, and cacti—oh, my!

At the telling of the story, Maya is recalling memories from her childhood and adolescence from the viewpoint of a woman in her early 20s. She remembers her mother (Mami) as a young woman, around the time she first became a mother and was at her most vibrant. Maya's grandmother (Abuela) appears as she was at the end of her short life.

Mi Abuela, Queen of Nightmares won a national playwriting competition held by Table Work Press in 2019 and was published in the book *Two Plays: True Believer and Mi Abuela, Queen of Nightmares* (2020). The play is based upon the 2018 Semiperfect Press chapbook of poems by the same name. The stage play is being produced by Quail Bell Press & Productions.

The Cast

Maya: Vanessa Vivas (Ariana Jackman, understudy)

Mami: Marian Del Valle

Abuela: Fiamma Piacentini

Father/Sheriff: Jacob Maximillian Baron

Cactus/Jaguar/Owl: Amanda Andrews & Jess Appel

Ancestors: Ariana Jackman & Christine Stoddard

The Crew

Playwright/Director: Christine Stoddard

Movement Director: Fiamma Piacentini

Lighting Designer: Jeremy Stein

Set Designer: Dario Mohr

Assistant Movement Director: Nicole Pascaretta

Assistant Director: Amanda Andrews

Line Producer: Jess Appel

Literary Assistant/Intern: Sydnie Stern

Biographies

Christine Stoddard (playwright/director/"Ancestor") is a writer, director, multidisciplinary artist, and the founder of Quail Bell Press & Productions. Recent plays include "My Favorite Sex Toy" at the Broadway Comedy Club and "A Chorus Within Her" at the Anacostia Playhouse, among other shows. Her first feature film is *Sirena's Gallery*, with its next screening at Cinema Village in September 2022. Christine's books include *Desert Fox by the Sea*, *Naomi & The Reckoning*, *Water for the Cactus Woman*, and others. She was the first-ever artist-in-residence at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House in Manhattan and an inaugural AnkhLave Arts Alliance fellow at the Queens Botanical Garden. Born to a Salvadoran mother and an American father, Christine is a graduate of VCUarts and The City College of New York. Find out more about her work at WorldOfChristineStoddard.com. Instagram/Twitter: @stoddardsays

Vanessa Vivas ("Maya") is a Venezuelan actress, director, writer, and producer based in NYC. Raised in the city of Doha, Qatar, she has taken her hybrid identity and infused it into her work, focusing on multidimensional storytelling. Recent stage credits include the world premiere of experimental piece "Islands Never Say" (Seed #1, Grassroots Theatre Co), a reading of "Cottagers and Indians" (Director, PICT Classic), and "Last Chance for Mama" (Stage Manager, Randomly Specific Theatre). She has received honorable mentions for "Best First-Time Director (Female)" and "Best Women Short" at the Independent Shorts Awards for her directorial short film debut *Transplant*. Vanessa is a recent grad of Point Park University. She serves as a team member at Bad Behavior Lab, a multi-hyphenate

production lab. She is also the Capes Coordinator at Capes Coaching, the industry's premiere coaching company. For more and such, visit VanessaVivas.com.

Marian Del Valle ("Mami") is a Mexican performer, actress, singer, dancer, and producer based out of NYC and a recent graduate from Columbia College Chicago. Moving to the US to pursue her performing career, she has started her podcast *Entre Pláticas* about how she navigates her experiences in this world and finds herself. She is making her professional debut on the NY theatre scene in "Mi Abuela, Queen of Nightmares." She has worked on independent films such as *El Tesoro Abandonado* back in Mexico and *Atlas* in Chicago. She has been involved in new theatre works in college like *Census* and *Blessing*, as well. She has a huge passion for cultivating new works and opening the entertainment world to new possibilities. For more information about her, you can visit MarianDelValle.com and [@mariandelvallet](https://www.instagram.com/mariandelvallet) on Instagram.

Fiamma Piacentini (movement director/"Abuela") is a New York City-based actor, movement artist, director, and photographer from Mexico City, Mexico. She directed and performed in "las-sitas: a movement exploration of the divine feminine," which had its debut at the Fringe NYC Festival. Other NYC theater credits include "The House of Bernarda Alba," "By Wing, Hoof or Foot," "Macbeth," "Miss Witherspoon," "Through the Looking Glass," "Andromache," and "The Insanity of Mary Girard." She has also worked on various independent film projects.

Jacob Maximillian Baron ("Father"/"Sheriff") is a sometimes actor/sometimes filmmaker/constant pain in the neck based out of New York, NY. He has played stoners, loners, glad men and mad men, and thus can always pull from personal experience. His film work has played at numerous festivals throughout the world, including depressing experimental films he made in college and even more depressing comedies he's made since college. For a good time, call +1 (203) 451-7005 - ask for Debbie.

Jeremy Stein (lighting designer). Off-Off Broadway debut! Brooklyn College Theater: "Antigone, Water by the Spoonful, Gunplay: A Play About America." York College Theater: "Guys & Dolls, O.G. Scrooge." NYU Tisch: "Two Gentlemen of Verona." "Artist for Artist: Generations – Part 1." Before moving to NYC, Jeremy worked for Royal Caribbean Cruises where he most recently served as the Head Light Technician for Symphony of the Seas, which was their flagship at the time. Jeremy is based in Brooklyn, where he is working towards his master's degree in Theatrical Design & Technical Production at CUNY – Brooklyn College. He holds a BFA in Theater Design & Technology from Emerson College. IG: [@jsteinlightingdesign](https://www.instagram.com/jsteinlightingdesign). JeremySteinDesigns.com

Jess Appel ("Cactus"/"Owl"/"Jaguar" & line producer) is an actor/singer/mover/producer. Her latest NYC credits include "Clowns & Otters," "Hashtag Mountain Girl," "My Favorite Sex Toy," and "Forget Fairytales," all by Christine

Stoddard, where she has acted alongside fellow Owl/Jaguar/Cactus, Amanda Andrews. She is thrilled to once again be expressing herself through physical movement on the stage in a Christine Stoddard original production. Other recent credits include Snow White in "Group Therapy" at The Sugarloaf Performing Arts Center in Chester, New York, Hannah in "Night of the Iguana" under the guidance of Atlantic Theater Company's Karen Kohlhas, and Samantha in the original indie film reading of *Out of The 80s*, which she co-produced with writer/director Andre Degas. IG @realdealjessappeal and on the web at JessAppel.com.

Amanda Andrews ("Cactus"/"Owl"/"Jaguar" & assistant director) has had a ball collaborating as an actress, singer, writer, and producer in NYC for almost a decade. In this past year, she has had the great honor of acting in four of Stoddard's original comedy plays, including "Hashtag Mountain Girl," "My Favorite Sex Toy," "Cyber Cinderella," and "Forget Fairytales." In addition to performing in a variety of plays, musicals, cabarets, workshops, and films, Amanda has also performed in two pieces that she wrote and produced: "Brilliant But Off," a rock & roll play about mental health, and *But A Dream*, a short film. She will be premiering a new one woman rock & roll play, "Everything's Fine!", at Joe's Pub on August 7, 2022. More at AmandaAndrews.net. Instagram: @amandrews31

Ariana Jackman ("Ancestor"/"Maya" understudy) is a NYC-based actor and a recent graduate from AMDA. She is a cast member of "The Stories of Arlyrus" and "The Off the Beaten Path Musical." She is a huge nerd and an avid Dungeons and Dragons player. You can catch Ariana playing your favorite 12-year-old, six-foot-tall Tabaxi, Kat, at https://www.twitch.tv/mayhem_gaming111?sr=a in the game Mayhem, where no one knows what is going on, not even the DM. You can also find Ariana on TikTok @arianajessica16.

Dario Mohr (set designer) is a first-generation Grenadian, U.S. citizen born in 1988. Based in New York City, Mohr is an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and non-profit leader. He received a BFA in Painting from Buffalo State College, an MFA in Studio Art from The City College of New York, and an Advanced Certificate from Queens College. His work involves the creation of "sacred spaces" referencing his heritage and expressing commentary on the cultural zeitgeist through immersive sanctuary experiences. His practice is interdisciplinary, converging painting, sculpture, installation, digital art, and film. In addition to his individual art practice, he is also the founder and director of AnkhLave Arts Alliance, Inc. which is a non-profit arts organization for the recognition and representation of BIPOC artists in contemporary art. You can find out more about his work at DarioMohr.com.

Nicole Pascaretta (assistant movement director) is an NYC-based actor/singer/dancer/musical improviser/comedian originally from Detroit, MI. Her most recent choreography credits include "The Detroit Musical and Greece - A Musical Parody." Nicole and her comedy partner, Julia Schroeder, recently headlined the Detroit Women of Comedy Festival with their original two-woman show, "The Parent Trap: Lord of the Twins Trilogy," a

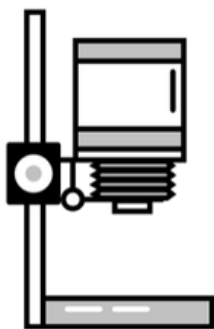
theatrical reimagining of *The Parent Trap* (1998 version) with a *Lord of the Rings* twist. Follow @parenttraptrilogy on Instagram for NYC showings. When she's not in the Shire, she can be found performing musical comedy and sketches with her duo, Bring Your Own Bob. She would like to thank the cast and crew of "Mi Abuela, Queen of Nightmares" for this opportunity and her first dance teacher, Sherry Lisjak, for sparking her passion for dance and changing her life. Follow her on Instagram: @nicole.pascaretta @nicolebirdfeather @parenttraptrilogy @bringyourown.bob

Sydney Stern (literary assistant/intern) is an American writer, journalist, editor, and English major at St. John's University in New York. Throughout high school, she participated in local student writing contests, traveled with the Tyler School of Art and Architecture for an urban life photography program, and earned a place on her school's Dean's list. Sydney graduated from Cherry Hill West High School a year early, via correspondence school with Keystone Education. Sydney regularly submits articles to her campus newspaper, *The Torch*.

About the Production Company

Quail Bell Press & Productions is a woman-owned creative studio and the parent of *Quail Bell Magazine* and various other arts, media & entertainment projects. Founded by writer, director, and artist Christine Stoddard, Quail Bell is based in Brooklyn, NY. The company produces both original and client projects and is available for commissions. Find out more at QuailBell.com.

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You can also show your appreciation at the concession stand or buy a copy of Christine's book *Desert Fox by the Sea* in the lobby.