

Herberger Institute
for Design and the Arts



School of
Music, Dance
and Theatre
Arizona State
University

7:30 p.m. Nov. 8-9, 15-16
2 p.m. Nov. 10, 17
Directed by Joya Scott
LYCEUM THEATRE

THE GRADIENT

BY STEPH DEL ROSSO



MUSICDANCETHEATRE.ASU.EDU/EVENTS

About the show

In this satire set in the not-so-distant future, a new facility promises to take men accused of sexual misconduct and rehabilitate them into responsible citizens. But inside the walls of The Gradient, the culture ruled by profit margins and corporate buzzwords muddles its high ideals. New employee Tess is eager to do her part, but finds herself locked in a subtle psychological battle with her latest client - one who has the perfect answer to her every question. "The Gradient" asks: can we mass-produce forgiveness?

Content transparency: "The Gradient" includes frank discussions of sexual acts and brief descriptions of sexual harassment and violence. Characters occasionally use harsh, violent, or misogynist language.

Please take photos before and after the show.
Thank you for not filming or taking photos during the performance.

Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge the 22 tribes who are native to Arizona, and more specifically the Akimel O'odham (Pima) and Piipaash or Pee Posh (Maricopa) tribes on whose ancestral homelands ASU's Tempe campus resides.

Dramaturg's Note

What's most exciting about dramaturgy to us is its generally loose definition—the dramaturgy of a particular project is free to embody the needs of the creative team and organization. As a dramaturg on this particular play, we felt very empowered to engage with the text from our own vantage point and to celebrate that—a gratifying feeling given the heaviness of the subject matter present in “The Gradient.” We were drawn to the dramaturgical questions surrounding the satirical approach to an idea of an algorithm that cures people's toxic behavior.

The concept of blurred boundaries came out of early discussions with our director, Joya Scott. The phrase encompasses the very idea of a color gradient and offers a sort of “HR twist” on it. We feel like we would hear the phrase “blurred boundaries” used in a new-hire training about workplace etiquette.

This led to our favorite challenge of the production: How did we want you, the audience, to relate to the characters? How did we want you to see your experiences in the play? Playwright Steph Del Rosso has said she “puts a fun house mirror up against the familiar.” When we look into a fun house mirror, we chuckle at the weird shapes reflected back at us and then think about how grateful we are for a normal mirror back home. Looking back at “The Gradient,” Del Rosso has provided us an opportunity to reflect, comment and evaluate. Natalia, Louis, Tess, Jackson and the other clients provide a more accessible entry point to the particular themes with the humor used in their circumstances.

That context gave us this idea to, as the dramaturgs, approach the play like a cautionary tale or a testimonial that would be seen in a company video. This dramaturgical framing helped give way to an epiphany we had about the storytelling of this piece: our job would be complete if we could clarify the boundaries, what they were, and how they got blurry. If HR were to select this story, they would probably tell it so that new employees could pass an accompanying quiz. Finding clarity in the boundaries at the beginning of the play would deepen the impact of everything that occurs once the boundaries get blurry. Of course, all of that is up to you to discover. And no, there's not a quiz afterwards, but we do hope you enjoy ASU's production of “The Gradient” by Steph Del Rosso.

—Claire Dettloff & Kenya Thompson

Visit our virtual lobby:

<https://sites.google.com/asu.edu/thegradient/home>

Artistic Team

Director	Joya Scott
Scenic Designer	Matthew Geraghty
Costume Designer	Zoe Omtvedt
Props Head	Caster Morse
Props Assistant	Jessy Moran
Production Manager	Katie Peavey
Lighting Designer	Nate Wheatley
Asst. Lighting Designer	Catherine Andrus
Sound Designer	Christian Roman
Stage Manager	Emily Salcido
Asst. Stage Manager	Ryan Ulrich
Choreographer	Lay Garcia
Vocal Coaching	Rachel Finley
Technical Director	Digger Feeney
Intimacy Director	Lauren Faust
Dramaturgs	Claire Detloff, Kenya Thompson
Cultural Context Representative	Kristin Hunt
Ensemble Safety Captains	Lauren Faust
Design and Prod. Safety Captain	Caster Morse
Crew Safety Captain	Ryan Ulrich
Community Engagement Coordinator	Amanda Pintore
Audience Engagement Asst.	Rachel Hutzenbiler

Performers

Tess	Isabel Ramirez
Natalia	Nya Salahdeen
Jackson	Geno Ploeger
Louis	Marlowe Texidor
Clients 1-8	Braedon Kulick

Bios

Catherine (Cat) Andrus she/her, (assistant lighting designer). Cat is a junior studying theatre (design and production) and accountancy, and this is her second production with ASU. Some of her recent lighting designs include “Wind in the Willows” (Christian Youth Theatre) and “Pink Floyd: Hale’s Tribute to the Dark Side of the Moon” (Hale Centre Theatre - AZ). She’s excited to design the New Works Festival this spring.

Makayla Eneboe she/her, (assistant stage manager). Makayla is a senior studying stage management. She became a new member of U.S.I.T.T. this semester. During summer break she assisted in managing at Mesa Arts Center for “Heathers.” Last spring, she assisted the stage manager in “Detroit ‘67.” Her last show at ASU will be Spring ‘25 stage managing “New Works Festival” presenting “Soul Magnet.”

Claire Dettloff she/her, (dramaturg). Claire is a third-year MFA student studying dramatic writing. She is a playwright, composer and lyricist with a passion for telling women-centered stories. Some of her playwriting credits include: “stuffed” (2024 Samuel French Off Off Broadway Short Play Festival, Valdez Theatre Conference), “chew the fat” (2023 Valdez Theatre Conference, Prism Theatre), and “Semantics: A New Musical” (2021 Central Michigan University MainStage Season). Claire’s new play “over my dead body there’ll be a pillow fight” will be performed in the Spring of 2025 as part of ASU’s New Works Festival.

Marlowe Finch they/them, (Louis). Marlowe is a senior majoring in theatre in the acting concentration. Marlowe has previously appeared in PRISM’s “A Fine Day’s Work” and ASU staged readings of “Spooky Council” and “Jewish American Pageant.” When not acting, Marlowe works as a costumer in the ASU costume department.

Braedon J. Jurnock he/him, (Clients 1-8). Braedon is a senior theatre acting major. Primarily having focused on student-based sketch comedy and various short film appearances, this is his stage debut at the ASU School of Music, Dance and Theatre.

Caster Morse he/she/they, (props designer). Caster is a second-year theatre design and production major. They have assisted properties and deck crew in ASU’s productions of “Iphigenia: King’s Child,” “Anthropocene” and “Clue.” This is his first designer role with the School of Music, Dance and Theatre. She will be working in ASU’s “New Works Festival” and “Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812.”

Zoe Omtvedt she/her, (costume designer). Zoe is a senior in the fashion program, with a minor in business. This is Zoe’s first time designing a show at ASU. While her major is in fashion, she has always had a passion for costume design. Zoe started her involvement with the theatre program as a stitcher in the costume department in the fall of 2023.

Geno Ploeger he/him, (Jackson). Geno is a junior theatre (acting) major double majoring in marketing. His recent roles include Mr. Green in “Clue,” several characters in “Anthropocene” and a tour guide in “Safe at Home” all with the ASU School of Music, Dance and Theatre. He is also currently apprenticing to be the company manager with ASU’s student-led organization PRISM Theatre Co.

Isabel Ramirez, she/her, (Tess). Isabel is a senior at Arizona State University, majoring in marketing with a minor in theatre. Isabel is currently represented by Ford RBA. Isabel has played notable roles, including Rosaline in “Juliet Wakes Up”, and starred in short films such as “Curling Smoke,” “Deliria” and “I’m Fine.” As president and founder of the Business for Actors Club at ASU, she helps aspiring actors navigate the business side of the industry, equipping them with the tools to succeed.

Christian Roman he/him, (sound designer) Christian is a Sophomore at ASU studying Theater Design and Production, with an emphasis in sound. He has previously worked on “Miss You Like Hell” as A2, “Theory of Relativity” as A1 mixer, and “Eva Luna” as the audio engineer all with the ASU School of Music, Dance and Theatre. He will also serve as A2 on ASU’s upcoming production of “Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812.”

Nya Salahdeen she/they, (Natalia). Nya is a junior double majoring in theatre (acting) and marketing. Her most recent role was Mrs. Peacock in “Clue” with the ASU School of Music, Dance and Theatre. Currently, Nya is apprenticing to be the marketing director for ASU’s student-led organization, PRISM Theatre Co.

Emily Salcido she/her, (stage manager). Emily is a senior in the theatre design and production program at ASU, where she also recently completed a certificate in special events management. “The Gradient” is her final show here, following her previous work on “Safe at Home,” “Iphigenia: King’s Child” and “Clue.” Emily has collaborated with the Mesa Arts Center for their Día De Los Muertos Festival and has worked with Santa Cruz Shakespeare for the past two seasons.

Joya Scott she/her, (director). Joya is a director, producer, dramaturg and assistant teaching professor at ASU School of Music, Dance and Theatre. She is also co-founder and creative producer of Ghosteater, a contemporary theatre ensemble based in Phoenix. Over the past 20 years, she has worked with many companies in the Valley, New York City, the DC area and beyond. Joya is also an alum of the Beth Morrison Projects Producer Academy, the LaMama Directors Symposium, Middlebury College (BA in theatre) and ASU (MFA in directing).

Kenya Thompson she/her, (dramaturg). Kenya is a second-year MFA student in the theatre for youth and communities program. Before attending ASU, Kenya taught theatre at a middle school in Taylorsville, Utah. While teaching, she directed several plays and musicals including: “Way’s End,” “This is Just to Say,” “Disney’s Newsies Jr.” and “Disney’s Lion King Jr.” Kenya is excited to add dramaturg to her directing and teaching experiences.

Ryan Ulrich she/her, (assistant stage manager). Ryan is a senior performance and movement major. She is the production manager for ASU’s student-led organization PRISM Theatre Co. Some of her stage management credits include: “{proof}” (Santa Cruz Shakespeare), “Theory of Relativity” (ASU School of Music, Theatre, and Opera), and “Anthropocene” (ASU School of Music, Dance and Theatre).

Join the conversation after the show:

Tag #TheGradientASU on Instagram

Production Team

Technical Director
Scenic Charge Artist
Props Head
Props Asst.
Head Electrician
Sound Systems Engineer

Digger Feeney
Ken Russell
Caster Morse
Jessy Moran
Ben Weskalnies
Noah Coutre

Run Crew

LX Board Operator
Wardrobe Head
Backstage Crew
Wardrobe

Kara Keene
Hanna Kieffer
Jo Boucher, Sergio Rodriguez
Lillian Abbs, Angel Mandujano

Production Crew

Electrics Student Workers
Scenic Student Volunteers

Lighting and Sound THP 301/401

Marai Perez
Rhiannon Boute
Taylor Wright
Aglae Mendez
Hainuo Jiang

Lighting and Sound student workers

Noah Coutre
Giana Garcia
Nikolas Good
Gemma Hardiman
Ashley Koclanis
John Mitchell
Christian Roman
Trevor Perry
Katerina Swartz
Xochitl Vance
Shane Waltz

Costumes student workers

Marlowe Texidor
Matthew Geraghty
Anna Kieffer
Tori Adam
Cid Alford
Quinn Hooton

School of Music, Dance and Theatre Production Staff

Production Manager/Stage Mgt. Mentor	Katie Peavey
Dramaturgy Mentor	Karen Jean Martinson
Intimacy Direction Mentor	Rachel Finley
Community Engagement Mentor	Amanda Pintore
Community Engagement PA	Rachel Hutzenbiler
Safe Set Committee Chair	Kristin Hunt
Scenic Design Mentor	Dori Brown
Scene Shop Supervisor	Britney Simington
Technical Direction Faculty	Digger Feeney
Costume Design Faculty	Kelly Hawkinson
Costume Shop Supervisor	Cari Smith
Senior Costume Technician	Lois Myers
Draper	Gwendolyn Basala
Media Design Faculty	Sven Ortel
Sound Design Faculty	Dan Jaquette
Sound and Media Supervisor	Jade Barger
Lighting Design Faculty	Nate Wheatley
Lighting Supervisor	Dani Deutschmann
Paints and Props Supervisor	Adam Sanders
Communications Coordinator	Lacy Chaffee
Multimedia Communications Aide	Abigail Wilt

School of Music, Dance and Theatre Leadership

School Director	Heather Landes
Assistant Director of Theatre	Kristin Hunt
Assistant Director of Dance	Keith Thompson
Assoc. Director, Curriculum & Instruction	Karen Schupp
Assoc. Director, Faculty	Martin Schuring
Asst. Director, Undergrad. Music Studies	Jamal Duncan
Asst. Director, Graduate Music Studies	Deanna Swoboda
Artistic Director, Theatre	Karen Jean Martinson
Artistic Director, Dance	Mary Fitzgerald
Artistic Director, Music Theatre + Opera	Brian DeMaris

2024-25 ASU Theatre Season

Each year, the School of Music, Dance and Theatre in ASU's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts presents a range of performances and events. Your support is key to their success. We hope you will join us for the remainder of our season:

Eva Luna, by Caridad Svich

7:30 p.m. Sept. 27-28, Oct. 3-5

2 p.m. Sept. 29, Oct. 6

Galvin Playhouse Theatre

The Gradient, by Steph Del Rosso

7:30 p.m. Nov. 8-9, 15-16

2 p.m. Nov. 10, 17

Lyceum Theatre

Sometimes the Rain, Sometimes the Sea, by Julia Izumi

7:30 p.m. Feb. 14-15, 21-22

2 p.m. Feb. 16, 23

Galvin Playhouse Theatre

New Works Festival:

Featuring two original works by ASU MFA Dramatic Writing students

Soul Magnet Beneath the Limestone, by Dane Futrell

7:30 p.m. April 12, 17-28

2 p.m. April 13


over my dead body there'll be a pillow fight (the sleepover play), by Claire Dettloff

7:30 p.m. April 10-11, 19

2 p.m. April 20

Tickets can be purchased through the
[Herberger Institute Box Office](#)

Stay up-to-date on our events by following us on social media:

 @arizonastatetheatre

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<https://musicdancetheatre.asu.edu/degree-programs/theatre>



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