

## CYS Summer Shakes Teaching Artists

**Haia R'nana Bchiri** is a PhD student at UC San Diego (Department of Theatre and Dance) and holds a BA in Theater Arts and Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation from Brandeis University. She has been involved in theatre on and off stage for the past 15 years, including as a teaching artist with Black Box Studios in NJ, the Cherubs program at Northwestern, and more. Haia was awarded the John Edward Hill Memorial Prize and the Herbert and Sandra Fisher Award for Exceptional Achievement in the Creative Arts and is a Phi Beta Kappa junior year inductee. Her research interests include performance practices in the ancient Mediterranean, the interplay between performance and female power, and the role of theatre and historiography in the rise of patriarchal and imperialist structures. She is passionate about highlighting voices that have been largely kept out of the canon and making theatre more accessible. Recent projects include *Eurydice* (Director), *Fefu and Her Friends* (Emma/ASL consultant), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Puck), *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Theresa), an experimental production of *Peer Gynt* (Solveig/Aase) devoted to accessibility, a reading of *John Proctor is the Villain* (Shelby), and an original play she wrote to accompany her honors thesis on the impact of the portrayal of the mother-daughter relationship in media titled *The Emassey* (Playwright/Eve/Choreographer) at Brandeis University; *Everybody* (Assistant Director/Teaching Artist) with the Northwestern High School Institute; *Uncle Vanya* and *Trojan Women* (Dramaturg) with UCSD; and *Cymbeline* (Director) and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Don Pedro) with the CYS Alumni Players.

**Hannah Blau** is a graduate of University of Manchester with a BA Hon in Drama, where she produced original research on theatre education's role in the social and emotional development of high school aged young adults. At Manchester, she directed *Twilight:LA, 1992* by Anna Deveare Smith over Zoom. She has also served as designer for *Enron* by Lucy Prebble and choreographer for *Spring Awakening* by Duncan Sheik. Hannah began working with CYS as an intern in 2018 during CYS's first anthological production, *Uneasy Lies The Head*, and returned to intern for a second summer on *Twelfth Night*, during which she planned and taught theatre workshops as a lead instructor. After working on *Twelfth Night*, Hannah co-founded the CYS Alumni Players in Fall 2019, for which she co-directed their first play, *The Merchant of Venice*, and their first radio play, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Apart from her work with Chicago Youth Shakespeare, Hannah has worked with The Viola Project, Rivendell Theatre, The Artistic Home, and Citadel Theatre. Hannah has loved participating in CYSAP projects as an actor, director, and producer, and is committed to CYS's work, and to helping actors of all ages work together with purpose and joy.

**Ryan Borgdorff** is a longtime Chicago Youth Shakespeare alumnus and intern, having first joined the company as a student in summer 2015's production of *Julius Caesar*, in which he

played Brutus. Since then, he has worked on most CYS projects as an intern and artistic apprentice while he was obtaining his undergraduate degree from Northwestern University, where he graduated in 2020 after completing majors in Theatre, Political Science, and Secondary Education, along with a minor in U.S. History and a Professional Educator License in teaching History, Political Science and Theatre/Drama. He is currently a social studies teacher at Downers Grove South High School, where he teaches U.S. History and Contemporary American Issues. In Fall 2019, Ryan co-founded the CYS Alumni Players as a way to allow alumni of the CYSE program to keep in touch and spread the word about the successful careers alumni of the program tend to go on to. In 2020, Ryan carried out changes to the program's original plan in response to the coronavirus pandemic to accommodate more frequent productions and greater focus on alumni outreach, and currently serves as CYSAP's director of communications and liaison to CYS. Ryan looks forward to continuing his work with Chicago Youth Shakespeare, and is as dedicated as ever to the work of empowering young people to claim their ability to change the world for the better, just by doing the things that they are passionate about.

**Kevin Johnson** is a Chicago-based actor, teacher, playwright, and musician, who has been involved with Chicago Youth Shakespeare since the Summer of 2016, first as a multi-year student, then as an intern, and finally, as an artistic associate. He has served as the fight choreographer for CYS productions since 2018, and composed and performed original music for their 2019 production of *Twelfth Night*. Kevin is a teaching artist and director with EDGE of Orion's education program, where he started as a student in 2011, and became a teacher in 2017. He has worked extensively with the CYS Alumni Players as a staff member through 2020-21, and was previously seen throughout Chicago performing with The Unrehearsed Shakespeare Company, and playing with his folk-rock band, The Rosehill Collective (which he looks forward to resuming soon). His award-winning original play, *The Tragedy of Johnny and Lisa* (a Shakespearean adaptation of Tommy Weisau's *The Room*), has seen several readings and a production in recent years.

**Josh Zambrano** is a graduate of the Chicago Youth Shakespeare youth ensemble; first joining it during its inaugural production of *Macbeth* back in 2014. Since graduating from Colorado College with a BA in Biology, he was asked to join CYS's board of directors and has been doing so since August of 2018. A professional actor, Josh also works as an ensemble member of the Visión Latino Theatre Company, and a co-founder/producer for Counter Collective. Josh currently serves as CYS's Director of Community Engagement and teaches acting courses to students at The Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts), his alma mater. Josh has been with CYS since the beginning, seen its tremendous growth, and is dedicated to providing the same opportunities and community he experienced to the youth of the coming generations.