

Daphne Agosin is a theater lighting designer. Some of her works include *Circus Quixote* (Lookingglass, '25), *STOKELY: The Unfinished Revolution* (Court, '24), *Dead as a Dodo* (The Biograph '24; Baruch NYC '25), *Pussy Sludge* (Facility Theatre '25) *Albert Herring* (COT-Athenaeum '23) and the US premiere of *Tebas Land* (Chicago Dramatists '22). She holds a Stage Design MFA from Northwestern University. She is the recipient of a Non-Equity JEFF Award for *Tebas Land*. She co-founded the outdoor performance group *Grass Studio Theatre* with Hamid Dehghani, experimenting with retaining passerby audiences and public space interactions post-pandemic, and *Dawn Theatre Project* with Chih-Jou Cheng, a devising dance company.

Harper Crewse returns to the Chicago International Puppet Theatre Festival where they stage managed *Amazing Story Machine* last year. Harper stage manages and production manages for theatre, dance, circus, and music. You may have seen some of their theatre work at Chicago Children's Theatre (*Go Dog. Go!—Ve Perro ¡Ve! Milo Imagines The World, Frederick*), Lookingglass (*Ice Cream Circus, Alice*), Writers Theatre (*The Band's Visit, Monsieur Chopin, Once, Into The Woods*), and Teatro Vista (*La Havana Madrid*). Work in the music industry includes the Chicago House Music Festival, Grant Park Symphony Orchestra, Constellation, Chicago Opera Theater, and Lollpalooza. They are the PSM for the Madison Ballet in Wisconsin and a frequent collaborator at The Actors Gymnasium in Evanston. BFA, DePaul University. @crewseship

RHYNOCERON

Created by KT Shivak
Directed by Rowan Magee

Ensemble:

PUPPETEERS Chihjou Cheng, Jacky Kelsey, KT Shivak

MUSIC Ben Zucker

Creatives:

PUPPET DIRECTION Rowan Magee

PUPPET DESIGN & CREATION KT Shivak

COMPOSER Ben Zucker

LIGHTING DESIGN & CYC Daphne Agosin

COSTUMES Jacky Kelsey, Eileen Shivak

STAGE MANAGER Harper Crewse

SCENIC BUILDER Charlie Malave

STAGE HAND Alfonso Moreno

WRITTEN BY Rowan Magee & KT Shivak

Based on a true story

Developed with the support of:

High Concept Labs, DCASE Individual Artist Grant Program,
The Puffin Foundation, The Foundation of Contemporary Arts,
The Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival

Rhynoceron premiered at HERE Arts Center in 2025,
through The DREAM Music Puppetry Program

Special thanks:

Ricardo Adame, Andy Barnes, Cheryl Lynn Bruce, Jill Liebhaber,
Caitlin McLeod, Ronald McLaren, Grace Needlman, Fletcher Pierson, Zach Sun,
Eileen Shivak, Mike Shivak, Richard Termine, Blair Thomas

Music:

"Rhynoceron"
Written by KT Shivak

"The Last Leviathan"
Written by Andy Barnes

A note on the title:

This is a story about three men and their obsession with a creature they did not understand. It is based on a one-horned Indian rhinoceros from renaissance history. He traded hands from a sultan, to a king, to a pope and was immortalized in a woodcut by Albrecht Dürer, though the artist never saw him with his own eyes. Dürer's rhino is an amalgam. It is part scientific illustration inspired by his own collection of natural specimens, and part mythical beast inspired by the writings of Pliny the Elder. With the dawn of the printing press, his image spread across Europe like wildfire. It became a symbol of a beast both terrible and desirable, inspiring generations of artists long after the rhino himself drowned in shipwreck. As rhinos continue to face extinction at the hands of humans who only want to harvest their horns, the misunderstanding of this species is still evident. Our history with rhinos is marked by a series of mistakes; moral and mythological, political and economical, and in Dürer's case—grammatical. The name, written in his own signature typeface across the top of his preparatory drawing of the animal, was Rhinoceron.

BIOS:

KT Shivak is a designer, builder, and puppeteer working in Chicago and North Carolina. Her puppets have appeared in the New York Times, Puppetry International, the Chicago Tribune, and at the Chicago Cultural Center. As a freelance designer and as part of the Chicago Puppet Studio she has designed for numerous theater and film productions. Her original works “Rhinoceron” and “Derelict Devils” have been supported by DCASE grants, and artist residencies at High Concept Labs, the National Puppetry Conference, and the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival. She studied sculpture and performance at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where a love for wood carving and simple machines led her to start working for a puppet theater for the first time.

Ben Zucker engages in acts of creative juxtaposition and speculation as a composer, audiovisual artist, and multi-instrumentalist. Acclaimed as a “master of improvisation” (IMPOSE Magazine), and “more than a little bit remarkable” (Free Jazz Blog), they have contributed to experimental music scenes across North America and the UK with “stirring compositions...built on a lifetime of musical curiosity” (Chicago Reader), as well as albums, multimedia situations, and frequent performances on vibraphone, brass, voice, and electronics. This intentionally diverse practice has included highlights such as compositions featured at the Berlin Philharmonie, London Roundhouse, and

in PBS documentaries, residencies with OneBeat and the Stockholm EMS, and collaborations with groundbreaking musical figures ranging from Anthony Braxton to Sudan Archives. They currently live in Chicago, working as a freelance musician, lecturer, curator, and President of New Music Chicago.

Chih-Jou Cheng() is a Taiwanese movement artist, physical theatre creator, and puppeteer based in Chicago. Her performance credits include *RHYNOCERON* (by KT Shivak at Here Arts Center) *The Dream King* (Teatro Vista), *The King and I* (Drury Lane), and *A Chorus Line* as Connie (Metropolis), as well as work with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Roughhouse Theatre, and Chicago Puppet Studio. Her original works include *Hold Your Hand*, *Above the Water*, and *Lost & Found*. Her work has been supported by the Ragdale Foundation, DCASE, and the Chicago Cultural Center Dance Studio Residency. She is a recipient of the Chicago Arts & Health Pilot for Creative Workers, the Princess Grace Honoraria & Princess Grace Fellowship, and the 3 Arts Award in Dance. For more of Cheng's work: www.chihjou-cheng.com

Jacky Kelsey is a nonbinary soft sculptor, costume designer, and puppeteer based in Chicago. Their sculptural fiber work deals with themes of body, comfort, constraint, and queer identity. Motivated by puppetry's playful ability to span many art forms, they design for productions of dance and physical theatre as well as more traditional puppetry. Notable costume design contributions can be seen in *META | MOR | PHOS* (Hedwig Dances and Bauhaus Dessau), *Kayfabe* (Josh Rice Projects), *Little Fears* (Ashwaty Chennat as part of the Steppenwolf Lookout Project), and *Left Hand of Darkness* (Untitled Theatre Company No. 61 and Yara Arts Group). They performed and designed puppets for *Exquisite Corpse 2023 and 2024* (Roughhouse Theatre), *Ghosts | Horizon* (Auricle Project), and *Fidget* (Chicago Puppet Lab 2023).

Rowan Magee is a puppeteer, designer and director living in Brooklyn, NY. He has previously performed at the Chicago Puppet Festival in Nick Lehane's *Chimpanzee*, Robin Frohardt's *The Pigeoning*, and Josh Rice's *Kayfabe*. Rowan has performed on international tours with Phantom Limb Company, Dan Hurlin, Sachiyo Takahashi and in New York for Sarah Holdren, Chris Green, Lake Simons, Spencer Lott and James Ortiz. He has performed at the Metropolitan Opera, the Japan Society, the Guggenheim, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and on Broadway in *Angels in America* and *Life of Pi*. He is a board member for the Puppetry Guild of Greater New York, and the co-founder of the Object Movement Festival, a winter residency and spring showcase of experimental puppet artists in NYC.