



# Unicorn prepares next production, 'Informed Consent'

Defined by Blood and Sacred Stories

INFORMED CONSENT

By Deborah Zoe Laufer

Directed by Darren Sextro

A brilliant and ambitious genetic anthropologist, Jillian is driven to find a cure for early-onset Alzheimer's to save herself and possibly her young daughter from the disease. When the opportunity arises to research the genes of an isolated Native American tribe who could hold the key, Jillian pushes ethical boundaries in the name of scientific progress. Inspired by the real life conflict between the Havasupai Tribe and an Arizona university, *Informed Consent* takes a fresh look at the age old debate of science versus culture & faith, and whether our DNA should write our life stories.

"A thoughtful and engrossing play."

– Charles Isherwood, *The New York Times*

“It’s the kind of work live theater needs more of – urgent, challenging and of the moment, grappling with concepts that scare us and intrigue us.”

– Andrea Simakis, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*

*Informed Consent* is on Unicorn Theatre’s the Jerome Stage located at 3828 Main Street, Kansas City, MO 64111. The show runs **March 7<sup>th</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018**. Previews are March 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>. Opening Night is **March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018**. Featured Friday pre-show events are scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Talk back performances, where patrons are encouraged to stay after the show and discuss the play with the actors and director, are scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>.

Performances run Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday at 8:00 p.m., and Sunday at 3:00 p.m. For those who are unable to afford a full price ticket, they may “Pay What U Can” at performances on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays; because we believe art is for everyone.

Tickets are now on sale. Call **816-531-PLAY (7529) EXT. 10**, go online at [www.UnicornTheatre.org](http://www.UnicornTheatre.org) or buy in person during box office hours located at 3828 Main St., Kansas City, MO 64111. Special discounts are available for groups of 10+, seniors (65+) and students.

### **About the Director, Cast, and Creative Team:**

**Cynthia Levin** (PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR) is in her 39th season with the Unicorn. Over the years she has served as a director, actor, designer or producer for over 300 productions. At the Unicorn, she recently directed *Chesapeake*, *Priscilla Queen Of The Desert* (co-directed with Missy Koonce), *Eclipsed*, *Hand to God*, *Heathers: The Musical* (again, with Missy), *The Oldest Boy*, *Women Playing Hamlet* (world premiere), *Bad Jews*, *Grounded*, *Venus in Fur*, *My*

Name is Asher Lev, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *The Soul Collector* (world premiere), *Hungry* (world premiere), *Red, Two Jews Walk Into A War...*, *Distracted*, *Green Whales* (world premiere), *Miss Witherspoon*, *My First Time*, *The Clean House*, *Mauritius*, *9 Parts of Desire*, *The Great American Trailer Park Musical*, *Bat Boy: The Musical* and additionally the world premieres of *rightnextto me* (both at the Unicorn and Geva Theatre Center, Rochester, NY), *How His Bride Came to Abraham*, *Light:Damage*, *Mercy Killing*, *Innocent Thoughts* and *Jack and Jill*. At Coterie Theatre, she has directed *Number the Stars*, *And Then They Came for Me*, *Frankenstein*, *Gatherings in Graveyards (I and II)*, *Valley Song* and *To Kill A Mockingbird*. At the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., she directed readings of *Occupants*, *In The Belly Of The Whale*, *The Friendship Of Her Thighs*, *The Last Pair Of Earlies*, *Tigers Be Still* and *White Devil and Loving Mother* for the MFA Playwright's Workshop. Cynthia is a graduate of Park University which also awarded her an Honorary Doctorate in 2002. She is a founding board member of the National New Play Network, an organization dedicated to the development and production of new works. She has been honored with the Pinnacle Award for Excellence in the Arts and the Human Rights Campaign Equality Award. She shares her home with Zia (the beagle), Dodger (the cat) and the spirit of the big red dog, Sylvia.

**Darren Sextro** (DIRECTOR) has previously directed *The Way We Get By* and *Buyer & Cellar* for the Unicorn Theatre. Over the past decade, he has directed nearly 25 productions on regional stages, including *My Old Lady*, *Crimes of the Heart* and *Old Times* for Kansas City Actors Theatre; *Desire: An Evening of Plays Based on Six Stories* by Tennessee Williams for UMKC's Graduate Theatre Program; *The House of Yes* for The Fishtank; *Kindertransport* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* for the White Theatre; and *God of Carnage* and *ART* for The Wright Opera House (Ouray, CO). He is a member of the Artistic Board for

Kansas City Actors Theatre. Sincere thanks to Cynthia Levin and her committed team for sharing their artistic home with me.

**Manon Halliburton** (JILLIAN) is thrilled to return to the Unicorn to be apart of this great story. She has worked all over Kansas City and regional theater for over 20 years. Some theaters include KC Rep, Indiana Rep, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Lyceum Theater Arrow Rock, Chester Theater Massachusetts to name a few. She has also appeared on *Law and Order* and had a recurring role on the 4th season of HBOs *The Sopranos*. You may have seen her in KCATS recent production of "*And then there were none*". She is also an avid photographer and teaches acting at Benedictine College in Atchison KS. she lives in North Kansas City with her beloved fur babies and her main squeeze Jon Robertson. [www.manonhalliburtonphotography.com](http://www.manonhalliburtonphotography.com)

**L. Roi Hawkins** (GRAHAM) is thrilled to be on the Unicorn stage, after most recently playing Clarence the Angel et al, in *It's A Wonderful Life The Radio Play* at TheatreSquared, Fayetteville, Arkansas. New York credits include Thurgood Marshall in *The Color of Justice* and Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet*, National tours for TheatreWorksUSA. And after a year in Australia, playing Flip in *Stick Fly* and Sgt. Waters in *A Soldier's Play* at The Black Repertory Theatre of KC, and Hurry Up Hare in *The Hare and the Tortoise* at TYA, all add to this Awesome Homecoming Experience.

**Teisha M. Bankston** (DEAN HAGEN/JILLIAN'S MOTHER/SHEILA) is delighted to be back at The Unicorn following *Eclipsed*, *An Octoroon*, *And Her Hair Went With Her*, and *A House With No Walls*. Other credits include: *A Star Ain't Nothin' But A Hole in Heaven*, *Children of the Damned Corn*, *Freedom Sisters* (The Coterie); *Africa's Daughters* and *Toughest Kid* (TYA); *Jitney* (u/s) and *...A Young Lady From Rwanda*(u/s)

(KC Rep). Teisha is featured in the documentary film, *Barbara Johns: the Making of an Icon*, the host of SciTech Now (KCPT), and performed with Neil Young in his Kansas City Tour (Starlight), choreography by Russ Tamblyn. Teisha holds a BA in Theatre Performance from UMKC with a minor in Spanish. Many thanks to you all, enjoy!

**Justin Barron** (KEN/LAWYER/LITTLE GIRL/JOAN) is so grateful to be back at the Unicorn. Past Credits: *How to Use a Knife*, *The Ghosts of Lote Bravo* (Unicorn) Local: *Man in Love* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre), *Hamlet* (Heart of America Shakespeare Festival), *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (Coterie), *South Pacific*, *Guys and Dolls* (Musical Theatre Heritage) Regional: *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Youth Audience Outreach Tours* (Creede Repertory Theatre). Upcoming: *Sister Act* (New Theatre Restaurant). Justin would like to thank Deanna, Quinn, and his family for their love and support.

**Enjoli Gavin** (NATALIE/ARELLA) is ecstatic to be making her debut performance here at the Unicorn! Enjoli was recently seen in *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure* (World Premier) at the Coterie Theatre and *You Can't Take It With You* along side Jim O'Heir (NBC's Parks and Recreation) at New Theatre. Other local credits include *Hairspray* (New Theatre), *Bloody Mary* in *South Pacific* (Musical Theater Heritage), *The Wiz*, *Bud, Not Buddy*, *Shrek the Musical* (World Premier), *Once Upon a Mattress*, *James and the Giant Peach*, and *Seussical* (Coterie Theatre). She was also fortunate to work on her first short film, *Endowed*, directed by KC's own, Tosin Morohunfola, in a supporting role. When not on stage you can find Enjoli crafting away on home décor or sewing up a storm in her craft room. Enjoli is so proud to be a part of the amazing Kansas City community where creativity of all aspects is shown. You can see Enjoli up next in *Show Boat* as Queenie, as she returns to Musical Theatre Heritage in November. Enjoli also holds a

BFA in Theater from Stephens College.

**Tanya Brown** (STAGE MANAGER) has been working with the Unicorn for the past eleven seasons. Some of her all-time favorites have been *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *My Name Is Asher Lev*, *Women Playing Hamlet*, *Cock*, and *Priscilla Queen of the Desert: The Musical*.

**Kelli Harrod** (SCENIC DESIGNER) is in her second year in UMKC's scenic design program. She truly enjoyed designing at the Unicorn Theatre and being a part of *Informed Consent*. Previously, she has been the scenic designer for *Men on Boats* at the Unicorn Theatre, and assisted the designer for *Between the Lines* at the KCRep. With a life long passion for art and community, the theatre culture in Kansas City has found a very special place in Kelli's heart, and she knows that it will continue to fuel her creativity and designs.

**Mary Traylor** (COSTUME DESIGNER) first costume designed, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, over 20 years ago. For 23 years she has been the Resident Designer for The Heart of America Shakespeare Festival. Her designs for the opera have been produced for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Washington National Opera, Calgary Opera Minnesota Opera, El Paso Opera, Austin Lyric Opera among others!

**Shane Rowse** (LIGHTING DESIGNER) first designed at The Unicorn for *Patient A* in 1994. His 18 previous designs at The Unicorn include *Unidentified Human Remains...*, *SubUrbia*, *Angels in America I & II*, *The Waiting Room*, *Skylight*, *How I Learned to Drive*, and *The Beauty Queen of Lenane*. Recent projects include work for KC Actor's Theatre, The Coterie, and Owen Cox Dance Group. Shane is currently a member of the UMKC Department of Theatre faculty, and is pleased to be working with the Unicorn again, both as a designer and as a mentor to students on

UMKC/Unicorn co-productions.

**David Kiehl** (SOUND DESIGNER) is excited to be back at the Unicorn where he has worked as sound designer for over 50 productions. Previous Unicorn productions date back to 1997 and include *Sylvia*, *The Laramie Project*, *Proof* and *Closer*; more recently, they include *Chesapeake*, *Disgraced*, and *Priscilla Queen of the Desert: The Musical*. You may have heard his work around town at KCAT (*A Streetcar Named Desire*), the Living Room (recently: *Milking Christmas*, *Bastard*, and *The Ballad of Lefty and Crabbe*) and over 100 productions at the Coterie (recently: *Tuck Everlasting*, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, *We Shall Not Be Moved*, and *Garfield: The Musical with Cattitude*).

**Eric Palmquist** (PROPERTIES DESIGNER) is a graduate of the University of Kansas Theatre program and has served as a scenic/props artist and carpenter for 6 years with the Lawrence Arts Center and the New Theatre. Recent designs include *Project Dawn* (Unicorn Theatre), *Casa Valentina*, *Finian's Rainbow* (Spinning Tree), *Spamalot*, *Hairspray*, *Macbeth* (LAC), and the upcoming *Superior Donuts* (OCTA). As an actor and fight choreographer, he has performed with the Unicorn, the Coterie, the Living Room, Kansas Repertory Theatre, KC Fringe, the MET, and the Buffalo Room.

**Emily Swenson** (PROJECTION DESIGNER) is Production Manager and Resident Designer at Unicorn Theatre. Recently at Unicorn, Emily scenic designed *Project Dawn*, Lighting Designed *Chesapeake*, and Assistant Directed *Disgraced*. Last season, Emily Assistant Directed *The Way We Get By*, Projection Designed *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, Lighting Designed *Application Pending* and Scenic Designed *Eclipsed*. She premiered as a Playwright in the 2017 Kansas City Fringe

Festival with *Walls Suck* which was awarded best in venue. Many thanks to her Unicorn family!

**Ian R. Crawford** (DRAMATURG) is a director, dramaturg, and designer living in Kansas City. For the Unicorn, Ian has directed the Rolling World Premiere of *The Ghosts of Lote Bravo* (cover of American Theatre Magazine Feb '18), *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *Application Pending*, and will direct *HIR* later this season. Ian studied at the La Mama Umbria Director's symposium and is a graduate of the Fordham University Department of Theatre where he studied text analysis under Obie winning directors Larry Sacharow, Annie Dorsen, & Matthew Maguire. Ian wouldn't be the artist he is without the support of his husband Vince.

**Jon Fulton Adams** (ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER) is thrilled to return to the Unicorn Theatre, having costumed several of its previous productions. A graduate of the Fashion Program at the Savannah College of Art and Design, Jon designs for his own label, Queen's Rocket, in addition to designing costumes for local theaters. Jon lives in a vintage house in the Historic Northeast with his husband, Ron Megee, two dogs, and a "studio bunny" named Byron. More information about Jon's work can be found at [jonfultonadams.com](http://jonfultonadams.com).

**Tim Sella** (ASSISTANT PROJECTION DESIGNER) is a scenic designer who integrates projection and animation with live action on stage. A native of Washington, DC, he has a degree in Theater Design from the University of Kansas where he worked on several productions, including scenic design for *Lost: A Cowboy Song* and producing a performance of *Trouble in the Works*. The latter featured an actor performing alongside an animated character. His artwork has been exhibited by the Spencer Museum of Art in Lawrence, Kansas. He has also studied the Tibetan language and culture.



**Chloé Robbins** (PRODUCTION ASSISTANT) last worked on *Project Dawn* at the Unicorn. She previously worked on *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *Men on Boats*, *How to Use a Knife*, and *Clybourne Park*. She has also worked with The Coterie, KC Rep, Egads!, Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, and The Fishtank Performance Studio. She has a brown belt in tae kwon do (testing for black belt in April) and reads, writes, and draws in her “spare” time.

**Courtney Dozier** (SOUND BOARD OPERATOR) was born and raised in Miami, FL. She moved to Kansas City and graduated from Kansas City Art Institute with a B.F.A with a focus in sculpture and architecture. When she isn't at work she is in her studio making art, drinking tea, and watching Futurama. Any day could be the best day of your life; how exciting!

**About the Playwright:** Deborah Zoe Laufer's plays have been produced at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Cleveland Playhouse, Geva Theatre Center, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Portland Stage, and eighty other theaters around the country, in Germany, Russia and Canada. *End Days* was awarded The ATCA Steinberg citation and appeared at Ensemble Studio Theatre through an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Grant. *Informed Consent*, which was a Sloan commission will be produced in 2015 by Primary Stages and EST. Other plays include *Leveling Up*, *Sirens*, *Out of Sterno*, *The Last Schwartz*, *Meta*, *The Three Sisters of Weehawken*, *Fortune*, *The Gulf of Westchester*, *Miniatures*, and *Random Acts*. Deb is a recipient of the Helen Merrill Playwriting Award and the Lilly Award and grants and commissions from The Edgerton Foundation, the NEA and NNPN. Her plays have been developed at PlayPenn, The Eugene O'Neill NPC, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Ojai, The Missoula Colony, The Cherry Lane Alternative, The Dramatists Guild, New Georges, The Lark, Asolo Rep. and the Baltic Playwrights

Conference. She is a graduate of The Juilliard School and a member of the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop and The Dramatists Guild. [DEBORAHZOELAUFER.COM](http://DEBORAHZOELAUFER.COM)

## **About Unicorn Theatre**

Founded in 1974, Unicorn Theatre enhances the Kansas City community by developing and producing high-quality, thought-provoking plays that have never been seen in the region. We illuminate social issues by shining a light on diversity and inclusive stories which include race, religion and gender identity. Unicorn creates opportunities for the advancement of emerging and established actors, directors, playwrights, designers, technicians and administrative staff. Unicorn Theatre is under the artistic and executive leadership of Producing Artistic Director Cynthia Levin, who joined the company in 1979. From a newly expanded home in the Midtown neighborhood of Kansas City, Missouri, the Unicorn houses two stages—The Levin Stage (formerly The Main Stage) and The Jerome Stage (added in 2008). After a year-long capital campaign Unicorn Theatre was able to purchase the building outright in 2014. A fully professional not-for-profit theatre, the theatre operates under agreement with Actor's Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States. The Unicorn is a founding member of the National New Play Network, an alliance of not-for-profit professional theatres that champions the development, production and continued life of new plays for the American theatre; and is a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, Inc., the national service organization for the not-for-profit professional theatre. Financial assistance for this theatre has been provided by The National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; corporate and foundation gifts; and the generous individuals throughout the community we serve.

**[SEE THEM HERE FIRST.](#)**

Unicorn Theatre / 3828 Main Street / Kansas City, MO 64111