

March 3, 2025

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For information regarding the 2025 season: [www.ChanceTheater.com/2025-season](http://www.ChanceTheater.com/2025-season)

Chance Theater proudly presents the OTR New Play Reading of...  
***Pyro: How to Blow Up a Life***  
A Bold New Play by 2018 Chance Fox Fellow Khanisha Foster

**ANAHEIM, CA** – Chance Theater is thrilled to announce the staged reading of the brand new play *Pyro: How to Blow Up a Life*, written by 2018 Chance Fox Fellow **Khanisha Foster** and directed by **Sasha Nicolle Smith**. This event is part of Chance Theater's acclaimed "On the Radar" (OTR) New Play Reading Series, highlighting innovative and impactful works in progress. The reading will occur on **Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 7:30 PM** on the Cripe Stage at the Bette Aitken theater arts Center.

***Pyro: How to Blow Up a Life*** is a play about a woman who finds out on her 40th birthday that her husband of 20 years has been cheating on her, so she decides to become a sexual anthropologist and embark on an experiment to sleep with everyone to find out who she really is.

Helen, our protagonist, gave up her whole life to move to the desert and help her husband run his family's fading fireworks business only to find out she is actually the laughing stock of the town. Her husband has been cheating -- for years -- and everyone knows it. Now alone and confused about who she would have been without him, Helen takes to lighting up her own sky and makes a sexy romp of an experiment to discover who she left behind. In this funny, sexy, heartbreaking romp Helen becomes electric in a place where friction is the biggest danger and leads us to the biggest mystery of all -- who burned the whole factory to the ground?

When asked what she was most looking forward to, Foster shared her excitement about returning to Chance Theater, where she previously served as a Fox Fellow, directed *Yellowman*, and led a series of clown workshops with the theater's ensemble and audience. "This place is where I discovered I would make theatre without centering panic," she said. "And when they offered me this commission, I knew exactly what to write—a personal, visceral, and physical exploration of a newfound sexual freedom at forty." *Yellowman* earned seven OCTG Award nominations and received widespread critical acclaim, but Foster emphasizes that her new work takes bold artistic risks. "This play is ambitious and combines multiple forms of theater, and we need you in the audience to help us discover what it can be."

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## About the Playwright: Khanisha Foster

**Khanisha Foster** (she/her) is the Director of Equity, Belonging, and Engagement at Center Theatre Group. Her writing, along with her life experience as being the daughter of a Black Panther father and a mother whose family invented Bubble Wrap, landed her a writing gig developing a TV series with K&L Productions (Kay Cannon & Laverne McKinnon). She and Julie Hébert (*The Man in the High Castle*) are adapting a Philip K. Dick novel with Electric Shepherd Productions. Foster has written video games for *Probably Monsters*, the company founded by the creators of *Halo* and *Destiny*, and for *Episodes*. She's a recipient of the TCG Fox Foundation Grant for Actors of Extraordinary Potential. Her solo show *Joy Rebel*, directed by Obie Award winner Lou Bellamy, received critical acclaim and was chosen as a DC Metro Staff favorite. Her plays have been commissioned by Penumbra Theatre, 1st Stage, and 2nd Story. Foster was a featured storyteller on NPR's *The Dinner Party*. *American Theatre Magazine* named her in their Role Call series as one of the 6 Theatre Workers You Should Know. *Broadway World* named her Best Director for *The Bluest Eye*. [www.khanishafoster.com](http://www.khanishafoster.com)

"I make work where cultures collide. You'll know it's mine because I slide slapstick right next to heartbreak." - *Khanisha Foster*

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## About the Actors: Tristan Cunningham, Kathleen Littlefield, & Josh Schell

**Tristan Cunningham** (she/hers), playing Helen, started her performing days in the Circus! From the Circus she went to SUNY Purchase Theater Arts and Film Conservatory. She has worked on numerous plays in NY, Bay Area & LA. She is beyond excited to collaborate with Khanisha again! Most recently she was in *All Rise* on CBS, *The Fugitive* starring Kiefer Sutherland, *CSI Vegas*, *SWAT*, *911*, *NCIS*, *Family Reunion*, *The Conners*, *American Auto*, and is Toni in *Reasonable Doubt* on Hulu.

**Kathleen Littlefield** (she/hers), playing Pyro 1, was born in Poughkeepsie NY and raised in Atlanta GA. Playing lots of imaginative dress up adventures with her friends, sister and long suffering dog led her to summer theater camps, where she studied with PushPush Theater, the Alliance, GA Shakespeare and the NYU summer high school intensive. One visit to NYC and Kathleen knew she wanted to be there. She graduated from NYU Tisch having studied with Atlantic Theater Co and Stonestreet Studios. After graduation she acted in NY plays, including *All the Windows on Alcatraz*, *The Accidental Virgin*, *We Are Live*, *#ReganCross* and acted in short films, including *Teacher of the Year*, which premiered at the 2012 TriBeCa Film Festival.

**Josh Schell** (he/him), playing Pyro 2, is thrilled to be making his debut at Chance Theater. He was last seen on stage in a reading of *Blue Paris Blues* at CTG (also directed by Khanisha Foster). Other credits include productions of *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* (San Francisco Playhouse), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Shotgun Players), *Fifth of July* (Aurora Theatre Company), and *In the Red and Brown Water*

(Marin Theatre Company). Film/TV credits include *Other Side of the Box* (SXSW), *For the Coyotes* (NoBudget), *Poppet* (Hulu), *Feed* (Sony Pictures), and *Thirsty* (Gravitas Ventures). Josh attended USC and is an associated artist with Public Assembly in Los Angeles.

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## About Chance Theater's On-the-Radar New Works Program

On the Radar consists of a new script reading series, a playwright's residency, and a commissioning program, all geared towards supporting the creation of diverse new stories by emerging U.S. playwrights. The goal of OTR is to create a deep and long-term commitment to playwrights by offering them access to a community of artists and audiences, a supportive environment, and the freedom to explore their boundaries and interests.

This year's resident playwright is Benjamin Benne. Past Resident Playwrights include Dustin H. Chinn, Keiko Green, Exal Iraheta, B.J. Tindal, Krista Knight, Jessica Huang, Joanna Garner, Ted Malawer, Jenny Connell Davis, Lauren Yee, Nick Jones, Marshall Paillet, Zayd Dohrn, and Adam Szymkowicz.

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## Tickets and Additional Information

Join us for the staged reading of *Pyro: How to Blow Up a Life* on **Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 7:30 PM** on the Cripe Stage at the Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center, located in Anaheim, CA.

Tickets are available now at [ChanceTheater.com](https://chancetheater.com) or by calling the box office at **(888) 455-4212**, Monday through Friday, 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

For press inquiries, photos, or to schedule interviews, please contact **Shinshin Tsai**, Producing Associate, at **(949) 346-2374** or via email at [Shinshin@chancetheater.com](mailto:Shinshin@chancetheater.com).

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## ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

As one of Southern California's leading ensemble-driven theater companies, Chance Theater is proud to have received the National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing for "nurturing a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre." The Chance has earned 31 OCTG Theatre Awards, including Outstanding Production of a Musical for *Next to Normal* and *Fun Home*, Outstanding Production of a Play and Outstanding New Play for *Matinicus: The Story Of Abigail Burgess* (A Chance Theater Commission) and *Cry It Out*, as well as 6 Orange Curtain Review Awards, with Best Musical for *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. The theater's achievements also include eight Ovation Awards (four for Best Production of a

Musical - Intimate Theatre) and four LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. In 2014, the Anaheim City Council designated Chance Theater as “the Official Resident Theater Company of Anaheim,” and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as an “Outstanding Arts Organization.” Known for using bold, personal storytelling to foster dialogue and connection in Southern California, the Chance remains committed to building a more compassionate, connected, and creative community. As a member of Theatre Communications Group, Theatre Producers of Southern California, OC Theatre Guild, and ArtsOC, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

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## **CALENDAR LISTING**

**WHAT:** *Pyro: How to Blow Up a Life* by **Khanisha Foster**

Helen gave up her whole life to move to the desert and help her husband run his family’s fading fireworks business only to find out she is actually the laughing stock of the town. Her husband has been cheating — for years — and everyone knows it. Now alone and confused about who she would have been without him, Helen takes to lighting up her own sky and makes a sexy romp of an experiment to discover who she left behind. In this funny, sexy, heartbreaking romp, Helen becomes electric in a place where friction is the biggest danger and leads us to the biggest mystery of all — who burned the whole factory to the ground?

*NOTE: This production contains sexual content and adult language.*

**Performance:** April 2, 2025, 7:30 pm

**PRESS** is invited to the one-night showing and the reception afterward.

**RUNNING TIME:** 1 hour, 15 minutes with no intermission

**WHERE:** Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center on the Cripe Stage  
5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

**TICKETS:** \$24 (including tickets fees)

**MORE INFO:** [www.ChanceTheater.com](http://www.ChanceTheater.com) or call **(888) 455-4212**