

AUDITION PACKET

THE THEATRE DEPARTMENT IS
SEEKING SCSU STUDENTS OF ALL
MAJORS FOR ITS UPCOMING
MAINSTAGE PRODUCTION OF NAOMI
IIZUKA'S *ANON(YMOUS)*

**No experience necessary. We'd love
to have you join the team and earn
credits!**

ANON(YMOUS)

A young refugee's story of navigating the world, fighting monsters, and coming of age, all while grappling with loss, and searching for family.

By Naomi Iizuka

Based on Homer's Odyssey

Presented by The Southern Connecticut State University Department of Theatre and The Crescent Players

This packet contains information about the SCSU/Crescent Player's upcoming production of *Anon(ymous)*. There are many different ways to be involved in this production whether it is auditioning for an onstage role, assisting one of several design teams, or joining the production crew. If you are excited by the information here and would like to be involved, please email Gracy at Keirsteadg3@southernct.edu. Or, just show up at our auditions! We are very excited to share this story, and hope that you will join us on this incredible adventure. –Gracy Keirstead & Sarah Bowles, directors.

Important Dates!

Auditions: December 4th & 5th from 7-10pm, Kendall Drama Lab in the Lyman Center for the Performing Arts.

Call Backs: If necessary, call backs will be held on 12/6 at 7p.

Rehearsals: Rehearsals will begin Wednesday, January 17th

Performances: The play will be performed on the mainstage in Lyman 2/29 – 3/3 with strike on 3/3.

CONTACT INFO

Directors: Gracy Keirstead Keirsteadg3@southernct.edu , Sarah Bowles

bowless2@southernct.edu Production Manager: Mike Skinner skinnerm2@southernct.edu

Anon(ymous)

Synopsis

This play is non-linear...it is structured like a dream would be. UNstructured. Chaotic. Flashes of memories. But though ANON's experiences are not depicted necessarily in the order in which they occurred, the story of his journey to find his mother becomes clear as the patchwork of scenes is sewn together.

The play opens with ANON, a young refugee from a faraway land, struggling to remember his homeland, torn apart by war. A CHORUS of other refugees joins him speaking aloud their memories of home. NAJA, a Goddess and guiding spirit comes to his aid. He finally remembers the one he loves...NEMASANI, his mother. And so his search begins to be reunited with her.

We then see NEMASANI, a bereaved mother, hope gone, working in a sewing factory somewhere in America. Other women are also working there. The manager MR MACKUS leads around SENATOR LAIUS and his wife MRS LAIUS, boasting about giving these workers a chance at achieving the American Dream. NEMASANI sews her son's shroud- which she explains to MRS LAIUS is a cloth to wrap the dead in. She unravels it at night, and sews it again during the day, as she has agreed to marry the sleazy MR MACKUS (she detests) only when she finishes her sewing project. She intends to never finish it. She tells MRS LAIUS the story of being separated from her son at sea while they were trying to flee their country.

Next we see where ANON washed up—on a beach somewhere in America. A girl named CALISTA claims that since she rescued him, he must stay with her forever. She offers him candy, and suggests they watch TV together. She says his mother won't even remember who he is and she has probably moved on by now.

NAJA appears as a surfer girl, and ANON leaves a protesting CALISTA. But perhaps this reunion is a dream, as ANON and NAJA and separated again by the sea storm, and we come back to the sewing factory, NEMASANI and MRS LAIUS, who offers her the thought that perhaps her son washed up on the shore, and a nice American family adopted him. When the SENATOR and his wife leave, NEMASANI must once again put off MR MACKUS' advances. When she finally gets him to leave, and agree to her custom of waiting until the shroud is finished, a co-worker of hers peeks at her unraveling the fabric.

In the next chapter we see NASREEN, a young American woman of Indian heritage, taking out the garbage from her family's restaurant. She hears a noise, and finds ANON scrounging for food in the dumpster. NASREEN's father ALI comes out, and invites ANON in. Inside he meets RITU, her mother. NASREEN mentions that they escaped from a war too, and maybe his mother was somewhere here living in the city.

NAJA reappears, and the family fades into the distance as ANON's memories flash back to the sea storm. The next chapter of the story is ANON with a new companion, PASCAL, a West African refugee. They are running from the police, and escape into an underground tunnel. They travel on the top of a boxcar. They get captured by a psychotic one-eyed butcher, MR ZYCLO.

ANON meets other refugees after escaping MR ZYCLO: BELEN, IGNACIO, STRYGAL, and the CHORUS. They end up in a dingy bar. He sees a vision of NEMASANI, and remembers his quest to find her.

Finally, the story fades back to the Indian restaurant. ALI, NASREEN, RITU and ANON. They tell ANON about a sewing factory nearby that employs a lot of refugee women. Maybe his mother is there?

We return to the factory where MR MACKUS has discovered NEMASANI's device for keeping him at bay. ANON comes in with a box of take-out Indian food, and heroically rescues his mother from MR MACKUS' attack. It takes time for NEMASANI to believe who she is seeing. But he describes his memories, and sings the song she used to sing to him. He tells her the story of his life after their parting.

Here is a link to reading the whole play: <https://outragerous.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/anonymous.pdf>

ACTING ONSTAGE

Auditions for *Anon(ymous)* will be held December 4th & 5th, with call backs on the 6th at the Lyman Center Drama Lab starting at 7pm. Those interested should add their name to the sign-up sheet outside the Drama Lab in Lyman.

Choose one or more characters and scenes to perform at auditions. **You don't need to be memorized.** Note: The ensemble will depict war, storms, refugees, a sweatshop factory, animals, freight-hoppers and more through movement work.

Characters:

- **Anon (Male Presenting):** a refugee lost in the USA. He struggles to remember his past and wanders from place to place on a dreamlike journey to find a sense of home, hopeful of finding his mother. This is a large role and those requesting it should know there are a lot of lines and an increased time commitment.
- **Nemasani (Female Presenting):** Anon's young mother. She lost him at sea and now works for a sewing factory in the US, hoping to find her son one day.
- **Naja (Female Presenting):** a goddess and Anon's biggest ally. She is here to help Anon on his quest. She is modeled after the Goddess Athena.
- **Ali (Male Presenting/Indian):** Nasreen's father and Ritu's husband with whom he owns an Indian restaurant.
- **Ritu (Female Presenting/Indian):** Ritu is Nasreen's mother. She is married to Ali and is the co-owner of the restaurant.
- **Nasreen (Female Presenting):** Ritu and Ali's daughter. She becomes friends with Anon.
- **Calista (Female Presenting):** an American girl who temporarily traps Anon. She is blind to her privilege and proud of her rich background.
- **Mr. Yuri Mackus (Male Presenting):** the sleazy manager at the sewing factory. He wants to marry Nemasani and is a little aggressive about his interests.
- **Senator Laius (Male Presenting):** the Senator of the US city the factory is in, He's a figure of power and authority.
- **Helen Laius (Female Presenting):** the Senator's wife. She shows interest in Nemasani's story, but only to satisfy her morbid imagination.

- **Pascal (Black/Male Presenting):** Pascal is one of Anon's friends. He is an immigrant. He is adventurous and not very cautious. West African.
- **Mr. Zyclo (Male Presenting):** a One-eyed butcher that eats people (modeled after the Cyclops).
- **Belen (Female Presenting):** an immigrant and one of Anon's friends, lost their father Ignacio, who they now sees as a ghost.
- **Strygal (Male Presenting):** a human traffic criminal.
- **Serza (Female Presenting):** The bartender.
- **Ignacio (Male Presenting):** the ghost of Belen's father
- **Chorus of Refugees (Anyone)**
- **Nice American Mother (Female Presenting)**
- **Nice American Father (Male Presenting)**
- **Nice American Daughter (Female Presenting)**
- **Sewing Ladies (Female Presenting)**
- **Zyclo's pet bird (Anyone)**
- **Barflies (Anyone)**

AUDITION SIDES for auditioners to prepare.

Monologue: We would appreciate it if everyone prepared this monologue.

Where I come from is far away from here.

Where I come from there was a war that

lasted so long people forgot what they were fighting for.

Where I come from bombs rained down from the sky

night after night and boys wandered the streets with M16s.

Where I come from mines are planted in the roads like
deadly flowers,

And the air smells like death, rank and sticky sweet.

Where I come from you go to sleep at night and dream
about the faces of the people you love.

Helen/Nemasani/Yuri

HELEN LAIUS (Seeing Nemasani's shroud): Ooooooh I love this. What is it?

NEMASANI: A shroud.

HELEN LAIUS: Ooooooh a shroud. How interesting. What's a shroud?

NEMASANI: It's a sheet you wrap around the dead.

HELEN LAIUS: Oh. Oh I see. And do you sell a lot of those? Shrouds, I mean.

NEMASANI: It's not for sale.

HELEN LAIUS: It's lovely, the design is just lovely. I collect primitive art, you know, from all around the world. It's a passion of mine. I have baskets from Guatemala and little Buddhas from Cambodia. They speak to me. This speaks to me. I would love to buy this and hang it on my wall.

NEMASANI: It's not for sale.

MR. YURI MACKUS: Don't mind Penny.

NEMASANI: My name's not Penny.

MR. YURI MACKUS: Her real name is too hard to pronounce. We call her Penny. It's easier Isn't it. Penny?

SEWING LADY #1: Mr. Mackus wants to marry Penny. He proposes to her every day. "Will you marry me. Penny," he whispers in her ear. He gets so close she can smell his breath. Coffee and Tic-Tacs. She tells him she'll say yes when she finishes the shroud.

MR. YURI MACKUS: I love Penny. I want to give her a good home. She's had a very hard life. I'm just doing my part. I have a big heart. It's my undoing.

SEWING LADY #1: Mr. Mackus had a mail-order bride from Russia.

MR. YURI MACKUS: Not true—

SEWING LADY #1: And one from the Philippines—

MR. YURI MACKUS: Lies lies all lies—

SEWING LADY #1: And one from Thailand, Romania, and Honduras—

MR. YURI MACKUS: That's enough!

HELEN LAIUS: Who's it for? The shroud, I mean.

NEMASANI: My son.

HELEN LAIUS: Your son? Is he dead? That's so sad. That makes me very, very sad.

You must be devastated. You poor thing. How did he die?

NEMASANI: He drowned.

HELEN LAIUS: He drowned! That's awful. It's so tragic, it's just so tragic. I feel your pain, I really do. How did it happen? If you don't mind me asking. It helps sometimes to talk, you know, to share. That's what human beings do, they share, they share their joy, they share their pain, it's only human, we're only human, you can tell me, go on tell me—and maybe I can help.

END.

Anon/Naja

ANON: The last time I was in the ocean, I almost drowned.

NAJA: I know.

ANON: I was with my mom. We were in an old fishing boat. We were trying to escape and there was a storm—

NAJA: I know.

ANON: How could you know that?

NAJA: You don't remember me do you?

ANON: Yeah I do. We knew each other when we were kids.

NAJA: Oh yeah?

ANON: Yeah. You lived across the street.

NAJA: Is that right?

ANON: Yeah. You lived in a big old building. It's not there anymore.

The bombs fell and it was destroyed.

NAJA: I know. (pause) What was I like?

ANON: Kinda shy. Kinda cute. Your hair was different.

NAJA: Shorter? Longer?

ANON: Just different. I had a crush on you.

NAJA: Oh yeah?

ANON: Yeah.

NAJA: I think you're thinking of someone else.

ANON: Maybe. (Pause) OK. I think I remember now. You were this girl at the airport.

NAJA: Yeah?

ANON: You were waiting to get on a plane. You were going somewhere far away. You were all by yourself. You were reading a book.

NAJA: What book?

ANON: It was a big book. I remember it was like this really big, old book. It was really, really big. The title is on the tip of my tongue.

NAJA: You don't remember me.

ANON: No, not really. But I feel like I do. I feel like I know you. I feel like I've known you my whole life.

NAJA: That's because I'm a goddess and I come to you in your dreams.

ANON: Really?

NAJA: Uh huh. And you're a mere mortal so you don't remember. Your brain's too small.

ANON: Is that how it works?

NAJA: Pretty' much.

ANON: And what do you do? Like when you come to me in my dreams?

NAJA: I give you advice. I whisper it in your ear. Sometimes I save your life.

END.

Ali/Ritu/Nasreen/Anon

ALI: It's so hot. It's hot hot hot. It's so hot I want to cry.

RITU: Ali, you're going to give yourself a bellyache.

ALI: Nonsense. I can take it.

RITU: Ali, stop. You're going to keel over.

ALI (Gaspings): It's the pepper. It makes me sweat. It's very healthy.

RITU: You're turning red like a beet. Tell me this is healthy.

ALI (Puking up a tiny pepper): Very healthy.

NASREEN: It's so little.

ALI: Don't be fooled. It's the hottest pepper of them all.

RITU: Enough is enough. You eat that pepper; your tongue will fall out of your mulish old head.

NASREEN: What about our guest. Poppa? Maybe he wants to try.

ANON: No. that's OK.

NASREEN: I thought you said you like spicy.

ANON: I do.

NASREEN: Well here you go.

ALI: Nasreen—

NASREEN: But he said he liked spicy. That's what he said. Isn't that what you said?

ALI: Nasreen, my dove, there's spicy, and then there's spicy. I think our guest is wise enough to know the difference.

NASREEN: I think he's scared.

ANON: I'm not scared. How bad can it be?

NASREEN: Bad.

ALI: A burning inferno.

NASREEN: The death star of peppers.

(Anon pops the pepper into his mouth).

ALI: Well?

(Anon opens his mouth. He's swallowed the pepper.)

NASREEN: He did it.

ALI: Impressive, stranger. I'm impressed.

RITU: I used to have a goat that could eat anything. Tin cans. Hubcaps. Hot peppers.

NASREEN: You did? What happened to him?

RITU: I chopped him up and made goat stew.

END.

Pascal/Anon/Zyclo

MR. ZYCLO: A good sausage is one of life's great pleasures. *(To Pascal)* Do you like sausage? Here. For you. *(Pascal approaches reluctantly. He eats the sausage.)*

MR. ZYCLO: You like that? My secret recipe. Top secret. *(To Anon)* How about you? Sausage? *(Anon doesn't move)*. Don't you like sausage? No? No matter. More for me and your friend then. *(Mr. Zyclo eats sausage ravenously)*.

PASCAL: We're looking for work.

MR. ZYCLO: What kind of work?

PASCAL: Whatever you have.

MR. ZYCLO: Times are tight. As you see, it's just me now. I had to let everyone else go.

PASCAL: We're good workers. We can do anything, anything you need.

ANON: Pssst. Pascal. Pascal—

PASCAL: What?

MR, ZYCLO: I could use some help cleaning up. I make a mess, my line of work.

PASCAL: We could do that. How much?

MR. ZYCLO: Trust me. I'll do right by you. What's the matter with your friend? Cat got his tongue?

ANON: What kind of meat is that?

MR. ZYCLO: Brain. It's a delicacy, High in protein. Very rich. Fry it up with a little garlic. Very tasty.

PASCAL: Where do we start?

END.

Anon/Nemasani

NEMASANI: Where I come from, there are butterflies like nothing you've ever seen.

ANON: Blue.

NEMASANI: Yes, blue, so blue.

ANON: With huge wings.

NEMASANI: Huge.

ANON (*Spreading his arms*): Like this. Bigger even.

NEMASANI: Yes. (*Recognizing something in Anon*) Yes.

ANON: I remember. (*They look at each other*).

ANON: What if I told you—?

NEMASANI: No. Don't say it.

ANON: What if somehow—?

NEMASANI: Please don't.

ANON: But what if—

NEMASANI: I don't believe in "what if." "What if" will break your heart.

ANON: You have a son.

NEMASANI: My son died. He died a long time ago. He was just a little boy and he died.

ANON: What if he didn't?

NEMASANI: Stop!

ANON: What if he survived?

NEMASANI: I said stop!

ANON: Please listen to me.

NEMASANI: No. No. I can't. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

ANON: What do you remember? Because what I remember, what I remember is you. How you used to hold me. You held me and you sang to me. I remember the song you sang to me. Somewhere in the night, the sound of a woman singing an ancient song.

NEMASANI: How can I know you are who you say you are?

ANON: I'll tell you the story of my life and then you can decide.

It begins in the middle

On the border

On the crossing.

It begins in the place in between.

END.

Anon(ymous): Working Backstage

We are incredibly excited to direct this production and want to invite **ANYONE** from the SCSU community to be involved in **all** aspects of the play including working with the backstage production team. **NO EXPERIENCE is necessary!** Anyone with an interest in the production will be trained and properly prepared.

Those interested in participating can email one of the show's directors, Gracy Keirstead Keirsteadg3@southernct.edu or the Theatre Department Chairperson, Mike Skinner skinnerm2@southernct.edu.

Here are some of the ways you can be involved:

Stage Manager: The SM is present at all rehearsals & performances and works in tandem with the director to create schedules, keep a record of staging/blocking, make a record of sound and light cues, and communicate with sound and light board operators during performances. The stage manager will also coordinate with any assistant stage managers or deck crews working backstage.

Dramaturg: The Dramaturg is part detective, part historian, and in a play based on a classic, absolutely invaluable. The Dramaturg typically creates and distributes an information packet that contains historical context for the play, facts about the real people on whom the characters are based, information about other significant things happening in history during the time period, and production history of the play.

Lighting/Set/Sound/Costume Teams: There are several jobs available within each team depending on your skill set, availability, and interest.

Lights: We will need people to help hang the lights from the grid in the theatre as well as someone to operate the lightboard.

Set: The team will need people to build, transport, paint, and strike the set. We will likely need people to work backstage during the production to help change sets, move furniture, etc.

Sound: The sound team will operate the sound board and add music and sound effects to the production. The sound team may also arrange speakers and other equipment to best suit the show.

Costumes: The costume team is always looking for people who can help with sewing, pulling costumes from stock, shopping for materials, preparing dressing rooms, etc. This team will also likely be looking to have some folks to help actors with make-up and changing costumes quickly.

It is important to the Southern Theatre Department that all of our productions be diverse and inclusive. I hope you will consider joining the *Anon(ymous)* team and help our students and the surrounding community come together and engage with one another.

