



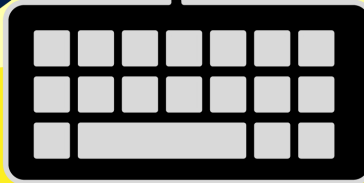
American Southwest Theatre Company  
at NMSU Theatre Arts  
presents



NMSU THEATRE & ASTC PRESENT

# TRACER

An Original Play by Hannah Benitez



11/11-11/18 @ 7PM

Cash: \$10 Credit Card: \$12

Visit [theatre.nmsu.edu](http://theatre.nmsu.edu) for more info.

**Written by Hannah Benitez**

**Directed by Nichole Hamilton**

**Costume Designer &**

**Coordinator - Carolina Ortiz**

**Lighting & Set Consultant -- Jim Billings**

**Production Coordinator - Jazmen Escarcega**

# CAST

Ariel Aguilar  
(Jen)

Nora Brown  
(Contact Tracer)

Imani Caldwell  
(Reed)

Carol Flinchbaugh  
(Donna)

Edward Goldstein  
(Dustin)

Dominique Gomez  
(Ryan)

Jet Montellano  
(Carolina)

Elija Reyes  
(Eddie)

Elia Vasquez  
(Madison)

Peyton Womble  
(Tori)

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

### HANNAH BENITEZ

Hannah Benitez is a New York based writer / performer represented by Elaine Devlin Literary Inc. She's currently working on two commissioned plays: *8-24 2020*, and *Untitled* for Miami New Drama premiering 21-22 season as well as a novel; *Trains To Hell Go Faster*. Her play *End of the Exodus* was recently shown at

New Mexico State University as part of the High Desert New Play Festival in spring 2019. Her all-female play *Dike*, was developed with The New York Theatre Workshop as Director Tatiana Pandiani's 2050 Fellowship Project and received an 8-week developmental production with Urbanite Theatre. Other recent: *Adaptive Radiation*, world premier Denizen Theatre New Paltz, NY. *Ashe* In Johannesburg, commission and première Burning Coal Theatre. Her other plays have been workshopped or read around the country at The Playwrights' Center, Artists' Repertory Theater, The Maltz Jupiter Theater, GableStage, Main Street Playhouse, freeFall Theatre and Red Theatre. She was a recipient of the Playwright Development Program, 2-year grant cycle. Member of Actors Equity. @hannahbenitez



## FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD AND MANAGING DIRECTOR

We so appreciate your patronage during these strange times. I want to extend a heart-felt personal thank you to our devoted audience members who have purchased season tickets, not quite knowing what form our shows will take, and for those purchasing individual tickets as well.



Please know your purchases directly fund our productions which allow our students to participate in the creation and execution of live theatre, which is fundamental to their growth as artists. I extend further thanks to those that donated to our program, and please know that your funds directly support our dedicated students. If you'd like to donate while also gaining a terrific item, check out our American Southwest Theatre Company License plates for sale on our website! Please be assured that we will continue to offer you theatrical experiences, whether filmed or 'live', according to the most recent health policies – we want everyone to remain safe.

Coming up our virtual *Holiday Cabaret*, sure to bring cheer to us all, and In January, 2022 a virtual viewing of "The Land Where We Stand" will become available. This production was performed and filmed on campus earlier this month.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me at any time:  
[wkilroy@nmsu.edu](mailto:wkilroy@nmsu.edu)

## DIRECTORS NOTES/about play-

After the High Desert New Play Development Workshop staged readings earlier this year, Hannah Benitez' play, *End of the Exodus*, was scheduled to see a full production in the Spring of 2021. When Covid-19 became an obstacle, I asked Hannah how could we continue a collaboration within these new restrictions. I wanted to find a way to embrace Digital Theatre and explore it as a medium rather than denying its current existence, all while keeping the audience a part of the piece. In addition, we asked students what kind of material they felt they wanted to embrace as actors that would also be important for audiences to hear. Many responded with the idea of embracing our current climate – talking about the issues we don't want always want to talk about. The result is *Tracer*, a present moment whodunnit that incorporates many topical themes, in a digital world, while asking the audience to participate in solving the mystery. After exploring all of these questions, in many ways, this play in turn asks us – the creators and the audience – how can we solve the problems of our own biases while navigating through this strange and peculiar new world?

-- Nichole Hamilton

## STUDENT PRODUCTION BIOS

**Carolina Ortiz (Costume Designer/Coordinator)** Carolina is a junior at NMSU pursuing a Fine Arts degree with an emphasis in Costume Construction. This is her first Costume Design project with the department and is excited to share the final product. As a work study student, she also has other costuming credits such as *A Christmas Carol* and *My Fair Lady* Carolina lives in Las Cruces as she finishes her school, expecting to graduate Spring of 2022.

**Jazmen Escarcega (Production Coordinator)** Jazmen staged managed last year's productions of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and *The Wolves*, and she is thrilled to be working on this new production. She has been the assistant stage manager for *My Fair Lady*, as well as being on crew in past productions, such as *Silent Sky* and *The River Bride*. She is excited to continue to grow in this facility and in the profession that she loves.

# ACTOR BIOS

## **Ariel Aguilar (Jen)**

Ariel appeared as Stephanie in Hannah Benitez' play *End of the Exodus*, as part of the High Desert Play Development staged reading in the spring of 2020. She was most recently seen in various roles in the devised piece *The Land Where We Stand* at NMSU. She is excited to pursue a career in film and television after graduation and proudly brings her Native American and Hispanic heritage into her work.

## **Nora Brown (Contact Tracer)**

Nora Brown, a two-time NMSU alumni, is currently enrolled as a non-degree seeking student. This is her first time working on an ASTC production, but has previously appeared on several Las Cruces stages. Some notable roles include Elizabeth in *The Crucible*, Veronica in *God of Carnage*, Shelby in *Steel Magnolias*, and Annie in *The Real Thing*.

## **Imani Caldwell (Reed)**

Imani is a senior Theatre Arts major. Her previous roles include #13 in *The Wolves*, Titov/Elena in *Yuri*, Mother in *The Dance of Life and Death*, Begger in *The Three Penny Opera* and Ensemble in *The Temple Project*. She would like to thank her mother and nana for sharing their love theatre, and the cast and crew for making this experience unforgettable.

## **Carol Flinchbaugh (Donna)**

Carol is an Associate Professor of Management at NMSU. She has no previous experience in the theater. Carol was raised in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and is excited about her opportunity to perform for the NMSU Theatre department.

## **Edward Goldstein (Dustin)**

Edward is a Sophomore here at NMSU. He is double majoring in Theater and Biology. He has various play experiences from high school and takes pride in his work on *The Vagina Monologues*. He is really excited for his next three years here at NMSU.

## **Dominique Gomez (Ryan)**

Dominique is in her third year as a Theatre Arts/Vocal Performance major at NMSU. Her credits include Narrator in *The Puffs*, Understudy for the cast of *The Wolves*, Nurse in *Antigone*, and Ensemble in the musical *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

## **Jet Montellano (Carolina)**

Jet is a senior at NMSU majoring in Theatre Arts and Film. Her previous credits include #2 in *The Wolves*, M.J. McMann in *Inspecting Carol*, Smee in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Nausicaa/Ensemble in *The Odyssey*, Little Red in *Into the Woods*, Death in *The Game*, Dawn in *All in the Timing*, Scarecrow in *The Wiz*, and Millie in *It's a Wonderful Life*. She would like to thank her friends and family for their support.

# ACTOR BIOS

## **Elia Reyes (Eddie)**

Elijah Reyes is a freshman here at NMSU. He is double majoring in Theatre and Journalism. He has had many play experiences throughout his 4 years in high school here in the hometown school, Las Cruces High. His passion is to act and takes pride in whatever production he is cast in. He is extremely blessed for the opportunity and is excited to see where his next three years in college have in store for him.

## **Elia Vasquez (Madison)**

Elia is a freshman at NMSU, majoring in Theatre Arts with a minor in Government. This is her first production with ASTC, having previously worked with the Los Alamos High School thespian troupe.

## **Peyton Womble (Tori)**

Peyton is a sophomore Theatre Arts Major at NMSU. Some of her credits include Cathy in *The Last Five Years*, Rosie in *Mamma Mia*, Margot in *Legally Blonde - The Musical*, and Lumiere in *Beauty and The Beast*. Peyton is Historian for Blank Conversions Theatre Company, Vice President of Service for the Band Fraternity Kappa Kappa Psi, and Treasurer for Ember Theatre Company.

# PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director/Props	David L. Hereford
Production Coordinator	Mike Wise
Theater Manager	Jim Wilkinson
Scene Shop Foreman	James Jaworski
Costume Shop Manager	Tamara M. Carruthers
Master Electrician	Jim Wilkinson
Playwright	Hannah Benitez
Director	Nichole Hamilton
Cinematographer	Luis Guitierrez
Frank Sage	Web Consultant
Light & Set Consultant	Jim Billings
Production Coordinator	Jasmen Escarcega
Costume Designer/ Coordinator	Carolina Ortiz
Crew	John Ellis, Erik Munoz, Kay-lee Rogers, Caitlin Skibyak

# RESIDENT COMPANY BIOGRAPHIES

**Claudia Waldrip Billings** is a Professor in the Dept. of Theatre Arts. She has taught The World of Theatre and Beginning Acting to literally thousands of students at NMSU over the last 20 years. She is also an actor and a director. Her last acting part was Silda in *Other Desert Cities* and she directed *Silent Sky* last spring. She is also on the Board of Directors for The Children's Reading Alliance and is a huge advocate of reading with children!

**Jim Billings** received an M.F.A. in Scenic Design from the California Institute of the Arts. He has worked as a freelance designer around the country, and came to NMSU in 1985. Design credits include design for dance, theatre, opera, industrials and museums. Jim was awarded the Ralph B. Crouch Award for "Outstanding contributions to the life of the NMSU community."

**Deborah Brunson** received a B.F.A. in Costume Design from The University of Alabama in 1977, and an M.F.A. in Costume Design from the University of Texas at Austin in 1980. She has been Resident Costume Designer at NMSU since 1988. She designs and fabricates for a variety of artistic areas.

**Tamara M. Carruthers** received a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts from New Mexico State University. She managed NMSU's Costume Shop for three semesters directly after graduation. She then joined Wayside Theatre (Middletown, VA) and spent ten years as their Resident Costume Designer and Shop Manager. She has spent the last five summers in the Costume Shop at Creede Repertory Theater (Creede, CO) designing and serving as their Draper, Draper/First Hand, Assistant Costume Shop Manager and, most recently, Costume Shop Manager.

**Nichole Hamilton** earned a BA in Theatre from the University of Montevallo near Birmingham, Alabama and an MFA in Acting from the University of Florida in Gainesville, FL. Post graduate school, she taught adjunct at the University of Florida and for the online Theatre Aesthetics course for incarcerated students through Ashland University in Ohio. At New Mexico State University, Nichole teaches courses in Acting and Vocal Production. Nichole is a proud member of Actor's Equity, a company member at the Hippodrome Theatre in Gainesville Florida, and a certified teacher through the National Michael Chekhov Association. She has worked professionally as an actor, director and sometimes stage manager with companies in NYC, MA, FL, GA, TN, NC and CA. Since 2016, Nichole has performed her devised solo performance entitled Dame daDA & the Meta Show in Nevada, Minnesota, Florida, and New York. For more info: [www.nichole-hamilton.com](http://www.nichole-hamilton.com).

**Lisa Hermanson** is originally from Seattle, Washington. She holds her MFA in Theatre Pedagogy/Performance from Virginia Commonwealth University, where she was also adjunct faculty in Theatre and Speech, and her BA in Theatre and Music from Seattle Pacific University. Lisa is a music director, director, pianist, vocalist, and composer/playwright. She has worked in theatres in both the Seattle and Richmond areas, including Virginia Repertory Theatre (Richmond, VA) and the 5th Avenue Theatre (Seattle, WA), as well as multiple years in theatre education in Seattle. Favorite music credits include *Into The Woods* (TheatreVCU), *Spitfire Grill* (Northwest University), *The Little Mermaid* (Broadway Bound Children's Theatre), several years with Covenant Kids (Shoreline Covenant Church), and work on the revival of *Paint Your Wagon* (5th Avenue Theatre). Favorite directing credits include *Little Shop of Horrors* (TheatreVCU), *12 Angry Jurors* (Meadowdale High School), *The Good Doctor* (Seattle Pacific University), and *Robin Hood* (Shoreline Christian School). In addition to working with published and classic pieces, Lisa also focuses on new work. Her current project is a musical on the question of immigration, the first draft of which was developed and workshoped in Richmond, VA as a culmination of her graduate work.

# RESIDENT COMPANY BIOGRAPHIES

**Wil Kilroy** joined NMSU after many years in Maine where he was Chair and Professor of Theatre at the University of Southern Maine. At USM he directed dozens of plays and musicals including *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Laramie Project* which were invited to Kennedy Center regional festivals. Wil has worked nationally as an actor, with roles ranging from Steve in *Becky's New Car* to Laertes in *Hamlet*, and on TV productions such as *All My Children* and *Babylon Five*, and is an annual alumni guest artist with The State Ballet of Rhode Island. As the co-founder of the National Michael Chekhov Association, Wil has taught nationally and internationally. Wil was awarded the Kennedy Center bronze medallion for achievement in Theatre Education in 2014.

**David L. Hereford** received his B.F.A. in Theatre from UNM in 1978. He spent five summers at the Santa Fe Opera and a summer in the props shop at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon, as well as being the Props Master at the Manitoba Theatre Centre in Winnipeg, and a scenic carpenter at the Denver Center Theatre Company.

**James Jaworski** comes from Buffalo, NY. Jim is a regionally-recognized artist and bowl maker and spends his "free time" making bowls and finding lumber.

**Larissa Lury** is a director, actor, acrobat, and teacher. At NMSU, in addition to teaching and directing, she heads the American Southwest Children's Theatre Company. She directs and workshops plays in NYC and regionally, focusing primarily on the development of new plays, two of which were nominated for (and one of which won) Best Play from the San Diego Critics Circle following the productions she directed. She was recently selected to be one of the inaugural recipients of the National Directors Fellowship. She was a Resident Director at Ensemble Studio Theatre from 2008-09, is a member of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, and an Affiliated Artist and a 2016-17 Audrey Resident with New Georges. MFA, UC San Diego. BS, Northwestern University.

**William Storm** teaches theatre history, dramatic literature, and theory. He is the author of *After Dionysus: A Theory of the Tragic, Irony and the Modern Theatre*, and *Dramaturgy and Dramatic Character*, along with plays and essays in literary criticism and drama theory. He is co-director and dramaturg for the High Desert Play Development Workshop and was literary manager of the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles.

**Jim Wilkinson** is a graduate of Oñate high school in Las Cruces New Mexico where he studied technical theater. He continued his education at Full Sail University in Orlando Florida where he received an associates of science in show production and touring. He returned to New Mexico to become the head of the audio department at the Spencer Theater in Alto, NM. He travelled the U.S. and Canada on tours of Broadway shows including; *Oklahoma*, *Big River*, *My Fair Lady* and *Movin' Out*. In 2007 he moved to New York City and worked as a sound operator and mixer for many Broadway productions including *Hair*, *Spamalot*, *Porgy And Bess*, *A Christmas Story*, *Spiderman: Turn Off the Dark*, and *If/Then*. Jim is thrilled to be back living in the southwest and to be part of the NMSU Theatre Department. He would like to thank his wife, Jackie for her continued support.

**Michael Wise** received his B.A. in Theatre from UC Santa Barbara, and has been working professionally in theatre ever since. He has worked for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Bathhouse Theatre Company, A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle, Intiman Theatre, The Empty Space Theatre, The Seattle Group Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Mt. Hood Repertory Theater, The Player's Guild in Canton, Ohio, New City Theater, Fargo Interarts Ballet, Southern California Conservatory Theater, and Seattle Childrens Theatre. He has directed plays locally at ASTC at NMSU, lo-fi productions and the Las Cruces Community Theater.



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## From the ASTC Board President

The American Southwest Theatre Company (ASTC) and the New Mexico State University Theatre Department welcomes you to our "Covid 19" friendly season. Thank you for your continued support during these trying times. I hope you will enjoy the plays and performances the creative and talented faculty, staff and students have so brilliantly devised!



Please visit our web site to stay up to date on any performance venue changes as group restrictions may change. We hope to have you back into the theatre soon enjoying not only the performances but the comradery of our audience members. On our web site <https://theatre.nmsu.edu> get to know the ASTC board and the faculty, staff, and students of the Theatre Department. Visit the Giving Guidelines section to see how you can support students, programs and become a season subscriber. Order your ASTC license plate through the web site or by calling Yoli Bacon at 575-646-5122.

Follow ASTC and NMSU Theatre on twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

Again, thank you for being a part of the Las Cruces Theatre Community. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail [dwelsh@nmsu.edu](mailto:dwelsh@nmsu.edu) with any comments or questions.

Denise Welsh, President  
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**SPECIAL THANKS to Larissa Lury,  
and Creative Media Institute, NMSU**

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