

RIT and NTID Performing Arts present

Angels in America

Part One: Millennium Approaches



Written by Tony Kushner

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama
and the Tony Award for Best Play

November 19-21, 2021

Robert F. Panara Theatre, NTID



The Kennedy Center

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,500 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

RIT & NTID Performing Arts
proudly present

Angels in America

Part One: Millennium Approaches

by Tony Kushner

ANGELS IN AMERICA, PART ONE: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES

is produced by special arrangement with

Broadway Play Publishing Inc., NYC

www.broadwayplaypub.com

Director

Andy Head

Assistant Director &

Director of Artistic Sign Language

Hayden Orr

Stage Manager

Kathryn Richer

Scenic Designer

Erin Auble

Projections & Sound Designer

Dan Roach

Technical Director

Eric JJ Moslow

Costume Designer

Amanda Doherty

Lighting Designer

Sacha Glasser

Properties Designer

Izzy Edwards

RIT recognizes that we gather on the traditional territory of the Onöndowa'ga:' or "the people of the Great Hill," in English known as Seneca people, "the keeper of the western door." We honor the land on which RIT was built and recognize the unique relationship that the Indigenous stewards have with this land.

Director's Note

As a college freshman, I was assigned to read *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* for a theatre history class. After glancing at the total number of pages I decided to pass on it (as college students are occasionally known to do). A year later my school announced auditions for that same play. Like any young acting student should, I rolled up my sleeves and sat down to read it first. And there, in my university's poorly lit library, during the quiet hours of the middle of the night, I eagerly devoured page after page until there were no more and I sat, mouth gapping open, staring at the final words. No wonder our professor had assigned this play. I thought it was astounding.

In a collection of his published essays, Tony Kushner once wrote, "A good play, like good lasagna, should be overstuffed. It has a pomposity, and an overreach." Almost to prove his point, *Millennium Approaches* is only the *first half* of Kushner's monumental two-part play. Combined with its second half, *Perestroika*, both parts together span eight acts and nearly eight hours of stage time. The playwright is undaunted by ambitious topics, such as politics, religion, and sexuality (after all, the subtitle is: *A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*), and like a chef with his ingredients, he masterfully mixes them all together.

As an audience, we're dropped into this story in the autumn of 1985, a turbulent and devastating time in the lives of these characters and in America as a country. A novel virus is spreading. Deaths are mounting. Lives ripping apart. Misinformation running rampant. Medical authorities perplexed. The government inept and motionless. A conservative demagogue running the White House. As a period piece, *Angels in America* pinpoints a very specific era in our history, though the parallels are eerily familiar. When *Angels* first opened, one reason it gained such widespread acclaim was its stark portrayal of the HIV/AIDS crisis. It took something society simultaneously could identify with and did not want to face, and put it on stages across the country. It changed the course of American theatre, winning Tony Awards and a Pulitzer Prize along the way.

I would be remiss, however, to ignore the fact that *Angels* focuses on a specific segment of the gay community, namely white gay men. Not unlike other plays of its time, this play mostly sidelines the perspectives of people of color and women. So, for all of its feats, it also has its faults. Since AIDS was first reported in the US in 1981 it has killed over 700,000 Americans and still results in 35,000 new infections annually—with black and brown people being disproportionately affected. It's no longer 1985, but AIDS is still as real, deadly, and stigmatized as it was back then, especially for those who are not white.

Due to COVID-19, this is the first fully produced play to appear in this space since NTID Performing Arts presented *People of the Third Eye* in the fall semester of 2019. It has been an undertaking in so many ways, with challenges foreseen and unexpected. My deepest thanks go to the cast, the stage managers, the production team, and my incredible assistant director, Hayden, for the dedication and heart they all put into this show. No production can be created alone and this one took many hands.

Our modern pandemic is not yet over, but you are here. We welcome you back, for without you, this theatrical exchange could not exist. Despite what Tony Kushner says, when you boil it down, theatre takes three ingredients: the storytellers, the story, and those receiving it. We're glad you're here. Thank you for spending your time with us. Enjoy the show.

Setting

Time: 1985

Place: New York City

This performance will include two 10-minute intermissions.

Cast

Rabbi Chemelwitz	Patrick Graybill
Roy Cohn	Wil Clancy
Joe Pitt	Leon Marcus
Harper Pitt	Serena Rush^
Mr. Lies & Belize	Raihiem Marshall
Louis Ironson	Ben Pennica
Prior Walter	Samuel Langshteyn
Hannah Pitt	Priscilla Godfrey
Angel	Victoria Covell
Host of Guardian Angels	Ricardo Aguilera
.....	Sam Bowerman
.....	Aslan Cronister
.....	Ryker D'Angelo
.....	Eric Fotang^
.....	Benson Haley*^
.....	Charlotte Hamilton-Caillet*
.....	Abby Hill
.....	Brianna Lynch*^
.....	Declan McHale^
.....	Corrina Mullins
.....	Ronald Soriano

* Indicates that student is currently enrolled in Theatre Ensemble

** Indicates that student is currently enrolled in NTID Practicum

^ Indicates that student is currently a Performing Arts Scholar

Crew and Administration

Director	Andy Head
Assistant Director & Director of Artistic Sign Language	Hayden Orr
Stage Manager	Kathryn Richer
Assistant Stage Managers	Jaylen Fier* and Dalton Fitzsimmons^
Scenic Designer	Erin Auble
Assistant Scenic Designer	Jessa Kaups
Projections and Sound Designer	Dan Roach
Technical Director	Eric JJ Moslow
Costume Designer	Amanda Doherty
Lighting Designer	Sacha Glasser
Properties Designer	Izzy Edwards
Assistant Properties Designers	Curran Dillis^ and Saige Kanik^
Stagecraft Manager	Joe Hamilton
Master Carpenter	Matt Parsley
Master Electrician	Benji Dow
Vocal Coach	Alexa Scott-Flaherty
CLA Finance and Marketing	Ben Willmott
NTID Finance	Denise Morgan
NTID Marketing	Nicole Cruz and Joe Fox
House Manager	Joe Fox
ASL Translation Team	Ronnie Bradley, Patrick Graybill Hayden Orr, Jackie Roth

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Crew and Administration (cont'd)

Rehearsal Interpreters	Kelsey Beers, Cynthia Collward, Nancy Kikendall, Cath. Richardson, Eric Severson
Videography	Morpheyes Studio: Liam Coleman, Abraham Mathew, Andrew J. Quinonez, Darian Slattery, Moises Tobias
Costume Shop Workers	Yarina Dai*, Jordan Morin*, Sarah Poirier*, Autumn Simoneau, Abigail Smith*, Bennie Williams*^
Carpenters	Courtney Boyer, Mac Leong*^, Deroaj Phatandain, Zach Ribak, Kathryn Richer, Chandler Riehm, Mark Shepard, Evan Vrencur*
Electricians	Benji Dow, Zach Ribak, Chandler Riehm
Painters	Liliana Cantillo, Alexa Dunn**, Maia Kromer^, Camren Missimer, Kaiya Moultrie^, Matt Parsley
Costume and Makeup Crew	Abigail Smith*, Bennie Williams*^
Light Board Operator	Evan Vrencur*
Sound Board Operator	Mac Leong*^
Projections Operator	Kay Onobiyi
Captions Creator and Operator	Mac Leong*^
Program Designer	Ben Willmott
Graphic Designer	Rebecca Klahold

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Bios



Abby Hill (Sister Ella Chapter, Ethel Rosenberg, Guardian Angel for Henry, Emily & Homeless Woman) is a 2nd-year American Sign Language Interpreting major. She is originally from Dallas, TX where she's involved with The Luckenbooth Theatre as their Director of ASL Services and part of their repertory company. Some of her favorite roles include Mae Peterson in *Bye Bye Birdie*, Katrina Van Tassel in *Sleepy Hollow*, and Gwendolyn Fairfax in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. She is so excited for her first show at RIT and would like to thank her friends and family for always supporting her!



Aslan Cronister (Prior 2, Guardian Angel for Joe, Voice of the Angel) is a 4th-year Cyber Security major from Massachusetts. He is very excited to be in such an incredible play with an even more incredible cast and crew! Ash has been doing theatre since he was 11 years old; starring in his middle school's production of *Oliver Twist* as a pickpocket where he discovered his passion for theatre and acting as a whole. Last year he received an acting award from the Trinity Film Festival for the film [Redacted] by Rylie Field. Some of his favorite roles include The Wild One in *The Cagebirds*, Kitty in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, Ariel in *The Pillowman*, and Horst in *Bent*. He would like to thank his closest friends, Mac, George, and Wil, his roommates Rylie and Sam, and his parents for their never ending support.



Ben Pennica (Louis Ironson) is an RIT alumnus who is thrilled to be joining the amazing cast and crew onstage for the RIT & NTID Performing Arts production of *Angels in America, Millennium Approaches*. Originally from Long Island, New York, he has been involved in theater since high school. Some of his favorite roles include Mr. Meeker in *Inherit the Wind* and Admiral Von Schreiber in *The Sound of Music*. Ben would like to thank his family and friends for their constant support and the queer community for the vibrancy it brings to the world.

Bios



Benson Haley (Guardian Angel for Louis) is a 1st-year Computer Science major, and he is delighted to have the opportunity to work with the incredible cast and crew instead of staring at a computer all day. In years prior he was held captive in East Greenbush, NY, where he could be seen taking great pleasure playing Dickon in *The Secret Garden* and Leaf Coneybear in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Benson blames his family, friends, and the Columbia Players for giving him the support that allowed him to end up on this stage.



Brianna Lynch (Emily, Homeless Woman, Guardian Angel for Ella & Martin) is a 2nd-year American Sign Language Interpreting major. She is very excited to be working with such amazing people to put on *Angels in America*. In high school, Brianna played Jovie in *Elf the Musical*, as well as Hope Harcourt in *Anything Goes*. You may have also seen her as Farrah the Faerie and Evil Gabbi in the RIT & NTID Performing Arts production of *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms*. Brianna would like to thank her wonderful family and friends for always supporting her and cheering her on!



Charlotte Hamilton-Caillet (Ethel Rosenberg, Guardian Angel for Hannah & Man, Voice of the Angel) is a 4th-year American Sign Language Interpreting major. She is originally from NYC, and is so excited to be a part of this production! You may have seen her as #7 in *The Wolves*, Iris in *The Tempest* with RIT Players, and Orcus in *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms*. She is thrilled to work with Andy one last time and would like to thank her family and friends for encouraging her to audition!

Bios



Corrina Mullins (Martin Heller, Guardian Angel for Harper, Voice of the Angel) is a 3rd-year majoring in Museum Studies. Originally from Akron, OH, Corrina is thrilled to be performing in her first RIT & NTID Performing Arts production. Having spent the last few years working on the production side of shows, she is excited to be returning to acting. Some of her favorite roles include the Stage Manager in *Our Town*, directing both *The Tempest* and *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind* with the RIT Players. Corrina would like to thank Alessandro and Kayla for their unending support, encouragement and company.



Dalton Fitzsimmons (Assistant Stage Manager) is a 2nd-year Software Engineering major who lives in Maryland. This is his second production with RIT & NTID Performing Arts and his second time being an assistant stage manager. His previous production was *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms* last semester and he is still very excited to be working again on *Angels in America*.



Declan McHale (Man in the Park, Guardian Angel for Prior) is a 1st-year Biomedical Sciences major. He is ecstatic to be working with this talented cast for his first main stage show here at RIT! You may recognize him from *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*, performed at the Little Theatre during the Rochester Fringe Festival. Declan has been performing since he was younger, doing shows through both his school and community theatre back in his hometown of Newton, New Jersey. Some of his favorite roles include Davey from *Newsies*, Monsieur Andre from *Phantom of the Opera*, Jack from *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, and Jacob Marley in *A Christmas Carol*. He would like to thank his family, friends, and the audience for coming out to support live theatre!!

Bios



Eric Fotang (Guardian Angel for Mr. Lies & Belize, Voice of the Angel) is a 2nd-year majoring in Game Design and Development. Hailing from Maryland, his life in the arts revolves around getting society to see itself in a reflection and inspiring others to do the same. While new to acting, Eric has previously performed as a pit orchestra member for *Elf the Musical* with the Port Tobacco Players. Eric would like to thank

his wonderful family and friends for inspiring and motivating him to be who he is today.



Jaylen Fier (Assistant Stage Manager) is a 3rd-year American Sign Language Interpreting major. She is from Long Island, New York however she is happy to be back in Rochester this semester. Previously she was on the stage management team for the NTID Performing Arts productions of *People of the Third Eye* and *Dial M for Murder*. She tried out acting last year with her role of Nancy Knapp in NTID's *Spoon River Anthology*.

Jaylen is very excited to be back in the crew for this spectacular show. She loved working on it with the amazing cast and crew. Jaylen would also like to give a shoutout to her boyfriend AJ for supporting her through the stress that comes with any production.



Kathryn (Katie) Richer (Stage Manager) is from Syracuse, NY and is a student of the School of Individualized Study with concentrations in Construction Management and Theatre. She will be graduating this semester. Previously she has been the assistant stage manager for *Spoon River Anthology* and *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms*. She has been working as a carpenter for theatre productions for six years now

and has worked backstage for several NTID Performing Arts productions. Katie is so grateful for her experience to be involved with the Performing Arts at NTID, the memories and life long friends she made.

Bios



Leon Marcus (Joe Pitt) is a 2nd-year double majoring in American Sign Language Interpreting and Psychology. He is glad to be back with NTID Performing Arts after almost six years. He was previously seen as a Wickersham in *Seussical*, and his first performance with NTID Performing Arts was in *Fairy Tale Courtroom*. Leon would like to thank his high school director, Laura Reed, for encouraging and supporting him in

his endeavors.



Patrick Graybill (Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz) is joyful to return to Panara Theatre to be in the current production of *Angels in America*. He was among the original members of the National Theatre of the Deaf troupe for ten years. Afterwards, he taught performing arts and literature and directed several plays here at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. Now retired, he can say that among his favorite roles are Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* and Prospero in *The Tempest*. He would like to thank Andy Head for asking him to be Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz.



Priscilla Godfrey (Hannah Pitt) is a 1st-year majoring in Computer Science. This is her first time acting onstage. She mostly worked in backstage crews during high school. Priscilla would love to shout out to her grandmother, Sharon, who supported her a lot and encouraged her to join the play.



Raihiem Marshall (Mr. Lies, Belize) is a 3rd-year transfer student from Gallaudet University and is currently studying Business Administration. He has been acting since middle and high school and his favorite role is Lysander from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare. He was also previously in *Taming of the Shrew* for NTID Performing Arts.

Bios



Ricardo Aguilera [he/they] (Henry, Guardian Angel for Rabbi Chemelwitz) is a 5th-year dual major studying Computer Science and Philosophy. They have previously performed as Herr Schultz in the 2018 RIT & NTID Performing Arts production of *Cabaret*, Underling in RIT Players' 2019 production of *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and Prospero in RIT Players' 2020 radio production of *The Tempest*. You may have seen them

teaching in RIT's swing dance club, the Brick City Boppers, teaching at RIT Improv workshops, performing with the Brainwreck Improv troupe, and facilitating in RIT's Philosophy Club. Ricardo is thrilled to be working with Andy again and to be a part of a hearing & Deaf cast. He would like to thank his friends and family for their constant support.



Ronald Soriano (Eskimo, Guardian Angel for Roy & Prior 1) is a 5th-year student majoring in the School of Individualized Study with a focus in Marketing and Communications and a minor in Hospitality & Tourism Management. He was previously seen as Miles in *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms*. He is from Arlington, Texas, though he currently lives in Toledo. You might have seen him on social platforms for content creators

as Soriano Sonrisa. His passion is making vlogs and entertainment videos for his Latino culture. Ronald would like to thank his family and friends for their support. Thank you to his family in Mexico & the Mexican community for inspiring him to be so proud of the man he has become.



Ryker D'Angelo (Guardian Angel for Louis) is a 1st-year student majoring in University Exploration. Performing arts has always captivated Ryker ever since he was a child. He has played a role in several Deaf-run and produced performances in his high school, portraying the stories of *Snow White*, *Robin Hood*, and many more. He comes from the small hometown of St. Augustine, Florida. Ryker is thrilled to work with this marvelous

cast and crew, and he is thankful to his friends and family for their never-ending support.

Bios



Sam Bowerman (Guardian Angel for Joe & Prior 2) is a 2nd-year transfer student in the Applied Computer Technology program. He is from Texas and was born deaf to a hearing family. This is Sam's first experience acting in a play. Shout out to Hayden for convincing him to audition for the play!



Samuel Langshteyn (Prior Walter) is a 4th-year Film/TV production major from NYC. He grew up performing since middle school, started as a dancer in a dance program for modern/ballet, then transitioned to street jazz. Going into high school, he developed a profound interest in acting, and it blossomed into his college years. You may have noticed Sam in his previous appearances such as Ferdinand in *Shakespeare In*

Park: The Tempest at Highland Bowl with the Rochester Community Players, Lesgate in *Dial M For Murder* with NTID Performing Arts, Aaron/Jocks in *Legally Blonde & Transvestites* in *Rocky Horror Picture Show* for Deaf Broadway, a dancer in *Leaves of the Poetry Tree* with NTID Performing Arts, and Maurice in *Beauty & The Beast* also with NTID Performing Arts. He wants to thank his family, besties & roommates, Nirvana, and all the men who did him wrong because they're certainly an inspiration for this role.



Serena Rush (Harper Pitt) is a 2nd-year majoring in Psychology. She has played numerous roles with RIT & NTID Performing Arts including Tilly in *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms* last year! She is from Silver Spring, MD. Serena would like to thank her family and friends for their ongoing support of her passion in theater. She would also like to thank the cast and crew for the great experience of working on this show! Hope

you enjoy the show!

Bios



Victoria Covell (Angel) is a 4th-year majoring in Graphic Design with a minor in Mobile Design and Development. You might've seen her in *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms* as Agnes, *I and You* as Caroline, or *Cabaret* as Sally Bowles. She is from Jacksonville, Illinois. Her previous experience is dancing for about 21 years and joining theatre, here at RIT, in 2018. Tori would like to thank her family and friends from RIT

who are always so supportive of her performing arts career. She would also like to thank Andy for pushing her to be a better actor and person.



Wil Clancy (Roy Cohn, Prior 1) is a 5th-year Software Engineering major from Eldersburg, Maryland. This is his first show with RIT & NTID Performing Arts, but he is thrilled to be involved all the same. He was last seen performing with RIT Players for their 2019 production of *The Drowsy Chaperone*, in which he donned a hat and apron as a gangster pastry chef. He would like to thank his parents for their undying support through-

out all his creative endeavors.

Special Thanks:

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Anthony Spall

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Sunshine 2.0 – Theatre on Tour

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Zain Ahmed (Actor)

Shiann Cook (Actor)

Tyler Fortson (Actor)

Bianca Ware (Actor)

Theatre and Tour Manager

Joseph Fox

Department Support Staff

Denise Morgan

Robert F. Panara

Teacher, author, poet... Robert F. Panara was RIT's first deaf faculty member: founder and first chairman of NTID's Department of English; and founder and director of NTID's Experimental Educational Theatre Program. Professor Panara's two decades of service to NTID at RIT and his firm belief in the talent and potential of young deaf people will always be remembered by those with whom he has shared his wisdom and vision.

