



PRESS KIT

COMPANY BASICS

The New York Neo-Futurists' signature show *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind* is an ongoing attempt to perform thirty original plays in sixty minutes. The plays, all written and directed by the ensemble, are performed in random order as determined by the audience as the show goes along. The 'menu' of 30 plays changes each week; once a play leaves the menu, it is gone often forever.

Inspired by the Italian Futurists, whose artistic response to the industrial shock of the Twentieth Century was to embrace speed, movement, spectacle and mechanization, the New York Neo-Futurists venture forth into the Twenty-First Century, forging through New York City with a bold undertaking: in a society that is constantly changing, so too will our theater.

The NEW YORK Neo-Futurists (in random order) are: **Christopher Borg, Lauren Sharpe, Jeffrey Cranor, Erica Livingston, Rob Neill, Adam Smith, Lusia Strus, Ryan Good, Jacquelyn Landgraf, Kevin Free, Alicia Harding, Cara Francis, Jill Beckman, Dan McCoy, Eevin Hartsough, Joey Rizzolo, and Christopher Loar.**

We perform 50 weeks of year at The Kraine Theatre, 85 East Fourth Street, between 2nd and 3rd avenues on the first floor.

Contact:

Rob Neill
 Managing Director
 475 West 57th Street, #6A-3
 New York, NY 10019
 917.445.4712

Check out our website: www.nynf.org.



COMPANY MISSION

The New York Neo-Futurists are a collective of wildly productive writer/director/performers who create:

- Theater that is reactionary to the rapid-pace, sensory-overload, evolving climate of New York City.
- Theater that is fusion of sport, poetry, and living-newspaper.
- Non-illusory, interactive performance that conveys our experiences and ideas as directly and honestly as possible.
- We embrace those unmoved by conventional theater-inspiring them to thought, feeling, and action.

As a group, we are dedicated to:

- Strengthening the human bond between performer and audience. We feel that the more sincere and genuine we can be on stage, the greater the audience's identification with the unadorned people and issues before them.
- Embracing a form of non-illusory theater in order to present our lives and ideas as directly as possible. All our plays are set on the stage in front of the audience. All our characters are ourselves. All our stories really happened. All our tasks are actual challenges. We do not aim to "suspend the audience's disbelief," but to create a world where the stage is a continuation of daily life.
- Embracing the moment through audience interaction and planned obsolescence. In order to keep ourselves as alive on stage as possible, we interweave elements of chance and change — contradicting the expected and eliminating the permanent.
- Influencing the widest audience possible by keeping our ticket prices affordable and our productions intellectually and emotionally challenging yet accessible.



COMPANY HISTORY

In 2004, the New York Neo-Futurists began playing to sold-out houses at the Brooklyn Lyceum as a branch of Chicago's Neo-Futurists. Originally conceived by Greg Allen in 1988, the company's aesthetic emerged from the theatrical experiments of the 1960s through 1980s, calling for a theater of audience interaction, breaking down all notions of distance, character, setting, and illusion, and articulating a socially conscious voice in a low-tech, "poor theater" format.

In the past four years, the New York Neo-Futurists moved from the Brooklyn Lyceum, to set up shop at HERE, the Belt, and Cherry Lane, before, in 2006, settling into their current home at the Kraine Theater. In addition to bringing shows to area colleges, the New York Neo-Futurists have performed at various other New York theaters, including P.S. 122, the Ontological-Hysteric and the Public. To date, we have written over 1300 new original short plays.

In 2006, *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind* won the New York Innovative Theater Award for Outstanding Performance Art Production.

That same year the New York Neo-Futurists participated in Suzan-Lori Parks's *365 Plays/365 Days* with performances at the Makor and the Public Theater, and in June created a daily spectacle in Astor Place executing *60 Plays in 30 Days* at 6:30pm; rain or shine, large or small crowds.

In 2007 the New York Neo-Futurists were Nominees for the New York Innovative Theater Award for Outstanding Performance Art Production.

In 2007, the New York Neo-Futurists began teaching the Neo-Futurist aesthetic and style of theatre to eager students. With an overwhelming positive response, the company continues to offer workshops throughout the year.

The New York Neo-Futurists have developed three original main stage shows *Tightening*, *The 6-Pack*, *Apocalypse Neo* and in November of 2008 look to mount at the Red Room, an original multi-media production of *(Not) Just A Day Like Any Other*.



IN THE PRESS

"Like the glory days of Saturday Night Live, Too Much Light is not just funny but faintly surreal."

Back Stage – GWEN OREL

"Like an entire Fringe Festival condensed into one show... it is the ideal entertainment for an audience with eclectic taste and a rapidly shrinking attention span."

New York Times - JASON ZINOMAN

"The performance itself is unbeatable: spontaneous, exciting, and perfect for the ADD-riddled masses. The 30 plays... are alternately hilarious and heartbreaking."

Washington Square News – JAMIE FELDMAR

"Intrepid, interactive theater performed by writers, directors, and actors. . . who are not afraid to be emotionally naked onstage."

Drama Review - CINDY PIERRE

"A group of actors who attempt to perform 30 original plays in 60 minutes—an athletic endeavor to be sure, and one which viscerally exploits the connection between performer and spectator for maximum ka-pow."

nytheatre.com – JEFF LEWONCZYK

"A rejuvenating exploration of the human condition."

Washington Square News – MICHAEL CONNELLY

"Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind offers the perfect gift for everyone on your list."

New York Cool.com – TARA KOPPEL

"What separates Too Much Light from sketch comedy or improv is its deliberately eclectic approach to form. The show I saw included the genres of musical, confession, agit-prop, poetic gesture, physical comedy, puppet theater, audience interrogation, folk song, sex joke, something that can only be described as "dance-walking," mime, and many others."

offoffonline.com - WILLIAM CORDEIRO



ENSEMBLE BIOS

Christopher Borg is an actor, director, writer, occasional dialect coach, back-up vocalist and stand-up comic. Trained at the Shakespeare Theatre (DC) and the University of Utah, he's been hogging the stage for 20 years in NYC and elsewhere, is a member of NY companies EAT and TOSOS, garnered 2 OOB Awards, and nominations for a GLAAD Media Award, an HX Award and an IT Award. A fan of the New York Neo-Futurists for many years, Borg finally charmed his way in with lies, flirts and threats. He originated the role of Eddie in the 2008 Off-Broadway hit “The Play About the Naked Guy.” He loves life.

Eevin Hartsough is an actor whose credits include Hellen Keller in *The Miracle Worker* (Roundabout Theater), Agnes in *A Bright Room Called Day* (Vassar College), the title role in *Presumed Retarded* (Manhattan Theater Source), a white-trash ghost in *Cockfighters* (Oberon Theater Co.) and the perky girlfriend of a government assassin in *Many 'Cides* (Prospect Theater Co.). Eevin lives in Manhattan where she also enjoys producing radio and Bollywood dancing.

Kevin R. Free is proud to be a Neo-Futurist . Other credits include: Off-Broadway: From My Hometown (Audelco Award Nominee), Taking A Chance On Love (York Theatre), The Conjure Man Dies (New Federal Theatre). Regional: CENTERSTAGE, Kennedy Center, Ordway, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, North Shore Music Theatre, Idaho Shakespeare, Cincinnati Playhouse, Charlotte Rep, NC Shakespeare Festival, Arden Theatre (Barrymore Award Nominee, Violet). Recordings: Avenue X, numerous audio books (2-time Earphones Award-winner, Audie award nominee). A successful teaching artist, he is the new Artistic Director for Queens Theatre in the Park's Cultural After School Adventures Program. His one-man show, Face Value, was in FringeNYC and was a recipient of the Henry Street Settlement's Playwrights' Project Grant in 2000 and was a finalist in the Mill Mountain Theatre New Play Competition in 2003.



Ryan Good is a writer, director and performer. He has been part of the New York Neo-Futurists since 2006 and in addition to *Too much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind* has performed in the New York Neo-Futurists' primetime productions, *The 6-Pack* and *Apocalypse Neo*. Ryan's performing and directing credits include: The Globe Theatre, London, New York Stage and Film, International W.O.W., Lincoln Center Institute, Suzan-Lori Park's *365 Plays/365 Days* and *New Dramatists*. Ryan is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Ryan's hobbies include photography, rock drumming and guitar.

Lauren Sharpe is an actor, improviser, dancer and clown who recently made the move from Chicago to NYC. While in Chicago, Lauren performed site-specific spectacles with Redmoon, also appearing in "The Golden Truffle" and "The Princess Club." Lauren has also worked with The Chicago Neos and has written for/performed in "Roustabout: The Great Circus Train Wreck!," "Picked Up" and "Fake Lake," a play performed in and around a Chicago Park District pool. She is a member of Barrel of Monkeys, a company that teaches writing workshops in public schools. By day, Lauren can be found clowning in children's hospitals with Big Apple Circus Clown Care.

Lusia Strus is a recent transplant to New York and one of the newest members of the NY Neo-Futurists, Lusia grew up in Chicago where she wrote and performed in *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind* from 1993 to 2001. Before moving to this fine city she lived in LA, where she did several movies, TV guest appearances, two seasons on *Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide* (Nickelodeon), and several pilots for NBC and Fox. She most recently performed in Greg Kotis' "The Truth About Santa" in NYC and in "Slasher" at the ATL Humana Festival. Other theatre credits include: "Hysteria," "Our Town," "Whispering City" (Steppenwolf Theatre); "Big Love" (Goodman Theatre and B.A.M.), "Pirate's Lullaby" (Goodman); "Merry Wives of Windsor," "Loves Labours Lost," "Henry IV": Parts 1 and 2 (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); "Henry IV": Parts 1 and 2 (Royal Shakespeare Co. – Stratford, England) "Quake" (Humana Festival at Actor's Theatre of Louisville); "Slavs" and "Go Away. Go Away." (Joseph Jefferson Award –



Principle Actress) (European Rep). Her solo show, "it ain't no fairy tale," which was originally commissioned by Steppenwolf, played to sold out houses. An extended version was written and performed for Neo-Solo in Chicago, in LA (where it won the LA Weekly Award for Best Solo Performance), and at FringeNYC. Lusia has enjoyed coaching actors for the last fifteen years.

Lusia was named one of the city's Top 10 Actors by the Chicago Tribune and was among the Elite 8 Actresses named by the Chicago Sun-Times and was honored with the Young Women Achievers Award presented by the Ukrainian National Women's League of America. This made her mother very happy because she likes dusting trophies.

Jacquelyn Landgraf spends most of her time in the companionship of her best friend, Teddy, who is a stuffed teddy bear with cataracts, and very wise. In fact, when she's feeling blue, it is he who reminds her, "Eternal nothingness is fine if you happen to be dressed for it." Years ago, she and Teddy headed East, in a covered wagon, in search of gold. After several cholera outbreaks and the loss of three oxen, Jacquelyn arrived in New York, where she attended NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Jacquelyn has been jumping for numbers with the New York Neo-Futurists since 2006.. Jacquelyn is also on faculty at the Atlantic Acting School.

Rob Neill is the Managing Director and an active ensemble member of the New York Neo-Futurists. He trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, the National Theater Institute, Improv Olympic and Grinnell College. He has performed *Too Much Light Makes The Baby Go Blind* in New York and Chicago since 1995. He has taught performance workshops around the country and his plays have appeared at the Ontological, P.S. 122, HERE, Cherry Lane and The Kraine, as well as in Chicago and Los Angeles. Performance credits include: Broadway: *London Assurance*; London: *The Cherry Orchard*; Regional: *You Never Can Tell*, *Tartuffe*, and *The Real Thing*; Off-Off Broadway: *Spring Awakening*, *Hamlet* and *Doughboy*.



Christopher Loar has performed and presented work at such places as The Ontological-Hysteric, New York Theater Workshop, The Public, The Bushwick Starr, Manhattan Rep, The New York Clown Theater Festival, The Chocolate Factory, The Bowery Poetry Club, The Brick, FringeNYC, The Tank, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, The New York Downtown Clown Revue, Emerging Artists Theater, The American Theater of Actors, and Chashama. He trained at Circle In The Square and RADA. His play Airport was published in The Best Plays from the Strawberry One Act Festival, Book IV. Christopher is also a turntablist DJ who gigs regularly around the city.

Erica Livingston is a performer, writer and director based in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Originally from Jackson, MS, Erica graduated from New York's American Musical and Dramatic Academy. Some of her favorite stage credits include Pandora in Beth Henly's Impossible Marriage, Jackie O' in Wendy MacLeod's House of Yes, and most recently representing the New York Neo-Futurists in performing week 52 of Suzan Lori Parks 365 Plays/365 Days under the direction of Joanna Settle at The Public Theater.

Jill Beckman hails from the Land of Lincoln, where she trained with ImprovOlympic and Second City. She has lived and worked in NYC for the last 10 years. In that time, she earned a BFA from NYU, trained with SITI Company and Upright Citizens Brigade, and collaborated in many various capacities with many various theater companies.

Jeffrey Cranor is a playwright from Dallas. His stage adaptation of Herman Melville's BENITO CERENO was performed at Kitchen Dog Theater (Dallas), and his short plays have been performed at Ground Zero Theater (Dallas), ArtSpirit (Dallas), 24HTP (Northampton, MA), and Naked Theater (Northampton). Jeffrey has performed in and directed plays at Naked Theater and Present Theater Project in Northampton. At PTP in 2006, Jeffrey directed Will Eno's THE FLU SEASON. Jeffrey has a BS in Journalism from Texas A&M University, and he currently lives in Queens.



Alicia Harding graduated from NYU in 2006. Her primary training took place at Playwrights Horizons Theater School, where she acted, designed for set and sound, and worked rigorously in the Creating Original Work program. Since college, she has explored installation in the *Art in Odd Places* festival and developed a devotion to *Nightmare: New York's Most Terrifying Haunted House*, where she is a director.

Joey Rizzolo is a proud resident of New Jersey, a fact that, when announced publicly in New York venues, is often met with a stunned silence followed by the quiet grunts of suppressed bile. He is the father of a 12-year-old. He is also a teacher and a carpenter, like Jesus. There are other ways in which he's like Jesus, but humility is not one.

Cara Francis is a playwright, director, actor and artist from Nashville, TN. Her plays have been seen at Galapagos Art Space, The House of Tribes, The Arthur Seelen Theatre, The Stella Adler Studio and as part of AUR-Another Urban Riff's Project 30. You may have seen her in, Off-Broadway: "Absolute Clarity", "365 Days/365 Plays" and "Church" at the Public Theatre, "Holiday Movies" at the Flea as a member of the Bats, "iph.then" at the Ontological-Hysterics, "Promised Land" at the Stella Adler Studio, burlesquing in Wonder Woman Week with the Groove Mamas, or blogging in her room to Frank Zappa.

Dan McCoy is a playwright and theatre artist whose recent plays include *Sympathy*, *Eli* and *Cheryl Jump*, *Group*, *The Downtown Daylight Project*, *Hell: A Reunion*, and *Peek*. His work has been produced and workshopped across the country with such groups as The Flea Theater, Highwire Theatre, State of Play Theatre, Crosstown Playwrights, Clubbed Thumb, Elephant Theatre Company, Source Theatre Festival, 13th Street Rep, and Soul Invictus Gallery. He has studied playwriting through 'Pataphysics with Mac Wellman, Erik Ehn and 13P. As well as an ensemble member of the NYNFs, Dan is a founding member of Crosstown Playwrights and a member-at-large of the Elephant Theatre Company in Los Angeles.



Adam Smith holds a degree in Acting & Directing from Bowling Green State University. He has written, directed and performed in several original works, *A Small American Town* (BGSU), *Me & Elian* (BGSU), as well as collaborating with Rob Neill & Leah Winkler on *6-Speed*, performed at the Ontological-Hysteric's Tiny Theater festival. He has also performed for Naked Theater (Northampton, MA), Present Theater Company's production of Will Eno's *The Flu Season* (Northampton, MA), and 24HTP (Northampton, MA).

