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Leda Hoffmann

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Charlotte Thomas

Artistic Producers

Mike Daily* and Anderson Lawfer*

Casting Director

Kanomé Jones

TAKE ME

Book by Mark Guarino

Music by Jon Langford

Directed by Anderson Lawfer*

Music Director

Chuck Evans

Lighting Design

John Kelly*

Choreographer/Dramaturg/

Assistant Director

Becca Braun

**Orchestrations/
Arrangements**

Annabelle Lee Revak

Costume Design

Rachel M. Sypniewski

Stage Manager

Jenn Thompson

**Scenic Design/Technical
Director/Paint Charge**

John Ross Wilson

Sound Design

Heath Hays*

Production Manager

Becca Levy*

Properties Design

Lacie Hexom

Projections Design

Anthony Churchill

*Denotes Strawdog Ensemble Company Member

Take Me was partially developed by
The Pivot Arts Incubator Program at Loyola University.

CAST

Nicole Bloomsmith*	Shelly
Carmine Grisolia*	Travis
Kamille Dawkins*	Doggie
Michael Reyes*	Matt
Loretta Rezos	Mother
Matt Rosin	Father
David Gordon-Johnson	Doctor
Megan DeLay	Nurse
Kristen Alesia	Ensemble

UNDERSTUDIES

Patrick TJ Kelly , Robert Sicklesteel, Tamara White

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION STAFF

Emily Ioppolo	Assistant Stage Manager
Peter Wilde	Assistant Technical Director
Becs Bartle	Master Electrician

*Denotes Strawdog Company Member

THE BAND

Mr. Pots (Assistant Music Director, Pianist)
Dwayne R. Cornelius (Guitar)

Sean McGill (Percussionist)
Colby Stark (Percussion Cover)

A NOTE FROM DIRECTOR ANDERSON LAWFER

Take Me has meant a lot of things to me over the course of making it for the past couple of years.

It's one of those stories that you can make fit into whatever metaphor you need in your life at the moment. At first it was about belief in the wrong things. Putting faith into false idols and falling down perilous holes. Then, for me, it became about coping with loss and the way our brain protects ourselves from truly grasping our current reality.

Now, as I write this two weeks into rehearsals, it's about inspiration. The spark of inspiration when everything is so dire that the world feels like it is going to swallow you up that appears like a rope ladder at the bottom of a well.

Take Me is about opening your heart and listening to the voices that tell you how to keep moving instead of how to give up. It's about forgiving yourself even though you can't imagine how.

That makes it an important story for everyone.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES



Nicole Bloomsmith* (Shelly) Nicole Bloomsmith is an ensemble artist and eponymous cabaret host here at Strawdog where she was last seen as fiddling Fanny in *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins*. Chicago stage credits also include the likes of Steppenwolf, Northlight, The Hypocrites, and many others. A singer-songwriter, she newly celebrated the release of her debut album *Find Me*, available wherever you get your music. She is charmed to be a part of this cosmic team. @nikkibloomsmith



Carmine Grisolia* (Travis) Hang around a theater long enough and eventually you get to play a Space Cowboy. Carm's been kicking around Strawdog for more'n 20 years, and so he reckons you can call him Maurice. Provided you listen to his musings on Love and all its Pompitus. Thanks to Mark and Jon for spinning this weird and beautiful yarn, and to Andy for his faith, spirit of collaboration, and his devilish brand of leadership. Seriously, it's like a smile and a couple of tacos, and next thing you know, you're wearing a Nudie and jumping out of spaceships.



Kamille Dawkins* (Doggie) Kamille Dawkins hails from the island of Jamaica and has been performing in Chicago as an actor, singer and musician since 2014. She has worked with The House Theatre, Adventure Stage Chicago, Haven Theatre and many others, but is currently an ensemble member at Strawdog Theatre where she most recently performed in *The Revolutionists*.



Michael Reyes* (Matt) Michael Reyes is excited to join you on the journey that is *Take Me*. A proud member of the Strawdog Ensemble, most recently appearing in *Masque Macabre*, *The Night Season*, and *Cymbeline*. Random smattering of other Chicago credits: Karenin in *Anna Karenina* (Lifeline Theatre); Nick in *Mutt* (Stage Left); Sebastian in *Animals Commit Suicide* (First Floor), Player in *A Kurt Weill Cabaret* (Theo Ubique), among others. Humble thanks to all of you for being here!



Loretta Rezos (Mother) Loretta Rezos is a Strawdog Ensemble Emeritus. Most recent Strawdog shows: *Distance*, *The Long Christmas Ride Home*. Elsewhere recent: *May The Road Rise Up*-Factory Theatre; *Assembled Parties*-Raven Theatre; *Trevor*-A Red Orchid Theatre. She has also been seen at Steppenwolf, Timeline Theatre, Trap Door, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Northlight Theatre, and other smaller theatres no longer with us. TV: Chicago PD, Chicago Fire, Lipstick Jungle (NBC) She is represented by Stewart Talent.



Matt Rosin (Father) A native of Columbus, Indiana, Matt attended Indiana University and Arizona State University for his Russian & Soviet Studies B.A. Matt performed comedic improv for over 20 years in Scottsdale, AZ, where he founded the comedy group The Originals. Moving to Chicago in 2015 to study scripted theater, he graduated from THE ACADEMY at Black Box Acting in 2017 and signed with Lily's Talent Agency in 2018. Matt is humbled to be a part of this amazing cast for *Take Me*.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES CONT.



David Gordon-Johnson (Doctor) David is excited to be working with Strawdog for the first time. Recent credits include *Southern Gothic* (Windy City Playhouse), *Pirates of Penzance*, *Anything Goes* (Music Theater Works), very still and hard to see (*Exit 63 Theatre*), and *As You Like It* (Eclectic Full Contact Theatre). When not onstage, David is an avid bread baker and cat dad. Proudly represented by Big Mouth Talent.



Megan DeLay (Nurse/ Ensemble) Megan DeLay is thrilled to be making her debut with Strawdog! In the Chicago area, she has worked with Lifeline, Black Button Eyes,

Akvavit, Arc Theatre, Piccolo, Artemisia, Open Door Rep, and is an Ensemble Member with Promethean Theatre where she was last seen as Lady Croom in *Arcadia*. Favorite regional credits: *In the Next Room*, *Tartuffe*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at Asolo Repertory. Film: *Man On Wire*. Megan received her MFA in Acting from FSU/Asolo Conservatory. www.megandelay.com



Kristen Alesia (Ensemble) Kristen is thrilled to be working with Strawdog! Previous Chicago credits include work with Idle Muse Theatre Company, City Lit Theater Company, Haven Theatre Company, and The Waltzing Mechanics. Regionally, she has worked with The Virginia Shakespeare

Festival. Kristen is a proud graduate of Indiana University where she received her BA in Theatre & Drama. In her free time she is horror movie enthusiast and helicopter cat mom. Check her out at www.kristenalesia.com!

Patrick TJ Kelly (Understudy Matt, Ensemble) Patrick TJ returns to Strawdog where his previous credits include *Masque Macabre*, and *Pillars of the Community*. Other Chicago credits include *Utility* (Interrobang Theatre) *An Enemy of the People* (Goodman Theatre); *The Revengers Tragedy* (Shakespeare Project of Chicago). Outside of Chicago Patrick has worked as an educator, writer, and actor with Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre, where his credits include *Coriolanus*, *The Rivals*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *Henry VIII*. Patrick TJ is represented by Stewart Talent.

Robert Sicklesteel (Understudy Travis, Ensemble) Robert is very excited to be doing his first show with Strawdog Theatre Company! Previous credits include: Nell Gwynn (U/S Ensemble, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); Ten Minute Playfest, (Saint Sebastian Players); Twelfth Night (Curio, Edge of the Wood Theatre). Robert has studied at Green Shirt Studio, Acting Studio Chicago, and has a Bachelor's of Music from Illinois State University.

Tamara White (Understudy Mother, Ensemble) Tamara White is delighted to be working with Strawdog for the first time! Around town she's worked with The House Theatre, Emerald City, A Red Orchid Theatre, Porchlight Musical Theatre and Chicago Theatre Works, among others. Thanks to the Strawdog team for letting me play!

PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

Mark Guarino (Original Book) Mark Guarino's plays have been produced by the House Theatre of Chicago, Walkabout Theater, the Curious Theater Branch, Chicago Dramatists, Zebra Crossing, among

others. Take Me is his second collaboration with Jon Langford following *All the Fame of Lofty Deeds* at the House. He is the recipient of fellowships from the Vermont Studio Center, the Sewanee Writers Conference

at the University of the South, and the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony in Woodstock, NY. Also a journalist, he covers Chicago for the Washington Post, was the Midwest Bureau Chief for the Christian Science Monitor for six years, and his byline has appeared in a wide range of national outlets including Reuters, the Guardian, and New York. He holds an MFA from Bennington College in Vermont. His first book is forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press. Visit mark-guarino.com.

Jon Langford (Original Score) Welsh-born Jon Langford, the original drummer for the punk band the Mekons, stands as a leader in the movement to incorporate folk and country music into punk rock. Langford has released numerous recordings as a solo artist and with other bands, most notably the Waco Brothers, Skull Orchard, Four Lost Souls, The Three Johns, Men of Gwent and The Pine Valley Cosmonauts. Since moving to Chicago, Langford has been active in the music scene nurturing label mates on Bloodshot Records, lending his services as a musician, producer or visual artist, or collaborating with like-minded artists (Dave Alvin, The Sadies, Otis Clay, Bonnie Prince Billy, Steve Earle, Andre Williams, Neko Case). Langford is also a prolific and respected visual artist best known for his striking portraits of country music icons. In 2015 Jon was the artist in residence at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville TN. Nashville Radio a book of Jon's artwork and writings was published by Verse Chorus Press in 2006 and was followed in 2011 by Skull Orchard Revisited, a book and CD about his roots in South Wales. The Executioner's Last Songs, a multimedia music/spoken word/video performance has been performed across the United States, Europe and Australia and two of his solo albums Gold Brick and All the Fame of Lofty Deeds were adapted for theatrical productions in 2009. Langford also illustrated the comic strip Great Pop Things under the pseudonym Chuck Death. From 2005 to 2013 Langford was a host

of a weekly radio program, "The Eclectic Company," on Chicago's WXRT 93.1 FM and has been a contributor to NPR's This American Life. This year Jon will be touring Europe and America with the Mekons, taking a musical train ride through Alaska with Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Dave Alvin, working with Marty Stuart on his new museum in Philadelphia Mississippi and lurking backstage at performances of Strawdog's Take Me, which he wrote a bunch of songs for.

Anderson Lawfer* (Director) This is Lawfer's second time working with Guarino and Langford. The first time in the House Theatre's *All The Fame of Lofty Deeds*. Lawfer served as Artistic Director in Strawdog's Hugen Hall from 11–16, focusing on new works and adaptations creating adaptations of Fail Safe, Pontypool and Kill Shakespeare. Lawfer served as Co-Artistic Director of Strawdog from 16–19. He was a creator and director of *Masque Macabre*, the immersive Halloween experience at Strawdog last fall.

Becca Braun (Assistant Director/Choreographer/Dramaturg) Becca Braun is a graduate of Miami University of Ohio, where she double majored in Theatre and Music, and minored in Musical Theatre. She is thrilled to be collaborating with Strawdog on such a fun and thought-provoking piece of art. Favorite directing credits include Chicago Afterdark (Artistic Conspiracy), The Big Black Box Serial (Just RANTing the Blues), Anniversary, The Wild Party (Lippa), and Gruesome Playground Injuries (Miami University).

Becs Bartle (Master Electrician) Becs Bartle is a lighting designer and master electrician. Mx. Bartle credits include 20% Theatre Company, Brown Paper Box Co., Highland Park Players, Urban Theatre Company, Interrobang Theatre Project, Commission Theatre, Babes with Blades, Flying Elephant Productions, Pride Arts Center, and Saltbox Theatre Collective.

Anthony Churchill (Projections Design)

Anthony Churchill collaborates on media for theatre, events, and installations. Recent projections and media with Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Marriott Theatre, Rivendell Theatre, Raven Theatre, The Cher Show, Q Brothers, Porchlight Music Theatre, Silk Road Rising, Theatre Wit, Stage Left, Museum of Broadcast Communications, Big Noise Theatre, 16th Street Theatre - Berwyn, and BoHo Theatre - which he is a proud company member of. Tony has been nominated for four Jeff Awards for Projections, and awarded one. When not working on plays, he enjoys sculpting tiny astronauts in peril, and playing projections with his band, Grape Juice Plus.

Chuck Evans (Musical Director) Charles "Chuck" Evans, music director, is a Chicago-based musician and music therapist. This is Chuck's first time working with Strawdog and second opportunity working as a music director. He can normally be found performing in various theatrical performances in orchestras on violin, viola, and/or bass guitar. Chuck most recently worked on pit orchestras for: Spring Awakening with Theatre Nebula (Palatine, IL) and Jekyll & Hyde with Next Gen. (St. Louis, MO).

Heath Hays* (Sound Design) Heath is an ensemble member at Strawdog theatre, and a sound designer in Chicago. Heath has designed for many companies including Chicago Dramatists, the hypocrites, Mortar theatre, BSTC, A Red Orchid Theatre, The New Colony, and many more.

Lacie Hexom (Props Design) Lacie is thrilled to be working with Strawdog again for the 3rd time! Other Strawdog credits include *Masque Macabre* and *Damascus*. Chicago credits include; *Bright Star*, *Cyrano* and *Marie Christine* (BoHo); *Othello* (Babes With Blades); *The Undeniable Sound of Right Now* (Raven); *Caroline or Change!* (Firebrand); *The Harvest* (Griffin); *The Light Fantastic*, *Franklinland*, *1980 or Why I am Voting for John Anderson*, *Ideation*, and

Octagon (Jackalope); *Alias Grace* (Rivendell). Regional credits; Steppenwolf, Goodman, Chicago Shakespeare, Glimmerglass Opera, Cleveland Playhouse, Dallas Theater Center, Santa Fe Opera. Lacie received her MFA in Props Design from CalArts and BA in Technical Theatre from UW-Stevens Point, and recently received her AWS Welding Certification at JARC Chicago. laciehexomprops.com

Emily Ioppolo (Assistant Stage Manager) Emily Ioppolo is honored to be working with Strawdog again, having previously worked on *The Night Season* and *Cymbeline*. Other previous credits include *HeLa* (Sideshow Theatre), *Natural Affection* (Eclipse Theatre) and *Franklinland* (Jackalope Theatre). Special thanks to her parents and Chris—her biggest fans.

John Kelly* (Light Design) John Kelly is happy to be designing Take Me. John has been an ensemble member since 2014 and has designed 14 shows previously for Strawdog. Elsewhere he has designed for companies including The Neo Futurists, Lifeline, Theatre Wit, Red Twist, About Face, Griffin and Adventure Stage. John also does event lighting design for Blue Man Group and is their lighting supervisor.

Annabelle Lee Revak (Orchestrations/ Arrangements) Annabelle Revak is a composer, music director, and pianist currently based in Chicago. Her original musical *Notes and Letters* will receive a workshop at Underscore Theatre Company in July 2019. MD credits include: *The Incredible 6,000ft Ladder* (Best Music Director, CMTF 2019), *Something Blue*, *The Bone Harp* (CMTF 2019), *The Last Five Years* (JPAC). Orchestrations/Arrangements: *Make Me Bad* (Drew Gasparini), *Abduction! The Musical* (Becky Toth), *Wife Material* (Jamie Shriner). Annabelle is the literary manager at Underscore Theatre Company. www.annabelleleerevak.com.

Rachel M. Sypniewski (Costume Design) Rachel M. Sypniewski (Costume Design) is grateful to be designing with

PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES CONT.

Strawdog, previously designing *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins* and *Improbable Frequency*. Other companies she has worked with include Goodman, Buffalo Theater Ensemble, Black Button Eyes, Jackalope, The New Colony, Emerald City, Lifeline, Haven, 16th Street Theater, Griffin, CityLit, Oak Park Festival Theatre, Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company, Promethean, Strawdog, Vitalist, Rasaka, the Factory, Red Tape and Redtwist, and Trap Door. She also has designed at Wheaton College, North Central College, St. Patrick's High School, Indiana University Northwest, and the Chicago Academy for the Arts. Rachel is an Artistic Associate with 16th Street Theatre, the Factory and Griffin. More info at www.rachelsyp.com

Jenn M. Thompson (Stage Manager) Jenn is elated to be making her Strawdog Theatre debut! Jenn is a freelance Stage Manager

and designer based in Chicago. Previous credits include: *Collage of a Dystopian Midwest* (Bower Theatre), *Frost/Nixon* (Redtwist Theatre), *I Saw Myself* (Redtape Theatre), TEN Festival 2016 & 2017 (The Gift Theatre). Jenn is an ensemble member of Redtape Theatre, and a resident stage manager at Redtwist Theatre. Thank you to the cast for making this such a great process.

Peter Wilde (Assistant Technical Director)

John Ross Wilson (Set Design, Technical Director) John is honored to be working again with Strawdog. John is a company member with Collaboration and The Yard. He wishes to thank this wonderful company, cast, crew, Peter, Andy, Slim and Emily for all their wonderful ideas and support. More of his art can be found at [#johnrosswilsonart](https://www.instagram.com/johnrosswilsonart)

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Web: www.jcolemedia.com
Email: jcolemedia@gmail.com
Mobile: 312_415_5792