



Welcome to the ninth annual Student Screenwriting Showcase presented by the Department of Cinema and Television Arts at California State University, Northridge.

Tonight, you will be treated to readings from the work of five of our exemplary students, two who are enrolled in our Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting program and three from our undergraduate program. Three of the pieces are excerpts of long-form scripts, and two are short screenplays that will be presented in their entireties. It will not be theater, as there will be little in the way of staging; it will not be mere recitation, as the performances have been directed; it will not be cinema. It will be, we expect, an invigorating, engaging and entertaining display of our students' artistry and imagination.

Cynics and wags are fond of complaining that there are no new stories. While it is true that commercial film and television entities tend to revisit and remake plots and plot types that have met with previous success, ample evidence of originality exists in Hollywood and beyond. Even within the familiar constructs of genres such as romantic comedies, westerns and thrillers, screenwriters continue to find unique ways to explore the various aspects of morality, society, and humanity that serve as the thematic bedrocks of all meaningful stories. We who teach screenwriting at CSUN view it as our primary task to provide our students with the conceptual and practical tools that will enable them to do just that – to create involving, inventive, and innovative narratives that reveal universal truths about the human condition. I submit that the student work we present tonight offers compelling evidence thereof.

This evening would not be possible without the help and efforts of many individuals. I heartily thank: Dr. Cynthia Rawitch, Interim Dean of the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communication; Screenwriting Professors Eric Edson, Alexis Krasilovsky, Ken Portnoy and Scott Sturgeon; CSUN Associated Students, for their financial assistance; Mark Schaubert, for the creation of the printed program; Professor Garry Lennon, Chair of the Theatre Department, and all his colleagues, for their time and help and for the use of their beautiful venue; all the wonderful actors who have donated their talent and time; Professor Shad Willingham, for his artful direction of the actors; and Professor Jared Rappaport, who produced this evening's event with me. He ignited the torch for our Showcase nine years ago and has kept it illuminated ever since.

We hope you will enjoy, and we thank you for attending.

Professor Jon Stahl
Chair, Department of Cinema and Television Arts
Head, CTVA Screenwriting Option



Robin Swicord

Writer
Showcase Host

ROBIN SWICORD is primarily known for her work as a screenwriter for *Memoirs Of A Geisha*, *Little Women*, *Matilda* (co-written with Nicholas Kazan), the comedy *Shag*, and *Practical Magic* (shared). In 2009, Swicord received an Oscar nomination for her contribution to *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, which Swicord originated and worked on for over a decade.

Swicord made her feature-directing debut with Sony Classics' *The Jane Austen Book Club*, from her screenplay adaptation. Swicord has adapted an E.L. Doctorow short story, "Wakefield," to direct as an indie feature in 2014. For HBO, she is currently creating a series pilot from E.L. Doctorow's short story, "Assimilation," about contemporary immigration in Queens and Brooklyn. Her original script, *Anatolia*, set in the Middle East during World War I, is creeping toward production, with James Gray directing.

Robin Swicord currently serves as a Governor for the Writers Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. She is married to writer-director Nicholas Kazan; daughters Zoe Kazan and Maya Kazan are actors and writers.

9th Annual Screenwriting Showcase

Welcoming Remarks by Jon Stahl

Screenplay Introductions by Robin Swicord

Enchantment

by Rachel Jones

Evergreen

by John Paul Carlton

Metaverse

by Elizabeth Keyishian

She's On Her Way

by W. Troy Whitaker

Sixty Seconds Until You're Dead

by Moises A. Carranza

Reception

(Immediately Following)



Rachel Jones

Born, raised and still boldly braving the suburbs of Simi Valley, Rachel's enthusiasm for writing first spawned in middle school, when she was granted near infinite opportunities to mass-forward sarcastic responses to AOL chain letters. The joy she derived from carefully crafted snarkiness taught her two important lessons: One, that hey...writing is pretty cool, and two, that she may have some innocently sadistic tendencies (remains undiagnosed). Since then, her talents

have evolved ten-fold to include an annual blog post and the occasional Facebook status to surpass the single-digit "like" threshold.

Originally planning to pursue a career in marine biology, Rachel's passion for aquatic study subsided as she entered the college realm and faced a reality of advanced science immersion. She then did what any self-respecting, low-ambition, twenty-something would do and loaded up on general education instead. After a few years spent accumulating credits for classes that have yet to demand application in everyday life, Rachel applied to CSUN as a Television Production major, citing supermarket tabloids as her inspiration. She quickly learned that camera work and directing classes functioned magnificently as both anxiety boosters and blood pressure catalysts. And so, in an attempt to save her complexion as well as her esteemed university status as a super senior, Rachel found herself applying to the Screenwriting program.

As an outspoken fan of the fantasy and science fiction genres as well as an avid reader of Orson Scott Card's works, Rachel jumped at the opportunity to adapt his 1999 novel, *Enchantment*. She currently works as a caregiver and dogwalker and can honestly say she has no complaints. For all her feigned cynicism and self-deprecating tendencies, Rachel is grateful for every day and every person in her life.

Enchantment

Enchantment is an adaptation of Orson Scott Card's novel of the same name. Stemming from the Russian fairytale version of Sleeping Beauty and incorporating additional fantastical elements, monsters and magic, our story follows the strong-willed and ever-curious Ivan Petrovich Smetski – a boy whose chance encounter with a beautiful sleeping woman, hidden deep in a Kievan forest, changes his life forever.

CONTINUED:

12.

IVAN
Always with the empty threats,
Papa.

PIOTR
Ah! I'm serious. Little boys are
her favorite.

IVAN
Mother! Papa wants to feed me to
the witch again!

ESTHER
Well in that case, I suppose you'd
better run, eh?

IVAN
(grinning)
Really?

ESTHER
Shoo!

Ivan spins on his heel and bolts toward the trees.

IVAN
She'll never catch me!

Piotr watches Ivan's quickly shrinking figure zip off into
the distance and turns to Esther.

PIOTR
You could have let him help unpack
first.

Esther shrugs.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST BY MAREK'S FARM - DAY

Leaves of orange, red and yellow shower Ivan as he bobs in
and out of the trees.

He jumps to catch a falling leaf, plants his foot on a tree
trunk, pushes off, and runs in another direction. His
delight is palpable and his natural athleticism, obvious.

He runs deep into the woods, where the overhead canopy
thickens, blocking out the sunlight.

Suddenly, all sounds of the forest have vanished, and he
finds himself inches away from -



John Paul Carlton

Born and raised in Richmond, Virginia, John Paul earned a B.A. in English from James Madison University in 2008 and an M.A. in English from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2012. Although he's always dreamed of working in film and television, John Paul honed his skills in his free time writing short stories, one-act plays, and a few novels that never made it past the second chapter. While several rather dire false starts have filled his laptop's hard drive over the years, it wasn't until 2011 that John Paul finished his first feature-length screenplay. The experience cemented his desire to write for film and television and emboldened the cross-country move that brought him to CSUN's M.F.A. in Screenwriting program in 2012.

Evergreen

Jack lies awake in his hotel room the night before a job interview with an intelligence contractor. Restless, anxious, he heads to the hotel bar. He strikes up a conversation with an alluring, older woman, which leads to much more than he had bargained for.

JACK
What she's having.

The bartender nods and heads off to prepare it as the woman bats an intrigued eye in Jack's direction. He glances at her sidelong for a beat until the bartender sets down his drink.

WOMAN
Careful.

JACK
Always.

Jack takes a careless gulp. He COUGHS.

JACK (CONT'D)
Strong. Surprisingly strong.

The woman laughs. She shifts to the stool next to Jack.

WOMAN
Lightweight?

Clearly, she's a few drinks in.

JACK
Just jet-lagged. Big day tomorrow.
Job interview.

Jack eyes a booth away from the bar. A pair of suited men, one TALL and the other STOUT, stare intently at him.

WOMAN
Forget about the fellas. They're
just jealous.

With a sly smile, she puts a hand on Jack's arm. He takes another deliberate swig.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

The bartender places two FRESH DRINKS on the bar. From the looks of it, both Jack and the woman have relaxed mightily.

WOMAN
So, this job... Color me intrigued.

JACK
It's a government contracting
thing. Intelligence analysis.

WOMAN
Ooh-la-la.



Elizabeth Keyishian

Elizabeth Keyishian is a film, television and animation writer, originally from Brooklyn, New York. After a stint as an actress in New York and as a journalist at Children's Television Workshop, she came west. She's been on staff on one-hour dramas for westerns (*Lonesome Dove: The Outlaw Years*), science fiction (*Mutant X*), and action adventure (*Queen of Swords*). At present, she is writing on a number of cartoon series for Disney and Nick, Jr. including *Sofia the First*, *Astroblast*, and *Paw Patrol*. Liz has taught screenwriting at PIXAR Animation Studio and teaches writing workshops for vets through the Writer's Guild of America. She believes in signs from the universe: When she was four, she got a stuffed kangaroo for Christmas and so, decades later, married an Australian. She's still married (to the Australian) and has two teenage girls. She is very pleased to be earning her MFA in Screenwriting at CSUN, where she has realized she doesn't know nearly as much as she thought she did.

Metaverse

A physicist at Princeton in the 1950's hypothesized that there is an infinite number of parallel universes. *Metaverse* poses the question: What if you could travel to many universes and live many versions of your life?

JASON wakes up on a beach of a small, depressed town in central California. His mother is shocked and happy to see him since he's been missing for six months and presumed dead. His girlfriend, SARAH, broken by his disappearance, has pieced her life back together with his best friend Matt. When Jason returns, she is unsure what to feel, especially since he seems so different...a much better version of himself. Jason reveals to Sarah that he's a "rover" from the Metaverse, which he describes as endless parallel universes, where he has loved all the versions of Sarah. He has come to be with her again for as long as he can. Sarah and all of her friends believe that Jason is crazy, but Jason insists that he's here for one reason — to take Sarah away from this dull and narrow version of her life so that she can rove the amazing worlds of the Metaverse with him.

EXT. ELLIS HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Sarah, her emotions tightly wound, rings the BELL. No answer. She rings again, leaning on the bell.

REPORTER TWO

Hi, Sarah? We can't imagine what you're feeling--

SARAH

--No you can't. Fuck off.
(beat)
Please.

She plucks a KEY from a POTTED PLANT near the front door, slides in the key, pushes open the door.

INT. ELLIS HOUSE - ENTRANCE AREA - CONTINUOUS

Sarah steps inside the funky, art-filled house. We HEAR LAUGHTER.

She glances at a PHOTO of Jason and herself. The sexy badboy and the prom queen.

Sarah takes a shaky breath, smoothes her uniform, and takes a step--right into Jason.

They stand there for a beat, staring at each other, as if time has stopped, then--

SARAH

I thought you were *dead*.

Sarah SLAPS him across the face, then throws herself, crying, into his arms. He wraps his arms around her like he never wants to let go.

JASON

Sarah.

SARAH

(into his chest)
Why didn't you call me and tell me where you were?
(pulling back, in tears)
Asshole!

Jason smiles at her.

JASON

I'm sorry.



W. Troy Whitaker

W. Troy Whitaker is a graduating senior in CSUN's Screenwriting Option. He first took night classes at Los Angeles Valley College when he was a few weeks shy of turning 13, and he has been writing screenplays since he was 14. At the age of 16, he secured a job at his local theatre company; six of his short plays were produced before he turned 19. He brings his experience on and off stage to the writing of screenplays, and he is honored to be included in this year's Screenwriting Showcase.

"A writer must write what he has to say, not speak it." – Ernest Hemingway.

She's On Her Way

"She's On Her Way" follows a man getting ready for a date. He does not prepare, though, as one would expect – he is constantly badgered by an imaginary projection of his date. The Woman pops in and out of existence, every time wearing something new, to run different possible scenarios. As the Man grows increasingly stressed, he is visited by imaginary versions of his pestering mother and his wannabe rapper friend. "She's On Her Way" explores what men think about before wooing women and demonstrates the fact that they are not always right.

MAN

Okay. Am I ready? The lasagna's in the oven. The salad is ready. Table: set. Living room: tidy. Alright. You got this. You got this.

He pumps himself up. Does a few push-ups, followed by a few jumping jacks. He takes a deep breath.

MAN (CONT'D)

So, how is this gonna work?
(beat)
She'll knock on the door.

Someone KNOCKS on the front door.

MAN (CONT'D)

I'll answer it.

He opens the door. No one is there.

MAN (CONT'D)

I'll say "Hello." Then she'll say...

Suddenly, a beautiful WOMAN (20s) APPEARS at the doorway. She's wearing clothes straight out of Breakfast at Tiffany's.

WOMAN

Hi. How are you?

MAN

Then she'll come in...
(she does)
... and I'll offer to take her coat.
(to Woman)
May I take the lady's coat?

The Woman FREEZES in place as if someone had pressed a pause button. The Man stares off into space.

MAN (CONT'D)

"May I take the lady's coat?" That sounds weird. Or does it?
(to Woman)
Does it?

The Woman UNFREEZES.

WOMAN

How would I know?



Moises A. Carranza

Moises Carranza was born in Los Angeles on March 18, 1991. He grew up in a semi-small town called South Gate, where barely anything ever happened, and damn it, he liked it that way. He attended Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School, yet decided to major in the furthest thing from medicine. In 2009, he enrolled at California State University, Northridge, where he entered the CTV Screenwriting program, and, barring any shenanigans, he hopes to graduate in the in the spring of 2014.

Sixty Seconds Until You're Dead

Sixty Seconds Until You're Dead tells the story of Esmeralda Pope, a bounty hunter in the early 1800s, and her quest to find the Vargas brothers, who are wanted for the rape and murder of a sixteen-year-old girl. Along the way, she meets a runaway, a dead ringer for the younger Esmeralda, named Samantha. The Vargas brothers, meanwhile, have joined with the mysterious Black Rider. The two forces ultimately make their way to the Saracen Train Station, where a newly appointed sheriff takes it upon himself to stop the violence that has always followed the Vargases and the Black Rider. To this day, people in Saracen still speak of the showdown at the station in hushed tones.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

You see that?

He points to the coyote.

ESMERALDA

Yeah.

JOSEPH

Poor little thing doesn't even know
what's ~~comin'~~.

ESMERALDA (V.O.)

My father had died after
complications of gangrene stemming
from the Civil War. I was sent to
an orphanage run by a preacher,
where I met Joseph.

Esmeralda picks up her rifle and aims it at the buzzard.

JOSEPH

(snickering)

Way too high. Ain't no way you can
make that ~~sh--~~

BANG!

The buzzard falls to the ground. The coyote runs off.

Esmeralda puts the rifle away, emotionless.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Wow!

He dismounts to get a better look at the dead buzzard.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I ain't never seen shooting like
that before. ~~Shit!~~ Now we got
dinner for when we go see dad.

Joseph jumps back on his horse and gallops toward the bird.

ESMERALDA (V.O.)

Today's the day I meet my family's
killer.

Cast

Avery Rodriguez

Heidi Dippold

Will Mercer

Skye Privat

Eric Austin

Julia Haimowitz

Ben Blonigan

Maggie Shakhramanyan

Joe McCormack Estrella

Justeen Butler

Caeli Molina

Shad Willingham

Student Screenwriting Showcase

Produced By

Jared Rappaport and Jon Stahl

Directed By

Shad Willingham

Hosted By

Robin Swicord

Sound Design

Brian Tran

Graphic Design

Mark Schaubert

Special Thanks To:

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Alexis Krasilovsky and Scott Sturgeon**

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