

After An Earlier Incident (A Dyschronic Romeo & Juliet)

The Club at La MaMa, 74A East 4th Street · [Tickets on sale through Mar 17](#)

nytheatre.com q&a preview by Luke Leonard, Producing Artistic Director of Monk Parrots February 23, 2013

What is your job on this show?
Director/Production Designer.

What is your show about?

Monk Parrots' world premiere of After An Earlier Incident: A Dyschronic Romeo and Juliet sets its sights on the classic star-crossed lovers, refracting their story to expose the past inside our present.

When did you know you wanted to work in the theater, and why?

I grew up an only child in Houston left to my imagination under the enormous Texas sky. I would keep busy by making performances, like when I asked my grandfather to build a wall with ankle and wrist straps, so that I could break free and reenact the final dance sequence from the movie, Staying Alive. He attached leather to a plywood sheet and placed it in the middle of a pasture. I set my boom box in the grass and asked for some privacy, though, I sensed he was watching from the window of their house, probably totally perplexed at this skinny kid in tube socks ripping himself from wood and leaping about. It was like an open rehearsal in grass under the sun, with water moccasins, blue racers, and quarter horses nearby, and a Nestle Crunch ice cream bar waiting for me in the freezer as remuneration. Theatre has been a part of me since an early age. Making theatre is a chance to celebrate the complexity, absurdity, and beauty of life. The only child in me, longing for siblings, appreciates theatre because it demands collaboration. My collaborators and colleagues are family.

Why do you do theater (as opposed to film, or TV, or something not in the entertainment field)?

I admire all arts and theatre brings them all together. It can appear simple on the surface, yet be complicated underneath and that tension excites me. I arrived at directing because it benefits from (and often combines) all of my interests in the fine arts, performance, design, writing, dramaturgy, and choreography. I learn something new with every production. Theatre teaches me about the world. I share a view with artists like Ad Reinhardt et al. that artists are very important to society and have a responsibility. I admire TV/film, but overall there seems to be less responsibility and concern regarding what is produced for popular culture. Art teaches people to think individually and for that reason theatre can be a very dangerous and meaningful place.

Why did you want to write/direct/produce/act in/work on this show?

AFTER AN EARLIER INCIDENT is based on the concept that we are haunted by the myth of Romeo and Juliet. The tale never dies and reflects the present. This approach presents challenges and questions, e.g., have we become desensitized to the story by continuing to repeat it? If something never dies, can we be nostalgic about it? Questions like these led us to the concept of Hauntology, a term coined by philosopher, Jacques Derrida. Do we have genuine feelings, or are we numb? Did the story of Romeo and Juliet die with Shakespeare's version? Can it be surpassed, or are we stuck with it? And if we are stuck with it can we become unstuck? The term "hauntology" started to be applied to electronic music around 2006, the same year that the Hearst Tower was completed, the first LEED certified skyscraper erected post 9-11 in NYC. The tower can be viewed as hauntological because it combines two facades, a 40 story modernist diagrid atop the original six-story art deco landmark. Together they form a whole, i.e., the past inside the present. We are adapting a text by David Todd, incorporating songs and electronic sampling, and we're very excited by the design elements. AEI should be a fun, strange, and beautiful show.

Which "S" word best describes your show: SMOOTH, SEXY, SMART, SURPRISING?

A word from the play: shitstorm.

How important is diversity to you in the theater you see/make?

Mac Wellman (a Monk Parrots advisory board member) said in an interview that the arts are "truly cosmopolitan." Diversity and discourse promote a healthy and democratic society and we hope our theatre can encourage that.

