

FRINGE ARTS

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Images available upon request

The dark side of an American classic

The Philadelphia-based theater company George & Co explores the violent lineage of The Catcher in the Rye

PHILADELPHIA – After a successful run in the Ice Factory Festival in New York, the Philadelphia-based director Anisa George brings *Holden* to the FringeArts stage. This journey into J.D. Salinger’s writing bunker runs from October 8-17 at 8pm at FringeArts’ waterfront headquarters, 140 N Columbus Blvd. (at Race St.). Tickets cost between \$14-20 and are available by phone at 215-413-1318 or online at FringeArts.com.

This devised, tragicomic play plumbs a darker dimension of J.D. Salinger’s coming-of-age novel *The Catcher in the Rye*. Two obsessive super-fans have taken up residence in Salinger’s private writing bunker. Unbeknownst to the reclusive author himself, their mission to get Salinger to publish once more spirals into a fevered bonfire of longing and delusion. “Compelling ...” said *The New York Times* of the Ice Factory run. “The entire production holds you in a disturbing grip.”

Inspired by her own obsession with Salinger’s writing, Anisa George set out to unpack the complex connection between *The Catcher in the Rye* and the violent acts committed in its name by John Hickley Jr., who attempted to assassinate Ronald Reagan, and Mark David Chapman, who murdered John Lennon. Both used the novel as a statement and explanation of their infamous crimes.

“When I found out that Salinger’s sequestered vault of manuscripts might be released this year, after fifty years of silence, I started to imagine and write about the world these writings would emerge from,” says writer and director Anisa George. “I was interested in how *The Catcher in the Rye*, a novel that was begun in the theater of WWII, could contain much of the sublimated trauma of Salinger’s experiences, trauma which might have passed through the character of Holden and resurfaced in the violent acts of a few deluded men. In creating *Holden*, the ensemble and I have created a space we think of as a bunker-of-the-mind. This bunker, our bunker, is where both creative and destructive acts are born.”

The relevance of *Holden* is intensified by recent highly public shootings in Charleston, Lafayette, and Chattanooga. An examination of a single gunman’s urge to kill strangers is at the heart of the play.

George & Co is a Philadelphia-based company, led by writer and director Anisa George. *Holden* features a cast of Philadelphia favorites, including Scott Sheppard, fresh off his Fringe Festival smash hit *Underground Railroad Game*, Matteo Scammell, and Jaime Maseda.

ABOUT ANISA GEORGE:

Anisa George is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Philadelphia-based company George & Co. She grew up performing with her parents' theater company, Touchstone Theater. In 2005 she graduated from Columbia University and was granted a Tow Fellowship to study theater in Iran. In 2008 she was granted the Jack Kent Cook Fellowship to pursue an MFA at the London International School of Performing Arts. Upon graduating in 2010, she founded George & Co. – a company dedicated to the creation of original theater and film. To date, she is the writer and director of several plays, documentaries and short films including “Animal Animal Mammal Mine” (Philadelphia International Festival of Arts), and “The Seer” (Nominated for Best Ensemble at the Edinburgh Fringe). She was a 2014 TCG – Global Connections grant recipient and has worked as a writer and director in Philadelphia with such organizations as Pig Iron Theater Company, Opera Philadelphia, The Bearded Ladies, and Swarthmore College.

ABOUT FRINGEARTS:

FringeArts is one of the country's foremost centers for contemporary performing arts, showcasing arts innovators from around the globe and cultivating world-class Philadelphia-based artists. FringeArts plays a vital role in Philadelphia's vibrant artistic community by presenting a year-round programming series of cutting-edge dance, theater, and music performances presented at its striking venue on the Delaware waterfront; the annual Fringe Festival which takes over Philadelphia with hundreds of artistically daring and socially engaging performances; and by providing opportunities for Philadelphia artists to develop and showcase new work. FringeArts believes in art making that tests boundaries—inspiring new ideas, passionate discussion and conceptual thinking, all essential for a healthy and vibrant society.

FACT SHEET FOR *HOLDEN*

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Thursday, October 8 | 8:00pm (Preview)

Friday, October 9 | 8:00pm (Opening)

Saturday, October 10 | 8:00pm

Sunday, October 11 | 8:00pm

Thursday, October 15 | 8:00pm

Friday, October 16 | 8:00pm

Saturday, October 17 | 8:00pm

CREDITS

Director & Writer: Anisa George

Performers & Co-Collaborators: Jaime Maseda, Matteo Scammell, Scott Sheppard, Bill George, Adele Goldader, and Madeline Charne

Holden is supported by a grant from the Wyncote Foundation, Amaranth Foundation, W. Beall Fowler, a residency at FringeArts, and developed, in part, at Ice Factory 2015, a program of New Ohio Theatre in New York.

TICKET INFORMATION

\$20 | \$15 (Student and under-25) | \$14 (Member)

Call 215-413-1318 or visit www.fringearts.com to purchase tickets.

CALENDAR LISTING (+/- 100 WORDS)

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To request photos, interviews and more information please contact:

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