

Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches

by Tony Kushner

Spring 2023

Who?

Producers: Corinne Evans, William An

Director: William An

Stage Managers: Cassandra Haakman and Coryell Smith

Preferred Contact Email: william.an@yale.edu

What?

The play is set in New York City in the mid-1980s during Reagan's presidency and follows a cast of characters as they grapple with queerness, religion, their relationships... all while the AIDS epidemic, the expectation of a new era of American society, and the decay of the natural environment create the sense that something big is coming with the new millennium: whether that's the death of old systems or the birth of a new one.

When?

Date of First Rehearsal: September 12, 2022

Current Tech Week Dates: February 12-16, 2023

Performance Dates: February 17-19, 2023

Overall Dates (First Rehearsal to Last Performance):

September 12, 2022 – February 19, 2023

Time Commitment

Weekly Estimated Time Commitments (in Hours):

The production as a whole will be rehearsing 4-6 hours in the fall and 6-8 hours in the spring prior to tech week (tech week: 3-4 hours per day, 21-28 hours total for the week); each individual actor, then, will likely have a lower time commitment than the hours listed here.

Content Warnings

- Death / discussions of death
- Drug and alcohol use
- Homophobia
- Racism
- Sexual scenarios
- Strong language
- Violence

Audition Expectations

Auditionees will be asked to prepare a monologue from the ones at the end of this document. It'll be a super chill, low-stakes 15-minute audition :)

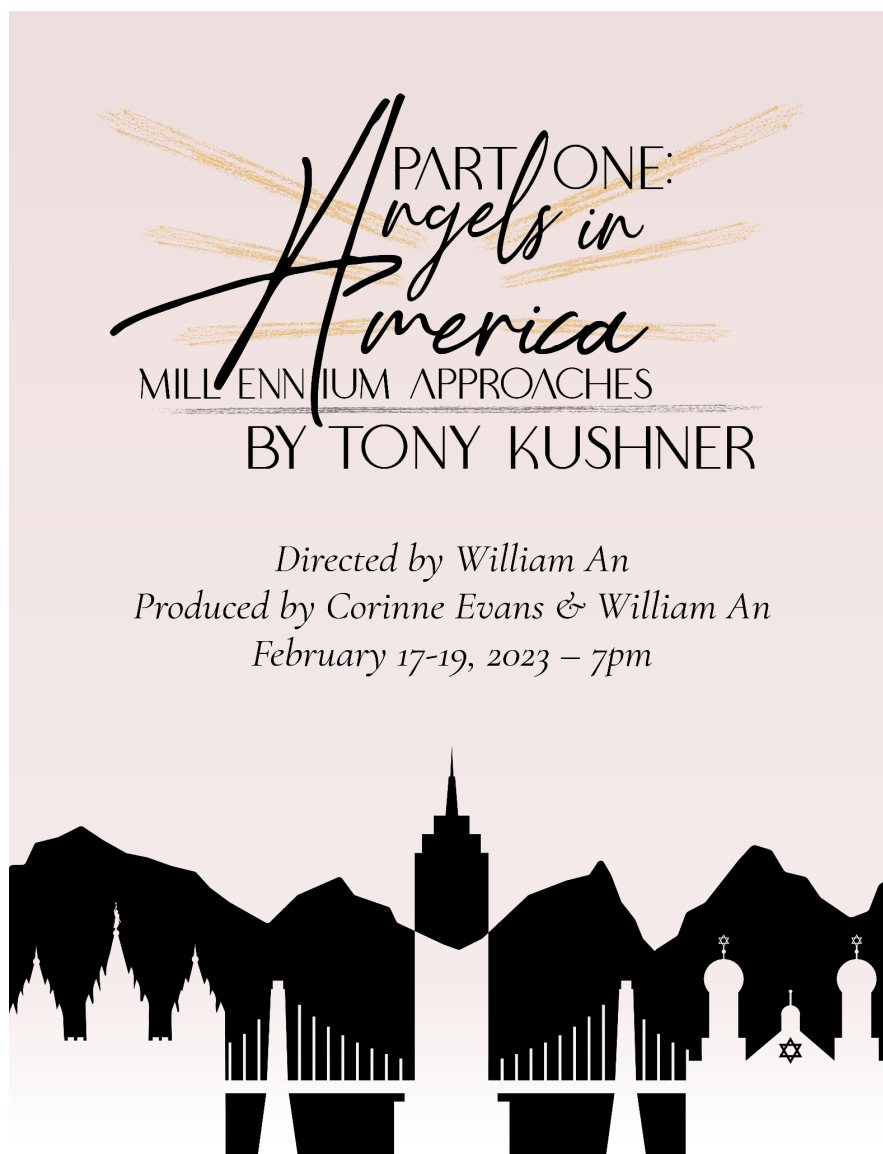
Please see page 10 for more details.

Audition Location(s)

Audition Dates and Times

Friday, September 2nd: 7-10pm
Saturday, September 3rd: 2-6pm
Sunday, September 4th: 3-6pm

All auditions will be held in **(Linsly-Chittenden Hall) LC 317**. If you would like to do a virtual Zoom audition, please contact us, and we will find a time :) william.an@yale.edu



Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches
A Gay Fantasia on National Themes

By Tony Kushner

February 17-19, 2023 — 7pm

Directed by William An
Produced by Corinne Evans and William An

Audition Packet and Information

Synopsis

Part One of Tony Kushner's sweeping set of epics, *Millennium Approaches* chronicles the intersecting stories of a cast of New York (and otherworldly) characters as they grapple with the AIDS epidemic, the social and political climate of the 1980s, and the approaching of the new millennium. As one of the characters, Harper, tells us: "everywhere, things are collapsing, lies surfacing, systems of defense giving way." While Harper's statement is about the world at large, it also rings true to the characters in the play as they face tumult in their own lives. In this atmosphere of uncertainty and decay, how, then, do we keep moving forward?

Kushner has subtitled his play, *A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*, which we can see in its scope and breadth with examining queerness and the entity of "America" through a range of lenses, from suffering to sacredness. In its blending of fantastical with familiar, ruin with repair, and conservatism with change, *Angels in America* tells that we, even in the darkest of times, can find community and comfort.

The show will run approximately 3.5 hours with two 15-minute intermissions.

Content Warnings

- Death / discussions of death
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- Homophobia
- Racism
- Sexual scenarios
- Strong language
- Violence

Contact Information

If at any point, you have questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to our director, William, at william.an@yale.edu. We will be thrilled to hear from you!! Truly :)

Tentative Timeline

August 28, 2022	YDC Season Preview
September 2-4, 2022	Auditions
September 5-6, 2022	Callbacks
September 11, 2022	Casting Day
September 12, 2022 - February 16, 2023	Rehearsals
January 22, 2023 (return from Winter Recess)	Off-Book Deadline
February 17-19, 2023	Performances!!

Production Philosophy, Goals, and Time Commitment

Our philosophy as a production prioritizes the well-being of our team above all else. We are aiming to create a low-stress and inclusive environment where we can all have a ton of fun and make art in a sustainable and healthy way.

The production as a whole will be rehearsing 4-6 hours in the fall and 6-8 hours in the spring prior to tech week (tech week: 3-4 hours per day, 21-28 hours total for the week); each individual actor, then, will likely have a lower time commitment than the hours listed here.

Because of the scope of the show (running approximately 3.5 hours with 3 acts, 26 scenes, and a combined total of 20 different characters), we want to be honest about the fact that there will be some work needed over breaks, though we will aim to minimize this. The work will consist of dramaturgical conversations, character/table-work, and, if necessary, virtual rehearsals. The hourly meeting commitment for each actor will not exceed 3-4 total hours over the course of each break (October, November, and Winter). We expect actors to memorize their lines throughout the rehearsal process and especially encourage you all to use breaks to do so. We will have plenty of support for actors to learn lines through “office hours.”

In addition to rehearsals, we will hold regular individual well-being check-ins to make sure everyone’s doing well and getting what they want out of the process. We also plan to hold (optional) team bonding and social activities as we are aiming to foster less of a “work” atmosphere when it comes to theatrical productions and form meaningful relationships.

The production will examine the text through the variety of lenses it provides us with to unpack the various social, political, and religious questions it poses. There will be a focus on character/table work and dramaturgical conversations and presentations. There will also be improv rehearsals where we will really strive to inhabit and understand these characters and their worlds.

Angels in America is widely regarded as one of the most influential plays of the last 50 years and a cornerstone of queer theatre and American literature. We hope that this process will be as insightful as it is rewarding and fun. There is much we can discuss, learn, and debate with this text through infinite avenues for creative and artistic expression. And we are gonna have a darn good time doing it.

Consent and Intimacy

As written in the script, the show features moments of heightened movement, intimacy, kissing, and sexual situations (see the character list in the following pages for which characters are involved). We are committed first to team well-being, and feeling safe and respected is an essential part of that well-being. Under no circumstance will anyone be asked to engage in an activity that they are uncomfortable with. In conversation with the director and stage managers, movement and intimacy will be scaled to ongoing actor comfortability and consent. Additionally, we plan to be working closely with an intimacy coordinator through Yale Undergraduate Production (UP) as well as adhere to [UP guidelines](#) when rehearsal material with sexual content and intimacy.

All team members are expected to uphold our values of safety and respect throughout the production process; this expectation applies during both rehearsals and auditions, as well as during any other production events or activities. For callbacks that require scene partners, boundaries must be established between auditionees. If you are thinking of engaging in any touching or potentially intimate movement, it must be discussed with your partner(s) before the scene begins.

Characters

Intimacy notes are subject to change based on actor comfortability. The following descriptions have been adapted from what is written in the script. Pronouns provided are what the script dictates, but are also subject to change based on director and cast conversations. We are looking to cast 8 actors, 7 of which can be of any ethnicity, and one must be played by a Black actor. We encourage anyone, regardless of experience and identities, to audition for our production!

Roy Cohn (he/him): a successful and influential New York City lawyer and unofficial power broker. Relentless and cunning; denies his sexuality and battle with AIDS.

- Also plays: Ghost of Prior II
- Intimacy Notes: embraces Joe

Joe Pitt (he/him): Chief clerk for Justice Theodore Wilson of the Federal Court of Appeals, Second Circuit. Mormon; Harper's husband; deeply closeted homosexual grappling with his sexuality and morality.

- Also plays: Ghost of Prior I
- Intimacy Notes: embraces Roy, kisses and embraces Harper, is kissed by Louis

Harper Pitt (she/her): Joe's wife, an agoraphobic with a mild Valium addiction. Visionary.

- Also plays: Martin Heller, a Reagan Administration Justice Department flackman
- Intimacy Notes: Kisses and embraces Joe

Louis Ironson (he/him): a word processor working for the Second Circuit Court of Appeals; talkative; Prior's boyfriend, who he ultimately leaves.

- Intimacy Notes: Kisses Joe, embraces/cuddles and kisses Prior, sexual encounter with Man in the Park

Prior Walter (he/him): Louis's boyfriend. Grapples with AIDS. Occasionally works as a club designer or caterer, otherwise lives very modestly but with great style off a small trust fund.

- Also plays: Man in the Park
- Intimacy Notes: embraces/cuddles and kisses Louis, embraces/cuddles and kisses Belize, sexual encounter with Louis

Hannah Pitt (she/her): Joe's mother, currently residing in Salt Lake City, living off her deceased husband's army pension.

- Also plays: Ethel Rosenberg, Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz, and Henry

Belize (he/him): a registered nurse and former drag queen whose name was originally Norman Arriaga; Belize is a drag name that stuck; identifies as Black.

- Also plays: Mr. Lies, Harper's imaginary friend who is a travel agent.
- Intimacy Notes: embraces/cuddles and kisses Prior

The Angel (she/her): Four divine emanations, Fluor, Phosphor, Lumen, and Candle; manifest in One: the Continental Principality of America.

- Also plays: Emily, Homeless Woman, Sister Ella Chapter

Audition Process

We encourage anyone, regardless of experience and identities, to audition for our production!

Audition monologues do not have to be memorized nor do they have to “make sense” in the context of the play (you can pretend the monologue exists in an artistic vacuum). We are looking for strong, interesting, and surprising choices. Are there particular threads of the text that excite you that you want to highlight? Are there areas that confuse you? Make you angry? Unspeakably happy? We want to see it all and you having fun with the text!

On the following pages, you’ll find the audition monologues you may select from. Please note—just because you select a particular monologue does not mean you will only be considered for that role. You will be considered for all the roles that you note you are comfortable playing.

During the audition, you will be asked to present your monologue, and then we will have a (very chill) conversation with you about your interests and thoughts on the text. Then, we will ask you to deliver the monologue again based on our conversation. You will be asked to try something different based on what we talked about. The audition will take no more than 15 minutes.

Auditions will be held at the following times:

Friday, September 2nd: 7-10pm

Saturday, September 3rd: 2-6pm

Sunday, September 4th: 3-6pm

All auditions will be held in **(Linsly-Chittenden Hall) LC 317**. If you would like to do a virtual Zoom audition, please let us know!

[Sign up for a timeslot here:](https://collegearts.yale.edu/opportunities/auditions/audition-angels-america-part-on-e-millennium-approaches)

<https://collegearts.yale.edu/opportunities/auditions/audition-angels-america-part-on-e-millennium-approaches>

If no time slots work for you, please contact our director, William, to schedule an alternative timeslot: william.an@yale.edu.

Break Legs!

(or perhaps, more aptly, Break Angel Wings! (๑^▽^๑)

Prior

I'm ready for my closeup, Mr. DeMille. One wants to move through life with elegance and grace, blossoming infrequently but with exquisite taste, and perfect timing, like a rare bloom, a zebra orchid . . . One wants . . . But one so seldom gets what one wants, does one? No. One does not.

One gets fucked. Over. One . . . dies at thirty, robbed of . . . decades of majesty . . .

Fuck this shit. Fuck this shit.

I look like a corpse. A . . . corpsette!

Oh my queen; you know you've hit rock-bottom when even drag is a drag.

Louis

You're a nurse, give me something, I . . . don't know what to do anymore, I . . . Last week at work I screwed up the Xerox machine like permanently and so I . . . Then I tripped on the subway steps and my glasses broke and I cut my forehead, here, see? And now I can't see much and my forehead—it's like the Mark of Cain, stupid, right, but it won't heal and every morning I see it and I think, Mark of Cain, Biblical things, people who . . . in betraying what they love betray what's truest in themselves, I feel . . . nothing but cold for myself, just cold. And every night I miss him, I miss him so much but then . . . those sores, and the smell and . . . where I thought it was going. I could be...I could be sick, too, maybe I'm sick, too. I don't know. Belize. Tell him I love him. Can you do that?

Harper

People who are lonely, people left alone, sit talking nonsense to the air, imagining . . . beautiful systems dying, old fixed orders spiraling apart. When you look at the ozone layer, from outside, from a spaceship, it looks like a pale blue halo, a gentle, shimmering aureole encircling the atmosphere encircling the earth. Thirty miles above our heads, a thin layer of three-atom oxygen molecules, product of photosynthesis, which explains the fussy vegetable preference for visible light, its rejection of darker rays and emanations. Danger from without. It's a kind of gift, from God, the crowning touch to the creation of the world: guardian angels, hands linked, make a spherical net, a blue-green nesting orb, a shell of safety for life itself. But everywhere, things are collapsing, lies surfacing, systems of defense giving way. This is why, Joe, this is why I shouldn't be left alone.

Joe

Stop it. Stop it. I'm warning you. Does it make any difference? That I might be one thing deep within, no matter how wrong or ugly that thing is, so long as I have fought, with everything I have, to kill it. What do you want from me? What do you want from me, Harper? More than that? For God's sake, there's nothing left, I'm a shell. There's nothing left to kill. As long as my behavior is what I know it has to be. Decent. Correct. That alone in the eyes of God. All I will say is that I am a very good man who has worked very hard to become good and you want to destroy that. You want to destroy me, but I am not going to let you do that.

Roy

Every day, doing what I do best, talking on the telephone, making sure that timid nebbish on the bench did his duty to America, to history. That sweet unprepossessing woman, two kids, boo-hoo-hoo, reminded us all of our little Jewish mamas—she came this close to getting life; I pleaded till I wept to put her in the chair. Me. I did that. I would have fucking pulled the switch if they'd have let me. Why? Because I fucking hate traitors. Because I fucking hate communists. Was it legal? Fuck legal. Am I a nice man? Fuck nice. They say terrible things about me in the Nation. Fuck the Nation. You want to be Nice, or you want to be Effective? Make the law, or subject to it. Choose. Your wife chose. A week from today, she'll be back. SHE knows how to get what SHE wants. Maybe I ought to send her to Washington.

Belize

“Real love isn’t ambivalent.” I’d swear that’s a line from my favorite bestselling paperback novel, *In Love with the Night Mysterious*, except I don’t think you ever read it. You ought to. Instead of spending the rest of your life trying to get through *Democracy in America*. It’s about this white woman whose daddy owns a plantation in the Deep South in the years before the Civil War—the American one—and her name is Margaret, and she’s in love with her daddy’s number-one slave, and his name is Thaddeus, and she’s married but her white slave-owner husband has AIDS: Antebellum Insufficiently Developed Sexorgans . . . Somewhere in there I recall Margaret and Thaddeus find the time to discuss the nature of love. Her face is reflecting the flames of the burning plantation—you know, the way white people do—and his black face is dark in the night; and she says to him, “Thaddeus, real love isn’t ever ambivalent.”

Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz

This woman. I did not know this woman. I cannot accurately describe her attributes, nor do justice to her dimensions. She was . . . Well, in the Bronx Home for Aged Hebrews are many like this, the old, and to many I speak but not to be frank with this one. She preferred silence. So I do not know her and yet I know her. She was . . . not a person but a whole kind of person, the ones who crossed the ocean, who brought with us to America the villages of Russia and Lithuania—and how we struggled, and how we fought, for the family, for the Jewish home.

...

You can never make that crossing that she made, for such Great Voyages in this world do not any more exist. But every day of your lives the miles that voyage between that place and this one you cross. Every day. You understand me? In you that journey is.

So . . . She was the last of the Mohicans, this one was. Pretty soon . . . all the old will be dead.