

PHROGZ

BY ARISTOPHANES | PETER MEINECK TRANSLATION |
DIRECTED BY JESSICA WASTCHAK | ADAPTED BY THE COMPANY

FEATURING:
LA CIBENCA WINE TASTING
PARODIES OF SONGS BY AC/DC, BARTH, WIND AND FIRE,
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & MORE AS PERFORMED BY
"THE MEBRKATS"

AUGUST 8-10
7PM

3053 LINCOLN AVE IN ALTAMUNDA, CA

a frayed knot



FRAYED KNOT COLLECTIVE

PRESENTS

PHROGZ

WRITTEN BY ARISTOPHANES

TRANSLATED BY PETER MEINECK

ADAPTED BY THE COMPANY

Directed By Jessica Wastchak

Assistant Directed by Daniel Baesler

Lead Producer: Max Newman

Produced By:

Daniel Baesler, Gabriella Cain, Olivia Geimer, Jeremy Guskin,
Olivia Keville, Charlie Melkonian, Anna Meo, Niraj Nair, Jakob
Newman, Katja Newman, Sam Newman, Micah Rauchon, Mya
Rosado-Tran, Joey Rothstein, Ian Ryan, Tuffet Schmelzle, Walker
Schneckenberger, Maddie Schumacher, Alicia Steinmann, Malia
Varela, Jessica Wastchak



A Note from Max and Jess:

Welcome all, to our show.

What you are about to see, currently seeing, or have seen is the result of a blessed collaboration the likes of which we have never encountered in our entire life. We have collaborated with the near & the far, the young & the old, and the living & the dead to bring you this production which we are calling PHROGZ.

The text and musical accompaniment of this show are an amalgamation of four vastly different voices.

1. A long-deceased Athenian dramatist, Aristophanes who wrote Frogs to commemorate the brutal loss of Athenians in the Spartan war, while also allowing citizens a comedic escape from daily life.
2. Our Professor and head of the classics department at NYU, Peter Meineck, who graciously allowed us to use his brilliant translation and make it our own. Many of the songs we have parodied came from Meineck's text and provided the foundation for a story about a god who has chosen to inhabit a rockstar and is fading in fame and recognition.
3. Our absurdly talented band, the Meetkats, who not only breathes new life into iconic songs but also brings new meaning to musical artistry.
4. 15 NYU students, and friends, who rallied around an idea.

Every part of this show was thoughtfully placed by one of these four voices. We encourage you to ponder what comes from what, you'll rarely find the correct answer.

Trust us when we say that blood, sweat, and tears went into turning Frogs into PHROGZ, but we are honored to share all that we have tirelessly worked on with you all tonight. Thank you to everyone who made this show possible and thank YOU for joining us. Grab a glass of La Cienega wine, sit back, relax, and enjoy Frayed Knot Collective's production of PHROGZ!

SHOW ORDER

Prologue: Everyone Have a Glass of Wine?

Scene 1: Dionysos Has a Plan

Scene 2: The Journey Begins

Highway to Hell by AC/DC

Scene 3: The Initiates

Devotion by Earth, Wind and Fire

Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now by McFadden and Whitehead

My Sweet Lord by George Harrison

Fantasy by Earth, Wind and Fire

Scene 4: A Battle

Scene 5: The Parabasis

Summer Breeze by Earth, Wind and Fire

Backstabbers by The O'Jays

Scene 6: ~~The Plan~~ New Plan

Scene 7: Turmoil in Hades

Jailhouse Rock by Elvis Presley

Dream a Little Dream of Me by Ella Fitzgerald

Mean by Taylor Swift

Scene 8: The Epiphany

Scene 9: The Rising

Cheek to Cheek by Ella Fitzgerald

The Rising by Bruce Springsteen

Epilogue

CAST

In Order of Appearance

<i>The Meerkats</i> -----	Bruno Bernal, Aidan Delaney, Shane Delaney
Xanthias/Chorus -----	Olivia Keville
Dionysos -----	Max Newman
Herakles/Guard/K. Cobain/Chorus -----	Daniel Baesler
Charon/Freddie/Corpse/Guard/Chorus -----	Niraj Nair
Doorman/Innkeeper/Sinatra/Chorus -----	Joey Rothstein
Handmaid/Initiate/Selena/Chorus -----	Malia Varela
Plathane/Amy/Dancer/Initiate/Chorus -----	Walker Schneckenberger
Taylor/Initiate/Chorus -----	Anna Meo
Ella/Initiate/Chorus -----	Micah Rauchon
Empousa/Madonna/Initiate/Chorus -----	Olivia Geimer
Hades/Guard/Chorus -----	Charlie Melkonian

PRODUCTION/CREATIVE

Director/Producer -----	Jessica Wastchak
Assistant Director -----	Daniel Baesler
Lead Producer -----	Max Newman
Music Director -----	Charlie Melkonian
Choral Music Director -----	Olivia Geimer
Stage Managers -----	Gabriella Cain, Alicia Steinmann
Technical Direction -----	Ian Ryan
Lighting Designer -----	Niraj Nair
Costume Designer -----	Aly Hernandez
Dramaturgy/Assistant Costume Design -----	Mya Rosado-Tran
Dramaturgy -----	Peter Meineck, Maddie Schumacher

GREEK MYTHOLOGY



Dionysos

DIONYSOS (JIM MORRISON)

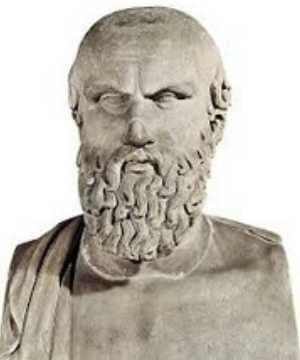
DIONYSOS, The God of Fertility and Wine, is considered a real “patron of the arts.” He has two sides: one that brings joy and divine ecstasy or one that brings rage. **JIM MORRISON** is the epitome of Dionysos, a “god of wine” unto himself. Morrison too submits to the temptation of the world’s vices in pursuit of a thrill. The two are a double-edged sword of charisma and chaos, always searching for a form of ecstasy and release in their work, no matter the cost.



Herakles

HERAKLES (JOHN LENNON)

HERAKLES, The Demi-God of Merchants and Traders, is the half-brother of Dionysos and known as the “strong man.” A fellow Olympian and meddler in mortal affairs, Herakles guides Dionysos on his journey. His embodiment through **JOHN LENNON** parallels his Herculean influence. Although he has used his lived experiences to help friends, behind the scenes he did not practice the message of “peace and love” he often preached.

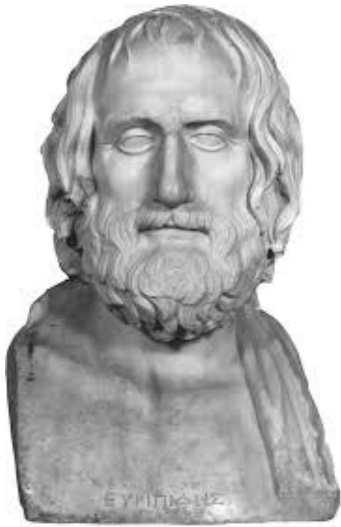


Aeschylus

AESCHYLUS (ELLA FITZGERALD)

AESCHYLUS - A long deceased playwright considered the father of Athenian drama. Originally this role was written for an older white man (like so many roles) and we decided we wanted an iconic female musician who has similarly brought people together through their relationship to art. **ELLA FITZGERALD**, like Aeschylus, is incredibly important to the art of the past and the present. She has set a foundational vocal Jazz standard for generations to come. Despite her legacy, and akin to Aeschylus, Fitzgerald is often overlooked as an artist in lieu of more contemporary ones.

GREEK MYTHOLOGY



Euripides

EURIPIDES (TAYLOR SWIFT)

EURIPIDES is a recently deceased contemporary playwright, whose death incites Dionysos' journey to the underworld.

Euripides has a warped view on what his art means to the world, and prioritizes himself over his readers. In this production, **TAYLOR SWIFT**, like Euripides, is a storyteller whose art has affected the masses, but has been criticized for taking advantage of her fans with ungodly merchandise and ticket prices. For this reason, Dionysos seeks to bring back the "Old Taylor" (who's "dead", as per the lyrics of her song "Look What You Made Me Do").

HADES (ELVIS PRESLEY)

HADES. The God of the Underworld. The one who has the final say between **AESCHYLUS (ELLA FITZGERALD)** or **EURIPIDES (TAYLOR SWIFT)** succeeding him as the resident musician of Hades. He is personified as **ELVIS PRESLEY**, a legend, a powerful force, and an untouchable celebrity who is often referred to as "The King" but has been controversial for his (lack of) morality and abuse of power.



Hades

BIOGRAPHIES



Daniel Baesler - Herakles/K. Cobain/Chorus

Daniel Baesler (he/him) is an NYC-based actor, writer and composer. Trained in Practical Aesthetics at NYU's Atlantic Acting School, he recently performed Off-Broadway credits in Sophocles's *Women of Trachis*, Lorca's *Blood Wedding* and Tannahill's *Concord Floral*. He also recently played Ren in Broadstreet Player's production of *Footloose: the Musical*. As a self-taught composer, he created music for Viscera Theater Collective's inaugural production of *Lost Girl*. He is a founding member of the Frayed Knot Collective and is thrilled to be a part of this production!



Bruno Bernal - Bass

hi my name is bruno! i'm a musician from la and i'm going to music school in manhattan. i love performing music and i'm super excited to be joining the cast for phrogz!



Gabriella Cain - Co-Stage Manager

Gabriella Cain (she/her) is a NYC based actor and stage manager currently training at New York University for Drama. She has studied with Atlantic Acting School and Stonestreet Studios during her time at NYU. Gabriella is so overjoyed to be working with Frayed Knot Collective as the co-stage manager for *PHROGZ!* Her previous stage managing credits include *Lost Girl* (Viscera Theater Collective), *13 Nights in the Woods Somewhere North of Lake Michigan* (The Tank), and *Footloose* (Broad Street Players). Enjoy the show! <https://www.gabriella-cain.com/>.



Aidan Delaney - Lead Guitar

Aidan Delaney (they/them) is a songwriter, vocalist, guitarist, and producer in Los Angeles and Boston. Currently, Aidan is studying at the Berklee College of Music in their second year. They are a founding member of their band, Meerkats, writing and performing with them since 2019. Aidan loves creating in any form and their goal with music is to be in touch with themselves, reach out to others, and advocate for contemporary issues.



Shane Delaney - Drums

Shane Delaney (he/him) is a songwriter, guitarist, vocalist, and drummer in Los Angeles, California. Shane spends most of his time writing songs and playing shows. Shane is a founding member of his band, Meerkats, writing and performing with them since 2019. Shane has studied at Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. His goal with music is to bring artistic visions to life, whether they are his or a collaborator's.



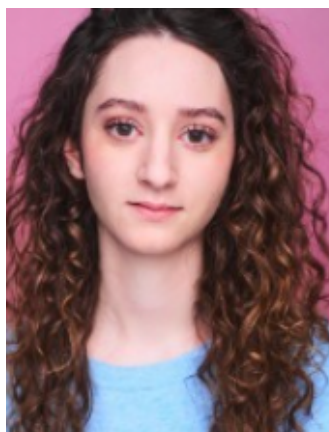
Olivia Geimer - Choral Director & Empousa/Madonna/Initiate/Chorus

Olivia is a Chicago-native actress, singer, and dancer affectionately known as Ollie by her friends. She is entering her final year at NYU Tisch as a Drama major with recent credits including *Concord Floral* (Atlantic Acting School) and *Shy of Sure* (Playwrights Horizons). She is a proud co-marketing director for Frayed Knot Collective and is so excited to be a part of its inaugural production! oliviageimer.com



Aly Hernandez - Costume Designer

Aly Hernandez is a Mexican-American costume designer based in NYC. She started as an actress, studying at NYU Tisch with the Atlantic Acting School. Now when she's not on stage, she designs costumes for those who are. She loves highlighting the actor's individuality through the world of the play. Recent works include costumes for *Timon of Athens* (The Elif Collective) and *Lost Girl* (Viscera Theatre Collective).



Olivia Keville - Xanthias/Chorus

Olivia Keville (she/her) is an NYC based actor, director, and writer who is currently going into her senior year at NYU for her BFA in acting and has trained with the Atlantic Acting School. She is thrilled to be in her first Frayed Knot production as an avid lover of classical plays and rowdy humor, and welcomes the west coast air for this incredible production.

Charlie Melkonian - Music Director &

Hades/Guard/Chorus

Charlie Melkonian is an actor born and based in New York City. Charlie started his acting training in his home city at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts where he studied at the Atlantic Acting School. Alongside NYU's BFA program, Charlie has also studied the Meisner Technique in the William Esper Studio's Two Year Program. When Charlie is not acting, he enjoys singing and playing guitar, writing, hanging out with his friends, and of course, eating.

Anna Meo - Dance Captain & Taylor/Chorus

Anna Meo is a New York City-based actor and singer. She is currently getting her BFA in Drama from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Anna is ecstatic to be a part of Frayed Knot Collective's inaugural production of Phrogz! Her most recent credits include Kimberly Bellflower's *Lost Girl* (Wendy), *Footloose* (Rusty), and Lorca's *Blood Wedding* (Maid). Anna would like to thank the entire cast and crew of Phrogz for making this such a joyful and memorable experience.

Niraj Nair - Lighting Designer &

Charon/Freddie/Corpse/Guard/Chorus

Niraj Nair is perpetually homesick. He was born to Indian parents and grew up in the UAE, Australia and Singapore. He is currently a BFA Drama student at NYU Tisch, and trained at the RADA in London. New York credits: *Hospitality* (Ronnie) at Ensemble Studio Theatre, *Lost Girl* (Slightly) with Viscera Theatre Collective, and *Middletown* (Public Speaker) at NYU. London credits: *Cachés: Clé à Dali* (Salvador Dali) (*World Premiere*) with Anastasiya Yevchenko and *The Winter's Tale* (Leontes) at RADA. IG: @niraj00971

Max Newman - Producer & Dionysos

Max Newman is an actor, producer, writer, director, and chef from Manhattan Beach, CA who has been performing since he was 9 years old. Theatre credits include: *Middletown*, by Will Eno (Mechanic); *Blood Wedding*, by Federico Garcia Lorca (Moon/Groom); *Lost Girl*, by Kimberly Bellflower (Doctor). He is the founding Artistic Director of Frayed Knot Collective.



Micah Rauchon - Ella/Initiate/Chorus

Micah Rauchon is a New York based performer and artist. She started theater at the age of five and has explored all sides of it since. From acting to writing Micah finds love in all things artistic. Working on Phrogz has given her the opportunity not only to be a part of the beginnings of a beautiful company but to learn more about music and music history. The journey she's gone on with this cast is one she will never forget.



Mya Rosado-Tran - Dramaturgy/Assistant Costume Designer

Mya Rosado-Tran has been quite fulfilled working behind the scenes of Phrogz, finding a passion in her new favorite job title: half Dramaturg half assistant Costume Designer! She recently made her off-Broadway debut with The Great Gatsby Immersive, then traveled where the show debuted in London to study at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. A born and raised New Yorker, she's passionate about all things fashion and theater, keen to paint the creative scene of her generation alongside her peers.



Joey Rothstein - Doorman/Innkeeper/Sinatra/Chorus

Joey is an actor who recently graduated from NYU Tisch where he studied Drama and Film. He grew up in New Hampshire with his parents and brothers and sister. He wants to thank his family, teachers, and friends who have supported him through his journey, and the opportunity to perform in Phrogz. In addition to his family and his dog, Joey loves cookies, cake, and candy



Ian Ryan - Technical Director

Hey I'm Ian the technical director. I've been working theatre tech for 7 years now and have branched out too a lot of different areas to bring theatre alive. Currently I'm a pyrotechnic at Universal Studios Hollywood and for the Anaheim Angeles. I plan to be a certified special effects artist within the next couple years. I also hope to move these passions towards the streets of New York in the near future. Thank you for coming, enjoy the show!



Walker Schneckenberger -

Plathane/Amy/Dancer/Initiate/Chorus

Walker Schneckenberger is a bicoastal actor, director, and singer. She is currently pursuing her BFA at NYU Tisch Drama and is so excited to be a part of Frayed Knot's inaugural production. It's been a pleasure working alongside talented artists and friends and help to creat this fantastic show!



Maddie Schumacher - Dramaturgy

Born and raised in New York City, Maddie Schumacher is an actress and creative nonfiction writer. She graduated from the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School in the Drama Studio and continues to study acting at NYU Tisch under the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute. Maddie is so excited to be a part of A Frayed Knot's inaugural production of Phrogz. Love and light to cast and creative team!



Alicia Steinmann - Co-Stage Manager

Alicia Steinmann she/her is a rising senior at New York University's Tisch School for the Arts, majoring in Drama. At NYU, she has trained with the Atlantic Acting School (recent credits include Blood Wedding and Sisters on the Ground), and will continue her studies at Stonestreet Studios. Alicia is ecstatic to be part of Frayed Knot Collective's inaugural show. Thanks to everyone in the cast and crew for an unforgettable experience with PHROGZ! aliciasteinmann.com



Malia Varela - Handmaid/Selena/Initiate/Chorus

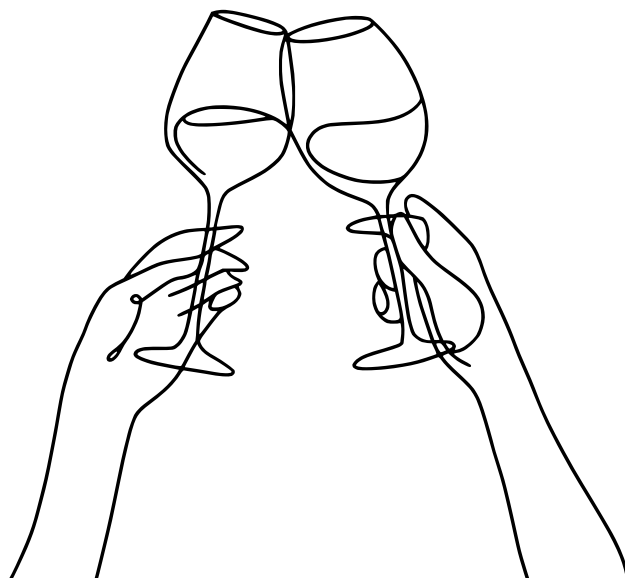
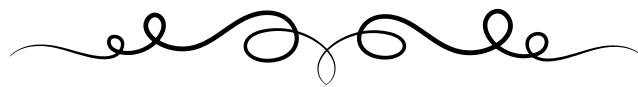
Malia Varela is a New York City born and raised actress pursuing a BFA in Drama at New York University. She has recently performed as Bride in Blood Wedding by Federico Garcia Lorca and Julia in Fefu and Her Friends by Maria Irene Fornes through Atlantic Acting School. Malia is also the Co-Marketing Director of Frayed Knot Collective. She is so excited to bring this inaugural production to life, combining two passions of marketing and performing.



Jessica Wastchak - Director/Producer

Jessica Wastchak (Jess to most) is thrilled to be directing and producing Frayed Knot's inaugural production! Growing up as a performer, Jess loves all things artistic. She grew up as a musical theatre kid through and through, but switched over to acting when she began her training at NYU in the Atlantic Studio. She has recently found a deep passion for directing and after co-directing *Lost Girl in the Spring*, she is honored to be making PHROGZ her solo directorial debut. She would like to thank her Mom, Dad, Sister and Best Friend for their unwavering support, the Newman family for their astounding generosity, and the entire cast and creative team of PHROGZ for every moment of their hard work and commitment throughout this process.

Thanks for joining us!





La Cienega is a family-run vineyard, located in Sonoma County's renowned Alexander Valley. We are women-owned and led, certified sustainable, and grow premium Cabernet Sauvignon grapes.

LaCienegaVineyard.com



The Meerkats



 Apple Music

The Meerkats is the creative songwriting project of Shane and Aidan Delaney. Formed in 2019, they have been playing all around LA's South Bay and gone through many sonic evolutions throughout with many different members. Cementing their sound in 2021 with influence from modern psych bands, post-punk, prog-rock and a healthy dose of noise, The Meerkats capture themes of socio-political and environmental strife through creative storytelling, infectious musical chemistry, tight rhythms, and raw expression.

@meerkatsband
themeerkatband@gmail.com
310-465-3650

Up Next...

FRAYED KNOT COLLECTIVE

PRESENTS

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT BY STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS

PRESENTED BY
FRAYED KNOT COLLECTIVE

PERFORMING AT
ROBERT MOSS THEATER
440 LAFAYETTE STREET, NYC

AUGUST 22-24 7PM
AUGUST 25 2PM

PRODUCER
MAX FERMIN

ARTWORK BY OMAR ASPRILLA
WWW.OMARASPRILLA.COM

DIRECTOR
MATAN HAMAM

ASSISTANT PRODUCER
PABLO CARDONA

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
DILARA NASKA

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