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La MaMa e.t.c.  
presents

**LUNATICS'  
BALL**



written by **CLAUDIA MENZA**

direction, set design & video by **HAROLD DEAN JAMES**

The First Floor at La MaMa  
74A East 4th Street, NYC, 10003  
June 9 thru June 25, 2006

Thursday thru Saturday @ 8PM & Sunday @ 2:30PM & 8PM

# ***LUNATICS' BALL***

by  
Claudia Menza

Direction, Set Design, Video  
Harold Dean James

Lighting  
Tony Mulanix

Costumes  
Ramona Ponce

Video/Props  
Yasmine Soiffer

Stage Manager  
Karen Oughtred

## **THANK YOU:**

Jaymie Meyer, Donna Kennedy, Imogene Drummond, Yasmine Soiffer, Stella Venner, Paul Albe, Wayne Kral, Dennis Diamond and Video D Studios, Michael P. Hesse, Susan Shapiro, Tony Mulanix, Ramona Ponce, and to the cast and crew who made my seventh show at LaMaMa, effortless.

## **SPECIAL THANKS:**

First and foremost my Source, Ellen Stewart and staff and Karen Oughtred.

**STELLA VENNER (Ensemble)** hails from Seattle where she enjoyed the panoramic views and hanging out with her dog before she moved to Mexico and became a guitar-playing, song-writing, Mexican-slang-speaking beach bum for 3 years. After a few brief stints in exotic locales such as Hawaii, Miami, and Lake Okoboji, Iowa (???) she has come to the Big Apple in pursuit of: *a)* discovering the mystery of pothole covers that electrocute people and their dogs; *b)* the joy of hanging out in front of corner bodegas at 3am; *c)* the insanity that is working with Harold and his crazy actor friends. Much love to Mom.

**CEZAR WILLIAMS\* (Earnest, Luis, LaDenise, Bill)** is very proud that *The Lunatics' Ball* is his fourth production at La MaMa e.t.c. Other theater credits include *James and Annie* at the Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, *Love Psalm* at Ensemble Studio Theatre, and *Possessed* at HERE Arts Center. Television credits include *One Life to Live* and *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*. He would like to express his sincere appreciation to Harold, Claudia, Karen and his wonderful wife Cynthia for all their support. It has been an absolute pleasure for him to work with such an awesomely talented cast and crew. God is good...all the time. All the time...God is good!

**CLAUDIA MENZA (Playwright)** is a native New Yorker. She is the author of two books of poetry, *Cage of Wild Cries* and *The Lunatics' Ball*. Her "Poem for Miles Davis" appears in *The Dream Book: An Anthology of Writing by Italian-American Women*, and won an American Book Award. Her poem "You Say You Like the Country" will appear in the anthology *I Speak of the City: Poems of New York*, in 2007. *Hermes* is her current nonfiction project, and *A Good Knight's Leap* a novel written with her late husband, the writer Charles Frye. She has performed her poetry and dramatic monologues throughout the United States, and toured the UK in *The Claudia and Charles Show*. Menza was the Assistant Editor of *Evergreen Review*, the Managing Editor of *Grove Press* and is a partner in the Menza-Barron Agency. She is the Chair and serves on the Board of the Prison Writing Committee of PEN American Center and is a member of The Academy of American Poets and the Association of Authors' Representatives and is listed in *Who's Who*.

**HAROLD DEAN JAMES (Director, Set Designer, Video)** directed *The Lunatics' Ball* as a staged reading in Queens Theatre in the Park three years ago and is pleased to bring it to La MaMa e.t.c. As a director, he also helped bring to life Frank Damico's *First Kill* (1996). As writer and director Harold first came to La MaMa in 1994 with *X Train*. Since then he has written and directed *Dance Card* (1996), *Call Backs* (1998), *What Happened to Me* (2000) and *The Good Faith* (2003). Harold is the founding director of We Three Productions, which develops and produces plays and also began, in 1995 with Wayne Kral, The Library Lounge reading series. Harold is a recipient of a New York Foundation of the Arts Fellowship. He is thrilled to be working with dear friends again, especially Lynn, from college eight years ago,.....he thinks.

**TONY MULANIX (Lighting Designer)** has designed extensively off Broadway & off off Broadway. Selected works include: *Wolfpit, Broken Journey, The Trial* (Phoenix Theatre Ensemble), *The Good Faith, First Kill, What Happened to Me, Callbacks* (La MaMa e.t.c.), *'Twas The Night Before The Twelve Days Of A Nut Cracker Christmas Carol*, (P.S.122), *Labapalooza / Purity Tank*, (St. Ann's Warehouse), *The Merchant of Venice, Medea* (Jean Cocteau Repertory), *The Skin of Our Teeth* (evidEnce room, LA), *Happy Birthday Wanda June* (Actors Gang, LA), *Elegies* (The Canon Theatre, LA), *Echo System: Action Station II – The Desert* (Carnegie Mellon), *Electric Haiku-Calm As Custard* (Cathy Weis, Flynn Space, Burlington, VT), *Lucie de Lammermoor* (Associate Lighting Designer/Boston Lyric Opera & Glimmerglass Opera), and *Laude in Urbis* (Compagnia de' Columbaria, Forli, Italy).

**RAMONA PONCE (Costume Designer)** started her stage career at the Ridiculous Theatrical Company. She has long-time associations with various artists at LaMaMa e.t.c., the T.W.E.E.D. Theater Group, Immigrants Theatre Project, film director Virginie Danglades and a host of Big Pretty Ladies around the world. Her artwork has appeared in galleries in New York and Arizona. She is co-authoring "Drinkology: EATS" with the urbane and witty James Waller. She never met a rhinestone she didn't like.

**YASMINE SOIFFER (Video/Props)** is currently pursuing studies in photography at the International Center of Photography, and working on a project on the collapsed Rivington Street Synagogue, among others. This is her first show with We Three Productions. As a member of the Great Jones Repertory, she appeared in *Perseus, Dionysus Filius Dei, Antigone, Mythos Oedipus*, and *Seven Against Thebes*. She wishes to thank Harold for the wall.

**KAREN OUGHTRED (Stage Manager)** is Artistic Director of the Australian Aboriginal Theatre Initiative (NY), which develops dialogues between indigenous artists. She is a graduate of New Actors Workshop and gained her MA at Antioch Uni. Karen is a director, drama teacher, mask maker and puppeteer, who also creates, directs and performs in museum theatre. Currently Production Stage Manager at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and for a variety of theatre and dance companies in New York. She is pleased to be working at La MaMa yet again.

**PAUL ALBE \* (Mario Battelliere)** joins Harold and friends for his fifth LaMaMa show. He has also performed at Papermill Playhouse, Stamford Theatre Works, Ohio Theatre, HB Playwrights, and Don't Tell Mama's. He has played principal roles on TV including, *The Sopranos, Sex and the City, Law and Order, Ed*, and *Feds*. Film roles in *She Hate Me, Henry Fool, Lonely in America, Auf Wiedersehen America, The Book of Life, Man About Town, Hollow World*, and *8 & 1/2x11*.

**DANIEL CLYMER (Josh, Jimbo, Kevin)** is happy to be sharing the stage at LaMaMa with these lunatics, some for the first time and others once again. He has performed in other theaters as well including The Ensemble Theater, Dance Theater Workshop, HERE and Nada. He is at work on two plays; one a collaboration with his writing partner Erika Dionisio and one on his own.

**LYNN ELDREDGE \* (Agnes, Polly, Fleur)** comes direct from a four-year run as "Earth Mother" in *Menopause the Musical*, and can be heard on the NY recording. Other credits include: Broadway's *On the Waterfront*, "Mrs. Claus" in Radio City's *Christmas Spectacular*, *The Secret Garden* (National Tour), and Off-Broadway: *The Rothchilds, Hysterical Blindness*, and *Charlotte Sweet* (also original recording). Regional theatres include Goodspeed Opera, Ford's Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, Pioneer Theatre, Cape Playhouse, Walnut Street, & American Musical Theatre. Earlier this year, Lynn was nominated for the first annual Kevin Kline Award for "Domina" in St. Louis Rep's production of *A Funny Thing ... Forum*. In this theatre, Lynn portrayed the bereaved "Mistress" in *Etiquette* directed by John Vaccaro, and is delighted to be back at LaMaMa. Thank you Harold.

**JOY KELLY \* (Elaine, Chantal, Sadie)** is a professional storyteller as well as an actor and director. Her TV credits include appearances on *One Life to Live, All My Children* and *Late Night with David Letterman*. As a storyteller Ms. Kelly has performed numerous one woman shows in various venues - most recently she performed at the Tribeca Family Festival and at The Brooklyn Museum. She has also done storytelling on Manhattan Cable. Ms. Kelly also directs for the critically acclaimed Theatreworks, USA .