



## American Repertory Theater

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### AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER ADDS “DRAGON MAMA” WITH SARA PORKALOB

#### TO VIRTUALLY OBERON SERIES

Virtual Premiere Thursday, November 12 at 7:30PM  
of the Elliot Norton Award Winning Production To Stream On Demand Through December 10

[{Dragon Mama Photos for Download}](#)

**Cambridge, MA—American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University**, under the leadership of Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus and Executive Producer Diane Borger, announces today that the **Virtually OBERON** lineup now includes the digital stream of **Dragon Mama**, premiering Thursday, November 12 at 7:30PM.

Written and performed by award-winning storyteller, playwright, and activist Sara Porkalob and directed by Andrew Russell, **Dragon Mama** stands alone as a complete theatrical event while serving as the second chapter of Porkalob’s **Dragon Cycle** trilogy honoring her family: three generations of Filipino Americans descended from gangsters and karaoke singers fighting to survive, thrive, and love. Porkalob received the 2019 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding New Script for **Dragon Mama**, as well as the 2019 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Solo Performance for **Dragon Lady** and **Dragon Mama**, which she performed in repertory March 20 - April 7, 2019 as part of the **A.R.T. Breakout** series.

Tickets to the November 12 virtual premiere include access to a pre-show celebration beginning at 7PM, bringing audience members together in this time of isolated viewing.

As part of **The Wellspring**, a partnership with the Harvard Center for Wellness and Health Promotion (CWHP), Porkalob will lead a free wellness workshop to foster connection and well-being in this period of social isolation—details will be announced at a later date.

#### **TICKETING INFORMATION**

Household tickets at \$30 with a pay-what-you-can option are available now at [AmericanRepertoryTheater.org](http://AmericanRepertoryTheater.org).

#### **ABOUT DRAGON MAMA**

How does a Dragon earn her wings? Maria Porkalob, Jr., yearns for a gayer, more POC-filled life than Bremerton, WA, can offer. When presented with an opportunity to make a quick fortune, Maria must make an important decision: leave her debt-ridden mother, four young siblings, and newborn daughter Sara for the wild unknown of Alaska, or stay close to home, family, and intergenerational trauma. Traversing 25 years filled with queer love in a barren land, the 2019 Elliot Norton Award-winning **Dragon Mama** features ghosts, Filipino gangsters, and a dope '90s R&B soundtrack.

#### **CRITICAL PRAISE FOR SARA PORKALOB AND DRAGON CYCLE**

“An opportunity to see an actor of extraordinary talent, intellect, and heart.” – Jared Bowen, WGBH

“In Porkalob’s plays, storytelling is an act of transformation.” – WBUR *The ARtery*

“Remarkable! Sara Porkalob is a multi-hyphenate wonder. Experiencing her remarkable show is akin to taking a master class from a superhero... The Wonder Woman takes us on a journey through time and space.” – Linda Chin, *The Theater Mirror*

“A stunning experience and shouldn’t be missed! A new high-water mark for one-person shows. Not only is she a brilliant writer...but her detailed characterizations of over a dozen highly differentiated characters in the story is mind-blowing.” – Mike Hoban, *The Theater Mirror* Quick Take

“Hilarious, shocking, touching, tragic, inspiring, and heartbreaking. A master class in storytelling and memoir-based cabaret.” – *Edge Boston*

### **ABOUT SARA PORKALOB**

**Sara Porkalob** (she/her) is an artist-activist and creator of the ***Dragon Cycle***. She is based in Seattle but soon will be working all over the nation. Awards and nominations include: 2020 nominee Seattle Mayor’s Arts Award, *Seattle Times* “11 Movers and Shakers to Watch this Decade, 2019 nominee for Americans for the Arts Johnson Fellowship for Artists Transforming Communities, *Seattle Magazine*’s 2018’s Most Influential People, and 2017 City Art’s Futures List. She is a co-founder of *DeConstruct*, an online journal of intersectional performance critique. She will make her Broadway debut as Edward Rutledge in the A.R.T./Roundabout Theatre Company revival of **1776**.

***Dragon Lady***, the first in the ***Dragon Cycle*** trilogy, received three 2018 Gregory Awards: Outstanding Sound/Music Design, Outstanding Actress in a Musical, and Outstanding Musical Production. The second, ***Dragon Mama***, premiered at American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) and received 2019 Elliot Norton Awards for Best Original Script and Best Solo Performance. A.R.T. has commissioned the third, ***Dragon Baby***, for a future season.

For the last two years, Porkalob has been a consultant for the City of Seattle and its Creative Strategies Initiative (CSI), a new City effort that uses arts- and culture-based approaches to build racial equity in non-arts policy areas like the environment, housing, workforce, and community development. Earlier this year, Cafe Nordo produced her queer Victorian revenge thriller, *The Angel in the House* and Artswest will produce her new play *Alex & Alix* sometime next year. For more information, visit [SaraPorkalob.com](http://SaraPorkalob.com).

### **ABOUT VIRTUALLY OBERON**

A.R.T.’s **Virtually OBERON** series features streamed productions from the OBERON archives and new performances created in partnership with The Loop Lab, a BIPOC-led nonprofit whose mission is to empower Womxn and People of Color in careers in the media arts. Ticket prices vary; all events include a pay-what-you-can option:

Now available on demand at [AmericanRepertoryTheater.org](http://AmericanRepertoryTheater.org):

***ANTHEM***—from the archives

Created and Performed by Justice Ameer and Chrysanthemum Tran

Through November 25

From praise songs to war cries to bops you can't help but dance to, anthems have long been the heartbeat of political liberation. Featuring Rhode Island-based poets and performers Justice Ameer and Chrysanthemum Tran, **ANTHEM** explores how race and gender politics shape reality for transgender woman of color. *Wellspring event details to be announced.*

***Queer Heartache***—from the archives

Created and performed by Kit Yan

Directed by Jessi D. Hill

Through November 27

Kit Yan is an award-winning, queer, trans, Asian-American poet from Hawaii. ***Queer Heartache*** is their solo slam poetry show that explores their identities, asks what queer hearts and families are made of, and interrogates the forces that constantly work to break them apart. The show is a testament to the resilience of queer love in all its forms. *Wellspring event Tuesday, November 17 at 7PM—details to be announced.*

Coming soon:

***Oompa***—NEW!

Online beginning Wednesday, October 28 at 7:30PM—*now on sale*

Nationally acclaimed, Boston-born artist Oompa returns to OBERON to premiere new songs and perform old favorites in a new show that highlights the evolution of herself, music, and artistry. **Oompais** forever representing the queer, black, orphaned, hood kids, and them. Oompa is a five-time 2019 Boston Music Award nominee, winner of the 2018 Unsigned Artist of the Year award from Boston Music Awards after an unprecedented six nominations, and winner of the 2017 Women of the World Poetry Slam, and was a finalist at the 2016 National Poetry Slam.

***Halloween Special: Cirque of the Dead***—from the archives with new bonus content

Created by Boston Circus Guild

Online Saturday, October 31 at 8PM —on sale October 14

After eight Halloweens of circus performance at OBERON, the annual event goes virtual. Hosted by fearless emcee Tim Ellis, ***Cirque of the Dead 2020: A Virtual Event*** is an adults-only evening of entertainment featuring a full screening of BCG's ***Cirque of the Dead 2018: Choose Your***

***Own Dead-venture*** filled with magical creatures, aerial acts and acrobatics, humor, and gore—plus brand new, never-before-seen music video content and a pre-show virtual cocktail party with special guests from the 2018 performance. “Doors” open at 7:30PM for the pre-show event; the screening starts at 8PM. Join us Halloween night to find out how the adventure ends!

***The Triad*—NEW!**

Online beginning Wednesday, November 18 at 7:30PM—on sale October 28

Feminist rapper **Brandie Blaze**, singer-songwriter **Anjimile**, and Latin, jazz, Hip-Hop, and R&B fusion artist **Kaovanny** return to OBERON to headline after previous appearances with Oompa in a triple-header directed by Summer L. Williams.

*Production support of **Virtually OBERON** is provided by the **Massachusetts Cultural Council**. Additional production support is provided by **Bank of America**.*

#### **ABOUT AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER**

**American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.)** at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work that is driven by risk-taking and passionate inquiry. A.R.T. was founded in 1980 by Robert Brustein, who served as Artistic Director until 2002, when he was succeeded by Robert Woodruff. Diane Paulus began her tenure as Artistic Director in 2008. Under the leadership of Paulus as the Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director and Executive Producer Diane Borger, A.R.T. seeks to expand the boundaries of theater by programming transformative theatrical experiences, always including the audience as a central partner. A.R.T. is committed to a long-term process of centering anti-racism in its practice, policies, culture, pedagogy, governance and organizational structure.

Throughout its history, A.R.T. has been honored with many distinguished awards including the Tony Award for Best New Play for ***All the Way*** (2014); consecutive Tony Awards for Best Revival of a Musical for ***Pippin*** (2013) and ***The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess*** (2012), both of which Paulus directed, and sixteen other Tony Awards since 2012; a Pulitzer Prize; a Jujamcyn Prize for outstanding contribution to the development of creative talent; the Regional Theater Tony Award; and more than 100 Elliot Norton and IRNE Awards. Additional Broadway productions include ***Jagged Little Pill***; ***Waitress*** (also US National Tour and in London’s West End); ***Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812***; and ***Finding Neverland***. Under Paulus’s leadership, A.R.T.’s club theater, OBERON, has been recognized annually as a top performance venue in the Boston area, and has attracted national attention for its innovative programming and business models.

As the professional theater on the campus of Harvard University, A.R.T. is committed to playing a central role in the cognitive life of the University, catalyzing discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange among a wide range of academic departments, institutions, students, and faculty members. A.R.T. is engaged in a number of multi-year initiatives with partners at Harvard that explore some of the most pressing issues of our day, including collaborations with the Harvard University Center for the Environment to develop new work that addresses climate change and with the Healthy Buildings Program at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health to develop a Roadmap for Recovery and Resilience for Theater that prioritizes a commitment to ethics, equity, and anti-racism as a guiding principle. A.R.T. plays a central role in Harvard’s undergraduate Theater, Dance & Media concentration, teaching courses in directing, dramatic literature, acting, voice, design, and dramaturgy. A.R.T. staff also mentors students in the Harvard Radcliffe Dramatic Club working at the Loeb Drama Center and OBERON.

Dedicated to making great theater accessible, A.R.T. actively engages more than 5,000 community members and local students annually in project-based partnerships, workshops, conversations with artists, and other enrichment activities both at the theater and across the Greater Boston area.

A.R.T. acknowledges that its theaters are situated on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Massachusetts Tribe.

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