

STEEL CITY SHAKESPEARE CENTER
AND THE WEST VIEW HUB PRESENT

Dracula

by Bram Stoker

ADAPTED BY COLE VECCHIO
DIRECTED BY TRACEY D. TURNER



A STAGED READING
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29
7:00 PM

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Dracula Cast

LUCY WESTERNA/VAMPIRE BRIDE....TAJIONNA CLINTON
QUINCY MORRIS.....WILL GUFFEY
MINA MURRAY.....LEXIE HELLINGER
R.M. RENFIELD.....ZACHARY MALINAK
NARRATOR/VAMPIRE BRIDE.....RACHEL MOESER
JONATHAN HARKER.....SAMWISE RILEY
ABRAHAM VAN HELSING.....TOM SARP
JACK SEAWARD.....ADAM SARPI
COUNT DRACULA.....COLE VECCHIO

Note From the Playwright

Hello and welcome to Steel City Shakespeare's staged reading of *Dracula*! First and foremost, I want to thank you for taking the time to come see my production and offering your support. This project has been a labor of love and a ginormous challenge that has taught me a lot! The story and character of Dracula is very near and dear to my heart, and to bring Bram Stoker's work to life in my own vision is a dream come true.

To be honest with you, I can't really explain why, let alone put into words, why exactly I'm so obsessed with the story and character of Dracula. I really can't! All I know is that he's sort of been present in my life since I discovered him as a kid. I just found him fascinating and frightening, often times it was the latter more so than the former when it came to how I felt about him. But as I grew older, I dug deeper into this character and his story, and soon found myself obsessed with him! He quickly became my dream role, and I was fortunate enough to have a Drama teacher, Melissa Geer, recognize this and direct a production of Dracula my senior year of high school. A production that used a stage adaptation written by Steven Dietz.

Steven Dietz, in my opinion, wrote the best stage adaptation of Stoker's novel that I've ever read! Seriously, go read it when you get the chance, you can order it online. He found a way to streamline the various points of view in the novel and make it flow effortlessly on the stage while remaining incredibly faithful to Stoker's work. It's beautiful! In 2019, Dietz revisited his work and revamped (pun intended) his play and made Mina the main character of his revised work. In an interview, when asked about this particular approach, Dietz said, "We inherit these stories. We inherit Jane Austen, we inherit *Frankenstein*, we inherit *Dracula*, we inherit these stories. But we can only view them through our one slice of time. We will never view this story in any other time but our own. And therefore, I think our own time has to color our adaptations." Pretty great quote, isn't it? Once again, the brilliance of Steven Dietz inspired me and gave me a North Star, as it were, to follow when embarking on my own adaptation.

Originally, I wanted to make the most faithful stage adaptation of Stoker's novel that anyone had ever seen! Obviously, this proved to be nearly impossible, and my first draft clocked in at a whopping 165 pages! Not even I, a huge fan of the story and being the playwright, would want to sit through a 3 hour+ play of Dracula, let alone perform in it! And that's where Dietz's quote came into play. Another goal I had for this adaptation was, "How can I make this different? How can I make this my own?" And Dietz really inspired me to step outside of my comfort zone and write from a perspective I wasn't familiar with, and to see how the issues and themes of Stoker's time lined up with the issues and themes of our time today.

Mina became the main character of my adaptation as I found her to be more relatable to the audience and could be the through line in most every scene of the play. I enjoy seeing Classic stories be reinvented and seen in a different light, and while I did a similar approach to my play as Dietz, I wanted to use Mina's journey in this story as a way to understand the fears and issues Women face today, and add a layer of a very real world Horror on top of the Supernatural one that Stoker wrote. I was asked once why tell the story of Dracula now, and my response to that is: it is more important now than ever to tell a story of a monster who uses his powers to control, manipulate, and abuse others for years, centuries even, and continues this pattern over and over and over again until one day a woman stands up to him and says, "Enough!"

Dietz was right, we do color these adaptations with our time, and I realized just how similar these time frames were with each other. Whether it is the Past, Present, or Future, we cannot ignore issues such as Abuse, Women's Rights, Toxic Masculinity, and Disease, or the themes of Tradition vs Progress, or the effects of a Patriarchal society, no matter where these things may pop up, or even when they do. While my goal tonight is not to preach to you on how to solve these issues, or how to even approach them, it is to remind you that no matter where we may come from, whether it's a different walk of life, faith, belief, country, or even period of time, we are all human. And we all face the same issues of pain and injustice that affect us all, so much so that we express these issues in our work and art, which speaks to others in a way nothing else can. Thus why stories like Dracula are as poignant and resonant today in 2022 as it was in 1897. Their pursuit in accurately portraying humanity is what makes these classic stories timeless.

I don't quite know what the future for my adaptation will hold. It may very well have a strong and fruitful afterlife that sees great success and longevity, just like Dietz's work. Or, this may be the one and only performance of this play. I don't know. I certainly hope for the former outcome rather than the latter. But what I can tell you now, with certainty, is that what I hope to achieve with this play, is that it makes you think, it makes you feel, and it reminds you just why we love and cherish these stories. We love being Human, and to be Human in an often inhumane world, is a gift that empowers the people and frightens the monsters. And Stoker captured the essence of this truth beautifully.

Without further ado, I invite you to sit back, relax, and enjoy the thrills and chills of one of the greatest horror stories of all time, and appreciate the level of humanity found in such a supernatural tale. Enjoy! And...

Beware!

-Cole Vecchia



Post-Show Q&A with Shanna Stoker

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28

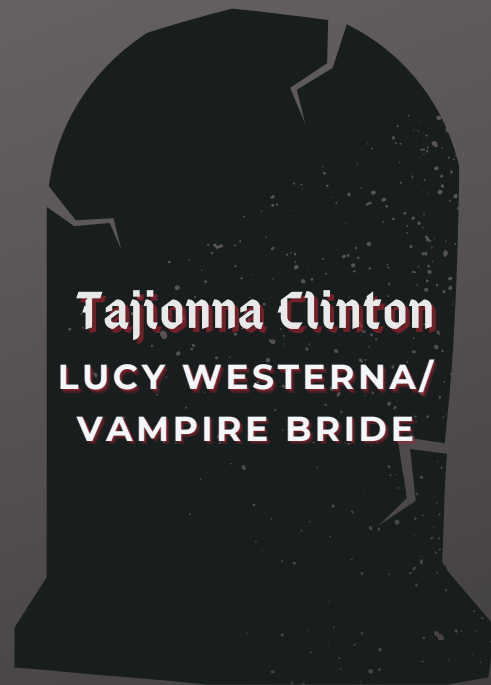




Tracey D. Turner

DIRECTOR

Tracey D. Turner (she/her) is a graduate of Carnegie-Mellon University and named Actress of the Year in 1997 by *Pittsburgh Newsweekly* for her portrayal as Prospero in *The Tempest* with Timespace. Previously with SCSC, she has appeared as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Cerimon, Dionyza, and the Bawd in *Pericles*, Old Sinbad in *The Seven Voyages of Sinbad*, Duke Frederick and Duke Senior in *As You Like It*, and as Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol; A Radio Drama* as well as director of the Pittsburgh Premiere of *The Twelve Dates of Christmas* by Ginna Hoben and the staged reading of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter From the Birmingham Jail. She has also directed a production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Tell Me on a Sunday* at Winnepesaukee Playhouse in Meredith, NH. Other local credits include Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Berowne and Jaquinetta in *Love's Labour's Lost* and Queen and Belarius in *Cymbeline* with Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks, Minnie Kinkaid in *Lifting* with Kuntu Repertory Theatre, Stella Marr in *Racing Demon* with PICT Classic Theatre, and Gertrude in *Hamlet* with Pittsburgh Theater Laboratory. She can currently be seen as Ruth Younger in the Pittsburgh Public Theater's production of *A Raisin in the Sun*. Tracey is the proud mother of Micah-Shai and Moriah Turner.



Tajionna Clinton (she/her) is thrilled to be returning to the stage with Cole and Steel City Shakespeare! You may have seen her before in New Horizon's productions *The Green Book* (2022), *Front Porch Society* (2019), and *Detroit 67* (2018). She graduated from Slippery Rock University, majoring in theatre, where she was the first student to win The Irene Ryan acting award in 2018. With winning the award she made it to nationals where she won the Classical Play Award by playing Cleopatra. This granted her a chance to tour Canada while taking classes at the Shaw festival. In 2019, she decided to dive into local cinematic theatre in Pittsburgh by joining Long Knuckles Studios for a film to enter in the 4K film festival. The production was called *Love you to death* which won overall best film, audience favorite, best lol moment and two other awards. In 2020, Tajionna decided to try something new and join The Pittsburgh Renaissance Festival where she played a Benin princess and educated about African renaissance royalty. Tajionna would like to thank her family and friends for supporting her passion and coming to the show.



Will Guffey (he/him) A bold and full-bodied entertainer with a rich flavor. Heavily planted in the acting vineyards of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, the talent of Will Guffey was first cultivated through Act One Theater School, then fully enriched in the soils of Point Park University, earning a Bachelor's in Acting Theater. You may recall Will's unique flavor profile as the titular offering this spring in the Steel City Shakespeare Winery's uncorking of *Macbeth*. While enjoying Will Guffey you may detect notes of deep emotion, comedy, villainy, bergamot citrus, and in some cases, blended with healthy tannins of improvisation. This particular selection of actor is mainly served in films such as *Smart People*, *The Other Side*, as well as the pioneering internet series; *Something To Be Desired*. However he has also been known to pair well with theater productions such as *Grand Hotel* at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., The Greater Pittsburgh Renaissance Festival, and many improvisational shows throughout the Pittsburgh area. We hope you will find this unique vintage of actor provided for Quincy Morris gives a robust taste with a meaty finish.



Lexie Hellinger (she/her) is beyond thrilled to be a art of *Dracula*! She recently graduated from Seton Hill University with a BFA in Musical Theatre. Recent credits include Helena from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with P*SiP*, Erika in Seton Hill's production of *Dontrell who Kissed the Sea*, and Dance Captain in *Head Over Heels*. She has had a wonderful time working with this fantastic cast and cannot wait to be a part of this production moving forward! She would like to thank all her family and friends for all of their support.

Website: www.ahellinger8.wixsite.com/my-site



Zach Malinak (he/him) Is excited to be returning to live theatre in this adaption of *Dracula*. Zach is a graduate of Slippery Rock University with a B.A. in Acting. He is also a two-time Mancini Award winner for Best Actor in a Leading Role, an Irene Ryan Finalist and a Jimmy Award nominee. Some of Zach's favorite roles include: Dennis (*This Is Our Youth*), Jason "JD" Dean (*Heathers*), Huck Finn (*Big River*), Jim Reston (*Frost/Nixon*) The Creature (*Frankenstein*), Cain/Japheth (*Children of Eden*), and Tobias Ragg (*Sweeney Todd*). When not performing, Zach enjoys Gaming, Singing, Cooking and not getting remotely enough sleep. Zach would like to thank Tracey, Cole and the rest of the cast and crew for being extremely welcoming, engaging and dedicated! It was a blast!



Rachel Moeser

NARRATOR
VAMPIRE BRIDE

Rachel Moeser (she/her) is excited to be making her Steel City Shakespeare debut in *Dracula*! Past credits for Rachel include various productions with the Mystery Theatre Pittsburgh company and as Roxanne Slate, the Stone Mason, with the Pittsburgh Renaissance Faire. She is currently studying for her Master's degree in Nutritional Sciences at Penn State University. Rachel would like to thank director Tracey D. Turner, this stellar cast, her friends and family, her fiancée Cole, and their three little house panthers, Ciarán, Nyxie, and Béla for all their love and support. Enjoy the show!

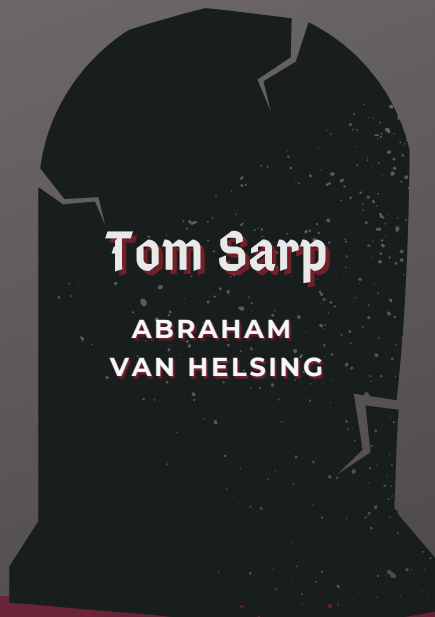
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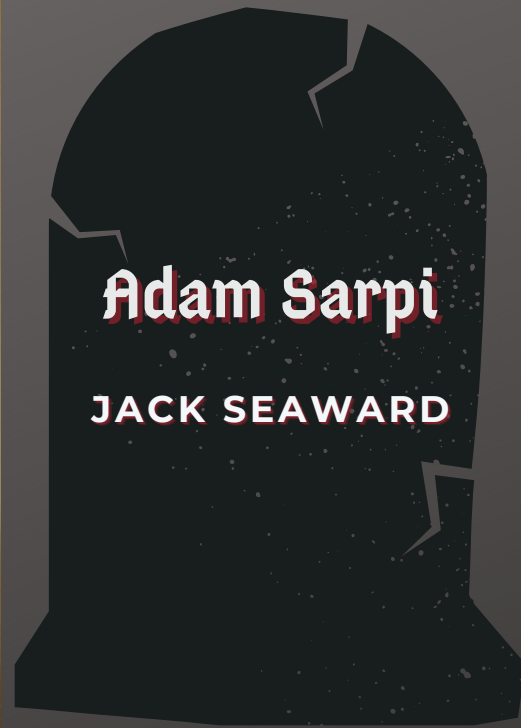
Samwise Riley

JONATHAN HARKER

Samwise Riley (he/they) is thrilled to be performing in this production of *Dracula* with Steel City Shakespeare. While not selling real-estate in London, Samwise can be found writing poetry and performing improv comedy as a member of the multi-award winning children's improv team Penny Arcade. A few of Samwise's other stage credits include Francis Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Dobchinski in *The Inspector General*, Annibale in *The Gondoliers*, and Sir Geoffrey in *The Open Door*.



Tom Sarp (he/him) is excited to be working for the first time with Steel City Shakespeare, along with his son Adam. Tom holds a BFA in Theatre Arts from Point Park University. He has performed in NYC, Los Angeles, and Pittsburgh. He was a co-creator of the Off Broadway 4 year smash hit comedy *Grandma Sylvia's Funeral* in which he played the role he wrote of Fredo Iannuzzi . While in NYC he also performed in stand-up comedy and comedy skits at Caroline's, Stand Up NY, and The Comedy Cellar and was involved in stage productions and readings of new works at the 12th Street Theatre. More recent roles include El Gallo in *The Fantasticks* (The Theatre Factory and The Cabaret Theatre), John Jacob Astor in *Titanic* (Split Stage) , Badchan -Tattooing Prisoner in *The Devil's Arithmetic* (New Hazlett), Father Jeremy in *Celibacy* and George in *Funicello's Birthday*, both with The Cabaret Theatre, and Foreman / Juror # 1 in *Twelve Angry Men* (McKeesport Little Theatre), Selsdon in *Noises Off* (Valley Players), Dr. Everett Scott in *Rocky Horror Musical* (BMG Productions Pgh) as well as a number of other professional and regional stage productions in PA, CA, and NY. Tom thanks his wife and their 3 children Adam, Nina, and Elena for all their love and support. Tom would also like to thank Cole Vecchio, Tracey Turner, Steel City Shakespeare, and his wonderful fellow cast members for this great, positive experience. He dedicates this performance to his late, beloved, wonderful mother Rose who never missed a show.



Adam Sarpi (he/him) is thrilled to be returning to the theatre world after a two-year hiatus as the role of Dr. Jack Seward in this reading of *Dracula*. Adam has been performing since junior high and graduated from Seton Hill University with a BA in theatre performance alongside a minor in theatre technology. Some highlights of his past work include Sir Henry in *The Hollow*, Herman in *Sweet Charity*, and The Old Shepherd in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*. Adam also enjoyed performing for three years in the Pittsburgh Renaissance festival. His non theatre hobbies include reading, video games, and binge-watching Netflix until 2am. Adam would like to thank his family, friends, and loving partner Maddi Duminie for their constant support of his work and passions.



Cole Vecchio

**PLAYWRIGHT
COUNT DRACULA**

Cole Vecchio (he/him) is a Pittsburgh based actor making a return to Steel City Shakespeare and an exciting debut as a playwright! He has a B.A. in Theatre-Acting from Slippery Rock University. Past roles include: Banquo (*Macbeth*); Jacob Lansky (*The Green Book*); Dallas Winston (*The Outsiders*); Father Flynn (*Doubt, a Parable*); Romeo (*Romeo & Juliet*); Benedick (*Much Ado About Nothing*); Ebenezer Scrooge (*A Christmas Carol*); Pastor Manders (*Ghosts*); Kyle (*Hungry Jane*), performed at the Edinburg Fringe Festival; Kit, a role he originated in the world premiere of *December Things*; and Cassius (*Julius Caesar*). Cole would like to thank the phenomenal Tracey D. Turner for her resilience and undying faith and support in him and this play, this tremendously loyal and incredibly talented cast of elite actors, Darrin Mosley for being the best friend/brother ever, Rachel for being a gorgeous and supportive fiancée, Melissa Geer, his high school Drama teacher who directed him in his first performance as the Count, Taj and Zach for reuniting with old theatre friends and fellow Alumni and making time to go on this wild adventure with him, and Mom, Dad, Casey, Chance, Teddy, Sonny, Ricco, Ciarán, Béla, and Nyx for their constant love and support.

Instagram: [colevecchioactor](#)



Moriah Turner (she/her) is an 11th grader at the Barack Obama Academy of International Studies who has spent much of her youth backstage and in rehearsal rooms. Previously with SCSC, she served as the stage manager for *The Twelve Dates of Christmas* and production intern for *Macbeth*. She is also an avid guitar player and visual artist with work featured at the Carnegie Museum of Art.





Bram Stoker

AUTHOR

Abraham "Bram" Stoker was born in Dublin, Ireland, on November 8, 1847, the third of seven children to Abraham Stoker and Charlotte Mathilda Blake Thornley. He spent much of his childhood bedridden with illness, devoting himself to academic pursuits. As his childhood ailments dissipated, he enrolled in Trinity College in Dublin, earning both a BA and MA. He excelled in athletics and academics, being named University Athlete as well as auditor of the College Historical Society and president of the University Philosophical Society.

After college, he followed his father into the civil service profession but quickly fell in love with the theater, becoming a critic for the *Dublin Evening Mail*. In 1876, his glowing review of Henry Irving's performance as Hamlet at Dublin's Theatre Royal caught Irving's attention and established a decades-long partnership. Soon after, Stoker moved to London and served as business manager at the Lyceum Theatre, which Irving owned, for 27 years. His success in this post allowed him to form friendships with many of the great English writers of the Victorian period, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Walt Whitman.

His first two novels, *The Primrose Path* and *The Chain of Destiny*, were first published in 1875. But while in Irving's employ, Stoker established himself as a novelist, publishing *The Snake's Pass*, *The Watter's Mou'*, and *The Shoulder of Shasta* in the years leading up to the publication of his seminal work *Dracula* in 1897.

Stoker married Florence Balcome in 1878, who gave birth to their only child, Irving Noel Thornley Stoker, in 1879. After suffering a series of strokes, rumored to be brought on by a case of syphilis, Stoker passed away in London on April 20, 1912, at the age of 64. His remains were cremated and placed into an urn currently on display in London.

Production Staff

Director: Tracey D. Turner

Playwright: Cole Vecchio

Stage Manager: Moriah Turner

Producers: Catherine Baird, Jeffrey Chips

SCSC Artistic Team

Jeffrey Chips - Founder and Artistic Director

Catherine Aceto

Ella Mizera

Catherine Baird

Darrin Mosley Jr.

Kacie Belletti

Hannah Moss

Bob Colbert

Caitlin Scaff

Emily Gallagher

Tracey D. Turner

Christine McGrath

Cole Vecchio

Acknowledgements

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Ben Robbins

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Roy Delorenz

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