

## About Tutto Theatre Company

Since its inception in 2001, Tutto Theatre Company has created collaborative and multidisciplinary theatrical productions bringing together local artists working in a wide array of disciplines to showcase the fruits of their collaboration.

The 2009-2010 Season maintains our dedication to the creation of multidisciplinary theatre. Our artistic emphasis strives to compliment Austin's audacious approach to all things by providing extreme production value, inventive staging, and the showcasing of new and rarely produced work.

## What Tutto did abroad this summer...

This summer we had the opportunity to devise a new work in Rome, Italy with the English Theatre of Rome. After three weeks of feverish devising and writing, and one week of rehearsal we created an experimental production called *Five o Cinque* which was well received by the ex-pat Italian community. The play embraced the beautiful 2nd century BCE architecture of the Teatro L'Arciliuto and toured the audience through its subterranean rooms. Thanks to performers, Amy Briggs, Keri Boyd, Chase Crossno, Sofia Ruiz and Emily Tindall.

## Tutto Theatre Company is Dustin Wills, Artistic Director Board of Directors

Matthew F. Ervin, *President*

Daniel L. Brock, *Vice President*

David G. Robinson, Ph.D., *Secretary*

Pidge Smith, *Treasurer*

**Together with all the talented artists who  
contribute to our work and you, the audience.**

## Notes on the Play

Before encountering *Murder Ballad Murder Mystery*, it is essential to know and understand a few things about the typical broadsheet murder ballad. A folk tradition, murder ballads generally recount the details of a crime (legendary or true) while telling the story of the murderer behind the crime and his or her decision to kill. According to some sources, the ballad ends with the murderer in jail or on their way to execution. In some murder ballads, the victim invokes an element of supernatural revenge upon the murderer.

This framework is fundamental to understanding the production you witness tonight. *Murder Ballad Murder Mystery* presents its own lovely, complicated, and off-beat song inspired by the folk tradition. With a cast that includes some of the most famous murder ballad figures in our Western world, the play explores their stories as well as the human connections and questions within these stories that still make them vital and relevant to audiences today.

Elizabeth Doss began this work while living abroad in Spain, and it's not difficult to pick up on the yearnings of a traveler far from home in the fabric of the play. She is a native Texan, and the powerful imagery and sound of her writing reflect her central Texas roots. The water, the wild, the whimsy, the tough: These are all part of a personal and regional identity that translate into a work full of universal themes and rich with poetry.

The cast, crew, design team, and many volunteers who contributed to this production invite you to sit back, breathe deep, engage the mystery, and, like the character "B", enjoy riding shotgun for a change.

-Martha Lynn Coon, Dramaturg

## Murder Ballads and Songs

### Act 1:

#### Overture

Full Cast

#### **Somethin' in my Bonnet**

Hilah Johnson, Emily Tindall

#### **Ballad for Agatha**

Robert Pierson, Hilah Johnson

#### **You Got What you Deserved**

Content Love Knowles

#### **Ballad of Stagger Lee**

Florinda Bryant

#### **Picture of the New Girl**

Emily Tindall

#### **Hottest Flames of Hell**

Full Cast

## Murder Ballads and Songs

### Act 2:

#### **Tierras Malas**

Elizabeth Doss

#### **Why's Everybody Gotta Die**

Kelli Bland and Full Cast

#### **The Night I Didn't Kill You** by Aaron Doss

Mark Stewart

#### **Epiphany**

Emily Tindall (Musical Composition)  
and Full Cast

**VORTEX Repertory Company  
and  
Tutto Theatre Company  
present  
the world premiere of**

# **Murder Ballad Murder Mystery**

by

**Elizabeth Doss**

**Directed by Dustin Wills**

**Music Composition and Direction**

Mark Stewart and Andy Tindall

**Scenic Design, Scenic Charge, & Props**

Lisa Laratta

**Lighting Design** Megan M. Reilly

**Costume Design** Kim H. Ngo

**Dramaturg** Martha Lynn Coon

**Photographer** Daniel Brock

**Stage Manager** Marcella Garcia

**Technical Directors**

Elaine Jacobs and Andy Agne

**Master Electrician** Patrick Anthony

**Lightning Bug Jar Design** Drake Wilson

**Rigging Magician** Dorian James Robison

**Assistant Stage Manager** Helen Parish

*Murder Ballad Murder Mystery is a co-production  
of TUTTO and VORTEX.*

**Tutto's Artistic Director**

Dustin Wills

**VORTEX Producing Artistic Director**

Bonnie Cullum

## **CAST**

B	Elizabeth Doss
J	Mark Stewart
Tom	Robert Pierson
Tom's Wife/Lincoln Lady	Content Love Knowles
Agnes/Harp	Emily Tindall
Agatha	Hilah Johnson
Stagger Lee	Florinda Bryant
Pimp/Banjo	Ben Schave
Pimp/Mandolin	Cami Alys
Pimp/Guitar	Alex Cogburn
Pimp/Fiddle	Andy Tindall
Sleuth	Kelli Bland
Psychic	Phillip Emanuel

There will be one 15-minute intermission  
No photography or recording.  
Please turn off cell phones and other electronic  
devices

### **Scenic Construction and Painting:**

Andy Agne, Elaine Jacobs, Lisa Laratta, Patrick Anthony, Helen Parish, Joseph Bonatakis, Barry Barber, Eric Lagunas, Christopher Loveless, Dr. David Robinson, Hannes Wieck, Martha Lynn Coon, Kevin Cox, Nazanin Shirazi, Rachel Kieschnick, Senait Fessahaye, Wilberth Gonzalez, Erin Wendel, Aaron Bell, Chelsey Moore, Thackery Hoffman, Stephanie Hoffman, Daniel Brock, Matthew Ervin

### **Electrics:**

Patrick Anthony, Megan M. Reilly, Elaine Jacobs

### **Special Thanks:**

Talena Martinez, Erin Fleming, Sandy Stone, Cynbe, Drake Wilson, University of Texas ACTLab, University of Texas Department of Theatre and Dance, Edna Parra

### **Thanks for Additional Script Development:**

Chris Doubek, Feliz Dia McDonald, Michelle Flanagan, Matthew Hislope, Barbara Chisolm, Hannah Kennah, Josh Meyer, Amie Elyn, Jude Hickey, Omid Gorashi, Courtney Hopkin, Cindy Williams, Heather Barfield



# Murder Ballad Murder Mystery

## Production Team

**Dustin Wills** (Director, Tutto Artistic Director) has worked as a director, playwright and performer in Texas and Rome, Italy. He is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin and holds a B.A. *magna cum laude* in Theatre and Dance and English. Dustin also studied at Oxford and Il Palazzo Antici Mattai in Rome. His productions have received 20 Austin Critic's Table nominations in the past four years including a win for Best Director in 2006 for his audacious production of *Cymbeline* and another this past year for Tutto's 2008 production of *Ophelia* - which won top honors this year at the recent B. Iden Payne Awards - Outstanding Production of a Drama. He had the privilege in 2007 of directing the world premiere of *Ashes, Ashes* by Eve Tulbert, which won the 2008 Kennedy Center Award for outstanding play for young audiences. Most recently he directed *Black Snow*, winner of the 2009 B.I.P. for Outstanding Production of a Comedy, and *Five o Cinque* at the beautiful 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE amphitheatre, Teatro L'Arciliuto in Rome, Italy. After Shakespeare's England, Bulgakov's Russia, and Fellini's Italy, it seemed fit to come home - and being a child of East Texas, he really means home - to work on Elizabeth Doss' magical bayou musical. He thanks everyone who has been along for this ride!

**Lisa Laratta** (Set Designer, Scenic Charge Artist, Props) graduated from UT with her M.F.A. in Theatrical Design. While in school she designed sets for: *Katrina: The Girl Who Wanted Her Name Back* by Jason Tremblay, *Ashes, Ashes* by Eve Tulbert and directed by Dustin Wills (Austin Critics Table and B. Iden Payne Nomination for Best Set Design), and the touring children's show *Lily Plants A Garden* by José Cruz González for which she also designed the lighting and projections. Since graduating, Lisa has worked for Tutto Theatre Company designing the sets for *Ophelia* and *Black Snow*, both directed by Dustin Wills (her work on both was nominated for an Austin Critics Table Award and she recently won the B. Iden Payne award for Scenic Design for *Black Snow*), and also designed scenery for the dance piece *Brierwood and Other Stories* created and choreographed by David Justin. Lisa has worked at both The Blanton Museum of Art and The Harry Ransom Center as a coordinator and designer of various live performances within the exhibits. For film she was the production designer for the short *[Jean]=truth* written and directed by SunHee Cho and the feature film *jumping off bridges* written and directed by Kat Candler. Before graduate school Lisa lived and worked in Toronto as a production designer and scenic artist for numerous theatrical and cinematic productions.

**Megan M. Reilly**, (Lighting Designer) Previous designs seen in Austin include: *Black Snow* and *Ophelia*, for which she received a B. Iden Payne Award, (Tutto Theatre Company), *Mister Z Loves Company* (Rubber Rep), *Orestes* (Cambiare Productions), *Trouble in Tahiti* (Butler Opera Center), *Well Suited* (Kathy Dunn Hamrick Dance Company), *The King & I* (Forklift Danceworks), *Portrait*, (David Mark Cohen New Works Festival), *Minus Tide* (Bayou Radio Theatre), *Flesh and the Desert* (UT Austin). Megan's work has also been seen with Divergence Vocal Theatre (Houston), Lakes Region Summer Theatre (Meredith, NH), The University of New Hampshire (Durham, NH), The Actor's

Collective, New Conservatory Theatre, the San Francisco Fringe Festival and the EXIT Theatre (all in San Francisco), the 2007 Prague Quadrennial, First Night Austin and the Fusebox Festival. Megan received international recognition for her design-driven work in *Transformations* and *Portrait*.

**Kim H. Ngo** (Costume Designer), Based in Austin, Texas, Kim H. Ngo designs costumes for theater, film and all forms of art. This production is Kim's third show with Tutto Theatre Company, which includes *Black Snow* and *Ophelia*. Recent designs include St. Edwards University's *Bobrauschenbergamerica*, Jude Mechanicals' *I've Never Been So Happy* and Austin Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Film and television design includes *Buttermilk Biscuit* on the PBS Show *Biscuit Brothers*, the MTV series *Meet the Bulldogs*, and the feature film *Harmony and Me*. In 2008, Kim was awarded the Costume Design Fellowship at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and has been nominated for two Austin Critics Table Awards as well as a B. Iden Payne Award for Outstanding Costume Design. [www.kimhngo.com](http://www.kimhngo.com)

**Daniel L Brock** (Photographer, Producer) is a third-generation photographer: his paternal grandfather documented the Second World War with the U.S. Navy in the Pacific Theater and both of his parents pursued black and white photography in their youth. His own first experience with photography was on the other side of the lens, as a poster child for the March of Dimes, and it was the Shriners who gave him his first camera—a Christmas gift—at the age of 9. As someone with Cerebral Palsy, Daniel has acquired a unique perspective on the essentials of life and art. His unrivaled clarity of vision and attention to detail enable him to produce striking images that are bold yet subtle. His work explores new ways to communicate the nuances of form, color, texture, and expression while championing a cleaner, more stripped-down approach to the craft of image-making. [www.DanielBrock.com](http://www.DanielBrock.com)

**Bonnie Cullum**, (VORTEX Producing Artistic Director) has created and presented nearly 300 innovative productions since 1988. She holds an M.F.A. in Directing from the University of Texas at Austin and a B.A. in Theatre from the University of Kansas. She was recently inducted into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame. She has received more than 80 B. Iden Payne Awards for her work and been recognized three times by the Austin Chronicle as Best Director. Cullum is internationally recognized for her experimental productions, her teaching, and her advocacy of cutting-edge artists. She is proud to co-produce Elizabeth Doss' new play with Tutto. Elizabeth has been a part of The VORTEX since 1996.



Join us in the Beer Garden!  
Before and after the show.  
Beer, Wine,  
Gourmet Sandwiches  
GREAT DECK!

## Tutto Would Like to Thank . . .

Joyce and Bill Leftault for saving us. Lori Brock, as always, for everything. Hallie Martin and Chris Loveless for believing in us through all the ups and downs. Pidge Smith and Dr. Dave for keeping our spirits up in even the darkest moments. Wes Hurt of Hey Cupcake! for all their tasty sweetness.

The City of Austin and its citizens for so generously supporting the arts. Vincent Kitch, Jesus Pantel, Barbara Sparks, and the Cultural Arts Division for all their hard work. The UT Department of Theatre & Dance, especially Denise Martel and Rusty Cloyes for their generosity and trust; and Amanda Flores for all of her help, you are the best. Doug Champion for his sage advice and thoughtfulness; Jennifer Robuck and Moody Anderson for their kindness and generosity; Lisa Scheps and Chris Ashton for their friendship; and Tom Stueckroth for letting Pidge come out to play.

Theatre Action Project for their understanding. Rev. Dr. Sid Hall III, Dr. Christine Kraemer, Dr. Carol Lewis, Larry Roberts, Tom Hansen, and the members of Trinity United Methodist Church for rehearsal space. Jim Reynolds, Amanda Adams, Adam Rodgers and Paul Flint. Travis Bedard and Will Snider of Cambiare Productions for being such lovely people.

Happy Mercado of Sweet Leaf Tea; and John Dorgan, Kerstin Shoberg, Monica Templeton, Michael Jastroch, and all the people of the Eco-Clean/Spider House/I Love Video family for their generosity. Walter Olden and Olden Lighting for the great service they provide to our community.

Yvonne Boudreaux, Scott Tatum, Mark Smith, and Spring Karlo for the gift of friendship. Ivan Klousia and St. Michael's for their generosity of spirit and general willingness to share. Frederic Burleigh, Becca Miller, Lindsay Jones, Sheila and Andrew Kenny, Donnie and Andee Knutson, Lisa Reile, Chris Hrasky, Rebecca Switzer, Meaghan Patton and Lillian O'Connor, Kirsten Bymark, Sinait Fessahaye, Marcus McQuirter of ACC has been amazing, and Brenda Benton and the DAC for all their kindnesses.

Drake Wilson for the amazing firefly design and to Sandy Stone, Cynbe Ru Taren, Jacob Wiederanders, Stephen Pruitt, and Travis Bedard for the hours of love that they put into the creation of each firefly

All of our Designers, Performers, Techs, and Volunteers who have continued to lend their considerable talents, energies, and hearts, going far above and well beyond all our wildest expectations in seeing our collective dreams to fruition.

VORTEX Repertory Company and Tutto Theatre Company are funded and supported in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division.



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## VORTEX Mission

- to create and present new and innovative performances
- to transgress conventional theatrical forms
- to cultivate new relationships between artists and audiences
- to generate new audiences through outreach
- to foster educational programming
- to anchor The VORTEX, a dynamic and cherished home for the arts of the 21st Century

## About VORTEX

- Incorporated 1988
- Artist-owned and operated year-round Cultural Arts Center
- Founder of East Austin Live
- Produced more than 250 different productions since 1988
- Revered around the world as a haven for alternative performance
- Local and national leaders in creating and presenting world premieres, cutting-edge plays, ritual theatre, musical theatre, and opera
- Tuition-free Summer Youth Theatre since 1991
- ADA-Accessible Facility
- ASL-Interpreted Performances
- Pick-your-Price Tickets
- Cafe with antique bar-Beer, Wine, Snacks
- Beautiful, breezy Yard for productions and events
- Salons and Workshops develop artists and new work
- Color-blind casting
- Generating discourse about the issues of our time
- Strong, dedicated company of resident artists
- Dozens of Awards, hundreds of nominations for excellence
- VORTEX has always recycled!