

# Fernando and his Llama

by Juan Jaramillo - Presented by Roseneath Theatre, a 258Signs Production

## CAST & CREW



### **JUAN JARAMILLO - Writer / Director**

Juan Jaramillo was a former Child and Youth Advocate for 9 years. His family were refugees from Colombia before he moved to Canada at a young age. Juan has over 25 years of experience in performance arts, he is a founder of Dancing Hands Theatre since 1992. He wears many hats; he is a creator of "Fernando and his Llama," it's a children's play in sign language, performed ASL Musical interpretations, and for his first short film, he created and directed "Misconceptions", he is an actor, scriptwriter in both theatres and films. He works and consults with theatres, films and festivals in supporting more access in sign language. He appeared in a short film called, "Towards You" as a supporting actor. This film received the MENA Film Festival's audiences 1st Choice Awards in the short film category. He appeared in Season 2 of the CBC documentary TV series "YOU CAN'T ASK THAT." He has also been involved in various theatre festivals, such as the Sound Off Deaf Festival, Fringe Festival, and the Abilities Festival. Juan's versatility and artistic expression has seen him share the stage with many different artists, he loves to put on a great show that is accessible and inclusive for all performers and audiences.



### **ROBERT BHOLA - Co-Director / Stage Design**

Robert Bhola is a Canadian/Trinidadian. Robert is immersed in Deaf culture and community. He is a hard of hearing CODA (Child of Deaf Adults). He is an actor, performer and a founder of 258 Signs Productions. He has written, directed, and produced a variety of ASL projects. Robert is a sign language interpretation artist who brings the emotions of music to life through visually mastered renditions of songs from all genres. He has worked as an ASL Coach and Instructor for over a decade and taught both children and adults. Since 2019, Robert has been involved with Deaf Spirit Theatre, Sound Off Theatre Festival, and Toronto Fringe Festivals. Recently one of the finalists of the 2021 MAP playwright festival. Recently he is the Co-director and stage designer/manager in the "Fernando and His Lama" partnership with Dancing Hands Theatre. With his creative artistic interpretations, Robert hopes to continue to spread awareness of Deaf culture through American Sign Language to everyone.



### **THERESA UPTON - Cast**

Theresa Upton is originally from Saint John, New Brunswick. She is the only deaf person in the family. For many years, she is a deaf performance artist, as a poet, creative writer, storyteller and as an actress. She is also one of the co-founder of the Deaf Spirit Theatre.

258signs Productions selected her to be one of the mentors, puppeteer and an actor in "Fernando and his Llama Friend" directed by Dancing Hands Theatre. With her sewing skills, she helped put together the backdrop design. She has been involved in various theatre festivals, such as the Sound Off Deaf Theatre Festival, Toronto Fringe Festival, the Abilities Festival, MAP Short Play Festival (Chicago). She is undergoing the process of creating a new script "Adeline".



### **NATASHA "COURAGE" BACCUS - Cast**

Natasha "Courage" Baccus is both an award-winning athlete and actor, combining her athletic skills. She is recipient of numerous medals in track and field and Master Track Breaking Record, including medal positions in the Deaf Olympics and Pan Am Olympics. Performance highlights include Shaw TV Talk Show Host, BC (2014) and actor in The Black Drum in Toronto, Canada and Reims, France (2019) with North American virtual tour (2020). Natasha was the selected winner of Canada Top 100 Black Women to Watch by the Canada International Black Women Event (CIBWE) 2019. In season four of 'The Corner' on Netflix. She participated as an art collaborator with numerous theatres and film productions in Canada, multiple positions including an interdisciplinary visual artist, art accessibility consultant, and activist for IBPOC Deaf art community in terms of expanding IBPOC Deaf artists representation.



## **JUANPOBLO ARMANI "JP" - Cast**

Juanpablo Armani "JP" is a deaf young actor from Toronto, Ontario. He first appeared in the Chum FM commercial 2012. He is enjoying his leading role as Fernando in "Fernando and his Llama", a children's play directed by Dancing Hands Theatre. JP was selected to be part of the Mentorship program with 258Signs Productions for 8 months. His first acting leading role as Alex in the short film called "Misconceptions" (2022). He hopes to continue in his acting career, his dream is to see all the deaf people to be something they've dreamed to become.



## **TALIA WALL-DIGIUSEPPE - Cast**

Talia Wall-DiGiuseppe is a deaf Canadian neurodivergent non binary, was born to a 3rd generation in a deaf family. In high school, Talia was involved in the Specialist High School Major in the theatre program with the E.C. Drury School for the Deaf. Talia enjoys being on stage and performing different roles, getting involved in theatre as a part of Deaf Theatre Interpretation. She hopes to continue in theatre and film to gain more experience. Talia enjoyed the role of the Llama in "Fernando and his Llama", a children's play directed by Dancing Hands Theatre. Talia was selected to be part of the Mentorship program with 258Signs Productions for 8 months. Talia appeared in a deaf short film as "Racheal", a leading role.



## **RALITSA RODRÍGUEZ - Cast**

Ralitsa Rodríguez was born in Bulgaria and moved to Toronto but her adopted mother was strictly against using sign language. Since she was a little girl, she has always had a passion for dance acting. In 1981, "The Little Prince" was her first acting job that allowed her to use sign language in the theatre. She appeared in a short role movie called, "The Children of a Lesser God". She also appeared in the "Old Mother's Tongue". She is enjoying her role as Mama and Speech Teacher in "Fernando and his Llama", a children's play directed by Dancing Hands Theatre. Ralista was selected to be part of the Mentorship program with 258Signs Productions for 8 months. Her next stop, performing at Sound Office Deaf Theatre Festival in Edmonton, Alberta.



## **ROBERT HAUGHTON - Cast**

Robert Haughton was born deaf and raised in New York City, USA, and resides in Ontario. Robert is the Child & Family Therapist at PAH!. He was so excited to be a part of the Mentorship program that he was selected by 258Signs Productions for 8 months. He is an actor and puppeteer in "Fernando and his Llama", directed by Dancing Hands Theatre. His past credits include "Fences" (2008), "Spoon River Anthology" (2009), and "Julius Caesar" (2015) with Gallaudet University Theatre productions. He is also part of "Blame MTV" (MTV Blame MTV "Sign Language," 2003) commercial as an actor, directed by David Horowitz for MTV back in the day.



## **KAYLEIGH KENNEDY - Cast**

Kayleigh Kennedy is a new actor. She was born in Oromocto New Brunswick. She is enjoying her role as "a student" and learning to be a puppeteer in "Fernando and his Llama", a children's play directed by Dancing Hands Theatre. She was selected to be part of the Mentorship program with 258Signs Productions for 8 months. Her first experience will be performing at Sound Office Deaf Theatre Festival in Edmonton, Alberta.

**ADDITIONAL CREDITS:**

**RACHEL MARKS.....Booking & Accessibility Coordinator**  
**ANNEMIEKE WADE.....Executive Director**  
**ANDREW LAMB.....Artistic Director**

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We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

We would like to acknowledge funding support from the Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Government of Ontario.

Produced with the support of the City of Toronto through Toronto Arts Council.

Roseneath Theatre is proud to be a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres.

