

WORD FOR WORD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Word for Word <http://www.zspace.org/aboutwordforword/>

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YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyXhwdhCihlX8rBkALuz9gg>

PHOTOS Books & Roses Cast/creative team <http://www.zspace.org/books-roses>

Word for Word's New Audio Drama Podcast Series

Word For Wordcast

February Audio Drama Release

Books & Roses by Helen Oyeyemi

Directed by Michael French

Release Dates February 14, 21 & 28 2021

<http://www.zspace.org/pod> Available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts

San Francisco theater company Word for Word's new audio drama podcast series **Word For Wordcast** continues in February with **Books & Roses** by Helen Oyeyemi posting in three parts February 14, 21 & 28 2021. All audio dramas in the series include "deep dive interviews" with creators/artists and are and will be available at <http://www.zspace.org/pod> and on Spotify and Apple Podcasts. **Books & Roses** is the story of Montserrat, a foundling left in a Catalonian chapel at the feet of Virgin de Montserrat. Her only possessions are a key hanging on a golden chain around her neck, and a note. Cared for by the monks of the order, she grows up and finds work in a laundry, where she encounters Señora Lucy, a painter who also wears a key. Montse eventually discovers that she and Lucy are linked, when she finds the lock that fits her key. Her reaction is bittersweet: "She'd carried the key to this place for so long and now that she was there she didn't know where she was." From Oyeyemi's short story collection, *What Is Not Yours is Not Yours* (described as "flawless" by NPR)

Over the last twenty five years Word for Word has performed short stories of over 100 writers, ranging from Alice Munro to Amy Tan, Tobias Wolff, and James Baldwin. Word for Word believes in the power of the short story to provide solace, compassion, and insight into our daily lives. A program of Z Space, Word for Word brings works of literature to the stage and now in an audio drama podcast, all performed verbatim by the multiple characters of the story. Word for Word's mission is to tell great stories with active theatricality, staging performances of classic and contemporary fiction. Instead of adapting a script, they use every word of a text in a dynamic, evocative style that preserves the original beauty of the prose.

Books & Roses by Helen Oyeyemi Directed by Michael French Release dates 2/14, 21 & 28 2021 ongoing availability <http://www.zspace.org/pod> Available on Spotify and Apple Podcast

"Books and Roses" from WHAT IS NOT YOURS IS NOT YOURS by Helen Oyeyemi. Copyright © 2016 by Helen Oyeyemi used by permission of The Wylie Agency LLC

Books & Roses Team

Helen Oyeyemi (author) is the author of the story collection *What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours*, winner of the PEN Open Book Award, along with six novels, including *Gingerbread* and *Boy, Snow, Bird*, which was a finalist for the 2014 Los Angeles Times Book Prize.

Michael French (Director) is a director, writer, and theatre maker. Originally from London, England, the Artist Development Coordinator at Afro Urban Society, the Co Artist Director at Other Hand Studios, and an artistic associate at Oakland Theatre Project, the Mr. French is currently directing an audio drama of Gina Harris' *The Magic of Ordinary Things*, adapting the Heinrich Von Kleist novel *Betrothal in Santo Domingo* with Raymond Barglow for production in 2021, and creating his first book of short stories called *Bable*.

Books & Roses Actors:

Rotimi Agbabiaka most recently originated the roles of Salima in *House of Joy* (California Shakespeare Theatre) and Cellphone/Narrator in *If Pretty Hurts Ugly Must Be a Muhfucka* (Playwrights Horizons, NYC). Other acting credits include *Father Comes Home from the Wars ...* (American Conservatory Theatre/Yale Repertory Theatre), Tom Waits' *Black Rider* (Shotgun Players), *Bootycandy* (Brava Theater/BACCE, Theatre Bay Area award), originating the title role in *runboyrun* (Magic Theatre), and several shows with the Tony Award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe. Rotimi penned the plays *Type/Caste* (Theatre Bay Area award), *MANIFESTO*, and *Seeing Red*; teaches performance to students from pre-school through college; and has graced nightlife stages around the world (as alter ego Miss Cleo Patois) Rotimi is a Core Company Member of Word for Word. www.rotimionline.com *

Sofia Ahmad has served as a teaching artist with Word for Word's Youth Arts program and performed in staged readings of *When Women Speak* and *The Sky is Everywhere*. She is a resident artist with Golden Thread, where she most recently appeared in the World Premiere of *On the Periphery* (a co-production with Crowded Fire). Other local credits include SF Shakespeare Festival, Magic Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Those Women Productions, Arabian Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Stage, Pacific Repertory Theater, and Bay Area Playwrights Festival. Up next: a workshop of *1001 Nights (A Retelling)*, originally slated for Cal Shakes' 2020 season. Sofia is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and a proud member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA. * **

Leontyne Mbele-Mbong was last seen at Word for Word in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Her last project was TheatreSquared's *The Half-Life of Marie Curie*, streamed from Arkansas. This summer she appeared in a live-streamed *King Lear* with SF Shakesespeare Festival. Favorite SF Bay Area credits include *Bull in a China Shop*, *Temple and Breakfast with Mugabe* (Aurora Theatre); *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, *Much Ado*, and title roles in *Medea* [TBA Award] and *Antony & Cleopatra* (African-American Shakespeare Company); *Watch on the Rhine* (Guthrie/Berkeley Rep). Other credits include *Top Girls*, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, *Fences*, *Andromache*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Intimate Apparel*.

Brian Rivera has previously worked with Word for Word in the school tour of *The Master-Maid* as well as the sold out, extended run of Amy Tan's *Immortal Heart*. Brian last performed onstage in *Translating Selena* for Campo Santo. He made his Broadway debut in the Tony Award winning revival of *The King and I* at Lincoln Center and subsequently traveled in its first national Broadway tour. Other credits include the US premiere of *The Orphan of Zhao* at A.C.T. and La Jolla Playhouse, *Major Barbara* at A.C.T and Theatre Calgary, Berkeley Repertory Theatre's *Yellowjackets*, and California Shakespeare Theater's *American Night*. Brian can be seen as a principle character in the dark Christmas comedy *Bitter Melon*, available on Amazon Video and Google Play. He can be

currently heard in *Tales of the Resistance*, San Francisco Mime Troupe radio play episodes available at www.sfmt.org. He is a Core Company Member of Word for word. Brian is a proud member of AEA and SAG/AFTRA. * **

Jeunée Simon is an actor and director in the Bay Area. Recent credits include: *La Ronde* (Cutting Ball Theater), *Men On Boats u/s* (American Conservatory Theater), *HeLa* (TheatreFIRST) *The Daughters* (SF Playhouse), *Bamboozled* and *Roan at the Gates* (Central Works). Simon is a proud recipient of the 2017 RHE Artistic Fellowship and a 2019 Directing Apprentice with PlayGround. She is delighted to be part of this Bay Area community and humbled by the talent of those around her. www.jeunesimon.com *

Megan Trout is a Bay Area-based actor and voice artist. She has been seen and heard on stage, screen, radio and podcast. No matter what form they take, she loves stories! Megan is an artistic company member of the Shotgun Players in Berkeley, CA. She has trained with VoiceOne, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Moscow Art Theatre School and holds a degree in Theater Arts from San Francisco State University. When not performing behind the mic or on stage, she enjoys refining her skills on roller-skates and snuggling up with her grumpy calico, Adelaide.

* = Actors Equity Association

** = SAG/AFTRA

Lindsay A. Jenkins (L.J.) (Dramaturgy) A dramaturg, educator and producer based in Los Angeles by way of Dallas, TX. Like many theatre practitioners, L.J. has performed a variety of roles over the years; however she considers her time as a middle and high school theatre teacher her most valuable experience. Though no longer a full-time teacher, L.J. still works as a Teaching Artist, engaging students at public and charter schools across Los Angeles. L.J. holds an M.A. degree in Theatre from California State University, Northridge. Her specific area of research is Black performance heritage, connecting past performances to contemporary experiences. L.J. has had the pleasure of working with universities, as well as organizations of various sizes including: The Playwrights Foundation, Naked Empire Bouffon Company, Critical Mass Performance Group, Cornerstone Theatre Company, and Center Theatre Group. She is the recipient of the 2020 Field Grant from the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas and is currently developing an audio drama with support from the Spotify SoundUp program. L.J. can also be found in the upcoming anthology *Rhetoric, Politics, and Hamilton: An American Musical* where she co-authored a chapter on “the eye” of history with Dr. Jade C. Huell. She’s dabbled in the film and television industry working on the Netflix show *Astronomy Club* and the upcoming film *Judas and the Black Messiah*. L.J. is the Founder of Maroon Arts and Culture, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowerment through performance.

***Books & Roses* by Helen Oyeyemi Directed by Michael French Release dates 2/14, 21 & 28 2021 ongoing availability <http://www.zspace.org/pod> Available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts**
The cast features Rotimi Agbabiaka, Sofia Ahmad, Leontyne Mbele-Mbong, Brian Rivera, Megan Trout, and Jeunée Simon. Dramaturgy: Lindsay Jenkins.

[Previous Wordcast audio drama stories posted](#)

***Citizen* by Greg Sarris Directed by Gendell Hing-Hernández
Release Dates (two parts) January 14 & 21 2021 on going availability
<http://www.zspace.org/pod> Available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts**

Word For Wordcast new radio drama podcast of author and tribal leader Greg Sarris’ short story *Citizen* going up on January 14 & 21 2021, available at <http://www.zspace.org/pod> and on Spotify and

Apple Podcasts. All podcasts in the series include “deep dive interviews” with creators/artists. *Citizen* tells the tale of Salvador, born in the U.S., raised in Mexico; son of an American Indian mother and a Mexican father. He has returned to California to find his mother, or rather, her grave. Working in the fields and ranches around Santa Rosa, he meets his mother's family, encountering both kindness and opportunism, as well as glimmers of hope. An American citizen, who speaks no English, Salvador procures his proof of citizenship and begins to discover his true identity, and what it means to belong. Directed by Gendell Hing-Hernández the cast of *Citizen* features Carlos Aguirre, Carolyn Dunn, Marie-Claire Erdynast, Rodrigo García, Edie Flores, Regina Morones, and Ryan Tasker*. *AEA *Citizen* Sound Design and Original Music by David R. Molina, with Beatbox by Carlos Aguirre and Hip-hop by Ras K'Dee. **Author Greg Sarris** is currently serving his fifteenth term as Chairman of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. He holds the Graton Rancheria Endowed Chair in Writing and Native American Studies at Sonoma State University, and his publications include *Keeping Slug Woman Alive: A Holistic Approach to American Indian Texts*(1993), *Grand Avenue* (1994), and *Watermelon Nights* (1999). Greg lives and works in Sonoma County. Visit his website at www.greg-sarris.com.

***The 14 Mission* by Anita Cabrera Directed by Stephanie Hunt**

Release Date: December 28, 2020 on going availability

<http://www.zspace.org/pod> Available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts

In Anita Cabrera's story *The 14 Mission* on Christmas Day a man takes the 14 Mission bus to visit his best friend. The man remembers his own life as a drunken outcast, so troubled he was once thrown off the bus he is now riding. As he rides from his room in the Tenderloin toward Mission and 16th, he considers what he owes his friend. It was the second story featured in Word for Word's Short Story Festival. The cast features Robert Ernst, * ** Rosie Hallett*, Dorian Lockett, * ** Alexander Pannullo*, Amy Prosser, * ** Jomar Tagatac*, Michael Torres,* ** with sound design by Drew Yerys *Member, AEA **Member, SAG/AFTR **Anita Cabrera** (Writer) is a San Francisco-based teacher and editor whose fiction, essays and poetry examine themes of family, addiction, and redemption. Her work has appeared in the Berkeley Poetry Review, Berkeley Fiction Review, Colere, Brain, Child Magazine, MER, Acentos Review, Litro, and RavensPerch. Her short story "*That Thing*" received The New Guard's 2017 Machigonne Fiction Award and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. The characters and events in "*The 14 Mission*" are inspired by real people who inspired the writer.

***The Machine Stops* by E.M. Forster Directed by Gendell Hing-Hernández**

Posted in three parts on 9/17/20, 9/24/20, and 10/1/20 2020 ongoing availability

<http://www.zspace.org/pod> Available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts

Written in 1909, E.M. Forster's "**The Machine Stops**" is a dystopian look at the future, where everyone lives underground, is controlled by "The Machine," and communicates with each other over vast distances through glowing blue plates. Forster's views as a secular humanist are at the heart of his work, which often depicts the pursuit of personal connections in spite of the restrictions of contemporary society. The cast for "*The Machine Stops*" features Carla Gallardo, Susan Harloe*, David Moore*, Brian Rivera* **, Ryan Tasker,*with sound design by David R. Molina the *AEA
**SAG/AFTRA

To Listen to New Audio Drama Podcast Series Word For Wordcast

-Podcast is on Spotify and Apple Podcasts, open the app and search for "WORD for WORDcast." Subscribe or follow so you get reminders whenever there is a new episode.

-WordcastWordcast may also be on many other major distribution services like Pandora, I Heart Radio, and others.

-To maximize experience, listen with headphones or good stereo speakers.

WORD for WORDcast on the radio

The **Word For Wordcast** podcast is being broadcast by select radio partners. To date we have worked with the following stations. We will update this section with broadcast schedules when available.

KSFP - 102.5 FM (San Francisco) - sfpublicpress.org/ksfp/

KACR-LP - 96.1 FM (Alameda) - alamedacommunityradio.org

KALW - 91.7 FM (Berkeley) - kalw.org - KALW's Open Air program will feature the story sections of the WORD for WORDcast's "The Machine Stops" by E.M. Forster. Broadcasting on 1/7/21, 1/14/21 and 1/21/21 (all Thursdays) at 1 PM.

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

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