The Afterlife
by Gary Soto

What gets lost when a teen dies?

March 13–22
THE FLIGHT DECK
1540 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94612
www.sfyouththeatre.org
THE AFTERLIFE
SF Youth Theatre DREAM Ensemble

Cast in Order of Appearance
Chuy: Edwin Jacobs
Yellow Shoes: Kevin Obando
Eddie: Eric Esquivel-Guttierrez
Chuy’s Mother (Tia): Arly Flores
Homeless Woman: Dyana Díaz
Rachel/Crystal’s Mom/School Principal: Zoe Chien
Crystal: Bianca Catalan
Vato Loco: Fabian Bravo
Uncle Ricardo/Homeless Woman’s Father: Homero Rosas

The Afterlife takes place in Fresno, California in…
A Night Club • Chuy’s Home
A Fresno Park • Crystal’s Farm
The Afterlife

Written by Gary Soto
Directed by Dyana Díaz with Cliff Mayotte
Sound Design by George Brooks & Silvia Matheus
Original music by George Brooks*
Costumes by Susana Aragón • Sets by John Ramirez
Fight Choreography by Gendell Hing-Hernandez
Lights by Colin Johnson
Production Managers
Joshua Waterstone & Leslie Price
Photos by Rick Soto
Poster by Tein Jung
Produced by Emily Klion, SF Youth Executive Theatre Director

*George Brooks’ Travelling Music and Karuna are from ELEMENTS
The Alchemy, available for sale in the lobby or elementstrio.com
If you are suicidal or are worried about a loved one:
use one of these resources or consult a mental health professional:
National Suicide Prevention Hotline (24 hrs): 1-800-273-8255
San Francisco Suicide Prevention (24 hrs) 415-781-0500
MY3 App (iPhone and Android) Allows you to create a plan to reach out to your support system when you are having thoughts of suicide.
Crisis Text Line (24 hrs) Don’t want to call? Text HOME to 741741

**Notes from playwright Gary Soto**
Our lives are unpredictable. The main characters in this play, after their deaths, find themselves living their most intense lives in the Afterlife, where they reflect on their early exits and the profound sadness of family and friends. Each young life that is lost, by violence or by suicide, is irreplaceable and precious. In this play, death is no laughing matter, but there is humor here that is wholly human.

**Notes from Director, Dyana Díaz**
What happens after we die? What happens after we lose a young life? "The Afterlife" is a collage of moments, memories and hopes regarding the loss of a loved one. This piece is created as an ode to life, honoring the beautiful and ugly aspects of being alive. No one knows when our time is ending, some will be with us for a long time and others not enough. When we lose a child or a teenager we are losing a piece of the future and possibilities. We are all affected, but we might not know it.

"The Afterlife" by Gary Soto gives us the possibility of imagining, in a bittersweet way, the consequences of a teen leaving this world too early. Thanks to Chuy for sharing his youthful and simple view of the world, thanks to Crystal for remembering us that life is worth living, thanks to Yellow Shoes and Vato Loco for telling us that every action has a story behind it, thanks to Tia for showing us that a mother's love goes beyond reason, thanks to Eddie and Ricardo for being that family strength that we need in hard moments, thanks to Rachel for representing friendship, thanks to Virginia for reminding us that every life counts, and finally, thank you to Gary Soto's play, "The Afterlife" for putting all these characters together as an altar in memory to every teen that we have lost. I hope you all enjoy this adventure as much as I did during this creative process.
**Producer Notes by Emily Klion**

Like many, I was deeply affected by the tragic 2012 murder of Trayvon Martin. It made me wonder: Where did he go? How does one move from life to death in moments? Trayvon was a boy like Chuy, enjoying simple teenaged pleasures before his life suddenly ended. Thus was born the idea to create a play that explored teen death.

When I approached long-term collaborator Gary Soto with my idea, we decided to adapt his young adult novel, *The Afterlife* into a powerful play. Gary’s novel also involves a tragic suicide. After accidents, homicides and suicide are the second and third causes of death for US teens, numbering in the thousands. What gets lost when a teen dies? The reverberations ring deeply in the victims’ families and community.

Thanks to the supporters of this project, *The Afterlife* has had the time to grow organically from its first staged reading at UC Davis in 2017, to a workshop production in 2018, a winter tour of California high schools in 2019, and an international tour to Banja Luka, Bosnia in November 2019.

Thanks for the consistent artistic vision and commitment of writer Gary Soto and Directors Dyana Diaz and Cliff Mayotte, along with all the artistic designers. Above all, thanks to the extraordinary SFYT Dream Ensemble.

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**San Francisco Youth Theatre** creates cutting-edge theater for youth ages 3-24, offering classes and performance ensembles, summer intensives, school residencies and a repertoire of original productions that speak to the unique sensibilities of youth. SFYT transforms youth and community through the performing arts, fostering personal growth and creating last social change.

**SPECIAL THANKS!**

George Brooks, Rick Soto, Johnny Soto, Crystal Bridges School, Adam Marquat, Maica Folch.
### Meet the Cast

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<th><strong>FABIAN BRAVO</strong> (Vato Loco)</th>
<th>I've never been a big believer in the fact that there’s life after death. But then again what do I know. There is this hope that revolves around humans when we talk about an afterlife, maybe our loved ones that have passed are in a much more beautiful and better place. It’s fun and amazing to imagine all the possibilities about an afterlife and this is something that this production and our talented director plays around with. We hope you guys love it as much as we’re enjoying creating this for you all.</th>
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<td><strong>BIANCA CATALAN</strong> (Crystal)</td>
<td>received the Best Actress Award in Bosnia at the Kestenburg International Theatre Festival. Bianca met SFYT Director Emily Klion when she was nine years old. Throughout the years, she has worked with SFYT as an actor, teaching artist and director. When she’s not onstage, Bianca teaches Community Engagement at SF University High School.</td>
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<td><strong>ZOE CHIEN</strong> (Rachael/Principal/Mother)</td>
<td>holds a BFA from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. Selected SF credits include: Theatre of Yugen's <em>A Noh Christmas Carol</em>, 3Girls Theatre Company's <em>Meth</em> and <em>Even What Little She Has</em>, Left Coast Theatre Company's <em>The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told</em>. Zoe has loved working with SF Youth Theatre on Gary Soto's <em>The Afterlife</em>. MDT Agency, zoechien.com, @thezoechien</td>
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<td><strong>DYANA DIAZ</strong> (DIRECTOR/HOMELESS WOMAN)</td>
<td>has been an actor in the Afterlife since its start. She earned her B.A. in Performing Arts for the Theatrical Expression at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, where she was co-founder of “Colectivo Transeunte” a theatre group dedicated to the creation of performances for young audiences. In 2014 she was co-founder of INART, Institute of the Performing Arts, the first private acting school in Guadalajara, Mexico where she worked as a teaching artist and academic coordinator. In 2017, she arrived in San Francisco and joined SFYT.</td>
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ERIC ESQUIVEL-GUTTIERREZ (Eddie) is an Oakland resident of the past eight years born and raised in Fresno, CA. In his time in the bay area he has worked, performed, and helped develop work with Breach Once More, New Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Playhouse, SF Playhouse, and Central Works. He works with Health Education and Teaching Artistry with Kaiser Permanent Educational Theatre. This is his first show with SFYT and excited to be performing in a community he’s come to know as home and to be a part of telling a story from his hometown.

ARLY FLORES (Tia) has a passion to explore social issues through artistic expressions. She has a BA in Communications and performed for a year in Roads, a show against racism and discrimination in Up With People worldwide tour. She was a member of the original cast of In & Out of Shadows and is on a short film about the separation of families at the border.

EDWIN JACOBS (Chuy) is a New Jersey-born actor based in the Bay Area who started at 12yo in theatre and has always found his way back. Edwin began performing through middle and high school, studied digital film at the Art Institute of CA - SF then continued his acting studies at the Beverly Hills Playhouse of SF. His last shows include Lin-Manuel Miranda’s "In the Heights" at CustomMade Theatre and Rachel Bublitz’s "RIPPED" at Zspace.

KEVIN OBANDO (Yellow Shoes/Fight Captain) has been with The Afterlife since its original, workshop production. He’s played all of the male characters except for Uncle Ricardo! In addition to working with SFYT as the fight captain for this production and for SFYT’s upcoming production of She Kills Monsters. Kevin is excited to be part of such a great group of artists.
HOMERO ROSAS (Uncle Ricardo) has been a part of the show since *The Afterlife’s* workshop production in 2018 at The Phoenix Theatre in San Francisco. He has been working with SFYT Executive Director Emily Klion since he was nine years old, and he’s excited to continue their artistic partnership now that he’s an adult.

PRODUCTION TEAM

SUSANA ARAGON (COSTUMES/PROJECTIONS) works in the fields of visual arts and education since 1982. Her work goes from video installations, video poetry, multimedia shows, public space interventions, to book objects, ceramic, photography, poetry, costume design, printing, painting and art education. She is interested in the way video projections can help to understand human nature and connect to our environment. Aragon’s work has been shown in Japan, Chile, Dominican Republic, France, Canada, Peru, Equator, Chile, Mexico, Spain.

GEORGE BROOKS (MUSIC/SOUND DESIGN) George Brooks is a prolific and diverse saxophonist and composer, acclaimed for successfully bridging the worlds of jazz and Indian classical music. He is the founder of Indian fusion groups *Summit* with Zakir Hussain, Steve Smith, Kai Eckhardt and Fareed Haque; *Bombay Jazz* with Larry Coryell and Ronu Majumdar; the *Raga Bop Trio* with Steve Smith and Carnatic guitarist Prasanna and *Elements* with Indian violinist Kala Ramnath and Dutch harpist Gwyneth Wentink.
GENDELL HING-HERNANDEZ (Fight Choreographer) was born in Havana, Cuba, and has been a Bay Area actor, director, combat choreographer and educator since 1997. He has worked as an actor for Berkeley Rep, Word for Word, Theaterworks, Shotgun Players, Campo Santo, San Jose Rep, Center Rep, New Pickle Circus, Teatro Vision and many others. Productions include Around The World In 80 Days, The Cook, Blood Wedding, Oil!, Food Stories, House on Mango Street.

COLIN JOHNSON (Lights) began doing lighting design and stage management in 2010 at the Garage after acting for several years in SF. He was nominated for a TBA Award and a Bay Area Critic Circle award for lighting design in 2014 for his design of Life X 3. He also does production work, sound design, box office, the front of the house, electrical carpentry and direction.

EMILY KLION (Producer/SFYT Executive Director) specializes in collaborating with artists from all disciplines, creating and producing new works of theater for youth with an emphasis on social justice. Emily composes much of the music for SFYT’s original productions. Klion has produced nearly 100 shows of youth theatre, working all over the United States, India and Bosnia.

CLIFF MAYOTTE (Original Director) is an award-winning educator and director with over twenty five years of experience in the field. He has been developing The Afterlife since He currently serves as the Education Program Director for Voice of Witness, an oral history book series and education program that highlights contemporary social justice issues. He has staged plays for such notable local theatres as Aurora Theatre Company, Shotgun Players, Marin Shakespeare Company, Rough and Tumble and The Marsh. Cliff has received awards from the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle, Drama-Logue, SF Weekly and the Beverly Kees Educator Award from the Northern California Chapter of The Society of Professional Journalists.
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<th><strong>LESLIE PRICE</strong> (PRODUCTION ASSISTANT/ PROGRAM MANAGER) is a theatre educator, director, and writer who is currently serving as San Francisco Youth Theatre's Program Coordinator. She's spent much of her career as a teaching artist specializing in work by and for young people. Most recently, she served as the Children's Director for a large non-profit youth theatre in the Chicagoland area creating curriculum and producing a variety of plays and musicals including an original adaptation of <em>Al Capone Does My Shirts</em> by San Francisco's Gennifer Choldenko.</th>
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<td><strong>JOHN RAMIREZ</strong> (SETS), fine artist and art instructor grew up in the farmlands outside of Sacramento. He studied studio art at Sacramento State University and UC Davis with Mel Ramos, Darrell Forney, Wayne Thiebault and Greg Kondos. For the past twenty-five years, he has been a professional space designer, prop master, and muralist for businesses throughout the United States. Ramirez produces set designs for Jean Shelton Theater Productions and continually explores his artistic vision in works in oil, acrylic and charcoal. Ramirez has a fine art studio in San Francisco Mission District. You can see some of John's work here.</td>
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<td><strong>GARY SOTO</strong> (Author) was born and raised in Fresno, California, the son of Mexican-American workers from the San Joaquin Valley. Soto is the author of eleven poetry collections for adults, most notably <em>New and Selected Poems</em>, a 1995 finalist for both the <em>Los Angeles Times Award</em> and the <em>National Book Award</em>. His poems have appeared in <em>Ploughshares</em>, <em>The Iowa Review</em>, <em>Ontario Review</em>, and most frequently <em>Poetry</em>, which honored him with the <em>Bess Hokin Prize</em> and the <em>Levinson Award</em> and by featuring him in the <em>Poets in Person Series</em>. His poem, <em>Oranges</em>, is the most anthologized contemporary poem in history. In all, Soto’s books have sold nearly four million copies, with forty-eight million textbooks featuring his writing. A self-described “cheerleader for reading”, Soto has captured the largest readership of Latino children and young adults in the nation.</td>
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JOSHUA WATERSTONE (Production/Stage Manager) is an award winning director, actor, fight choreographer and educator. Locally Joshua is Company Manager of Ragged Wing Ensemble Theatre in Oakland and a teaching artist with LEAP, SF Youth Theatre, Cal Shakes and Berkeley Repertory School of Theatre as well as guest lecturer at Guilford College Theatre Studies. Joshua holds a Master of Fine Arts in Directing for Stage and Screen from the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. With SFYT he is Fight Director for the upcoming She Kills Monsters.

THE FLIGHT DECK is on Ohlone land.
We encourage you to support The Sogorea Te Land Trust, an urban Indigenous women-led community organization that facilitates the return of Chochenyo and Karkin Ohlone lands in the San Francisco Bay Area to Indigenous stewardship. Sogorea Te creates opportunities for all people living in Ohlone territory to work together to re-envision the Bay Area community and what it means to live on Ohlone land. Guided by the belief that land is the foundation that can bring us together, Sogorea Te calls on us all to heal from the legacies of colonialism and genocide, to remember different ways of living, and to do the work that our ancestors and future generations are calling us to do. Honor the Land You Are On: Shuumi Land Tax
http://sogoreate-landtrust.com/shuumi-land-tax/

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Melissa Lee, Secretary;
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Interested in being a board member? We’d love to have you!
COMING UP!

From SFYT 415 Teen Ensemble

Join us for this extravagant production which features an exploration of *Dungeons and Dragons* and lots of sword play! When Agnes discovers her sister Tilly's *Dungeons and Dragons* notebook, she finds herself on a journey of adventure and unmasked secrets.

POTRERO STAGE 1695 18th St, SF 94107
April 17 @ 7:30, April 15 @ 5, April 19 @ 2

SUMMER INTENSIVES!

24 Hour Play Festival • Grades 8 and up • June 5 & 6
How much can you do in a day? Tell a story? Explore a stage fantasy? Change the world? SFYT emerging writers, actors and directors will come together in a 24-hour marathon to write, cast, direct and perform plays for the community.

POPPY PLAYHOUSE • Grades 2-5 • June 17–21 & June 24–28
SFYT's creative and fun teachers, Leslie Price and Dyana Diaz, will lead two one-week theatre intensives for students in grades 2-5. Through improvisation, theatre games and a simple script, students will create a play to perform for friends and family on the final day of the program. Special guests will arrive for art and music classes.
THE AFTERLIFE IS MADE POSSIBLE BY

DONATE at sfyouththeatre.org