A production based on the novel by Charles Dickens

LA COPPERFIELD

A SOUTH LA Bildungsroman

INSPIRED BY THE NOVEL BY CHARLES DICKENS January 31 & February 1 2020 Foshay Learning Center

This production and exhibition culminates LA Copperfield LitLAb, an interdisciplinary and engaged teaching project imagining what it means to be a 21st century South LA teen reader of the 19th century novel.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

David Copperfield (Matthew Rodriguez-"Little David"), (Anthony Lopez- "Older David") The protagonist of the novel, David is innocent and naïve even though he suffers abuse as a child. But though David's troubled childhood makes the reader sympathetic, he is not perfect, and is often blinded by his prejudices and passions.

Clara Copperfield (Alyssa Riveroll)– David's kind mother, described as being innocently childish, who dies while David is at Salem House. She dies just after the birth of her second child, who dies along with her.

Peggotty (Sandra Rodriguez) – The faithful servant of the Copperfield family and a lifelong companion to David.

Betsey Trotwood (Karla Martinez) – David's eccentric and temperamental yet kindhearted great-aunt; she becomes his guardian after he runs away from Grinby and Murdstone's warehouse in London. She is present on the night of David's birth but leaves after hearing that Clara Copperfield's child is a boy instead of a girl.

Emily (Silvia Gabriela Martinez-"Little Em'ly"), (Alice Martinez-"Older Emily") – A childhood friend of David Copperfield, and niece to Daniel Pegotty, she is beloved by David in his childhood days. She leaves her cousin and fiancé, Ham, for Steerforth, but returns after Steerforth deserts her.

Edward Murdstone (Kasandra Marmolejos)– Young David's cruel stepfather, who beats him for falling behind in his studies. David reacts by biting Mr. Murdstone, who then sends him to Salem House, the private school owned by his friend Mr. Creakle. After David's mother dies, Mr Murdstone sends him to work in a factory, where he has to clean wine bottles.

James Steerforth (Matthew Jimenez)– A friend of David from school, he is charming and romantic and has known David ever since his first days at Salem House. Although well-liked by most, he proves himself to be lacking in character by seducing and later abandoning Little Em'ly. He eventually drowns at Yarmouth with Ham Peggotty, who had been trying to rescue him.

Daniel Peggotty (Alan Dominguez)– Peggotty's brother; a humble but generous fisherman who takes his nephew Ham and niece Emily into his custody after each of them has been orphaned.

Ham Peggotty (Alvaro Hernandez) – A good-natured nephew of Mr. Peggotty and the fiancé of Emily before she leaves him for Steerforth. He later loses his life while attempting to rescue a sailor, who happens to be Steerforth, from a shipwreck.

Wilkins Micawber (Alan Dominguez)– A gentleman who befriends David as a young boy. Although Mr. Micawber never succeeds at supporting his own family, he is generous and industrious in serving others. Despite having financial difficulties, he still gives plenty of financial advice. He is based on Dickens' father.

Mrs. Micawber (Esmeralda Fuentes)- Mrs. Micawber stands by her husband despite his flaws and regardless of the hardships they suffer. She serves a temporary maternal figure to orphaned David.

Agnes Wickfield (Emely Lopez) – David's true love and second wife, Agnes was David's childhood companion at Canterbury, where David's Aunt Betsey had sent him for school. She suffers patiently through David's other romances, comforting David with kind words when he needs support.

Uriah Heep (Elise Lightburn) – A wicked young man who serves as partner to Mr. Wickfield, Agnes's father. He is finally discovered to have stolen money and is imprisoned as a punishment. He always talks of being "umble" (humble) and nurtures a deep hatred of David Copperfield and many others.

Dora Spenlow (Sophia Hernandez)– The delightful but naive daughter of Mr. Spenlow who becomes David's first wife. She is described as being spoiled and childish. She dies of illness on the same day as her dog, Jip.

MOVEMENT TEAM: Kirrah Lewis and Justin Jimenez with Carlos Serrano, Emmanuel Rodriguez, Brianna Garcia, Emily Sanchez, Emily Diaz, Jennifer Romero, Kirrah Lewis, Kizzyah Dorant, Luisa Serrano, Viviana Vasquez, Matthew Jimenez, Alyssa Riveroll, Elise Lightburn

MUSIC: Elise Lightburn (Vocals) with Romell McKenzie (Guitar)

*Choreographer's Note

The production's choreography was developed through a series of dance intensives with Contra Tiempo, LA-based urban Latin dance company. We are grateful to our teaching artist, Isis Avalos, for inspiring students to engage with the novel's themes through dance.

*Music Notes

The soundtrack of *LA Copperfield,* compiled collaboratively by our team, includes the following: *It's a Man's, Man's, Man's World (James Brown); lovely (Billie Eilish & Khalid); Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out (La Santa Cecilia); Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Ángeles (La Santa Cecilia); Como Dios Manda (La Santa Cecilia); Someone to Watch Over Me (Sleeping At Last); Viento (La Santa Cecilia).* House music curation includes the following: *Ángel Baby (Las Cafeteras); This is Your Land (Chicano Batman); Luna Lovers (Las Cafeteras); Black Lipstick (Chicano Batman); Freedom (Feat. Kendrick Lamar) (Beyoncé); Cycles of Existential Rhyme (Chicano Batman), Ritmo De Mi Pueblo (Making Movies & Las Cafeteras), Háblame (Chicano Batman & Caloncho); It's Movement Time (Las Cafeteras); We Had to End it by Cuco Latino (Isaac Mejia-Lopez).* Retrospections were written and recorded by the following company members: Anthony Lopez, Karla Martinez, Kizzyah Dorant, Elise Lightburn, Esmeralda Fuentes, Arlene Reyes, Mathew Jimenez, Kenny Mejia, Alyssa Riveroll, Emily Sanchez.

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I.I AM BORN

Heroes | *It's a Man's Man's Man's World* James Brown
Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.

Birth Aunt Betsy pays a visit to the Rookery at the eve of my birth.
A RETROSPECT I Birth Stories

II. I OBSERVE

Shadows I recollect my childhood— and the influence of those who loved me, and those who didn't.

Orphan | *lovely* Billie Eilish & Khalid
There was no need to tell me so. I had already broken out into a desolate cry, and felt an orphan in the wide world.

III. I BEGIN LIFE ON MY OWN ACCOUNT

Micawbers I am forced to make my way in the great city, and find a friend.

London | *Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out*
La Santa Cecilia & The California Feetwarmers
Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen and six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery.

III. I FORM A GREAT RESOLUTION

Another Retrospect I Journey Stories

Walk to Dover | *Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Ángeles* La Santa Cecilia
No. I had resolved to run away.—To go, by some means or other, down into the country, to the only relation I had in the world, and tell my story to my aunt, Miss Betsey.

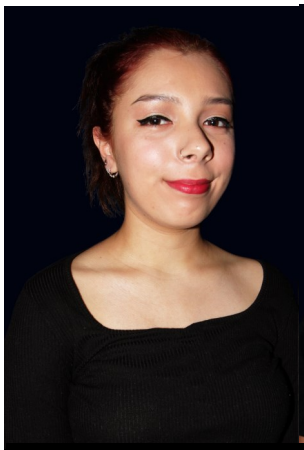
INTERMISSION

IV. BLIND

Blind I make many mistakes, and have to learn from them.
Another Retrospect I Loss Stories

Funerals | *Como Dios Manda* La Santa Cecilia
As a man upon a field of battle will receive a mortal hurt, and scarcely know that he is struck, so I, when I was left alone with my undisciplined heart, had no conception of the wound with which it had to strive.

Agnes I return to my good angel.



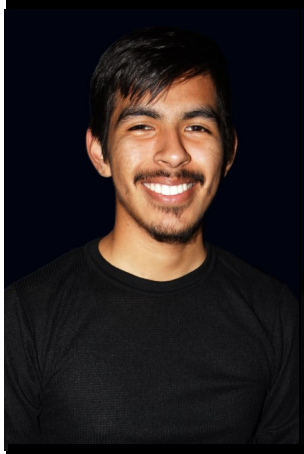
Alice Martinez

Silvia Gabriela Martinez

Sophia Hernandez

Alyssa Riveroll

Kasandra Marmolejos



Alvaro Hernandez

Alan Dominguez

Matthew Jimenez

Matthew Rodriguez

Anthony Lopez

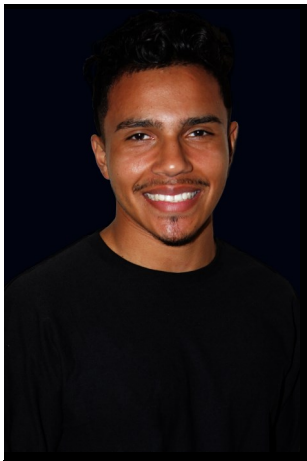
Elise Lightburn

Emely Lopez

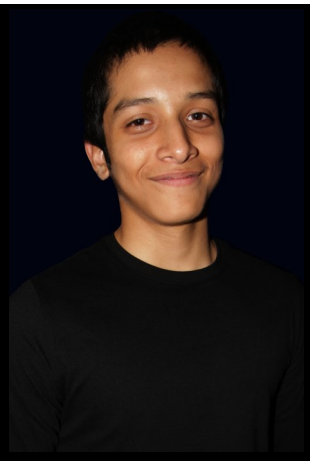
Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.

Esmeralda Fuentes

Sandra Rodriguez



Justin Jimenez

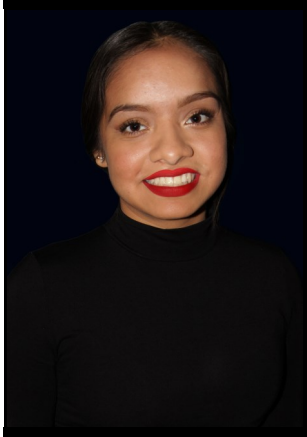


Carlos Serrano

Emmanuel Rodriguez

Jennifer Romero

Emily Diaz

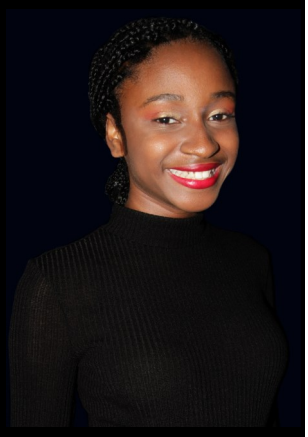


Brianna Garcia

Kizzyah Dorant

Luisa Serrano

Viviana Vasquez



Kirrah Lewis

Crew– Stage | Emily Diaz, Carlos Serrano, Jennifer Romero, Heidi Ramirez, Lindsay Huerta, Adaly Ibarra, Alvaro Hernandez (not pictured)

Crew– Tech | Isaac Mejia-Lopez, Crystal Rivas, Kenny Mejia

 Crew-Event | Arlene Reyes, Adalvis Benitez, Marvin Paredes, Candice Candler, Sulara Merghani, Dylan Roberts (not pictured)

LA Copperfield Student Directors | Candice Candler, Matthew Jimenez, Viviana Vasquez

The Leads of LA Copperfield

The Core of LA Copperfield

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STAGE
Crew ~ Heidi Ramirez (Lead Stage Manager, R) with Adaly Ibarra (L) with Lindsay Huerta, Alvaro Hernandez, Jennifer Romero, Carlos Serrano, Emily Diaz
Tech ~ Dahlia Ballasteros with Crystal Rivas (Lights), Kenny Mejia (Sound), Isaac Mejia-Lopez (Sound). *Special thanks to Ms. Lisa Beebe and Mr. Vince Womack for their assistance to our Tech team.*
Costume ~ Kimberly Mejia with Candice Candler (Student Lead). *Special thanks to our USC NAI parent Yessenia Guerra for her contributions to our costume department.*

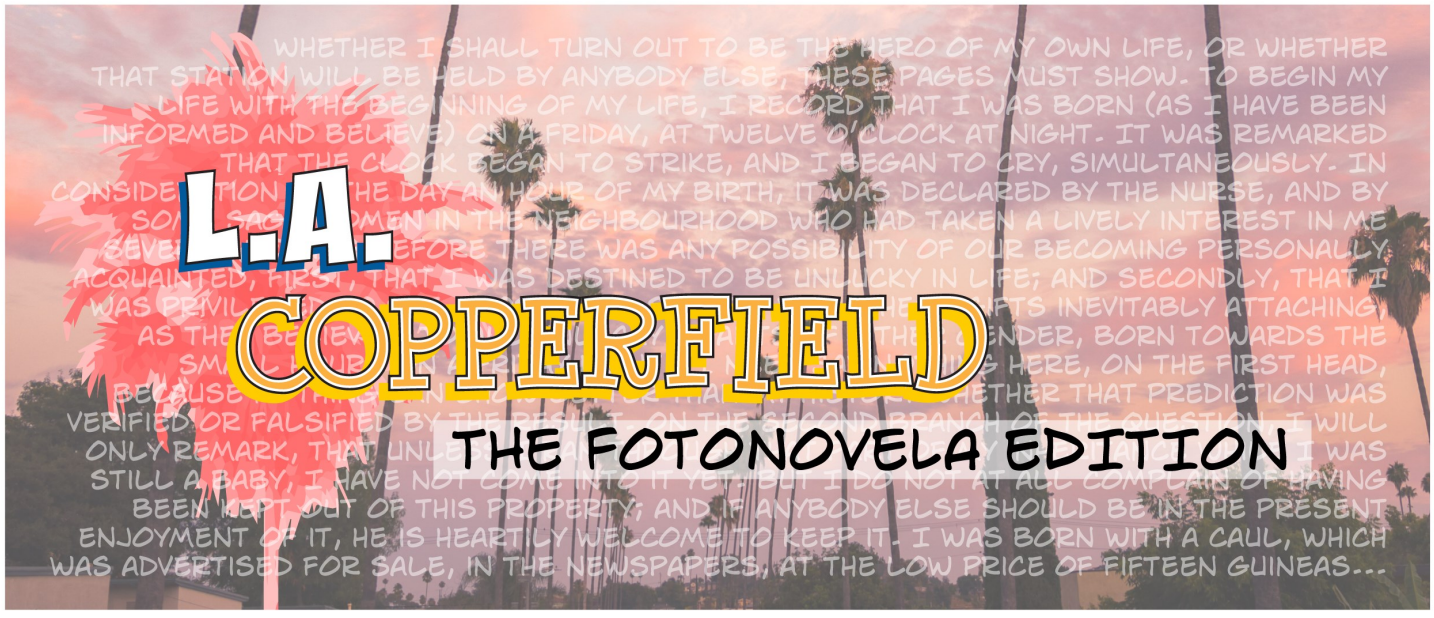
EVENT
Event ~ Kimberly Mejia with Candice Candler (Student Lead) with Sulara Merghani, Arlene Reyes, Adalvis Benitez, Marvin Parades, Dylan Roberts. *Special thanks to Kristina Barrios for her assistance to our team.*
Art ~ Sai Rojanapirom (Graphic Designer) *with* Alice Martinez (Student Graphic Designer)

LA COPPERFIELD CORE LEADS
Directing Team ~ Jacqueline Jean Barrios (Director), Kimberly Mejia (Assistant Director), Dahlia Ballesteros & Romell McKenzie (Teaching Assistants) with Candice Candler, Matthew Jimenez and Viviana Vasquez (Student Directors); Elise Lightburn & Esmeralda Fuentes (Cast); Kirrah Lewis and Justin Jimenez (Movement); Heidi Ramirez & Adaly Ibarra (Crew); Crystal Rivas, Kenny Mejia, Isaac Mejia-Lopez (Tech); Candice Candler (Event); Candice Candler (Costume); Elise Lightburn, Alvaro Hernandez, Kenny Mejia, Isaac Mejia-Lopez, Crystal Rivas, Lindsay Huerta (Music, Writing)

LA COPPERFIELD: FOTONOVELA EDITION
Karla Martinez, Alice Martinez, Lindsay Huerta (Project Directors). *Special thanks to Romell McKenzie, LitLabs Teaching Assistant for supporting the students' graphic work.*

LA COPPERFIELD: THE FOTONOVELA EDITION are ten photo-based comics written, designed and published by students of South Los Angeles. In the series, students relocate David's story to their neighborhoods, reimagining the places of Charles Dickens' novel in their own city. Ventriloquizing the first-person 19th-century protagonist, students take us through all the ways their own personal histories, adventures, experiences and observations transform the urban world into their home. The exhibition features a pavilion inspired by the "Rookery," David's childhood home, which will house the fotonovelas and their first readers as a symbolic shelter to the wandering imaginations that brought these South LA places to life. On display at the Festival and evening shows, 1/31-2/1.

Exhibition Design by Kenny H. Wong, UCLA



SUPPORTED BY THE UCLA URBAN HUMANITIES INITIATIVE

This production and exhibition culminates LA COPPERFIELD, the latest LITLAB. LITLABS are immersive studies of the long –form novel by Foshay Learning Center seniors of the University of Southern California's Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI) program in their AP English classroom. In partnership with the Dickens Project and others, LITLABS host intensives, guest workshops and artist, teaching and research residencies-creating an interdisciplinary, urban-based learning experience interested in imagining what it means to be a 21st century South LA urban teen reader of a 19th century novel.

Partners of LITLABS

DICKENS PROJECT | UCLA URBAN HUMANITIES INITIATIVE | UCLA ENGLISH | CONTRA TIEMPO | USC ENGLISH | USC JOINT EDUCATIONAL PARTNERHSHIP

Become a partner tonight and help students connect literature to their lives.

Our donation box outside is always open and we appreciate contributions in any amount.
Please contact thomasba@usc.edu to consider sponsoring the next LitLAb project.
@litlabslosangeles #lacopperfield litlab.ucsc.edu

FOSHAY LEARNING CENTER is a LAUSD K-12 urban learning center and is a USC Family of Five neighborhood school. Its mission is to prepare students to become socially responsible citizens who are prepared to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Tracy Triplett Murray, Principal