

# PERFORMANCE PROSPECTUS

## TEMPORARY DISTORTION

### *Newyorkland*

**NOV 17- 20, 2011**

**Direction, Set & Lighting Design:** Kenneth Collins

**Video Design & Direction:** William Cusick

**Stage Cast:** Nick Bixby, Daniel Brown, Al Di Martino, Brian Greer

**Film Cast:** Ilan Bachrach, Nick Bixby, Charles Brice, Daniel Brown, Al Di Martino, Cara Francis, Ximena Garnica, Anthony Gaskins, Brian Greer, Elizabeth Hounsell, Sauda Jackson, Rodney Ladino, Sean Edward Lewis, Derek Lloyd, Lorraine Mattox, Annie Ng, Maria Oppedisano, Christopher Piccione, Walter Vincent, Jason Robert Winfield and Ryosuke Yamada

**Associate Producer:** Nick Sherman, Nick Bixby

**Costumes:** TaraFawn Marek

**Music & Sound:** John Sully

**Technical Director:** Joe Cantalupo

**Technical Assistant:** Scott Fetterman

**Costume Assistant:** Elizabeth Hounsell

**Interns:** Sean Shannon and Chase Voorhees

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# A NOTE FROM OTB

Given all of the headlines about confrontations between protesters and the police in cities across America, Temporary Distortion's *Newyorkland* provides a timely opportunity to consider what it means to be a police officer.

Director Kenneth Collins comes from a police family. His dad was a cop as were some of his relatives. As such, he has been able to glean not only first-hand accounts of this particular line of work but also many of the psychological ramifications of law enforcement. The production cleverly uses highly restrained acting as well as claustrophobic set design to create a kind of dark hyper reality that sounds almost like a radio play. The lack of affectation and overacting make the performers feel more authentic and help distance the portrayal of law enforcement from the usual Hollywood treatment. At the same time, video director/designer William Cusick washes the stage in highly stylized video imagery inspired by 70's films such as *The French Connection* and the multitude of documentary works that began to surface throughout the decade. While this approach may at first seem to support common stereotypes about cops, the creators in fact use video to reveal rather than gloss over the inner workings of the job and the challenges associated with it. Altogether, the experience reads like a fresh reconsideration of a career most of us know very little about. And it introduces to Seattle a talented performance ensemble whom most people have probably never heard of but will be seeing a lot more from in the coming years.

We first learned about Temporary Distortion after seeing their breakout theater work, *Welcome to Nowhere*, in Performance Space 122's COIL Festival three years ago. At that time, we took the unusual step of approaching them about filming their next production *Americana Kamikaze* in NYC for OntheBoards.tv. They became the first artists we filmed off-site for our then new website of high definition performance films. *Newyorkland* completes their trilogy of theater works inspired by cinematic genres starting with the American road movie, then Japanese horror and finishing up with cop films. We're thrilled to give our audiences the opportunity to see them live, doubly so because this is the first time the work will be seen in the US.

Cheers to this thoughtful and highly-talented group of artists.

**Sarah Wilke & Lane Czaplinski**

PS – Any theater fans in the audience should watch for the next OntheBoards.tv film to be launched just after Thanksgiving: *The Method Gun* from *The Rude Mechanicals*!

# **DIRECTOR'S NOTE**

**Assemblage** is the artistic process of putting together found material in such a way that a new unique artwork is formed.

Each non-art object in the assemblage acquires aesthetic meaning only within the context of the whole.

*Newyorkland* is not a play.

It is an assemblage that attempts to address the subject of police work.

The piece combines documentaries, police procedurals, firsthand officer accounts and personal interviews with pure fiction.

# BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO TEMPORARY DISTORTION

**1.** Temporary Distortion was one of the first artists to be filmed for OntheBoards.tv. We flew to NYC to film the performance, Americana Kamikaze, almost 2 years ago. In addition to being one of the original 9 films on the site, they have the distinction of being the only artists so far who after watching the footage decided to rewrite a scene of the show. Read more about the story in the New York Times.

**2.** *Newyorkland* is the final part in a trilogy by Temporary Distortion exploring the translation of film genres to the stage. They do this by both taking on the storylines and imagery from different genres. The first, *Welcome to Nowhere (Bullet Hole Road)* tackled the American road movie and is currently being transformed into a feature length film. The second, *Americana Kamikaze*, takes a look at Japanese Horror. This final work hits the closest home for the creators behind Temporary Distortion: the NYPD.

**3.** On that note, *Newyorkland* is one of Temporary Distortion's most personal creations. Kenneth Collins, the stage director/designer, grew up in a family of police officers and was constantly surrounded by that life. Listen to or read the interview to hear more about his experiences growing up.

**4.** One of the influences that the company frequently references is the visual artist Joseph Cornell. This artist created scenes in small boxes comprised of everyday materials. The company uses this inspiration in the way they craft their box-like sets in which everything is an object (including the performers!) that helps construct a larger image and story.

**5.** Temporary Distortion is led by both Kenneth Collins, the stage director/designer, and William Cusick, the video director/designer. This dual leadership helps create two unique and complimentary compositions where the film carries equal weight to the live performance. See how that plays out at the US premiere of *Newyorkland*!

# **INTERVIEW EXCERPT**

**Seattle playwright Neil Ferron with William Cusick & Kenneth Collins**

**NF: So how and when did this piece really get started for you guys?**

WC: The very beginning of this idea, that I remember, was the film *The French Connection*. I had never seen that film, and I saw it as an adult maybe 2 years ago, and I realized that I've known Kenneth for however long and his dad is a cop...And I called Kenneth with the idea and I said, would you be interested in looking into how to investigate the life of a police officer, you know, in New York City? And from there we started doing all the research into the piece.

**NF: And so Kenneth, you grew up in a cop family?**

KC: Yeah, my father and his brother and other members of the family too.

**NF: Now what exactly - what's that like?**

KC: Well, I mean, growing up, I don't think I thought too much about the organizational aspect of it so much, but it was more so this element of danger that was in your life. Because there was always this feeling of sort of wondering if he was going to come home from work or not on any given day. And that's the thing that sort of stood out the most in, you know, growing up and having a father who was a cop. And it was even my grandparents too. Because both of their sons were police officers. They were in different departments, but they were both local cops. And when I would go over to my grandparents' house they would always have a police scanner on...They were just basically scanning it to listen to see if anything was happening, like did anything happen to either one of their sons? So it was always this element that was sort of in the background...I mean there was always wild stuff coming over the radio. It wasn't the best area where he worked. And there were lots of incidents growing up where he would come home injured. He was trying to get somebody out of a car one time that exploded, and he was trying to get somebody out of a house one time that was burning down, and he passed out and got drug out ... He got stabbed, broken arms - all kinds of things that you would find out a little bit, pieces - as a kid, you have to realize, I wasn't an adult, I was a child. But you know, there was always this weird element of danger that maybe you couldn't quite understand at that age

**LISTEN TO THE FULL INTERVIEW**

**ONTHEBOARDS.ORG**

**DOWNLOAD INTERVIEW PDF**

# BIOS

**Temporary Distortion** has earned a reputation for pushing the boundaries of theater by staging unsettling, meditative performances in claustrophobic, boxlike structures that feature minimal physical movement and a uniquely restrained acting style. In the work, projected video is juxtaposed with live performance to create dreamlike double worlds that fracture traditional notions of narrative coherence and merge film, performance, and visual art.

The company's work has been seen in various cities in the US, Canada, Austria, Australia, France, Hungary and Japan. Articles discussing Temporary Distortion's work have been published in *Contemporary Theatre Review*, *The Drama Review*, *The New York Times*, *TheatreForum*, *Live Design* and *Real Time Arts*.

**Nick Bixby** (Performer) is a New York-based performance artist, designer, and theatrical technician. He most recently worked with Temporary Distortion on the European tour of *Welcome to Nowhere* in France and Hungary (Via Festival, Exit Festival, Théâtre Garonne, Trafó) as well as the company's upcoming feature-length film project, based on the stage production. Prior to that he spent six years at Performance Space 122, working with several hundred local and international companies and artists. Bixby has also worked as a production manager, technical director and stage technician at numerous venues in New York City since 1999.

**Daniel Brown** (Performer) is a theater student at Nassau Community College in New York. This is his debut performance with Temporary Distortion.

**Joe Cantalupo** (Technical Director) has worked as a Technical Director on: *Welcome to Nowhere* (Trafó, Budapest), *Mission Drift* (Republic, Salzburg), *Americana Kamikaze* (Brisbane Powerhouse, Brisbane). Lighting Design credits include: *John Faustus and the Overclocked Death Drive*, *This Is...Next Stop*, *Demon Dreams*, *An Extraordinary Echo*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Bat Boy the Musical*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Tell-Tale Heart and Other Horror Stories by Edgar Allan Poe*. Assistant Projections Design: *Der Schuh Des Manitou* (Theater Des Westens, Berlin), *The Other Place* (Lucille Lortel), *Stop the Virgens* (St. Ann's Warehouse), *Hamlet* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival).

**Kenneth Collins** (Direction, Set & Lighting Design) is a playwright, director and designer living in New York City. He is the founder and Artistic Director of Temporary Distortion and has served as the writer, director, set and lighting designer for the company's productions since 2002. His work has

been seen in Canada, Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia and the Pacific. Collins is a MacDowell Colony Fellow (2009) and alumus of Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab.

**William Cusick** (Video Design & Direction) is a video artist, filmmaker and projections designer based in NYC. As the resident video artist for Temporary Distortion, Cusick has created video for five stage productions, two art installations, and one feature length film project. Cusick's designs for theater, opera and dance include Broadway: *The Coast Of Utopia* (Lincoln Center Theater); Off-Broadway: *The Other Place* (MCC); *Arjuna's Dilemma* (BAM/Next Wave), *The Clean House* (LCT), and *Dead City* (New Georges); International: *Rasta Thomas' Tap Stars* (touring), *Rasta Thomas' Rock The Ballet* (touring), *The Shoe of Manitu* (Berlin). Awards include: NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Designers for 2009-2011; 2008 Artist-in-Residence at Harvestworks Digital Media Center; and the 2007 Henry Hewes Design Award for Projections for *The Coast Of Utopia* on Broadway.

On the web: **[williamcusick.com](http://williamcusick.com)**

**Al Anthony Di Martino** (Performer) received his bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts from Flagler College and studied Meisner technique at the Actors Studio of Saint Augustine in Florida. Di Martino also studied theater at Hunter College in New York. This is his first production with Temporary Distortion. Notable roles in other work include: *Waiting for Godot* (Vladimir), *Lend Me a Tenor* (Saunders), *Dearly Departed* (Ray Bud), *Golden Boy* (Moody), *God's Favorite* (Joe Benjamin), *Mere Mortals* (Charlie) and Sam Sheppard's *Red Cross*.

**Scott Fetterman** (Production Assistant) is a New York City-based video creative operating in theater, film, and fashion. He is a cinematographer for Red Stiletto Media, Taos Hum Films and True False Theatre. Fetterman designed projections for *Recovery* at the Kraine Theater (NY Fringe 2011).

**Brian Greer** (Performer) has originated roles in 5 productions with Temporary Distortion, including: *Epilogue Gone*, *Last Year the Universe*, *Welcome to Nowhere* and *Americana Kamikaze*. Most notable theatrical credits include: the title characters from: *Macbeth*, *The Elephant Man*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and Laurent from *Therese Raquin*. Currently, he can be seen playing the captive in sundancechannel.com's exclusive webseries, *The Captive*:

**[sundancechannel.com/captive](http://sundancechannel.com/captive)**

**TaraFawn Marek** (Costume Design) is a designer and producer living in New York City. She is the Executive Vice President and Design Director at Elizabeth Gillett, a garment district-based accessories designer stocked at Neiman Marcus, Calypso St. Barth and Anthropologie among other boutiques

and retailers worldwide. As the resident costume designer for Temporary Distortion, Marek has designed five productions including their breakout hits *Welcome to Nowhere* and *Americana Kamikaze*.

**John Sullivan** (Sully) (Sound Designer) is a composer and musician from New York City. His music for stage and film has crossed the globe including Europe, Asia, Australia, North and South America. As the resident composer for Temporary Distortion, Sully has created the music and sound designs for the stage productions, *Welcome to Nowhere* and *Americana Kamikaze*, as well as the company's installation *An Instrument for the Measure of Absence* and feature-length film adaptation of *Welcome to Nowhere*. Please enjoy John's latest creations on line at: **[reverbnation.com/johnsully](https://reverbnation.com/johnsully)** and **[soundcloud.com/john-sully-sullivan](https://soundcloud.com/john-sully-sullivan)**

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*Newyorkland* photos by William Cusick

