



irt

ANNUAL REPORT

2017

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MISSION

IRT is a grassroots laboratory for independent theater and performance in New York City, providing space and support to a new generation of artists. Tucked away in the old Archive Building in Greenwich Village, IRT's mission is to build a community of emerging and established artists by creating a home for the development and presentation of new work.

HISTORY

In 2007, IRT Theater embarked on a groundbreaking journey to support emerging and established artists, to give young artists a unique opportunity to work with professionals, and to offer development and performance opportunities for Deaf artists and audiences. With new Artistic Director, Kori Rushton, the company created its artist in residency program & completely revamped its staff & business model. Today IRT Theater is focused in two primary areas. First, IRT fosters independent artists by providing space, support, and most important, time to create their work through its Archive Residency and 3B Development Series, in which

there are several residencies reserved for Deaf artists. Second, IRT mentors the next generation of theater artists through its educational program. Launched in 2012, Westside Experiment, is a teen acting laboratory that pairs students with working experimental theater artists to learn about their craft and create an original theater piece at IRT.

Some of the pioneering artists who have developed work at IRT are: Young Jean Lee, Reggie Watts, Mike Daisey, New York Live Arts, Tommy Smith, Thomas Bradshaw, Crystal Skillman, Jose Zayas, May Adrales, terraNOVA Collective, Immediate Medium, Vampire Cowboys, The Nonsense Company/Rick Burkhardt, The Mad Ones, Collaboration Town, Rady&Bloom, Katt Lissard, Erica Fay and many others. Established in 1986 as Interborough Repertory Theater by Luane Haggerty & Jonathan Fluck, IRT spent its first two decades nurturing artistic freedom & career development for a wide-ranging community of performing artists, providing over 200 first-time professional NYC creative jobs while producing over sixty-eight original scripts in forms ranging from staged readings to full off-Broadway productions. With respect for the past, IRT looks forward to a bright future.

DEAR FRIENDS,

IRT Theater's 2016-2017 season was a superb one. The *Artist in Residency* program included twenty-two *3B Development* residencies and four *Archive* residencies in partnership with our friends and neighbors, The New Ohio Theater, for a total of 652 artists and 188 performances for 4,109 audience members- serving more artists in residence than any previous season. At the same time, the devised educational programming of the *Westside Experiment* and our continued emphasis on facilitating and supporting Deaf artists, helped fulfill our steadfast dedication to our mission: to be an affordable and invaluable resource to the theater and experimental arts community of NYC.

The season opened with IRT Theater's ***Westside Experiment*** education program in July. There were thirteen middle school and high school students enrolled, with several students returning from the previous year. For the first time, Westside Experiment was lead by Tectonic Theater Project's Amanda Gronich and Spit&Vigor's Samuel Adams. The group created an original work titled *Myth in Motion: Exploring Hades and Persephone*, which was inspired by the Greek myth Hades and Persephone. The show had two sold out performances on July 16, 2016.

Some of the highlights of the ***3B Development Series*** included:

- Life Jacket Theatre Co. developed *America is Hard to See*.
- Howard Fishman/Connie Converse/Paul Lazar developed *A Star Has Burnt My Eye* prior to it opening in BAM.
- Jessi D. Hill ran a developmental reading of *The Starving Dress* which included 26 female actors.
- The new year brought Caps Lock Theatre to IRT for the month of January for 17 performances of *Baby Mama: One Woman's Quest to Give Her Child to Gay People*.
- Hard Sparks was in residence for their two shows, *Bareback Ink* and *Cabaret at The End of the World*.
- Spring brought Stable Cable back to IRT 20 performances of *The Conspiracists*.
- F*It Club returned to IRT in May with their Spring Fling, an annual, award-winning presentation of six world-premiere commissioned short plays developed around a central theme.

This year, IRT's Artist in Residency programs gave many new artists to IRT the time and space to develop and perform new work.

EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

Our Voices ran a free workshop called *Space, Time & the Body*. This revolutionary workshop paired American Sign Language & Viewpoints to explore theatrical points of view.

ARCHIVE RESIDENCY

The season would not be complete without paying homage to our partnership with The New Ohio Theatre- *The Archive Residency*. We congratulate the two new Archive Residents- anecdota and Built For Collapse- and look forward to what they have in store for us in 2018.

In late November, IRT was host to our two Archive Residency artists, Pie Hole and Built For Collapse, and in February, IRT was host to our two other Archive Residents, anecdota and Our Voices. Our Voices, a company dedicated to investigating themes of otherness in society, did final development of *SOOT & SPIT* by Charles Mee, which celebrates the life of James Castle, one of America's great outsider artists. Born profoundly deaf, Castle never learned to read, write, sign or speak. His art was his language, and *SOOT & SPIT* tells his story. Deaf theater is a core component of our future and is deeply embedded in the DNA of IRT itself. This theatre piece in particular spoke to IRT's continuing dedication to Deaf artists.

One huge announcement we are excited to share is that IRT was awarded funding by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) for the first time! This will support our goal in making next summer's *Westside Experiment* education program fully accessible to both Deaf and hearing students.

Filled with tremendous achievements and key learning experiences—we are eager for the triumphs that the next fiscal year will bring.

Kori Rushton,

Producing Artistic Director



SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

Archive Residencies Premiere to the World After a Two Year Gestation

PIEHOLE

Ski End

April 30–May 19, 2017

Text by Piehole

Directed by Tara Ahmadinejad

Dramaturgy by Lauren Whitehead & Elliot B. Quick

Production Design by Bailey Williams

An ARCHIVE RESIDENCY PRODUCTION, a collaboration between the New Ohio and IRT Theater

In Piehole's SKI END, an abandoned ski shop becomes the center of the universe. A group of 30-whatever urbanites

finds itself stuck in a flood-damaged building with a make-shift skate ramp, dead birds, and the tattered banner of a final blowout sale. From these clues they ritualistically reanimate a bygone world of Ski, until they incite a cosmic force. Rising from the ruins of economic and environmental dread, Piehole's Ski End examined chronic patterns of apocalyptic despair and what it takes to face The Sublime.

"Acute observations about a society in which impermanence passes for progress....A sweet, eccentric charm."

—The New York Times

"Surprisingly endearing....Tara Ahmadinejad's cast are a lot of fun here."—Popdust

PIEHOLE investigates the process of collaboration and collective authorship to create live events. Driven by an ongoing pursuit of surprise, delight and beauty in unexpected places, Piehole encourages agency in one's thinking, perceiving, and feeling, as well as an expanded sense of potential realities. Since 2008, Piehole's work has performed in theaters, galleries, and hotel rooms in New York, Philadelphia, and Prague, and has been praised for its "beauty and gratifying weirdness" (The New York Times)

OUR VOICES

soot and spit

May 27–June 17, 2017

Written by Charles Mee, Jr.

Directed by Kim Weild

An ARCHIVE RESIDENCY PRODUCTION, a collaboration between the New Ohio and IRT Theater

What drives a single person to create nearly 20,000 works of art? Celebrating the life of James Castle, one of America's great outsider artists, Our Voices presented the world premiere of acclaimed playwright Charles Mee's *SOOT AND SPIT*. Born profoundly deaf, Castle never learned to read, write, sign or speak. His art was his language. Bringing his world to life through bluegrass, dance, and multi-media displays of his works, *soot and spit* enables its audience to experience the "other"- and rejoice in the unquenchable creativity of the human spirit.

"Charles Mee Jr.'s lyrical, fictionalized bio-play soot and spit conjures Castle's world and work in a beautifully designed, dreamily evocative production directed by Kim Weild. From the moment we enter the space we are transported as [the show] springs to vivid life on a rustic, neatly cluttered set, with clever projections and pieces of playful art. It is a strange and lovely thing, a theatrical reanimation of an artist and his work." —The New York Times

Our Voices Theater is a multicultural company dedicated to creating innovative theater that exalts diversity, engenders understanding, and provokes empathy. They investigate themes of otherness in society whether they are culture, language, gender, or ability. Our Voices actively cultivates an inclusive experience that more accurately represents the world in which we live and our shared humanity.



3B DEVELOPMENT SERIES

2016—2017

IRT's 3B Development Series hosts radically affordable, full-immersion development residencies for emerging and established artists. Our intimate performance space offers artists the flexibility and autonomy to mount full-bodied workshops and do robust technical experimentation, creating a supportive environment for taking risks and test-driving new work before adventurous audiences and potential producers.



G45 Productions

New Work Development Series

June 28–July 4, 2016

4 young playwrights, all students under the age of 23, collaborated with the ensemble of G45 Productions to develop their own full length new works over this week long residency.

Playwrights showcased: Kori Alston, Sam Mueller, India Kotis, Max Friedlich

AZTEC ECONOMY

Butcher Holler Here We Come

July 5, 2016–Aug. 1, 2016

Text by Casey Wimpee

Directed by Leah Bonvissuto

1973, West Virginia. Following a cave collapse, 5 coal miners struggle to survive the dwindling supply of oxygen, the lack of food and water, the unravelling sense of passing time, and, even more threatening, their own competing natures. Brutally weaving through family histories, complicated friendships, crooked politics, childhood visions, audacious hopes, eerie dreams, criminal addictions, and fervent spirituality in this run-of-the-mill Appalachian community, BUTCHER HOLLER HERE WE COME is a descent into the male psyche-in-crisis where secret desires, carnal urges, and hidden memories come boiling to the surface in a primitive territory of Earth that mirrors the subliminal mind.

"Visceral. A jarring piece of theater and a fine introduction to the Tank's DarkFest!"—New York Times

"A Fast-paced thriller. Bold, inventive, crisp staging. A finale that is at once terrifying and exciting!"—NY Theatre Now

"A Vulnerable and exciting experience. Committed and powerful performances. One grand hallucination!"—NY TheatreScene



SPIT&VIGOR

The Execution of Mrs. Cotton

July 5, 2016–Aug. 1, 2016

Written by Sara Fellini

Directed by Samuel Adams

THE EXECUTION OF MRS COTTON by Sara Fellini told the story of the life and times of Elva Zona Heaster Cotton, a serial killer in a gothic postbellum South. She preys, as all serial killers do, on victims who are most vulnerable to her: her husband and children. By taking a sympathetic look at the art of killing, this play deals with the value of women's work, their art, and their voices, and explores how several working-class men could become vulnerable to a female serial killer, an artist in her own right, while the world around them rapidly industrializes.

"..wrenching and visually eloquent"—The New York Times

"With a penchant for the macabre and an electric energy coursing through the whole creative team, spit& vigor has emerged as a reliably compelling theater company, mounting works that aspire to greatness as they continually test the limits of artistic director Sara Fellini's bountiful imagination."—Theater Pizzazz

THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF MATMADIA

The Coward: a Madcap Fairytale at FringeNYC

July 18—Aug 1, 2016

Written by Maddy Campbell

Directed by Matthew Phillips

Once Upon A Time... In a far off kingdom on some cloud or something an insane Monster possesses a cowardly castle maid. They must battle gods and demons to resurrect the King they murdered. This experimental, absurdist comedy revels in clowns, confetti, and blood. So shield those precious eyes, you cowards.

"The Coward marks a modern moment; gender lines are blurred irreversibly, mental health and its treatments are on the tips of our tongues, and lead actresses need no longer look like Barbies. Willie, with her short pixie cut and complexities, suggests a new type of hero has come to town: the realized woman."—Julia Lourie, *The Creator's Project*; Vice



STABLE CABLE LAB CO.

In the Event of My Death

August 2–22, 2016

Directed by Padraic Lillis

Written by Lindsay Joy

IN THE EVENT OF MY DEATH is about eight small-town twenty-somethings, who know each other from high school, who share an impromptu time of mourning and celebration after the suicide of a mutual friend. This play was originally developed through The Farm Theater's College Collaboration program, under the artistic direction of Padraic Lillis.

"...Stable Cable Lab Co. is one to watch..." —Theatre is Easy

"Moving, thanks to the emotional sincerity of the performances in Padraic Lillis's sensitive production for Stable Cable Lab Co."—The Village Voice



STRANGE HARBOR

This England: The Complete Kings 1377-1485 (Abridged)

August 23–29, 2016

Created by Strange Harbor

Directed by Zachary Tomlinson & Rosa Schneider

Who is the rightful king of England? Eight actors performed over 40 roles in a condensed adaptation of Shakespeare's play cycle chronicling over a hundred years of war, murder, seduction, and betrayal as one family tries to answer the most hotly contested political question of the middle ages.

THIS ENGLAND is a geopolitical epic that takes audiences on a dramatic rollercoaster to the heights of the medieval English monarchy's glory and the depths of its depravity. Grief-stricken John of Gaunt, heroic Henry the Fifth, murderous Queen Margaret, repulsive Richard the Third, and dozens more of Shakespeare's greatest characters cross swords, match wits, and meditate on the nature of power, ambition, and leadership in this unique adaptation. See Shakespeare's eight compelling and dramatic histories as he understood them: connected stories in a continuous narrative that shaped both his time and ours.

PUNCHLINE PRODUCTIONS

The Koan of Seymour

August 30–September 19, 2016

Written by J.B. Heaps

Directed by Justin Bennett

It would be impossible to name a performer who more effectively blurred the lines between his real life and his life on stage than Seymour Fitzgerald Payne. While his fans loved adorable characters like The Purple Orange and The Bellowing Mime, Seymour was also involved in a series of public confrontations that left his public wondering if these incidents were rehearsed routines or spontaneous tantrums. But just as his career was beginning to soar, his life reportedly ended. Was his mysterious demise an unavoidable and calamitous tragedy? Or the latest, and most elaborate, of Seymour's hoaxes?

In this two-act play, Seymour's fellow comedians gather together to mourn his passing and celebrate his life. But as the evening progresses, truths are revealed, lies are invented and Seymour – may or may not – have one last surprise.

"Playwright J.B.Heaps does theater the old fashion way: from the heart. He takes a subject that inspires him, builds a world for it and then shares it with others.....The truth is, so much of the plot is is left brilliantly to the imagination that one never really knows anything: Is Seymour Payne real? Is the stripper real? Am I real? What does "real" even mean?"—Stage Buddy





LIFE JACKET THEATRE COMPANY

America is Hard to See

October 11–24, 2016

Written and directed by Travis Russ

Original Songs by Priscilla Holbrook

Researched and developed by Travis Russ, Anthony Dvaskas, and Amelia Parenteau

AMERICA IS HARD TO SEE investigates Miracle Village, a small rural community for sex offenders buried deep in Southern Florida's sugarcane fields.

Residents live in places like Miracle Village because they are not permitted by law to live near schools, parks, or bus stops. Also, they must register their crimes, addresses, and vehicles on online public databases. These factors limit their chances of finding employment.

Several years ago, members of Life Jacket Theatre Co. travelled to Southern Florida to interview residents of Miracle Village, law enforcement officials, lawmakers, religious leaders, and other prominent figures on all sides of this controversial issue. An ensemble of seven powerful actors embodies over 50 people in this dynamic play.

Based solely on verbatim interviews and field research, the play blends spoken text and original songs to bring to life the interviewees' actual words. This uncomfortable and unorthodox play tells tough, thoughtful, and real stories about darkness, uncertainty, and healing in small-town America.

WILLIE JOHNSON

The Followers & Age of Extinction: Two Plays about Women at The End of The World

October 31–November 7, 2016

The Followers

Written by Willie Johnson

Directed by Sarah Stites

Age of Extinction

Written by Willie Johnson

Directed by Ashley Monroe

In *The Followers* and *Age of Extinction*, playwright Willie Johnson examined the social forces that pressure women to conform in two very different apocalyptic landscapes.

The Followers used the backdrop of a high school sex scandal to examine the nature of adolescent loneliness and the ways that social media can intensify teenage isolation. The play alternated between teen and adult perspectives, examining both the brutal dynamics of adolescent social life and the absurdity of school as a social environment.

Age of Extinction is a clown show about gentrification. The play centered around a volatile animal lover named Grundrisse who is grappling with the recent death of her mother and the transformation of her rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. As Grundrisse becomes increasingly alienated from her urban ecosystem, she begins to see how the forces transforming and destroying her neighborhood are linked to the forces destroying ecosystems all over the world. Note: this is a comedy.

JESSI D. HILL

The Starving Dress (A closed developmental reading)

December 5, 2016

Written and directed by Matthew Freeman

The Starving Dress is a surreal tale of discovery, murder, and escape. When a woman in a red dress becomes aware that she is in sealed, liminal world, she searches her scattered memory and the fractious tribes that form around her for answers and, perhaps, a path to freedom.



VERONICA COOPER AND ADAM THOMAS SMITH

Wake Up Call

December 6–19, 2016

Written by Veronica Cooper and Adam Thomas Smith

Directed by Adam Thomas Smith

In the midst of an unexpected double shift (on Christmas Eve, no less) a group of degenerate hotel employees stumble their way through an unusual night of service. It's a "coming of age when you're already of age" story. Sometimes it takes a miracle to grow the hell up. *Wake Up Call* was a 90-minute contemporary play set in the lobby of a luxury boutique hotel in New York City. Navigating through the misadventures of the evening, from outlandish guests to unpredictable coworkers,

we followed their journey into adulthood. Sort of.

"The most stellar aspect of Wake Up Call is undoubtedly how well the writing meshes with the chemistry of the actors. Cooper and Adam Thomas Smith's dialogue so accurately captures the voice of this generation of characters that I felt like I was watching people I knew, worked with, and had gone to school with. Combine that with the truly wonderful performances by the cast and you end up with some of the most natural friendships and relationships I have seen on stage."—Theatre is Easy

"All in all, WAKE UP CALL is a charmer. It's warm and fuzzy and full of sarcasm and dirty jokes. Just like I like my holiday season."—The Arts Wire Weekly

ALYSSA LIMPERIS

No Bad Days

December 12, 2016

My dad was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer in 2014, died in 2015 and we are now in 2016. This show took you through the impossibly painful journey of saying goodbye while introducing you to his magical, eccentric spirit that never left. We will cry. But

my dad once sent me to school with fake poop to "spice things up in algebra" so we will take breaks from crying as well. My dad always said that there were no bad days. So come, let's take what would be a bad month, a bad day, and make it into a good one.

"I know it's cliché to say I laughed and cried but I did both laugh (a lot) and cry (sobbed). The show was so emotional, hilarious and honest." —Libby Phillips, LibbyPR.com



PAMELA ENZ/VERA BEREN/BAD REP

w'Holy unHoliday series of events "Fractured Hearts and Lurid Details"

December 20, 2016–January 2, 2017

Part One & Two of The Family Plays
"Fractured Hearts and Lurid Details"

America's Big Band period of the 1930's and 40's open hearted beat provided a sound track for this wistful pean to a romantic



ideal that shattered shortly after it reached its zenith in the imaginations of 1950's America although it continues to live on in the DNA of lovers all around the globe.

"Are You My Kitchen Table?"

"...and when you're gone..who's gonna walk me down the street?"

An exploration of what happens when the music stops and we forget to continue dancing anyway. Mothers, gramma and little girls look to each for the next steps, who leads whom, whether to take them together, or choose an altogether different journey on a solitary road.

CAPS LOCK THEATRE AND JACK SHARKEY

Baby Mama: One Woman's Quest to Give Her Child to Gay People

January 3–30, 2017

Written and performed by Mariah MacCarthy

Directed by Sara Lyons

Baby Mama: One Woman's Quest to Give Her Child to Gay People tracks one birth mother's true adoption journey, from conception to placement with the gay couple of her dreams—while still living her life, dating, and attending the

occasional orgy. From adoption agencies to vaginal discharge, from burlesque to goodbyes, this intimate night of storytelling is up close and personal. Winner of The Dr. Robert J. Thierauf Producer's Pick Award of the Cincy Fringe. Bring hankies.

"Sweet and boisterous...and a lot of fun, too." —The New York Times on MacCarthy's Mrs. Mayfield's Fifth-Grade Class of '93 20-Year Reunion

"MacCarthy doesn't pull any punches...funny, moving and unapologetically candid...an entertaining slice of biography." —Time Out New York

*"MacCarthy holds nothing back...With radical intimacy and humor, she offers a candid look at love, family, friendship, and sacrifice—and there's even some burlesque to boot." —Broadway Baby (****):*





HARD SPARKS

Bareback Ink

February 28–March 20, 2017

Written by Bob Bartlett

Directed by David Drake

Looking down from the heavens, Zeus could not take his eyes off the boy, the most beautiful of the race of men. So the king of gods, taking the form of an eagle, descends from a fierce thunderstorm, seizes the Trojan prince and hides him among the stars...

HARD SPARKS

The Cabaret At The End Of The World

February 28–March 20, 2017

Written by Melody Bates and Rebecca Hart

Directed by Joan Jubett

It's the Ides of March—What could go wrong? Irreverent and vivacious hosts Flora and Fawna invite you to the hottest club in Ancient Rome for a sly, sexy, hilarious romp through Julius

Caesar, affectionately burlesquing Shakespeare and Rome while casting a sharply satirical light on the play's themes and how they reflect our own times.

The Cabaret At The End Of The World is a play with songs created by Melody Bates (book) and Rebecca Hart (music and lyrics), and directed by Joan Jubett. It was originally commissioned by Maine's Opera House Arts at The Stonington Opera House.





ATHENA THEATRE

Sub-Basement

March 21–April 17, 2017

Written by Tom Block

Directed by Hunter Bird

What is the place of art and imagination in our increasingly Orwellian society? *Sub-Basement* follows Adrienne, a former poet now Royal Canadian Mounted Police trainee, on an absurdist odyssey to find her true purpose amidst the dark corners of New York City, the depths of the Drama Book Shop, and her muddled past. Her voyage was guided by Gustav (a one-time climatologist) and Arnaud (an erstwhile poet), all while being pursued by Simon, who (unbeknownst to her) is set on becoming her fiancé. Are we ever free of the disappointments of the past, and can we escape the expectation of our parents? We joined on a voyage deep into Adrienne's psyche — and tried to discover what life's really about.

"Athena Theatre Company's production has brought together a strong creative team to put up a challenging but worthwhile



script. Given the nature of the play and its movement in fits and starts, the level of professional production is a boon."

—Will Jacobs, *Theatre is Easy*

"Sub-Basement" is another great production of Athena Theatre." —Andrew Baumgarten, *andybsports.com*

"The set, sound design, lighting, costumes, and all technical elements of the production all worked together in tandem to create a palpable and ominous atmosphere."

—Danielle Beckmann, *theartswireweekly.com*

STABLE CABLE LAB CO.

The Conspiracists

April 18–May 8, 2017

Written and directed by Max Baker

Set in a church basement, this World Premiere Play followed an Under-35 Conspiracy Theorists Support Group as they wrestled with their convictions, perceptions and each other's personalities. THE CONSPIRACISTS revealed how much we are influenced by other people, and how little we think we are.

Whether you believe in Chem-trails, tainted fluoride, UFO's, Inside Jobs, The Mandela Effect, JFK plots, or that Justin Beiber is a reptilian, THE CONSPIRACISTS were sure to challenge your reality in ways you didn't expect.

"...a strong ensemble, sharp writing, and timely discourse, The Conspiracists will lead you down the "rabbit hole" of conspiracy theories...You could see this play multiple times and discover new things each time that you hadn't noticed before."

—Tami Shaloum, Stage Buddy



"The Conspiracists displays the same rich, deeply human portrayal of knotty interpersonal dynamics as Baker's previous two plays with Stable Cable Lab Co..."—Leah Richards & John Ziegler, Culture Catch

"...a quirky, funny, and surprisingly dark play that showcases playwright Max Baker's ability to create tangibly deep characterizations."—Tom Stevens, Applause! Applause!

STABLE CABLE LAB CO. IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE FARM THEATER

Hope You Get To Eleven or What are we going to do about Sally

April 18–May 8, 2017

Written and performed by Padraic Lillis

Directed by Scott Illingworth

Hope You Get To Eleven or What are we going to do about Sally? is a solo show on the topic of suicide, written and performed by Padraic Lillis and directed by Scott Illingworth. The show was a very personal sharing of the ways of the mind, techniques for survival, and an invitation to talk about an issue that if left unspoken is deadly

"It felt like all of the collective suicidal thoughts that had ever entered the audience's heads came to sit alongside us in the theatre, right next to the ghosts of loved ones who had chosen to exit this life at their own hands. We were immersed in the

temporary nature of existence, and it felt cathartic to have the storyteller say out loud our ruminations and impossible questions on choosing to leave our lives too soon. It is a brave work. It's scary and necessary. It will certainly go down on my list of "Perfect Moments."—NYTheatreGuide

"This is theatre that can save lives. It MUST be seen at as many schools and colleges as you can get it into! Powerful, brave, vulnerable, honest and moving. Thank you."—Shira Lee, Audience Member NYC

"Hope You Get to Eleven is an emotionally driven solo piece that discusses things that can be hard to admit. Inspired by his own story, Lillis smartly doesn't tip toe around the subject. He brings dry humor to balance the gravitas. And there is a hell of a lot of gravitas in this play."—Theaterinthenow.com



F*IT CLUB

The Spring Fling: Rebound

May 8–22, 2017

World-Premiere Plays by Ngozichukwuka Anyanwu, Liza Birkenmeier, Lucy Boyle, Ryan King, Dan Moyer, Matthew Paul Olmos, & Leah Nanako Winkler

Directed by Saheem Ali, Sash Bischoff, Jess Beckley-Chayes, John Giampietro, Anne Cecelia Haney, Candis C. Jones, & Annie Tippe

The Spring Fling is an annual, award-winning presentation of six world-premiere, commissioned short plays around a central theme, written specifically for this project by six different playwrights of note, now going into its seventh year. In 2017, playwrights drew inspiration from the theme “rebound.”

“The writing here is insightful and often funny.”

—*The New York Times*

*“The Spring Fling has its S*IT together. Not only are all of the pieces thoughtful, but the overall production values make for a*

cohesive and enjoyable evening of theatre. Producers Allyson Morgan and Mara Kassin have assembled a stellar team of playwrights, performers and directors to bring these works to life... The Spring Fling includes work by artists who are simply good at what they do. This evening of quick and high-quality work is well worth your time and attention.” – Theatre Is Easy

“Shows like ‘Spring Fling’ are rare. Indomitably weird and high-brow, but without being esoteric to the point of pretension. It’s for the introvert stranger in all of us, that part of ourselves that is quietly a freak, and we, and the rest of the world, are able to just about not notice. It massages a part of the brain that is difficult to reach, and for that I admire it greatly. The writing is unique, the direction excellent, and the cast on-point. I highly recommend it if you need to see theatre that is unlike every other show on or off Broadway. It’s what I wish every one-act festival could be. Most of these feature reiterations of conventional theatre on a smaller scale. This was a venue for honest theatrical experimentation, performed by people who unquestionably knew what they were doing. I love that. I recommend checking out F It Club’s work in future.”—On Stage Blog*

DOUBLE DOWN PRODUCTIONS

The Disposal

May 23–29, 2017

Written by William Inge

Jess was convicted for killing his pregnant wife, and now he

sits on death row, awaiting execution today. He alternates between calm acceptance and violent hysteria, raging at his fellow inmates and the prison's chaplain. Jess is desperate for forgiveness from his father, but his father refused to accept that Jess is guilty, robbing his son of the possibility of some kind of understanding.

IMPROBABLE STAGE

That Which Remains

May 30–June 26, 2017

"Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand, Blood and revenge are hammering in my head. O, why should nature build so foul a den, Unless the gods delight in tragedies?"

Improbable Stage was thrilled to return to the ever fabulous IRT Theater to explore the divinely fraught Titus Andronicus.

"That Which Remains is presented by Improbable Stage. This company "is dedicated to creating intriguing theatrical work, both original pieces and reimagined classics . . ." . . . Here they have beautifully achieved these goals."

"There are numerous gorgeous stage pictures and compelling movement and dance numbers."—TheatreScene.net

"... thought provoking, innovative, interesting . . . not for traditionalists."—broadwaybaby.com



WESTSIDE EXPERIMENT

2016—2017





IRT THEATER, AMANDA GRONICH, & SAMUEL ADAMS

Myth in Motion: Exploring Hades and Persephone

July 5–16, 2016

Lead Teaching Artists

Amanda Gronich—(Tectonic Theater)

Samuel Adams—(Spit&Vigor)

Monique Holt—(Guest teaching artist)

Since 2007, IRT Theater has made a mission of hosting radically affordable, full-immersion development residences for emerging and established artists. An offshoot of IRT's 3B Development Series, the Westside Experiment offers students the skills to create original devised theater in collaboration with a working theater company in residency at IRT. The progressive Young Actor's Laboratory program still covers all the theater essentials, like physical-acting technique, improvisation, voice and the ever-popular stage combat, but with a decidedly downtown twist. This is a great choice for kids who are interested in theater but eager to try something more offbeat than, say, Oklahoma.

IRT's Westside Experiment joined Amanda Gronich & Samuel Adams as they led students grades 6-12 through an incredible development process resulting in a show at IRT!



We shared in a lively celebration of a classic story, Hades and Persephone, brought to new theatrical life. Our special presentation showcased IRT theater students' dramatic imaginations...as they explored this famous myth. Delving into the key elements of theater – light, sound, costume, movement, character and plot – each participant has devised a unique storytelling 'moment' taken from the story. What makes this ancient tale as meaningful today as it was over two millennia ago? Our students have uncovered their own theatrical revelations...each one inventive, surprising and engaging.

ABOUT RESIDENT COMPANY

Amanda Gronich (Tectonic Theater) - began her theatrical career as a charter member of the Tony Award-winning Tectonic Theater Project, where she became one of ten original cast members who traveled to Laramie, Wyoming and co-created The Laramie Project. She currently teaches theatrical storytelling and playdevising techniques to graduate Arts Education majors at City College. She is also an experienced acting coach. Prior to this, Amanda worked as an Emmy-nominated non-fiction television writer, developing, scripting and story-producing dozens of hours of top-rated cable series and specials.

Samuel Adams (Spit&Vigor)—is thrilled to be joining IRT's Westside Experiment! Samuel works an actor, director, teacher, and resident artist with Spit&Vigor. Born in Manhattan and raised on a farm in the Catskills, he trained at Adelphi University and studied classical theater at the London Dramatic Academy. As a director, he has worked with many New York City theater companies that focus on experimenting with the boundaries between audience and actors, such as Island Shakespeare, Rapidfire Bootleg, and the Ophelia Theater Group. As an actor, he has performed off-broadway at Theater Row and The Symphony Space, in productions regionally, and across NYC (including the award-winning 2015 production of *In Vestments*, written by Spit&Vigor's artistic director Sara Fellini). With a special love of the classics, Sam has performed in over a dozen plays of Shakespeare, including leading roles in *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, *King Lear*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Film work includes starring roles in several indie films, several national commercials, as well as supporting roles in HBO's *Boardwalk Empire* and *Mildred Pierce*. Most recently, he did voice-over and motion-capture for a featured character in an upcoming video game, which he's eager to play once it's finally released. For the past several years, Samuel has worked as a teaching artist with Stages on the Sound, teaching theater arts to students at Catholic Schools across Queens and Brooklyn. Samuel is a proud member of Actor's Equity and SAG-AFTRA, and is represented by Atlas Talent.

"What I enjoyed most about the Westside Experiment was just the ability to create the weirdest pieces of work possible. With the Westside Experiment it seems like anything is possible. I love it!"—Kijani-Ali Gaulman (Student)

"What I liked about the Westside experience is begin able to create a scene from a topic and also to direct my vision on stage. It was also a great time to get myself out of my comfort zone and to prove myself that I am capable to do something I love. I would recommend anyone to have the experience, because it's fun and you actually leave with confidence. Never stop doing what you love."—Rayna Brown (Student)

"This Fall Mia was cast in The Burning Boy, the Fall play at Stevenson. She was also accepted to the Improv Troupe after auditioning this Fall. The faculty advisor that cast Mia told her that she felt Mia had been overlooked and it was her 'time'. This was a great affirmation and it is no coincidence that her 'blossoming' occurred after attending this unique and wonderful program. Mia auditioned for admission into Bradley University's theatre program a few months after returning from NYC. She was accepted and awarded a theatre scholarship. Scott Karnow, who recommended that she be awarded the maximum theatre scholarship after her audition, commented favorably on her ability to take instruction. Another skill that Mia worked on while at IRT. She hopes to make performance her career."—Julie Katz (Parent)



ARCHIVE RESIDENCY ARTISTS

2016—2018

The Archive Residency is our ongoing development and presenting program, providing a two-year commitment of time, space, and support to select independent theater companies. Each residency culminates in a world premiere of a new work. In partnership with New Ohio Theatre, our neighbors in the Archive Building, we provide independent theater companies with that most elusive and invaluable resource: an artistic home.

In the first year we provide them with one month in IRT Theater's development space to investigate, workshop, and rehearse the work. We then present a simple but fully realized four performance run as part of the New Ohio's OBIE Award-winning Ice Factory Festival. This invaluable opportunity allows the director, designers, and actors to evaluate and calibrate their progress in response to a paying audience. The second year includes another month of development at IRT, and finally a four week run of the World Premiere as part of our main-stage season, giving the company a professional downtown platform to present their work.



BUILT FOR COLLAPSE

DANGER SIGNALS

November 8–December 5, 2016

Written by Nina Segal

Directed by Sanaz Ghajar

A woman gives a lecture about the brain. A woman gives a lecture about a man and his brain. A woman bakes a cake. Fuck that. She does nothing like that. A woman puts on a large hat and plays at being a man, pushing a sharp object through the soft bit of an eye socket. Chalk dust falls from the ceiling and two monkeys talk about the ways that pain is processed by the brain. Becky and Lucy. Doctor Walter Freeman. War is coming. Count backwards from ten. Becky and Lucy. Becky and Lucy. Becky and Lucy. Becky and Lucy. Becky and Lucy. Becky and Lucy. Becky and Lucy. War is

coming, always. DANGER SIGNALS is a multidisciplinary fantasia about monkeys, brains and how we deal with our problems.

With: Misha Brooks, Jessica Almasy*, Lilly Brown, Eva Jaunzemis, Issa Best

Built for Collapse is an award-winning theater company committed to building multi-disciplinary work that challenges theatrical form. They develop each project through a highly physical process inspired by found texts, visual art, and pop culture to create a live collage of the world and its stories. “An ambitiously subversive young troupe” (Time Out NY), they have developed work nationally and internationally with The Drama League, NYTW, BRIC Arts ffl Media House, Ars Nova, 3LD, Prague Film and Theater Center, and others.





anecdota

*A FOOTNOTE IN HISTORY**

Jan. 3–Feb. 27, 2017

Created by anecdota

Music by Rima Fand

“How does it feel to realize that...you are going to become a footnote in history and a trivia question subject forever?”

Dr. Sally Ride: “Gosh, that’s quite an honor!”

It’s 1983 and America is sending its first female astronaut into space, breaking the highest glass ceiling. anecdota returns with a rollicking, genre-bending meditation on being an American first that looks back to ask how far have we traveled, how far have we come.

Performed live by a seriously kick-ass all-female band:

Leni Stern on guitar (recently named one of the “50 Most Sensational Female Guitarists of All Time” by Guitar Player Magazine), Felice Rosser on bass (who first picked up a bass borrowed from her friend Basquiat), Jessie Nelson on drums and Kirsten Nordine on keyboards.



anecdota creates original live performance works inspired by (too) little-known (true) stories of women who dared to shape history. Led by Erica Fae & Jill A. Samuels, their production *Take What Is Yours* was a Critics’ Pick in *The NY Times*, supported by *Ms. Magazine*, and nominated for a Henry Hewes Design Award. Fae’s feature film *To Keep The Light* won the Fipresci Int’l Critics’ prize, among other festival awards. Samuels’ interdisciplinary work has appeared at over sixty festivals, venues and sites.

IRT PRODUCTIONS

2016—2017

WANDERING BARK THEATRE COMPANY

Hedda (Gabler)

September 20–October 10, 2016

Directed by Joseph Mitchell Parks

Artistic Directed by Valerie Redd
& Joseph Mitchell Parks

WANDERING BARK THEATRE CO. is a New York City based group founded in 2011, dedicated to exploring and adapting classical theatre, highlighting the universality of its themes with bold and experimental productions, often incorporating live music, multi-media design, original text, and stylized physicality.

"Wandering Bark does a strong job of paying homage to the play while still putting their own twist on the classic... this 90-minute version is fast and gritty."—THEATER IN THE NOW

"It was great to see IRT bring back a classic and show us why it is deemed such a great play by many...it captures the darkness of the human condition that plagues us all."—THEATER THAT MATTERS



EVENTS/ WORKSHOPS

2016—2017



KIM WEILD/ALEXANDRIA WAILES

Space, Time and the Body

December 2, 2016

A free Introductory Viewpoints based workshop for Deaf and hearing artists - American Sign Language lives three dimensionally in space. The Viewpoints offers a vocabulary for theater artists to paint three dimensionally in Time and Space. Participants explored what happens when we put ASL and The Viewpoints together.

"The Viewpoints workshop was great! It was a rare opportunity to participate in a workshop designed specifically for the Deaf, with highly qualified interpreters, and led by an instructor (Kim Weild) who is familiar with Deaf culture and open to learning more as well. I appreciated very much that we as participants did not have to fight for communication access. The workshop itself, was beneficial and made me think of various aspects of myself such as



movement, interaction, perception of others and myself. To think of and feel the multi-layers of what is occurring during the exercises and debriefings."—Howie Seago

CONNIE NOYES/BAD REP

TWO workshops: One-Sock Tree & Where Does Love Live?

December 16–30, 2016

WORKSHOP ONE—One-Sock Tree

The lonely sock. The sock that lost its mate. Your favorite pair or an old gym sock abandoned unexplainably. Everyone has one of these. Some have a drawer full, hold outs for hope that their match will reappear. The lonely one-sock was used as a jumping off point for this workshop to inspire contemplation of loss, love and all things left behind. Connie used authentic movement, spontaneous writing, drawing and meditation to illuminate the un'known with humor grace and compassion.

WORKSHOP TWO—Where Does Love Live?

In this workshop Connie used music, dialog and characters from the play by Pamela Enz, *Fractured Hearts* and *Lurid Details**, to explore the Heart. They created costumes to restrict and expand movement, explore the face of the character (mask) and underlying motivations. They worked with objects to expand perception. *Where does love live?* used authentic movement, repetition spontaneous words and making to get curious about our fears, longings, upsets and honesty, acknowledging and opening our imaginations to infinite possibilities of connection and LOVE (of course) "In the end the shadow is transparent".



IRT, NEW YORK DEAF THEATRE, AND OUR VOICES

The Ghostlight Project

January 19, 2017

On January 19, 2017 at 5:30PM in each time zone across the country, members of the theater community—from Broadway to regional theaters to high schools and colleges and community theaters—came together to launch The Ghostlight Project.

Inspired by the tradition of leaving a “ghost light” on in a darkened theater, artists and communities made or renewed a pledge to stand for and protect the values of inclusion, participation, and compassion for everyone—regardless of race, class, religion, country of origin, immigration status, [dis]ability, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

NICK MECIKALSKI & SOPHIE WEISSKOFF

American Maar

January 28, 2017

Written by Nick Mecikalski

Directed by Sophie Weisskoff



Journey of a Dream: Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 16, 2017

16 talented artists came together on the evening of Martin Luther King Day, and use one of his quotes as inspiration to create a new piece that they shared with us to celebrate his life and legacy. This evening of new work will be sure to breathe new life into everyone in the audience as these artists will continue the journey of the Dream Dr. King first had, while also manifesting new Dreams for today and the generations to come.

ARTISTS PERFORMING: Jasmine Batchelor, Nia Brantly, Marchant Davis, Arielle Goldman, Trevor Kluckman, Chalia La Tour, Eric Marable Jr., Mandi Masden, Rachel Mewbron, Andres Santiago Pina, Ren D. Santi, Brendan Spieth, Korde A. Tuttle, Kerry Warren, Victor Williams

Jo, a young CEO, owns a green energy megacompany that is now one piece of legislation away from drastically transforming the American way of life for environmentalist good. Jo’s mother Sandy, however, mistrustful of her increasingly influential daughter, wages subtle war against Jo to keep what she sees as a dangerous amount of power out of her hands.



AFTER RESIDENCY

2016—2017

HOWARD FISHMAN/CONNIE CONVERSE/PAUL LAZAR

A Star Has Burnt in My Eye

October 25–30, 2016 (IRT Theater 3B Development)

November 9–12, 2016 (Brooklyn Academy of Music—BAM)

Written by Howard Fishman

Music and Lyrics by Connie Converse

Directed by Paul Lazar

In 1961, sovaldi the polymathic songwriter Connie Converse grew disillusioned with music and New York, packed her bags for Ann Arbor, and eventually disappeared. Her home recordings from the 50s have only recently come to light—vulnerable, literary songs about loneliness, sexual longing, and bad credit—but they were unclassifiable at the time and she vanished without an audience or album to her name.

In this new play by songwriter and guitarist Howard Fishman, four musicians in a Brooklyn living room prepare for a concert



of Converse's music, rehearsing her songs, reflecting over lyrics, and pondering what it meant, and still means, to be an outsider artist. A treasure trove of recently discovered artifacts—personal letters, diary entries, poems, along with first-person recollections—come to life alongside intimate performances on guitar, piano, and accordion, in tribute to this enigmatic songstress whose fate still eludes.

"Incredible, as was she; the show had me transfixed, joyful, and grateful. It reminded me, yet again, what art is for."—The New Yorker

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