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Director	<b>Monteze Freeland</b>
Production Stage Manager	<b>Nik Nemec</b>
Set Design	<b>Mark Clayton Southers</b>
Light Design	<b>Madeleine Steineck</b>
Sound Design	<b>Mark Whitehead</b>
Costume/Makeup Design	<b>Cheryl El-Walker</b>
Sound Technician	<b>Nic Nemec</b>
Light Technician	<b>Monn Washington</b>
Scenic Painter	<b>Diane Melchitzky</b>
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### Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company Staff

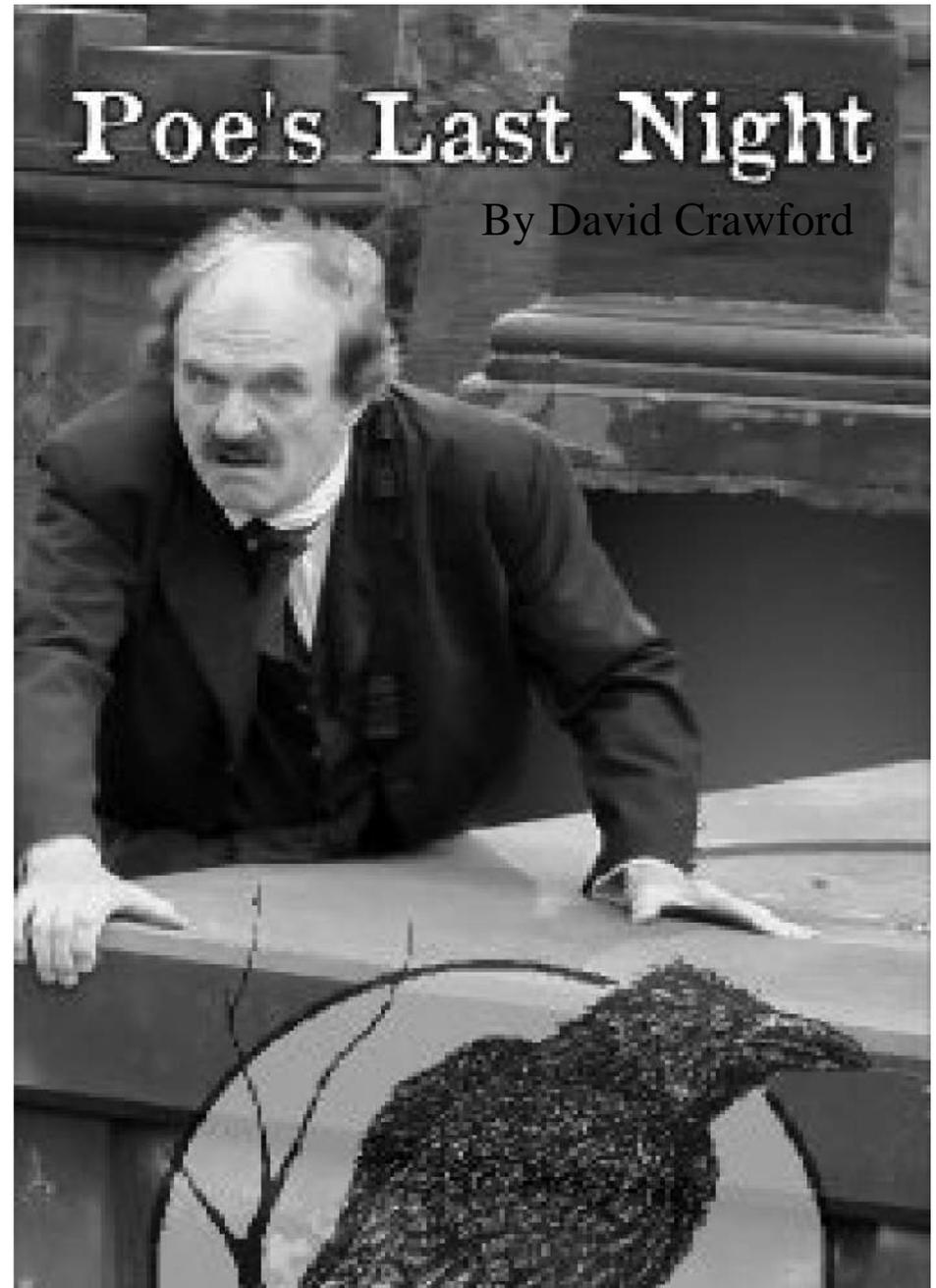
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Managing Director	<b>Eric A. Smith</b>
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## Words from the Artistic Director



We're very excited about this production. It covers a lot of our mission by providing the opportunity for local playwrights to take their work from page to stage.

When I first heard the voice of David Crawford I was immediately drawn in to whatever he had to say. I was also drawn to the fact that his acting talents match this authoritative voice of his. So it is indeed a treat to have him grace our tiny stage once again, but this time solo with his one man play Poe's Last Night. Mr. Crawford last appeared here as Selig in our 9th August Wilson production, Gem of the Ocean. It's always a special time for us when we host an iconic actor. In fact it could be the theme of our season if all goes as planned. We're currently fundraising to bring in a very well known national actor for our spring production of Marlon Youngblood's Comfort Zone. If you would like to be one of our actor sponsors please speak with Eric or myself at intermission or after the performance. In the mean time please sit back and allow your senses to take a journey with Mr. David Crawford through Poe's Last Night.

Happy New Year! Make 2014 a great year for theater. Make a donation today Visit our box office in the lobby, or go to [www.pghplaywrights.com/donations](http://www.pghplaywrights.com/donations)

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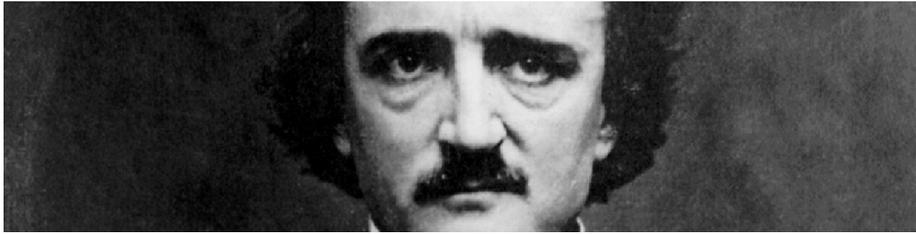
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Pittsburgh Playwrights



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**We thank all of our donors; Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company's productions would not be possible without you.**

**From the Playwright and Star David Crawford**

Was it a brain disorder, too much beer and laudanum, rabies, or a vicious beating? The possibilities are many. More to the point, they have much to say about who Edgar Poe was. The hypothesized circumstances of his death lead us back to the themes of his life.

Did his prolific powers of invention arise from an agitated brain? Did his occasional descents into hellish misery lead to a fatal indulgence in alcohol and morphine? Did the joy he took in affection expose him to a bite from a rabid cat? Did his determination to marry the woman he loved despite her brothers' fierce opposition bring on a disastrous attack?

Exploring these threads over the past three years has been a great adventure. Weaving them into a depiction of the man who was Edgar Poe has been immensely and joyously challenging.

The resulting theater piece was developed over the course of 2012, first on a peripatetic netbook computer, then during the month of August at the Edinburgh, Scotland, Festival Fringe. Twenty-eight daily performances in the fourth-floor back room of a nightclub for audiences of 30 or 40 from all over Europe is a wonderful way to turn a script into a performance.

Further development has come as the original fifty-minute piece was expanded to eighty minutes for a Halloween performance at 12 Peers Theater. Then came the paring down to thirty minutes for First Night Pittsburgh 2013 at Pittsburgh Playwrights. Then a revisiting and polishing for a one-week run at the Charlevoix, MI, Circle of the Arts. And now this production, complete with lights and sound and a set, thanks to the fine work of Monteze Freeland, Mark Southers, and all the artists of Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater. They have my admiration and gratitude.



## From the Director Monteze Freeland

I was first introduced to Edgar Allan Poe in a middle school English class in Baltimore. While somewhat dense for my brain at the time, the imagery was enough to keep my interest. Escaping death, plotted revenge...what teenage boy wouldn't be intrigued? Poe's work transcends barriers and hits the core of our fears and nightmares. His legacy is palpable in my hometown from the illustrious Ravens football team to taverns and pubs dubbed after some of his most famous works and inspirations. I still get that eerie twinge as I walk through the cobblestoned alley to my best friend's house when visiting home. The man and the work coincided as many artists discover along their journey.

Here we explore Poe's final night on the barren streets of Baltimore. The mystery surrounding his demise creates a story that Poe himself could have written and made famous. Many consider him the father of Horror so it seems fitting that his last day would play as a page ripped from his creation. David Crawford's diligent work has allowed him to create an imaginative look at the work of Poe and gives those watching a glimpse into the bewildered artist; blending real life with true fear. Mr. Crawford has taken his production to Scotland and back with audiences eager for these familiar hauntings.

Indulge in our nostalgic ride to the days in which a simple insult could find you walled up with regret.

Monteze Freeland

[www.pghplaywrights.com](http://www.pghplaywrights.com)

## Poe's Last Night Production Bios

**Nik Nemeč** (*Production Stage Manager*) is a student of Point Park University in the Stage Management program. He has done work with Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, The Gemini Children's Theater Company and works at Point Park University's Pittsburgh Playhouse Theatre. He is thrilled to work with fellow Point Park graduate Monteze Freeland and actor David Crawford.

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**Madeleine Steineck** (*Light Design*) Madeleine Steineck is a Lighting Designer and Master Electrician. Recent Master Electrician credits: Nearly Wild (Texture Ballet Company), Lady Windermere's Fan and Don Juan Comes Back From the War (PICT). Recent Design credits: Aladdin Jr. (JCC Performing Arts Camp), Hello, Dolly! (Winchester Thurston High School), Romeo and Juliet<sup>3</sup> (Morgantown Dance and Morgantown Ballet Company). Upcoming Design Work: Urinetown: The Musical (Mercyhurst University).

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**Mark Whitehead** (*Sound Designer*) is the founder of Saints & Poets Theater, for which he produced and directed Christiane D's Saffronia, Sam Shepard's The Late Henry Moss and Donald Freed's Secret Honor: The Last Testament of Richard M. Nixon. He was a member of Time Space, for which he produced Hamlet Machine and directed 4-H Club and Insignificance. Additional directing credits include The Revenants, Cry Havoc, Taking Sides, and Fool for Love. Mark has designed sound for numerous local theaters, and is Resident Sound Designer for The Unseam'd Shakespeare Company and Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Company. Mark has won Onyx awards for best sound design three years in a row for his work on PPTCO's annual August Wilson productions. He was named best sound designer and listed among the best directors in City Paper's 2001 theater round-up, and was named best sound designer of 2000 by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Mark was a founding producer of the Dark Night Cabaret performance series. He has also produced and directed music videos for several local bands.

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**Cheryl M. El Walker** (*Costumes/Make-up*) is an award-winning costume designer and make-up artist who is also a veteran stage actor from Pittsburgh. Her creative work has been seen in Kim El's "Straightening Combs" and she has earned several Onyx Awards for Best Costume Design, Best Make-up and Leading Actress, all from The African American Council for the Arts (AACTA). She also received the 2012 Legacy Award from The Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company. Cheryl's stage performances include The Wilksburg Arts Theatre, New Horizon Theatre, Kuntu Repertory Theatre, PPTCO and most recently with the B.U.S 8 Tour with Bricolage. Cheryl is an alumna of Point Park University.

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**David Crawford** (Edgar Allan Poe)

David Crawford last appeared at Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater in 2012 in August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* and Ray Werner's *Elder Hostages*. He has worked on most of Pittsburgh's stages as well as a few in West Virginia and New York. Among nearly 200 roles, he has played Fagin in *Oliver!*, Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Tom in *The Glass Menagerie*. On film, he was Doctor Foster, Government Scientist, in George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, the boy's father in PBS's *The Boy Who Loved Trolls*, and the crazed Reverend in Bill Schotten's *Sabbath*, among others.



**Monteze Freeland** (Director)

Monteze Freeland is a Baltimore native with a B.A. in Theatre from Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts. Past directing credits include: "Reservations Cancelled" for the Pittsburgh New Works Festival, "Harriet Tubman Loved Somebody" with Kuntu Rep, "Is That a Gun in Your Pocket?" for the Pride Theater Festival, "Sold" co-directed with Mark Clayton Southers at Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater in addition to Ray Werner's "Christmas Star". He is the founder and Artist Director of The LAB, a new theater company debuting in Pittsburgh this fall. Many many thanks to Mark, David, Nik, Madeleine, Mark W., Monn, Diane and Eric for all of their hard work and dedication to producing "Poe's Last Night".

## The Story of Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Poe was born in Boston on January 19, 1809. That makes him Capricorn, on the cusp of Aquarius. His parents were David and Elizabeth Poe. David was born in Baltimore on July 18, 1784. Elizabeth Arnold came to the U.S. from England in 1796 and married David Poe after her first husband died in 1805. They had three children, Henry, Edgar, and Rosalie.

Elizabeth Poe died in 1811, when Edgar was 2 years old. She had separated from her husband and had taken her three kids with her. Henry went to live with his grandparents while Edgar was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. John Allan and Rosalie was taken in by another family. John Allan was a successful merchant, so Edgar grew up in good surroundings and went to good schools.

When Poe was 6, he went to school in England for 5 years. He learned Latin and French, as well as math and history. He later returned to school in America and continued his studies. Edgar Allan went to the University of Virginia in 1826. He was 17. Even though John Allan had plenty of money, he only gave Edgar about a third of what he needed. Although Edgar had done well in Latin and French, he started to drink heavily and quickly became in debt. He had to quit school less than a year later.

Edgar Allan had no money, no job skills, and had been shunned by John Allan. Edgar went to Boston and joined the U.S. Army in 1827. He was 18. He did reasonably well in the Army and attained the rank of sergeant major. In 1829, Mrs. Allan died and John Allan tried to be friendly towards Edgar and signed Edgar's application to West Point.

While waiting to enter West Point, Edgar lived with his grandmother and his aunt, Mrs. Clemm. Also living there were his brother, Henry, and young cousin, Virginia. In 1830, Edgar Allan entered West Point as a cadet. He didn't stay long because John Allan refused to send him any money. It is thought that Edgar purposely broke the rules and ignored his duties so he would be dismissed.

In 1831, Edgar Allan Poe went to New York City where he had some of his poetry published. He submitted stories to a number of magazines and they were all rejected. Poe had no friends, no job, and was in financial trouble. He sent a letter to John Allan begging for help but none came. John Allan died in 1834 and did not mention Edgar in his will.

In 1835, Edgar finally got a job as an editor of a newspaper because of a contest he won with his story, "The Manuscript Found in a Bottle". Edgar missed Mrs. Clemm and Virginia and brought them to Richmond to live with him. In 1836, Edgar married his cousin, Virginia. He was 27 and she was 13. Many sources say Virginia was 14, but this is incorrect. Virginia Clemm was born on August 22, 1822. They were married before her 14th birthday, in May of 1836. In case you didn't figure it out already, Virginia was Virgo.

As the editor for the *Southern Literary Messenger*, Poe successfully managed the paper and increased its circulation from 500 to 3500 copies. Despite this, Poe left the paper in early 1836, complaining of the poor salary. In 1837, Edgar went to New York. He wrote "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym" but he could not find any financial success. He moved to Philadelphia in 1838 where he wrote "Ligeia" and "The Haunted Palace". His first volume of short stories, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, was published in 1839. Poe received the copyright and 20 copies of the book, but no money.

Sometime in 1840, Edgar Poe joined George R. Graham as an editor for *Graham's Magazine*. During the two years that Poe worked for Graham's, he published his first detective story, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and challenged readers to send in cryptograms, which he always solved. During the time Poe was editor, the circulation of the magazine rose from 5000 to 35,000 copies. Poe left Graham's in 1842 because he wanted to start his own magazine.

Poe found himself without a regular job once again. He tried to start a magazine called *The Stylus* and failed. In 1843, he published some booklets containing a few of his short stories but they didn't sell well enough. He won a hundred dollars for his story, "The Gold Bug" and sold a few other stories to magazines but he barely had enough money to support his family. Often, Mrs. Clemm had to contribute financially. In 1844, Poe moved back to New York. Even though "The Gold Bug" had a circulation of around 300,000 copies, he could barely make a living.

In 1845, Edgar Poe became an editor at *The Broadway Journal*. A year later, the Journal ran out of money and Poe was out of a job again. He and his family moved to a small cottage near what is now East 192nd Street. Virginia's health was fading away and Edgar was deeply distressed by it. Virginia died in 1847, 10 days after Edgar's birthday. After losing his wife, Poe collapsed from stress but gradually returned to health later that year.

In June of 1849, Poe left New York and went to Philadelphia, where he visited his friend John Sartain. Poe left Philadelphia in July and came to Richmond. He stayed at the Swan Tavern Hotel but joined "The Sons of Temperance" in an effort to stop drinking. He renewed a boyhood romance with Sarah Royster Shelton and planned to marry her in October. On September 27, Poe left Richmond for New York. He went to Philadelphia and stayed with a friend named James P. Moss. On September 30, he meant to go to New York but supposedly took the wrong train to Baltimore.

On October 3, Poe was found at Gunner's Hall, a public house at 44 East Lombard Street, and was taken to the hospital. He lapsed in and out of consciousness but was never able to explain exactly what happened to him. Edgar Allan Poe died in the hospital on Sunday, October 7, 1849.

The mystery surrounding Poe's death has led to many myths and urban legends. The reality is that no one knows for sure what happened during the last few days of his life. Did Poe die from alcoholism? Was he mugged? Did he have rabies?