

Pittsburgh Playwrights THEATRE COMPANY

WORLD
PREMIERE!



FINDINGS

BY
ARLENE WEINER

DIRECTED BY
LISA ANN GOLDSMITH

MARCH
4TH—19TH
2017



Welcome to the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre. I'm excited about this world premiere production of Arlene Weiner's FINDINGS. Like the late great August Wilson, Ms. Weiner has moved from poetry to writing for the stage. That's a big part of our mission and we're very thankful to play a big part in that process.

Sit back and relax. We hope you have an enjoyable experience.

Mark Clayton Southers

by **Arlene Weiner**
directed by **Lisa Ann Goldsmith**

Setting: Present day

Jennifer CortlandAmy Marsalis
Gloria BazonLissa Brennan
Lainie (Verlaine).....Julia de Avilez Rocha
Lainie (Verlaine) understudy 3/10 & 3/18Emma Szuba
Roger CortlandJohn Michnya
Ray JeromeSam Lothard
Dr. Blankette/NeighborCharles David Richards*

*Member of Actors' Equity Association

The play is presented in one act. There is no intermission.

Special Thanks

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About the Playwright



Arlene Weiner (Playwright) grew up in New York City. Her aunt worked for a theater ticket agency, so she got to see plays at an early age. Arlene has been a Shakespeare scholar, a cardiology technician, a college instructor, a member of a group developing computer-based educational instruction, and an editor. Her poetry has been published in journals and anthologies and has been read by Garrison Keillor on *The Writer's Almanac*. Ragged Sky Press published two collections of her poems, *Escape Velocity* and *City Bird*. Arlene wrote essays and theater reviews for *Cold Hill Review*. *Findings* is her first produced play.

Playwright's Note

I'm a writer and a theatre maniac. I grew up in New York City and have lived in Pittsburgh for most of my adult life. Pittsburgh artists have a real sense of community. I've benefited from that in the poetry community, where poets have workshops where we exchange and critique each other's work, and in the theatre community too. I took classes with playwright Tammy Ryan—some scenes in this play were written for her assignments. I went to group meetings where playwrights "brought pages." I was generously encouraged by Tami Dixon, Melissa Hill Grande, Sam Turich, Gab Cody, Kathleen Downey, Joanne Pompeo, Lisa Ann Goldsmith, and many others, friends and professionals. Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company's artistic director, Mark Clayton Southers, is passionate about theatre and about nurturing theatre in others, young and old. *Findings* had a seated reading here in November 2015 from which I learned a lot. My husband and I have enjoyed many productions here. So I'm thrilled that this time I'm not just in the seats but on the stage!

I hope there's a lot of love in this play. One of the characters asks, "Why are some people lucky and some so unlucky?" She's a teenager and I'm far from a teenager, but I still ask that.

About the Director



Lisa Ann Goldsmith (Director) is thrilled to be directing the world premiere of this beautiful play in the company of all these wonderful artists! Her directing credits include: **Pittsburgh:** The world premieres of *The Devil's Arithmetic* and *Walk Two Moons* (Prime Stage); *Out of This Furnace* (Unseam'd Shakespeare), the premiere of Amy Hartman's *Disinfecting Edwin* (Open Stage); *The Proposal/To Hell and Back*, *The Monkey's Paw/Happy Garden of Life*, and Jake Heggie's *Three Decembers* (at Pittsburgh Opera) with The Microscopic Opera Company; *As You Like It* (Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, *The Merry Wives*

of Windsor and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Pittsburgh Public Theater's Summer Shakespeare Intensive); *The Rocky Horror Show* (immersive production - Brisbane Management); the East Coast premiere of Allison Moore's *Eighteen* (Pittsburgh Playwrights). **New York:** *Into the Woods* (Fordham University); *Dark Lady of the Sonnets* (Protean Theatre Company at Primary Stages); *Jesus is My Goalie* (Winner - One-Minute Play Contest); *The Miss Firecracker Contest* (Queens Theatre in the Park). **Regional:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Tulsa Shakespeare in the Park); *The Butterfingers Angel*, *Mary and Joseph*, *Herod the Nut* and *the Slaughter of 12 Hit Carols in a Pear Tree* (Tulsa Repertory Theatre); *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* (Centre Stage); *Pump Boys and Dinettes* (Broadhollow Theatre).

Lisa Ann is also a professional actor with many New York and regional credits, most recently regionally as Kate Rearden in the World Premiere of *Windfall* directed by Jason Alexander of *Seinfeld* fame! (Arkansas Rep) and locally, as Mrs. Cratchit for the sixth year in Pittsburgh CLO's *A Musical Christmas Carol*. She has appeared in numerous films, including the 2013 Sundance Dramatic Competition Nominee *The Lifeguard*, *The Umbrella Man*, *Progression*, *The Next Three Days*, *Love and Other Drugs*, *One for the Money*, *Mombies*, *Lightweight*, *The Director*, and just wrapped the hilarious *Deal With It*.

Cast Biographies



Lissa Brennan (Gloria Bazon) has previously worked with Pittsburgh Playwrights in several installments of the Festival in Black and White as an actor, director, and playwright. This is her first full-length production with the company.



Sam Lothard (Ray Jerome) has been acting, writing and directing since 2007. Sam received a Best Actor Nomination in Pittsburgh Playwrights' "Theatre Festival in Black and White" in 2013. He's performed as Uncle Moses in *The Ballad of Emmett Till*, LoBoy in *Lower Ninth* and is Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre's featured actor for this season. Following that, Sam will be seen in *Kalopsia the Musical*. He's thankful for the experience that phenomenal cast members and directors have poured into him. Many thanks to God, my family, and friends. Put God First. Shoot your shot. Chase your dreams.



Amy Marsalis (Jennifer Cortland) is honored to be working under the direction of Lisa Ann Goldsmith, and with this amazing cast and crew in the world premiere of *Findings*. Amy is a professional actor working in film/tv/commercials/theater/improv in Chicago, LA, San Diego and PITTSBURGH. Recent credits: *Outsiders*, WGN; *Banshee*, Cinemax; and *You Wouldn't Expect*, August Wilson Center/Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. Her two daughters inspire her every day to make the most of each day — to love, laugh and live fully on every given day — and they remind her that the "future is not ours to see" - courage is necessary. Amy would like to dedicate her performance to her parents and her late grandmother,

Antoinette Kocak, three of the bravest people she will ever meet.

Cast Biographies



John Michnya (Roger Cortland) is a Pittsburgh-based actor, director, and teaching artist and a graduate of both the College of the Holy Cross and the University of Pittsburgh. His recent acting credits include *The Odd Couple* (Roy, St. Vincent Summer Theatre), *Midnight Radio: 1984* (Voice & Foley Artist; Bricolage), *Last Gas* (Guy Gagnon; Little Lake Theatre), *Animal Farm* (Boxer; Primestage), and *As You Like It* (Jacques; PSiP). John has recently directed *The Mathematics of Being Human* for the University of Pittsburgh, and *Sarazad and the Monster King* for In Between Theatre at Chatham University's KidsCan Festival. www.johnmichnya.com



Charles David Richards* (Dr. Blankette/Neighbor) is happy to work with Pittsburgh Playwrights. Off-Broadway he reprised the role of Gillen which he created at New Playwrights Theatre of Washington D.C. Last summer he appeared as Dubik in Unseam'd Shakespeare's *Out of This Furnace*, also directed by Ms. Goldsmith. In Los Angeles he did *Hamlet* with James Cromwell at the Olympic Arts Festival at the Pilot Theatre LA, and *On the Razzle* with the West Coast Ensemble. On film he's been in *Predator 2*, *Three Men and a Little Lady*, *Six Souls* with Julianne Moore and *Out of the Furnace* among others. TV includes Judge Lenzner in *The Outsiders*, Judge Haller in *Banshee*, *The Guardian*, *The War That Made America* and

Steve Posnick in the Emmy award winning series *St. Elsewhere*. He is a proud member of Actors Equity and SAG-AFTRA.



Julia de Avilez Rocha (Lainie [Verlaine]) is a sophomore at the University of Pittsburgh currently studying Theatre Arts and English Writing. She is thrilled to be making her Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company debut! In Pittsburgh, she has performed in three University productions thus far, including *A Midsummer Nights Dream* (Puck 1), *Hair* (Jeanie), and *Nine* (ensemble). Other credits include *The Tempest* (Stephano), *Into the Woods* (Jack's Mom), Mary Zimmerman's *Journey To the West* (ensemble), and *West Side Story* (Velma, ensemble).

Biographies



Emma Szuba (*Lainie understudy*) is thrilled to be joining the cast of *Findings*. Currently a senior at Quaker Valley High School, she plans to pursue English and theater in college next fall. Her credits include *Julius Caesar* (Marc Antony) and *Twelfth Night* (Viola) with the PPT Summer Shakespeare Intensive and *Arms and the Man* (Raina) with her high school. She would like to extend a huge thank you to Lisa Ann for this opportunity, the cast for welcoming her in, and her friends and family for always being so supportive.

Cheryl El-Walker (*Makeup & Costume Design*) Cheryl is an award-winning costume designer and makeup artist who is also a veteran stage actor/director from Pittsburgh. Her creative work has been seen in nine of August Wilson's plays. She has earned several Onyx Awards from the African American Council of the Arts (AACTA): Best Make-up Artist (2007); Best Costume for a Musical (*Christmas Is Coming Uptown*, 2008); Best Leading Actress (*Freeman*, New Horizon Theater, 2008); Best Costume Design for a Play (Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012), and the PPTCO 2012 Legacy Award. In 2013 she received PPTCO's Theatre Festival in Black & White Award for Best Director. Most recently, Cheryl's work was seen in Short North Stage (Columbus, OH) productions of *Gem of the Ocean* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and in CAPA High School's production of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*.

Monteze Freeland (*Production Manager*) has worked with PPTCO since 2013. He's managed the productions of *Seven Guitars*, *Dulcy* and *The Piano Lesson*. In 2015 he organized the Theatre Festival in Black & White and returned as Assistant to the Director of the festival in 2016. As always, it's a pleasure to watch the artists create through their talents.

Diane Melchitzky (*Scenic Design, Lead Carpenter & Scenic Painter*) has designed and built Pittsburgh Playwrights sets since our 2003 debut. Her work for *Fences* can be seen on display at the August Wilson Center. She recently worked as a carpenter on the movie *Fences* directed by Denzel Washington. Her next set design is for the Gateway High School production of *Cinderella*.

Biographies

Madeleine Steineck (*Lighting Designer*) graduated from Temple University in 2011 with a B.A. degree in Theatre: Lighting Design. She is the Resident Lighting Designer for Mercyhurst University's Theatre Program and has designed over 10 shows with them. She has worked as Master Electrician for Pittsburgh Festival Opera, formerly Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh's Summerfest, since 2014. In addition to serving as Master Electrician, she designed lights for the Summerfest productions of *The Silent Woman*, *Damn Yankees*, and the world premiere opera, *A New Kind of Fallout*. She frequently designs for Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company and for off the WALL Productions. She designs lights for various middle school and high school productions in and around the Pittsburgh area. She worked as a Master Electrician for Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre in 2013, and has designed lights for Morgantown Dance Studio and fireWALL dance theatre. She has also toured with Raphael Xavier and his production, *The Unofficial Guide to Audience Watching Performance*.

Mark Whitehead (*Sound Designer*) is the founder of Saints & Poets Theater, for which he produced and directed the world premiere of Christiane D's *Saffronia*, and the local premieres of 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 timespace, for which he produced *hamletmachine* and directed *4-H Club* and *Insignificance*. Additional directing credits include *Comfort Zone*, *The Revenants* for PPTCO, *Cry Havoc*, *Taking Sides*, and *Fool for Love*. Mark is Resident Sound Designer for PPTCO and The Unseam'd Shakespeare Company, and has designed for numerous local theaters. 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.

2017: A Season of World Premieres

Lights Out by Steve Hallock
Directed by Cheryl El-Walker
April 1-15

A power outage that stalls a Pittsburgh trolley in a tunnel beneath Mount Washington on a late Friday night leads to a set of encounters among a train of strangers that spark fear, accusations, confessions, guilt, and love as the riders share thoughts of wisdom, philosophy, music and religion, mixed in with a few drinks and some jazz and blues riffs.

Hercules Didn't Wade in the Water
by Michael A. Jones
Directed by Wali Jamal
May 6-21

It is 2005. Two men cling for life on a rooftop, surrounded by murky water, festered with disease and the unknown. Two women are hundred of miles away, striving to see their dreams of life, love and the pursuit of happiness come to fruition. All of this set against the threat of one of America's greatest disasters.

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Sound Designer Mark Whitehead
Lighting Designer & Technician Madeleine Steineck
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Assistant Costume Design & Makeup Gibson Williams III
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Pittsburgh Playwrights THEATRE COMPANY



DID YOU KNOW... Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company will travel this summer to the prestigious Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland with last season's hit play *Miss Julie, Clarissa and John* by Mark Clayton Southers. The production will feature its original cast, pictured above: Crystal Bates, Kevin Brown and Tami Dixon.

We have received a generous matching grant of \$10,000 for this production. You can **double** the impact of your donation by donating today.

Financial support from patrons like you helps us to pay the theatre artists, build sets, advertise the show and produce the program book in your hand. Your tax-deductible contribution helps us fulfill our mission to produce the work of Pittsburgh playwrights and makes our 2017 Season of World Premieres possible. **Thank you for your support.**

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