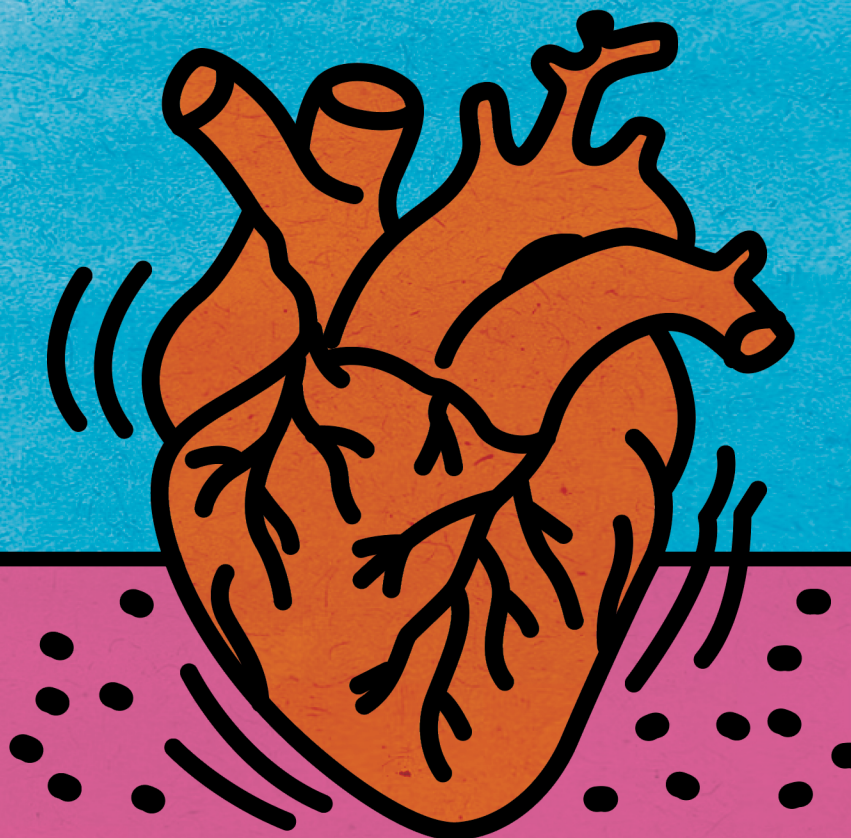


THE NORMAL HEART

BY LARRY KRAMER



**ORIGINAL NEW YORK PRODUCTION BY NEW YORK
SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL, PRODUCED BY JOSEPH PAPP.**

PROGRAM COORDINATOR LETTER

Dr. Troy Comeau



Welcome to the 2021-2022 season of Pitt State Theatre. I hope you are as excited as our department is as we return to live productions on the stage! This year we return to viewing each and every performance from the comfort of the Dotty and Bill Miller Theater and our Grubbs Studio Theatre. Our faculty and students look forward to each and every one of you coming back to enjoy theatre as it was intended to be.

Dr. Megan Westhoff is in her second year leading our program and we are excited to have Mr. Gil Cooper and Mr. Linden Little return to direct in the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts.

We are also pleased to have Lisa Quinteros return in her role as Costume Designer/Wardrobe Supervisor. Lisa brings over 20 years of experience to our program.

This year's season opens on October 21-24 with the production of *Lapin Lapin* directed by Mr. Linden Little. From the creator of *Three Men and a Baby*, we join the Lapin family as their world is flipped upside down through a comical military coup and a possible alien invasion.

Our second production on December 3-4 features our student directors as they direct their one-act plays in *Theatre Unplugged*, which is always fascinating, always popular, and always free of charge.

Mr. Gil Cooper directs our third production on February 24-27, *The 39 Steps*. Join us for a fast-paced comedy thriller with some Hitchcockian intrigue and Monty Python humor as Richard Hannay begins an evening at the theatre only to end the night with a dead body in his apartment. The action continues as he is on the run searching for an alibi and the actual killer's identity.

Finally, we are pleased to feature one of our graduate students, Cooper Dammrich in their mainstage directing debut of *The Normal Heart* from April 21-24. You are sure to enjoy the passion and energy as Cooper's vision becomes a reality on stage.

We appreciate your support of Pitt State Theatre and hope you enjoy this season's productions.

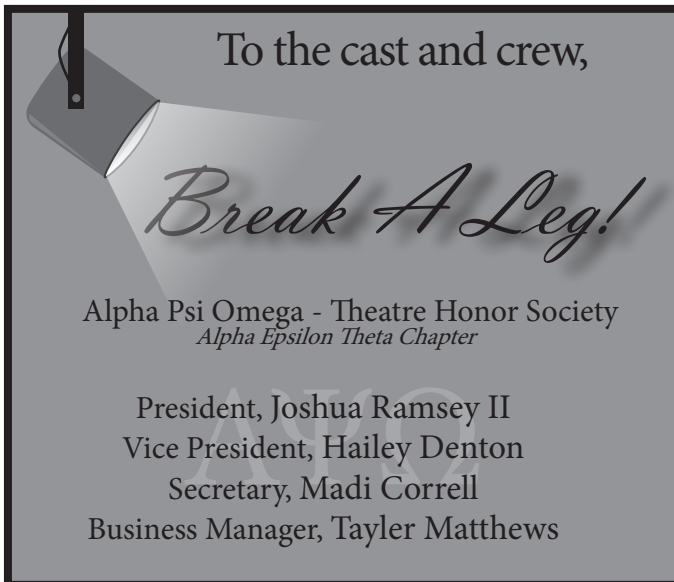
DIRECTOR OF THEATRE

Dr. Megan Westhoff

I love the feeling of anticipation for live theatre. The last-minute controlled chaos backstage as the cast and crew are doing their final preparations, hearing the hustle and bustle of the audience as they enter the lobby, and the excited conversations while the audience gets seated in the theatre. These instances lead to one of my favorite moments in theatre when the house lights go out, the audience is still and quiet at the same time, and the chills of excitement when the stage lights come up and seeing the entrance of the first character and hearing the first words of dialogue. There is no other place for me that produces that feeling in a shared human experience.



Thank you for your support and kindness over the past year as we navigated a very different theatre experience for our students, faculty and staff, and patrons. We are thrilled to welcome you back to live theatre!





Bryce Presley and Westin Friederich in conversation



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Cooper Dammrich

As I began searching for a play to direct, I knew I wanted to focus on the daily experiences and relationships of queer people. The issue I ran into was most scripts used LGBTQIA+ people as stereotypical side characters without much depth. When Dr. Megan Westhoff introduced me to *The Normal Heart*, I was instantly drawn to the honesty and individuality of each character. Based on the real-life experiences of the playwright, Larry Kramer, at its core, *The Normal Heart* tackles how we express our love for another person: platonically, romantically, and familiarly. I see a lot of myself in the character of Ned Weeks, specifically his passion and outspoken attitude. This personal connection to the text was a driving force for me as this production came together over the past eight weeks, and I am honored and humbled to say *The Normal Heart* is my final production with Pitt State Theatre. I've experienced great triumphs as well as my fair share of challenges over the last five years with this theatre company. These peaks and valleys are mirrored in the play as Ned, Bruce, Felix, and so many others fight for their right to be seen not only as people but as valued members of society. I wish so badly that my community was not decimated by HIV and AIDS, but the past cannot be changed. Instead, we must learn from it and keep marching forward with a new perspective.

COSTUME NOTE

Lisa Quinteros

Before what everyone remembers the 1980's as....there was the early 1980's. It was a time of transition in clothing, and wasn't yet completely filled with neon, fishnets, stilettos with ankle socks, and mullets, but was the start of that transition, blending the 70's and 80's into one. It was also a transition in thought. It was rebellion and ignorance, power suits, defiant punks, unisex androgyny in your magazine ads, and conservatives getting nervous. Voices that were yelling loudly, and forcing themselves to being heard, polarized politics, and people realizing that change was coming..... and it was not going away. *The Normal Heart* isn't about the clothes, though, or the sets or the props. It's about the people, who they were, what they did and what happened to them. I just want the clothes to help support their individual personalities, and represent them, filling out their characters and supporting our vision, as they yell as loud as they can, fighting, uniting, and learning how to try, try, try ... to embrace change. Keep yelling, everyone.



The Normal Heart

By Larry Kramer

Director.....Cooper Dammrich*
Costume Design.....Lisa Quinteros
Technical Director.....Linden Little

CAST

Ned Weeks.....Bryce Presley
Ben Weeks.....Westin Friederich
Dr. Emma Brookner.....Michaela Henningsen
Bruce Niles.....Dane DeTar
Felix Turner.....Josh Ramsey*
Mickey Marcus.....Rashid M. Bey
Tommy Boatwright.....DJ Ortiz
Hiram Keebler.....Ian Lee
David/Examining Doctor.....Jerry Middleton
Craig/Grady.....Eli Blankley

SETTING

New York City
1981-1984

The Normal Heart is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals
on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

Original New York Production by New York Shakespeare Festival
Produced by Joseph Papp

PRODUCTION CREW

Stage Manager.....Taylor Matthews*
Assistant Stage Manager.....Miranda Madden*
Hair and Makeup.....Jenna Russell*
Props Master.....Hailey Denton*
Props Assistant.....Matthew Parrot
Sound Board Operator.....Katherine Hudiburg
Light Board Operator.....Grace Springer
Running Crew.....Theo Diacopoulos, Chantel Shaw,
Jerry Middleton

PITT STATE THEATRE STAFF

Production Assistant.....Matthew Parrot
PR/Advertising Manager.....Daisy Burns, Zach Kamm
Artwork Design.....April Ahlders
Production Photographer.....Shakota Woolsey*

* DENOTES MEMBERSHIP IN ALPHA PSI OMEGA
NATIONAL THEATRE HONOR SOCIETY

SCENIC DESIGN NOTE

Linden Little

This production of *The Normal Heart* honors and expands the production history of the piece. The original production and the 2011 Broadway revival were staged with blank walls and sparse furnishings. As a set designer I wanted to honor these conventions. The play is not about the design, instead I hope the audience invests in the struggle of the characters and the profound loss the HIV/AIDS epidemic wrought on the world. I hoped to pull in some visual interest and acknowledge the significant contribution of activist and artist Keith Haring in the graffiti style line work covering the walls. Haring's aesthetic has broad appeal and recognition. He advocated for ACT UP with his 1989 Silence = Death poster. Haring and Kramer were screaming into a cultural void that did not want to face the very real public health crisis of HIV/AIDS. I hope to amplify their voices by putting Kramer's text with Haring's visuals in conversation with each other.



This excerpt gave Kramer inspiration for the title of this play as W.H. Auden reflects on themes also present in *The Normal Heart*.

The windiest militant trash
Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love
But to be loved alone.

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

-W.H. Auden

From "*September 1, 1939*"

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The cast discussing a scene

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Cooper Dammrich directs actors on stage

SPECIAL THANKS

We thank everyone who provided invaluable services, materials,
and support to this production.

Local Upcoming Shows

Pittsburg High School:

Repertory Theatre Class Improv Show

April 21-23, 2022

Pittsburg Community Theatre:

Matilda

July 22-24, 2022

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