
THE SEEING PLACE THEATER PRESENTS

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

A TSP Zoom Reading
August 29, 2020 (7pm, EDT)
August 30, 2020 (3pm, EDT)



ALL PROCEEDS: THE ALI FORNEY CENTER
(WWW.ALIFORNEYCENTER.ORG)

Presented by The Seeing Place Theater

August 29 & 30, 2020

Sponsored by the Ravenal Foundation





Our name "The Seeing Place" is the literal translation of the Greek word for theater (theatron): ". . . the place where we go to see ourselves."

The Seeing Place is an actor-driven company dedicated to exploring the intersection between the actor's voice and the playwright's words, by reinterpreting masterful works live and in the moment to make them relevant, visceral, truthful, and accessible to a modern audience.

We live up to our name by engaging our community in a vivid conversation about what makes us human. Connection. Learning. Humanity. That's what theater is all about.

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"O hell! - to choose love by another's eyes." - Hermia

ABOUT THIS PERFORMANCE

CAST (in order of appearance):

Theseus/Oberon.....	Brandon Walker*
Hippolyta/Titania.....	Laura Clare Browne
Egeus/Puck.....	Jon L Peacock*
Hermia/Snout/Cobweb.....	Ellinor DiLorenzo
Lysander/Starvling/Moth.....	Weronika Helena Wozniak
Demetrius/Flute/First Fairy.....	William Ketter
Helena/Quince/Peaseblossom.....	Erin Cronican*
Bottom/Second Fairy.....	Dan Mack

CREATIVE TEAM:

Playwright.....	William Shakespeare
Co-Directors/Digital Design.....	Brandon Walker* and Erin Cronican*
Original Music Composition.....	Randi Driscoll
Stage Management.....	Shannon K Formas
House Managers.....	Robin Friend, Hailey Vest
Producers.....	Erin Cronican* and Brandon Walker*
Associate Producer - Outreach.....	William Ketter
Marketing Design - Graphics.....	Laura Clare Browne, Erin Cronican*
Marketing Design - Video.....	Ellinor DiLorenzo
Marketing Support.....	Robin Friend
Social Media Outreach.....	Weronika Helena Wozniak
Dramaturgy Program.....	Jon L Peacock*
Fundraising Support.....	Sandra Trullinger*, Olivia Hardin

* indicates member of Actors' Equity Association

SETTING AND RUN TIME:

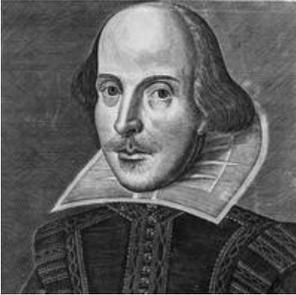
Setting: Athens - The Duke's court and the surrounding forest

Running Time - 2 hours 15 minutes, plus a brief intermission - with a short talk-back with the cast & creative team following each reading.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Performers' Unions through Theatre Authority, Inc. for their cooperation in permitting the Artists to appear on this program:

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION
AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS
AMERICAN GUILD OF VARIETY ARTISTS
SAG-AFTRA

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOS



William Shakespeare (Playwright) was a renowned English poet, playwright, and actor born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. His birthday is most commonly celebrated on 23 April (see When was Shakespeare born), which is also believed to be the date he died in 1616. Shakespeare was a prolific writer during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre (sometimes called the English Renaissance or the Early Modern Period). Shakespeare's plays are perhaps his most enduring legacy, but they are not all he wrote. Shakespeare's poems also remain popular to this day.



Laura Clare Browne (she, her; Hippolyta/Titania) is an actress, writer, and comedian hailing from Westchester, New York. She recently graduated from Hofstra University with a BA in Drama and a minor in Television/Film, focusing on screenwriting. In addition to Laura's work with The Seeing Place, she does stand-up comedy, writes and performs sketch comedy, and teaches improv to teens from all five boroughs of NYC, as a part of Irondale's STEM to STEAM program.



Erin Cronican* (she, her; Helena/Quince/Peaseblossom, & Co-Director) is an award-winning actor, producer and director who is based in New York City. She is a founding member of The Seeing Place Theater and has served as its Executive Artistic Director since 2011. She is an NYIT nominated actor for her work in TSP's *The Maids*. Off Broadway: *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*; *Sistas*; *This One's For The Girls*. Favorite roles with TSP: *Dutchman* (Lula); *My Name is Rachel Corrie* (Rachel) *Othello* (Desdemona); *Closer* (Anna); *Getting Out* (Arlene); *Boy Gets Girl* (Theresa); *A Lie of the Mind* (Beth); *The Laramie Project* (Mercedes Herrero Track) Regional favorites: *The Last Five Years*; *Angels in America*; *Camelot*; *South Pacific*; *Evita*. Erin spends much of her spare time as an activist for causes that mean a lot to her, particularly those that support the LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, and Disabled communities. As someone in a queer romantic relationship, along with having many LGTBQIA+ family members and friends, Erin is thrilled to be spotlighting this underrepresented community with Shakespeare's beautiful text.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

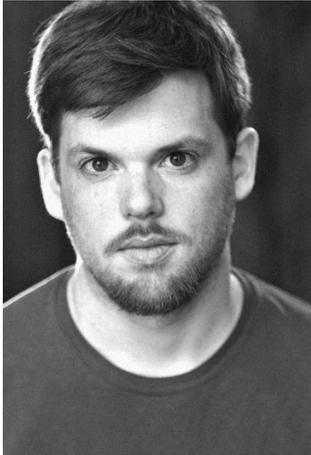


Ellinor DiLorenzo (she, her; Hermia/Cobweb/Snout) is an actor, writer and comedian originally from Uppsala, Sweden. She has studied acting and comedy in Stockholm, London and New York and have been in numerous stage productions and films. Recently, she made her Off Broadway debut in the critically acclaimed *Beloved* by the Lisa Langseth and is a frequent contributor to the massive world of geekery, doing voice over for various podcasts and running a popular gaming channel on Twitch. As a staunch skeptic, Ellinor is a champion of free speech, rational discourse and democratic values and as an artist and comedian, believes it's crucial to have uncomfortable conversations, especially with oneself. Ellinor is very excited to participate in TSP's reading of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and is proud to support the work of Ali Forney Center & this important work in helping LGBT homeless youth.



William Ketter (he, him; Demetrius/Flute/First Fairy) is originally from Minneapolis, and moved into NYC after graduating from Hofstra University's BFA program in 2018 in order to pursue his career as an actor and theatermaker. With *The Seeing Place* Will appeared in *Measure for Measure* as Angelo. He has worked with several Shakespeare companies, such as Stag and Lion and *The Fools and Kings Project*. In addition to *The Seeing Place*, Will is a member of EPIC players, a neuro-diverse company. He appeared in *The Little Prince* as the Aviator with them. Diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome as a child, inclusivity is very important to Will. He hopes to continue to explore his craft through the lens of his disability, serve as inspiration for people on the fringes of society, and create spaces for disabled folks to make their own art.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOS



Dan Mack (he, him; Bottom/Second Fairy) co-founded Theater of Others in San Francisco. He studied improvisation at iO Chicago.



Jon L. Peacock* (he, they; Puck/Egeus) was born a Gemini, and has felt the twins of this mythology within them from as early as they remember. Tall, with a low voice, and usually sporting some sort of facial hair, they do not mind you referring to them as 'him' at all, regardless of how they see themselves. Playing such a fluid character as Puck has been such a beautiful experience for Jon, as they are an accomplished Shakespearean actor who's never been able to take on this role that's so full of possibilities beyond societal constraints, demands, and (especially) labels. Thanks to The Seeing Place, their fellow actors, and all who come experience this celebration of diversity, sexuality, and what it means to love.



Brandon Walker* (them, they; Theseus/Oberon, & Co-Director) is a mixed-race and gender-fluid Actor, Director, Playwright, Teacher, and has been the Producing Artistic Director of The Seeing Place Theater for the last eleven years. Previous directing credits for The Seeing Place include: Animal Farm, Cloud 9, The Laramie Project, Othello, Rhinoceros, Boy Gets Girl, and Waiting for Lefty. Acting credits with The Seeing Place include: I Am My Own Wife, Hamlet, and Danny and the Deep Blue Sea (Off-Bway, NYIT Nominated). Plays written include: Animal Farm, The Hysteria of Dr Faustus, The People vs Antigone, Scotch Kiss, and When We Have Gone Astray. Brandon is excited to present this, their favorite Shakespeare play, through a LGBTQIA+ lens.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOS



Weronika Helena Wozniak (she, her; Lysander/Starveling/Moth) comes to New York City from the land of pierogi – Poland. She was born in Poznan and lived most of her life in Wroclaw. She graduated from the Conservatory at The Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute and since 2016 has performed on numerous Off and Off-Off-Broadway stages. Selected theatre: The Jewish Question (Sandra Kahn Wasserman Jewish Studies Center), The Video Games (Off-Broadway, Elektra Theatre), Vandals (The Tank, Dixon Place), Detective Story (Heights Players), Two Foscari by Lord Byron (Off-Broadway, Davenport Theatre), Octopi Wall Street (Hollywood Fringe Festival '19), Three Sisters (Columbia University), Sex v. Love Musical (Dixon Place). She's also working with the Polish Theatre Institute in NY where she continues to educate young generations of Polish-Americans about their mother-tongue and culture through theatre. She dedicates her spare time to studying languages, graphic design and writing poetry. She wishes that one day every gender, orientation, religion and race will be equally represented in theatre throughout the whole world. She dedicates her performance of Lysander to her fellow brave LGBTQ youth protesting in Poland against the fascist aggressors occupying her beloved country.



Randi Driscoll (she, her; Original Music Composition) is an award winning singer-songwriter whose original music, voice and stage performances have earned her the accolades Campus Activities Magazine's, "Female Performer of the Year, Nashville's Top Writer, Series III Winner, and Femme Music.com's artist of the year. Randi's music has been featured in television, commercials and movies. Randi's original song "What Matters," is a benefit single for the Matthew Shepard Foundation, and the song has been featured in several films including NBC's The Matthew Shepard Story. Over fifty choirs have performed the choral version of Randi's songs "Love is Love" and "What Matters" (arranged by Kevin Robison) including GMCLA, live at the Disney Hall, and the NYGMC-@Carnegie Hall. Randi is honored to be involved with this production and the work of The Seeing Place Theater.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOS



Shannon K. Formas (she, her; Stage Manager) is thrilled to be working on this production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and is excited for the world to see it. This is her third time working with The Seeing Place Theater. She holds degrees in both Theatre and English Literature and is a director, technician, stage manager, and actor. When Shannon is not working in the world of theatre she works in healthcare on Long Island and is working on becoming a NYS EMT.



Original Artwork of the
QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES



Original Artwork
ODE to ROBIN GOODFELLOW

A MIDSUMMER SYNOPSIS

This story, brought to life by The Seeing Place, has been modernized to involve multiple LGBTQIA+ storylines. Lysander loves Hermia, and Hermia loves Lysander. Helena loves Demetrius; Demetrius used to love Helena but now loves Hermia. Egeus, Hermia's father, prefers Demetrius for Hermia (as Lysander is a woman), and enlists the aid of Theseus, the Duke of Athens, to enforce his wishes upon his daughter. According to Athenian law, Hermia is given four days to choose between Demetrius, life in a nunnery, or a death sentence. Hermia, ever defiant, chooses to escape with Lysander into the nearby forest.

In the forest, Oberon and Titania, King and Queen of Fairies, are locked in a dispute over a boy Titania has adopted. The non-binary Oberon instructs their servant, the non-binary Puck, to bring him magic love drops, which Oberon will sprinkle on the Queen's eyelids as she sleeps, whereupon Titania will fall in love with the first creature she sees upon awakening. Meanwhile, Helena and Demetrius have also fled into the woods after Lysander and Hermia. Oberon, overhearing Demetrius's denouncement of Helena, takes pity upon her and tells Puck to place magic drops upon the eyelids of Demetrius as well, so that Demetrius may fall in love with Helena. Puck, however, makes the mistake of putting the drops on the eyelids of Lysander instead. Helena stumbles over Lysander in the forest, and the spell is cast; Lysander now desires Helena and renounces a stunned Hermia.

In the midst of this chaos, a group of craftsmen are rehearsing for a production of "Pyramus and Thisbe," to be played for the Duke at his wedding. Puck impishly casts a spell on Bottom to give him the head of a donkey. Bottom, as luck would have it, is the first thing Titania sees when she awakens; hence, Bottom ends up being lavishly kept by the Queen. Oberon enjoys this sport, but is less amused when it becomes apparent that Puck has botched up the attempt to unite Demetrius and Helena. Oberon himself anoints Demetrius with the love potion and ensures that Helena is the first person he sees; however, Helena understandably feels that she is now being mocked by both Demetrius and Lysander (who is still magically enamored of her).

Finally, Oberon decides that all good sports must come to an end. He puts the four lovers to sleep and gives Lysander the antidote for the love potion so that she will love Hermia again when they all wake up. Next, Oberon gives Titania the antidote, and the King and Queen reconcile. Theseus and Hippolyta then discover Lysander, Hermia, Helena, and Demetrius asleep in the forest. All return to Athens to make sense of what they think is a strange dream. Likewise, Bottom returns to his players, and he and the male Flute perform the lovers' story, "Pyramus and Thisbe" at the wedding feast (which has since become a wedding of three couples). As everyone retires, fairies perform their blessings and Puck delivers a tender epilogue soliloquy.

HOMOSEXUALITY IN SHAKESPEARE

You may ask why The Seeing Place has chosen to pair the classic play of A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM with a concept involving the LGBTQIA+ community. Do the themes of Shakespeare's works have relevance to today's queer society?

During the life of Shakespeare in England, the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, terms for sexuality were not explicit with the categories of gay or homosexual. With this in mind, it's obvious why Shakespeare had himself never exclaimed himself to be gay or to enjoy romantic or sexual relationships with other men. It was clear that the Bard had many loving relationships with people beyond that of his only wife, Anne Hathaway, but it is unclear whether these relationships were solely with men, solely with women, or a combination thereof. What is clear is that many of his love sonnets were addressed to a man, even using male pronouns when espousing his love: "Nothing, sweet boy; but yet like prayers divine/I must each day say o'er the very same,/Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,/Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name." (Sonnet 108)

During his life, English law said no woman could legally be an actor, so as Shakespeare wrote his many powerful female characters, he did so knowing they would be played by boys and young adult men. Every moment of expressed love, romantic and sexual, on Shakespeare's stage was performed by two male actors. The kisses he wrote into the dialogue as internal stage directions were also carried out by men, not to the cringe of his audiences but to their delight. Shakespeare leaned into this theatrical restriction, not shying away from sexuality but embracing it throughout all of his plays. From the funny, "drag roles" of Mistress Quickly and Mistress Overdone, talking about their sometimes lude sexual exploits, to the deep romance between characters like Antony and Cleopatra, Margaret and Suffolk in the Henry VI plays, Troilus and Cressida, etc, these depictions of love, lust, and romance were all male-to-male portrayals. This pushing against the puritan restrictions of the day (which haunt America today) was readily written by Shakespeare and was enjoyed by his audiences, including Queen Elizabeth I and King James I.

Shakespeare wrote Patroclus and Achilles directly as male lovers in his play Troilus and Cressida, and hinted at homosexual relationships in other plays of his, including Sebastian and Antonio in Twelfth Night, Bassanio and Antonio in The Merchant of Venice, even the love Mercutio shows Romeo in Romeo & Juliet. Even in A Midsummer Night's Dream, The lovers, fairies, and even the rude mechanicals (amateur actors) have moments of gender non-conformism and homosexual overtones.

So, was William Shakespeare gay or bisexual (by our modern labels)? We can never be certain, but what is certain is his embracing of a world that is more fluid, more open, more diverse than the puritan classifications that have evolved into our (soon-to-be-outdated) definitions of human sexuality.

AN EPIDEMIC OF HOMELESSNESS

In The Seeing Place's LGBTQIA+ telling of A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, Hermia expresses to her father that she's wants to marry Lysander (a woman) despite the fact that Egeus demands that she marry Demetrius (a man). Pulled before the Duke, Hermia learns that if she defies her father's order, she'll either be put to death or sentenced to life in a nunnery (which, in today's scoeity, is akin to a religious gay-conversation camp). So, after coming out and facing rejection of her only living relative, Hermia opts to run away with Lysander carrying little more than the clothes on her back. Fortunately, our lovers find their way into the good graces of the community by the end of the play, but many LGBTQ youths in our world today are not so lucky. This is where the Ali Forney Center comes in.

Studies have found that LGBTQ youth comprise up to 40% of the homeless youth population in New York City. In December 2007 the Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services (ESC) reported on the findings of the first New York City Council census of homeless youth in NYC. This data showed that 28% of the street youth identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual, 11% were unsure of their sexual orientation or were not comfortable answering the question and 5% identified as transgender with another 18% unsure or choosing not to answer the question about gender identity. The study also verified what we see at the Ali Forney Center (AFC) everyday; LGBTQ street youth experience greater levels of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking violence, trauma, HIV infection, mental health issues and substance abuse than their heterosexual counterparts in the homeless youth population. LGBT Youth comprise a disproportionate number of the homeless population and are 8 times more likely to experience homelessness.

Ali Forney Center's clients come from all walks of life. More than 80% are kicked out of their homes for being who they are. The remainder run away due to abuse, neglect, or a combination of rejection and abuse. About half of our clients come to us from other states and some are even from around the world. 49% of our clients are male, 29% are female 22% are transgender. 60% of AFC's clients are African American, 30% are Latino, and 10% are white; 90% of clients are uninsured and the majority do not even have proper identification. 75% have a history with the police. At least 20% are HIV positive.

For more information, and to learn how to help: www.AliForneyCenter.org



FREE PANEL DISCUSSION ON LGBTQ HOMELESSNESS

Wednesday,
September 2, 2020 (6pm Eastern Time, via Zoom)

Speaker:

Russell Gregory, Ali Forney Center

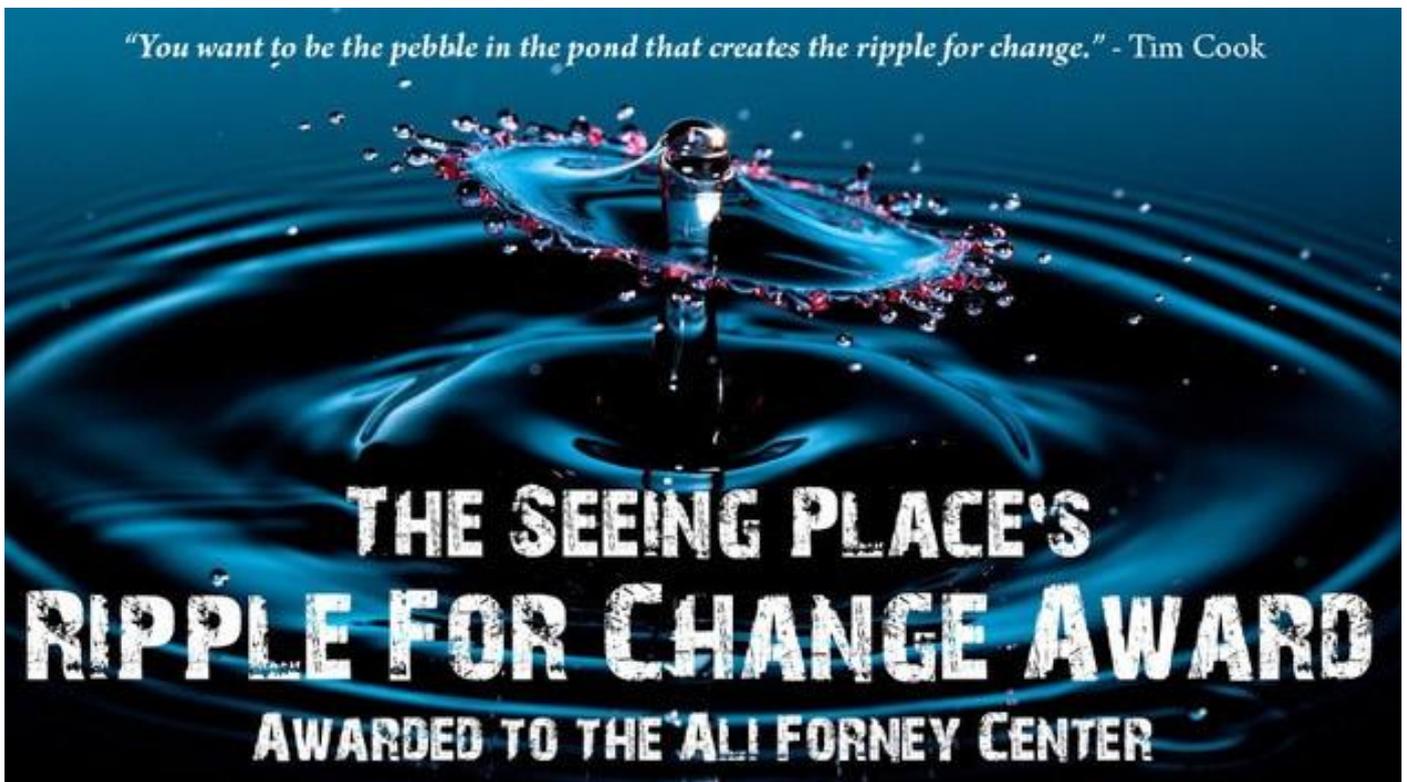
Theme:

Action Steps: How to Address Homelessness in the LGBTQIA+ Youth Community

This panel discussion with speaker Russell Gregory from the Ali Forney Center explores the themes of the play A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM and how we can use what the play teaches us to take positive action toward supporting LGBTQIA+ youths.

To RSVP - register at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAvde2sqDsiEtPGZDMrRA-_XK-Fnst3VAc2



THE FUTURE WITH THE SEEING PLACE

RIPPLE FOR CHANGE READING SERIES

EXIT THE KING by **Eugene Ionesco** - October 2020

This TSP Ripple For Change Series of this French absurdist play will be a benefit for a non-profit that fights for Voter Access and Rights.

LIVE MAINSTAGE SEASON 2021

WIT by **Margaret Edson** – 2021 (dates TBA)

A mainstage production of this Pulitzer Prize-winning play about a woman who is diagnosed with Stage IV cancer and the trials and tribulations of going through experimental treatments to provide breakthroughs for science.

BOY by **Anna Ziegler** – 2021 (dates TBA)

A mainstage production of this play - based on a true story - about a boy who suffers from a surgical accident to his genitals, and to cope with the trauma his family (with the guidance of a world-renowned psychologist) opts to raise him as a girl.

More Projects TBA! To learn more:
www.seeingplacetheater.com/season.html

THE SEEING PLACE'S EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM

Like most theater across the country, The Seeing Place had to shut its doors when the COVID-19 pandemic took hold on New York City. Gathering together in groups is a prerequisite for live theatre, so we have canceled or postponed our in-person productions and events. The well-being of our audience, artists, and team is our first priority.

To continue our passion at TSP and keep bringing our mission to the community, we have come up with exciting ways to entertain and educate you remotely - all from the comfort of your own home. We've created two online series: our Professional Education Program and TSP Insiders Program to serve both Professional Artists and Theater Lovers.

To learn more about these programs, please visit
www.seeingplacetheater.com/training.html

ACKNOWLEDGING TSP'S DONORS

**Special Thanks to the Ravenal Foundation,
without whom this production of
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM would not be possible.**

Thanks Also to Our Season 10 Donors

TSP REVOLUTIONARIES

Kelley Elizabeth Henry, Dr Judy Page, Tere Petersen

\$2000-\$5000+

The Ravenal Foundation
The Taproot Foundation
The Boro Hotel
Erin Cronican

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\$100-\$499

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\$1-\$99

Meg Anderson, Diane Beck, Kirsten Brandt, Tom Brophy, Corey L Brothers, James Browne, Susan Browne, Linda Castro, Michael Cedar, Gamze Ceylan, Casey Clark, Michael Colby, Anita Cooper, Susan DeLeon, Ellinor DiLorenzo, Tiffany Draughn, Symon Edmonds, David Ellenstein, Elizabeth Haas, Jason Heil, Haley Horbinski, Martha Garvey, Michael Gnat, Shamiko Hails, Janice Hall, Juke Bar NYC, Anna Kaltenbach, Beau Karch, Micky Kerwick, Mary Lahti, Thomas Lopez, Ruth Luchey Toliver, Barbara Malley, Steve Mannshardt, Arnon Manor, Edward Marczak, Lara Mcdavit, Dorothy Mcfadden-Parker, Colin McReynolds, Brianna Morrison, Marissa Mutascio, Emily Nassberg, Lindsey Naves, Noelle Nichols, Ashley Pickens, Ann Raiten, Ken Raboy, Anthony Richards, Amanda Rinnert, William Schweigert, Jayne Sherman, Harvey Silikovitz, Judd Silverman, Pamela Stevens, Evelyn Thatcher, Mitchell Weisburgh, Cheri Wicks, Shannon Wyant, Joanne Zipay, Suzanne Zuckerman .

TSP'S ENSEMBLE

PRODUCING STAFF

Producing Artistic Director: Brandon Walker

Executive Artistic Director: Erin Cronican

ENSEMBLE MEMBERS

Laura Clare Browne, Ellinor DiLorenzo, Robin Friend, Olivia Hardin, William Ketter, Jon L Peacock, Sandra Trullinger, Hailey Vest, Weronika Helena Wozniak.

Thank you for your support of The Seeing Place Theater! We are excited about how far we have come and hope that you will help us go even further.

**To make a tax-deductible donation, visit:
www.TheSeeingPlace.org**

THE NEW YORK TIMES LOVES THE SEEING PLACE'S "DUTCHMAN"

"The Seeing Place production, which starred Timothy Ware and Erin Cronican and was directed by Brandon Walker, highlighted the sexual friction between Clay and Lula. Cronican's Lula gives Clay a lusty up and down, hungrily takes bites of her apple, a seductive smile creeping across her face. Ware's Clay smirks gamely in response; he seems mostly unbothered by her odd diversions and casually racist remarks and appears to lust back...By underlining the sexual power dynamic between the man and the woman, Walker's direction simplifies the larger reach of the play and what the characters represent." - New York Times

