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EVERYONE

Issues of Our Time

2023-2024 Season

Deeply personal stories of those directly affected by social injustices and the actions they take to affect positive change in our society

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From the ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

For over a decade, The Justice Theater Project has been concentrating an entire season on a single social justice theme. This served us well for many years, allowing us to make a deep dive into a single issue. As we evolve and take a long look at our world in 2023-24, there are simply too many pressing concerns to wait until subsequent seasons for us to bring them to the forefront. Therefore, going forward, The Justice Theater Project will be who we have always been – a social justice theater company – and will choose plays that address the most critical issues of our time, RIGHT NOW.



This season, we will tackle a myriad of social justice issues – prejudice, persecution, inequity, violence, stereotyping, the list goes on and on. Our varied season contains some of the most famous titles of modern theater as well as some newer scripts destined to become staples of the American stage. And rest assured, with our supporting events, including expert speakers, workshops, roundtables, seminars, and artist interviews, our dives will remain as deep as ever.

- Jerry

Grantors

The Justice Theater Project is supported by the United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County, as well as the N.C Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The Justice Theater Project is funded in part by the City of Raleigh based on recommendations of the Raleigh Arts Commission.

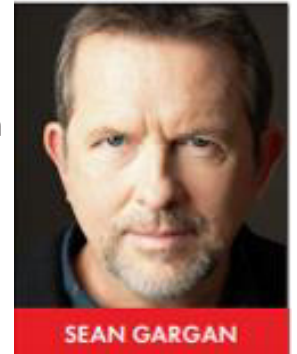
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From the BOARD



Welcome to the exciting 20th anniversary season of The Justice Theater Project! Things have changed dramatically in our community during the past 20 years. One thing that stays the same is our work in staying true to our mission – to produce compelling theater experiences that create community dialogue and gives voice to social concerns.

Throughout economic downturns followed by a year of exponential growth, exciting worldwide advances in sensibilities and compassionate understanding, and a global pandemic, YOUR support of our work and your participation in our discussions, fundraisers, kids' camps, and more have fostered a unique theater community dedicated to social justice awareness and ways to take action.

Our work continues. As we grow and evolve, it's apparent that numerous social justice issues keep bubbling up at the same time - all equally important, and all deserving of discussion and action. Our spectacular slate of shows for our 20th anniversary year touch on multiple topics of social concern that will challenge you, delight you, and inspire you.

Thank you for your support, and I'll see you at the theater.

-Sean

the justice theater
project

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Director's Note

In my schooling from kindergarten in the 1970s to my graduate degree programs in the mid-1990s, not once in my two-and-a-half decades of institutional education did the thought of gun violence inside my school ever cross my mind. On April 20, 1999, the United States came to grips with a school shooting and attempted bombing at Columbine High School in Columbine, Colorado, which took the lives of 15 people (including the suicide of the two teenage shooters) as well as more than 20 with gunshot injuries. This event in 1999 seems like the start of a 25-year American nightmare where countless mass shootings have occurred in our society—whether at a school, a nightclub, a church, or a temple.

26 Pebbles by Eric Ulloa is a string of monologues from actual townspeople of Newtown, Connecticut. Each monologue represents the actual words from the actual peoples' experiences who experienced a tragic day on December 14, 2012, when a lone teenage shooter murdered his own mother and then drove to Sandy Hook Elementary School and murdered 20 elementary school-aged children and six educators as well as himself. Twenty-eight people died that day.

The cast and crew of this show do not have the answers on how to make this nightmare stop. As we've been rehearsing this show for the past six weeks, the CDC recently reported that the number one cause of death of young people in the United States is gun violence – a first in this country. In the past 25 years, what the hell has happened to us? Why do we continue to turn the channel on our children? Why do we continue making movies, TV shows, or music that glorify violence? Why do we let our kids get lost on their phones and the Internet where there are few safeguards? Why do we keep electing politicians who aren't looking out for our safety?

This show is hard; night in and night out, this crew and cast emotionally explore the depths of tragedy that are unknown to most. They display their vulnerability and their truth in this production. It is a heavy, heavy weight to bear for six weeks; however, it is nothing compared to the heavier lifelong weight of the people of Newtown and those affected directly by the Sandy Hook shooting. The light and life in their eyes are a little more dim; they struggle every day with the loss, and they struggle every day with America's unwillingness to wake up to this mental health crisis in our kids and this fervent zeal and fascination for guns in this country.

Our hope with this show is to build on the Justice Theater Project's mission of continuing social justice conversations through provocative theatrical productions. Somehow, in some way, the people of Newtown emerge and are resilient and hopeful in their fight to make sure this never happens again. As an audience member of this production, we ask you to get sad, get angry, and get human. Harness the same resilience, hope, and love that the people of Newtown show us, and find ways to continue this crucially important conversation. Be a source of comfort, joy, hope, and change.

– Brian

blank _____

By Nassim Soleimanpour

Directed by Jerry Sipp

Thursday, May 16th, 2024 UPUCC

Friday, May 17th, 2024 NorthStar Church of the Arts

Saturday, May 18th, 2024 UPUCC / LGBT Center of Raleigh

Sunday, May 19th, 2024 Fuquay-Varina Arts Center

Friday, May 24th, 2024 UPUCC

Saturday, May 25th, 2024 UPUCC

No director. No rehearsal. One performer who has never read the script. A script filled with blanks. One weekend of one-of-a-kind theater held in multiple and diverse locations throughout the Triangle. Iranian playwright Soleimanpour has revolutionized what theatre can be, borne out of a time when his government would not let him leave his home country.

CABARET

Music by John Kander, Lyrics by Frank Ebb, Book by Joe Masteroff

Directed by Nancy Rich, Music Direction by Katherine Anderson

June 7-23, 2024 Umstead Park United Church of Christ, Raleigh

In a Berlin nightclub, as the 1920s drew to a close, a garish Master of Ceremonies welcomes the audience and assures them they will forget all their troubles at the Cabaret. Employing the Emcee's bawdy songs as wry commentary, this musical classic explores the dark, heady, and tumultuous life of Sally Bowles and Berlin's natives and expatriates as Germany slowly yields to the emerging Third Reich. *CABARET* boldly tackles racial profiling, inclusiveness, politics, survival, sorrow, and fear in times of culturally and politically reactionary forces and episodes of significant social change. *CABARET* is among the American theatre's most enduring musicals.

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Photos by Chris Janaro (l-r) El Pueblo, CAM, NC Museum of History, Town of Zebulon, African American Cultural Festival, Justice Theater Project, IBMA, Hum Sub, WCPSS Pieces of Gold



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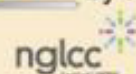


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26 Pebbles

By Eric Ulloa

Directed by Brian Yandle

April 12-28th, 2024

26 PEBBLES

is presented through special arrangement with Concord Theatricals
on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com.

Special Thanks

The Justice Theater Project would like to thank the individuals below who helped make this show possible:

Dr. Sandra Wartaski, Gerald Givens, Sylvia Burns, Beth Bergartt, Catherine Corbett, Ella Cordova, Juan Isler, Olivia Allen, Debbie DeRosa, Ann Bozek, Marguerite LeBlanc, Slea Arnold, Dr. Asabi, North Carolina Central University, Cory Arnold, Margaret Kellner, Danielle McCaslin, Katherine O'Connor, Yvonne Anderson, Joye Goff, Sondra Iverson, Nikki Hinnant, Celeste Hinnant, Dunella Jones, Barbara Dicerio, Monica Long, Debra Russell, Sandy Carrington, Nava Svaig, Thom Haynes, Beverly Olsen, Jim O'Brien, Louise Farmer, Christine Stachowicz, Karin Shank, Melissa Zeph, Sally Beale, Kelly Caniglia, Jeff Nugent, Theatre In The Park, Moms Against Gun Violence, Stormy Ingold, and the Umstead Park United Church of Christ.

Thank you to the classrooms at Dillard Drive Elementary (Shelby Barros) and Umstead Park United Church of Christ (Tyler Ung) for contributing their artwork for this production.

This show is dedicated to the memory of Emily Steinhoff James.

The Justice Theater Project presents

26 Pebbles

By Eric Ulloa

Directed by Brian Yandle

Production Stage Manager
Olivia Allen

Model Building Design/Construction
Jerry Sipp

Costume Consultant
Beth Gargan

Lighting Design
Cory Arnold

Set Concept
Brian Yandle

Sound Design
Juan Isler

Artistic Emotional Support
Kelly Caniglia

Production Assistant
Stephanie Turner

Scenery/Props:

Brian Yandle, Tim Rath, Melissa Zeph, Olivia Allen, Marguerite LeBlanc, Matthew Johnson

Cast

Michael

Kevin Aponte

Georgia/Julie

J Evarts

Yolie/JeriAnn/Sally

Lindsay Gautier

Rabbi Praver/Joe

David Akiva Klionsky

Jenn/Carla

Page Purgar

Starr/Carole

Christine Rogers

Bill/Father/Mike

Jerry Sipp*

Kat/Carrie

Stephanie Spohrer

Darren/Chris

Geraud Staton

*The Actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Discussions and Events:

Friday, April 12th: 6:30pm. Meet the Director. 6:30pm refreshments and discussion.

Saturday, April 13th: 6:15pm. Pre-show Panel "Being the Change: Ways to Get Involved and Make a Difference in Gun Policy". Featuring Moms Demand Action, Boots On The Ground, and North Carolinians Against Gun Violence.

Saturday, April 20th: 4:00pm. Retirement Party for former Executive Producer Melissa Zeph on the deck!

Sunday, April 21st: Post-show Discussion "When Peace Is Shattered: Healing and Helping with Psychological Science" with Dr. Sandra Wartaski.

26 PEBBLES will be performed without an intermission.

Videotaping or other video or audio recording prohibited.



Kevin Aponte (Michael) is thrilled to be making his Justice Theater Project debut! Other favorite roles include *Hands on a Hardbody* (Jesus) with Raleigh Little Theatre, *Dogfight* (Bernstein) with Studio 1, and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Protean/Soldier) with North Raleigh Arts and Creative Theatre. Kevin would like to thank the production team for this opportunity, as well as the cast and crew for their hard work and friendship! Special thanks to Melanie, Lorelai, and Luna. IG: @kevin_canwait



J Evarts (Georgia/Julie) has been performing in the Triangle for over 15 years and is making her Justice Theater Project debut. Favorite productions include *The Changeling* and *The New Colossus* (Little Green Pig Theatrical Concern), *The Open House*, *Spirits to Enforce* and *Act a Lady* (Manbites Dog Theater Company), *Uncle Sam Wants You*, *Now Boarding*, and *1*9*5*6 Degrees of Separation* (Killian Manning/No Forwarding Address), and *Contractions* and *Many Moons* (Common Wealth Endeavors). She has appeared in the films *The Reckoning* and *Manicotti* (Archipelago Theatre/Ciné), *Queen of Hearts* (KV Works), and *Nadia* (preposterous pictures), and had a role that is as close to a Bond villain as she will ever get in the web series, *Frequency* (KV Works). Most recently, she could be seen in raucous performances of *Rocky Horror* with the Wiley Fosters.



Lindsay Gautier (Yolie/JeriAnn/Sally) is thrilled to be returning to the stage after a (too long) multi-year hiatus. She is a proud graduate of the Elon Musical Theatre BFA program and has had the privilege to tour with the shows *Pinnocchio* and *The Little Mermaid* and, more locally, work with Theatre Raleigh and Cape Fear Regional Theatre in professional productions. Favorite productions she has been involved with include *Sweeney Todd*, *Cabaret*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Lindsay is grateful for the continued support of her family, friends, and cats as she navigates the changes life has thrown her way and pursues a way to continue feeding her first passion: theater.



David Akiva Klionsky (Rabbi Praver/Joe) is a native of Binghamton, NY. He recently appeared in The Justice Theater Project's productions of *All The Way* and *The Dead Man*. David is happily retired after teaching elementary school for 21 years. His favorite roles include Max in *Laughter On The 23RD Floor*, Clerk/Erie in *Hughie*, and Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*. He has narrated five books on Audible.com and is looking for his next project. Much love to Mara and Hazel.



Page Purgar (Jenn/Carla) was last seen on the Justice Theater Project stage in *Men on Boats*. Other credits include *Fuddy Meers* (TIP), *Blithe Spirit* (RLT), and *Good People* (Deep Dish). Love to Steve and Marleigh, and thank you to this incredible cast and crew for all the support.



Christine Rogers (Starr/Carole) is thrilled to be part of this production and to share this difficult but important story. Christine has performed with many theater groups in North Carolina and her native New York. Her most recent productions include *You Wouldn't Expect* (Mary Tom Walker), *Equus* (Dora Strang), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Nurse Ratched), and *Roe* (Sarah Weddington). Some of her other favorite roles include Norma in *Plaza Suite*, Marjorie in *Tale of the Allergist's Wife*, Clairee and M'Lynn in *Steel Magnolias*, Woman in *Veronica's Room*, Masha in *Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike*, and Mrs. Levinson/Timmy in *Divine Sister*. Much love to her biggest fans, her hubby Stephen, her amazing daughter Anastasia, and all her dear friends who support her love for theater!



Jerry Sipp (Bill/Father/Mike) serves as Artistic Director for The Justice Theater Project. Before becoming our A.D., Jerry was seen on our stage as Fagin in *OLIVER!*, Mitch Album in *Tuesdays with Morrie*, and LBJ in *All The Way*. Other favorite historical figures he has portrayed include John Wilkes Booth in *The Actor and The Assassin*, Shakespeare in *Equivocation*, and Robert Louis Stevenson in his original one-man show, *Shadows*. He has acted in over 100 plays spanning 38 U.S. states and Scotland. He has directed well over 100 shows and is an award-winning playwright, having seen 10 of his original scripts produced. Jerry also served as Producing Artistic Director for Temple Theatre, The Playhouse Theatre, and Granville Little Theatre and co-founded Trio Productions, a professional touring company.



Stephanie Spohrer (Kat/Carrie) is a recent transplant from Seattle. She is excited to be working with The Justice Theater Project on this beautiful piece. Stephanie, born and raised in NY, received a BA in Theater Performance from SUNY New Paltz, NY. Favorite roles include Jen in *The Cake*, Dotty in *Out of Sterno*, Myrtle Mae Simmons in *Harvey*, and Anne from *Stranger on a Train*. Stephanie has worked with CLIMB Theatre in Minnesota as an actor educator, performing interactive classes for children. She would like to thank Mike, as well as her family and friends, for their continued support.



Geraud Staton (Darren/Chris) began his acting career onstage as Yasha in *The Cherry Orchard* (Little Green Pig). Other roles include Inspector Bertozzo in *Anarchist!*, Taylor in *Prelude to a Kiss* (Ghost and Spice), and Gerard in *The Overwhelming* (Manbites Dog). He has appeared in three 10 x 10 Festivals at The Carrboro ArtsCenter, as a member of an ensemble cast in *Oh What a Lovely War*, and as an actor/dancer in *Uncle Sam Wants You*. Geraud's favorite role to date is Sam in the play *Mr. Burns – A Post Electric Play* (Manbites Dog).

He has done set design for *Night Beast*, *The Pillowman*, *Harriet Jacobs*, and *The Parent Project*. He also had a recurring role as Anvil Steel in NPR's *Jade City Pharoah*. Geraud's film debut was Earl in *Basilisk* in 2013. He's since been part of three projects, including *Frequency* and *Going Down Slow*.



Olivia Allen (Stage Manager) graduated with a BFA in Directing from Emory & Henry College in 2019 and currently serves as the Admin and Artistic Associate for The Justice Theater Project. Some of her favorite stage management credits include *Every Brilliant Thing*, *Enemy of the People*, *Best of Enemies* (JTP), *Tiny Beautiful Things* (Honest Pint), and *The Lion King Jr.* (The Dreamland Stage Company). Her favorite directing projects include *Urinetown the Musical* (Assistant Director), *RENT: School Edition* at Seattle Children's Theatre (Assistant Director), *No Exit*, and Rodgers and Hammerstein's *State Fair* (E&H). Olivia will direct The Justice Theater Project's production of *The Lifespan of a Fact* in November 2024. She'd like to thank Brian, Jerry, the cast, and the creative team for pouring their hearts into this beautiful and important play. "For mom, dad, and Cat."

Olivia will direct The Justice Theater Project's production of *The Lifespan of a Fact* in November 2024. She'd like to thank Brian, Jerry, the cast, and the creative team for pouring their hearts into this beautiful and important play. "For mom, dad, and Cat."



Cory Arnold (Lighting Designer) has a B.A. in Music Business from Millikin University. Recent Lighting Design credits include *Skeleton Crew*, *12 Angry Jurors*, *Urinetown*, *Annie*, *The Best of Enemies*, *The Dead Man*, *Every Brilliant Thing*, *Black Nativity in Concert*, *Enemy of the People*, *Man of La Mancha* (The Justice Theater Project). *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Noises Off*, *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club*, *Forbidden Broadway* (Theatre in the Park), *My Wonderful Birthday Suit* (Raleigh Little Theatre), and *SOFAR Sounds Raleigh/Durham*.

Cory often uses his skills as a Lighting Designer and Electrician at DPAC, Martin Marietta Center, PNC Arena, Theater in the Park and other regional venues. He is excited to work with The Justice Theater Project again and thanks those who continue to support him in his pursuit of the arts.



Beth Gargan (Costume Consultant) is an avid theatergoer and quilter and is thrilled to add costuming to her resume. Most recently, Beth was a costumer for *Arcadia* at Burning Coal Theater and *12 Angry Jurors* at The Justice Theater Project. She also did the costuming for The Justice Theater Project's 2023 summer camp and worked with 120 lively campers in *Annie Jr.* She will reprise the costumer role for this year's summer production of *Matilda Jr.* Thanks to Jerry and...

...Melissa for their support and to the wonderful cast and crew for their collaboration on this important show. Much love to Sean, my biggest fan.



Juan Isler (Sound Designer), a native of Kinston, NC, grew up singing and earned a music business degree from Winston-Salem State University. He has worked as a technical director for a local news station, been a DJ in a local nightclub, and a choir director. Juan has worked on over 50 plays in venues across the Triangle and Triad of North Carolina. His success is evident as an actor, technician, and director on all sides of a theatrical performance. He is a recipient of the Raleigh Arts Commission's Medal of Arts award and a current member

of the Arts Commission. Currently, he is a Finance and Operations Specialist at NC State University.



Stephanie Turner (Running Crew) (she/hers): Nothing drives Stephanie more than telling a good story. Whether that's through acting, writing, or other methods, she's been fortunate to have told hundreds of stories. Ones of humor, intrigue, heart, and of hope. When she was asked to help tell this particular story, she immediately said, "Yes." She knows this play will resonate and affect people in different ways; she knows it does for her. So thank you for being here and going on this journey with us.



Brian Yandle (Director) hails from Columbia, SC, but has lived all over the country and has called Raleigh home for the past 19 years. He is a local actor, director, producer, trivia host, artist, emcee, pancake chef, and all-around Renaissance Man (a tongue-in-cheek reference to his cameo in a 1994 Penny Marshall movie). Brian was also a mainstage improviser for Bay Area TheatreSports in San Francisco back when he had brain cells, which was a long time ago. He avidly supports The Justice Theater Project's mission and is proud to have appeared as C.P. Ellis in their stellar 2023 production of *Best of Enemies*. As an

actor for over 30 years, appearing in community and professional productions across the U.S. (Boston, San Francisco, Hartford, Charleston, etc.), and he now sets his sights on directing these past several years. Brian received a Best Director nod in 2013 from IndyWeek for A Big Wig Production's *Kinderstransport*, and most recently, he has directed for Raleigh's Seed Art Share and the UNC-Chapel Hill Writing for the Stage and Screen program. He is deeply humbled and appreciates the Justice Theater Project trusting in him with the careful telling of *26 Pebbles*.