

2024-2025 Season  
Pitt Stages proudly presents



# ***THE ACTOR'S NIGHTMARE***

**Written by Christopher Durang**

**Directed by Lucia Troiano**

THE ACTOR'S NIGHTMARE is presented by special arrangement  
with Broadway Licensing, LLC, servicing the Dramatists Play  
Service collection. ([www.dramatists.com](http://www.dramatists.com))

Henry Heymann Theatre

Friday, February 21, 2025 at 8pm  
Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 8pm  
Sunday February 23, 2025 at 2pm

For more information and  
tickets, visit [play.pitt.edu](http://play.pitt.edu).



## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR:

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First, I want to thank you for coming to support this production of *The Actor's Nightmare*. I have adored getting to work with this group of people and getting to laugh together. This show has been the opposite of a nightmare, and I am so grateful for the story we are able to share with you.

I first encountered *The Actor's Nightmare* during the pandemic, when there was little theatre and little laughter. I remember how much I laughed and how much I related. My personal actor's nightmare growing up was having to go back on for my sixth-grade production of *Peter Pan Jr*, and not remembering any of the lines. This show is a chaotic cacophony of plays within plays, and falling down the rabbit hole into madness.

This production would not be possible without my incredible production team and cast, my mentors, and my family and friends. I am incredibly grateful to each and every one of you for making this show possible.

I hope you enjoy this nightmare!

Lucia Troiano

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucia Troiano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L".

# ***THE ACTOR'S NIGHTMARE***

**Written by Christopher Durang**

**Directed by Lucia Troiano**

## Cast

George Spelvin.....Isaac Thatcher

Meg.....Audrey Clare

Sarah Siddons.....Gianna Healy

Dame Ellen Terry.....Rachel Pronesti

Henry Irving.....Casey Price

# Production & Creative Teams

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Director.....	Lucia Troiano
Stage Manager.....	Jared Donelson
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Ceili Schiller
Set & Props Designer.....	Julia Ferranti
Costume Designer.....	Cade Teribery
Lighting Designer.....	Karla Frank
Sound Designer.....	Marie Southall
Dramaturg.....	Olivia Kessler
Fight Choreographer.....	Claire Stemmer
Fight Captain.....	Ceili Schiller
Dresser.....	Sarah Dugan

This digital program allows us to reduce paper consumption and divert printing costs to supporting students' education, creative explorations, and excellence. Click each individual's name to learn more about them. Navigate to credit listings using the links at the bottom of each page.

# Playwright Biography

Christopher Durang is a playwright and actor. His plays have been seen on and off-Broadway, around the country and abroad. He usually writes comedy – either satire or dark comedy or parody or just absurdist. He has a B.A. in English from Harvard College, and an M.F.A. in Playwriting from Yale School of Drama.

As a student at Yale he had several plays presented at the School, and he especially worked at the Yale Cabaret. With fellow playwriting student Albert Innaurato he co-authored and performed in two very crackpot cabaret pieces, *I Don't Generally Like Poetry But Have You Read "Trees"?* and *The Life Story Of Mitzi Gaynor*. Durang later collaborated with fellow student Wendy Wasserstein on another cabaret piece, *When Dinah Shore Ruled The Earth*.

His first professional production was of *The Idiots Karamazov* (co-authored with Innaurato) at the Yale Repertory Theatre, in a production starring then student Meryl Streep as the 80 year old nutty "translatrix" Constance Garnett.

After that, his play *The Nature And Purpose Of The Universe* was presented off-off Broadway at the Direct Theatre in 1975.

His play *Titanic*, starring his Yale classmate Sigourney Weaver, was done in 1976 at the Direct Theatre, and transferred to off-Broadway along with a satiric cabaret, *Das Lusitania Songspiel*, co-authored by Durang and Ms. Weaver, and featuring both of them.

In 1976 his play *A History Of The American Film* was accepted as one of 12 plays done by the prestigious Eugene O'Neill National Playwriting Conference; and from that, Durang's play received an unusual shared "triple premiere" in 1977, having three back-to-back productions at the Hartford Stage Company in Hartford, Conn., the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, and the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. The following year *A History Of The American Film* was presented on Broadway, earning Durang a Tony nomination for Best Book of a Musical.

In 1979, Durang and Sigourney Weaver rewrote their *Das Lusitania Songspiel* and it was done again in the 1979-80 season as a late night show at the Westside Arts Theatre and became a cult success. The piece satirized the work of Brecht and Weill, and presented Brecht-Weill mishmashes of current shows, such as *Evita*, *the Demon First Lady of Fleet Street*. Durang and Weaver were both nominated for Drama Desk awards for Best Performer in a Musical.

# Dramaturgy Note

Welcome to the goofy, comical, and slightly terrifying world of *The Actor's Nightmare*!

Within this show we explore four different plays, each honing in on a classic nightmare trope.

First up, *Private Lives*, a classic comedic play that follows two couples who just can't quite get over their exes. The second show is an absurdist drama, *Happy Days* by Samuel Beckett. This slightly dystopian, avant garde play features Winnie, a woman trapped in a hole and her partner Willie while exploring the nuanced stages of grief. Departing from contemporary plays, we enter the world of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This turning point within *The Actor's Nightmare*, departs from the previous comedic nightmare elements, and transforms the world into a true tragedy. The final play is another English classic, *A Man for All Seasons*, a historical drama depicting the life of Sir Thomas Moore. At the beginning of this show, Moore is a trusted council advisor of King Henry VIII, but by the end of the play loses all of his status; his worst nightmare. While each of these plays is uniquely different, all tackle the complexities of a nightmare. The loss of a partner, the loss of your sanity, the loss of your life, your status, your family; and most notably forgetting your lines. Enjoy the comedy of *The Actor's Nightmare* and consider your own worst nightmare.

Olivia Kessler



# Cast Biographies

**Audrey Clare** (Meg) is so thrilled to be performing her first Pitt Stages production! She is a sophomore majoring applied developmental psychology with a theatre arts minor, and a disability studies certificate. Her most recent stage credits include *Parental Consent* (Erin), *Spongebob the Musical* (Spongebob), and *Pirates of Penzance* (Edith). In the tech world, she is a scenic artist for Pitt Stages and a sound designer for MTC. Later this semester she'll be the assistant lighting designer for *As You Like It*. She thanks you for supporting the theatre arts!

**Gianna Healy** (Sarah Siddons) is a sophomore molecular biology major and theatre minor. At the University of Pittsburgh, she's participated in Pitt Stages' *The Inseparables* (U/S Alex, Taylor, Emerson), *That's Not How I Remember It* (Jessica/Nurse 1), and ran crew in MTC's *Legally Blonde*. Other recent works include *The Hunchback Of Notre Dame* (Esmeralda) and *The Crucible* (Mary Warren). She is so excited to share this ridiculous story!

**Casey Price** (Henry/Executioner) is beyond excited for his first show with Pitt Stages. He is a junior chemical engineering major. Some of his past shows include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bottom), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Simeon), and *A Walk Down the Street* (Tom the Mailman). He is overjoyed to be working with this cast and crew on *The Actor's Nightmare*!

## Cast biographies continued

**Rachel Pronesti** (Dame Ellen Terry) is a Fredrick Honors College Student with a major in political science and two minors in law, criminal justice, & society, as well as gender, sexuality, & women's studies. She is also the Vice President of Healing Harmonies, Vice President of Outreach for BridgePittsburgh, and Secretary for Pitt's Performance Collaborative. Most recently, Rachel performed as Taylor in *The Inseparables* for Pitt Stages and the KCACTF Region 2 Festival. She hopes you enjoy the show!

**Isaac Thatcher** (George Spelvin) is ecstatic to debut in his second theatre production at Pitt! As a second-semester freshman, Isaac is excited for the years ahead full of shows, projects, and friendships. He's had so much fun with this play and everyone involved! Isaac would like to extend his gratitude to The Actor's Nightmare direction and stage management team, his friends and family for their constant love and support, and Marissa for being his rock through the craziness of his schedule. Previous credits include: *The Lightning Thief* (MTCatPitt), *Tuck Everlasting*, and *Something Rotten!* (both Hampton High School), among others. Isaac hopes you enjoy the show and wishes you all the best. Thank you for coming to see us and H2P!



# Director Biography

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**Lucia Troiano** (Director) is beyond excited to be making her Pitt Stages directing debut with *The Actor's Nightmare*! She is a senior theatre arts major, secondary education minor, working on a certificate in American Sign Language here at Pitt. She spent the past summer working as a teaching artist at Lexington Children's Theatre. Her other directing credits include *The Lightning Thief* (Director), MTC Sings: *Jekyll & Hyde* (Director), and *Legally Blonde* (Assistant Director). Pitt Stages credits include *The Inseparables* (Assistant Director), *Spring Awakening* (Assistant Music Director), *Dance Nation* (Run Crew), & *Emilia* (Actor/Musician). She hopes that you enjoy *The Actor's Nightmare*!

# Production & Creative Biographies

**Liza Brown** (Technical Director) is a junior theatre arts and architectural studies double major. She is a Production Assistant in the scene shop, the Technical Director of Performance Collaborative, and the Co-Technical Director of Redeye Theatre Project. She would like to thank you for supporting young people in the arts!

**Maddie Decker** (Scenic Artist) is thrilled to be working on another Pitt Stage show! This is her first show as a scenic artist! She is a double major in English writing and theatre arts. Previously, she worked on *Dead Man's Cell Phone* as a stage manager, and *Corsicana* and *That's Not How I Remember It* as an assistant stage manager. She is also heavily involved in Pitt's theatre clubs. She hopes everyone enjoys the show!

**Jared Donelson** (Stage Manager) is a sophomore theatre arts major with a certificate in leadership. Previous works include, Pitt Stages *The Inseparables* (ASM/Deck Chief), Pitt Stages' *Spring Awakening* (ASM), Performance Collaborative's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (ASM), Pitt Stages *The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon* (Light Board Operator), and MTC's *Legally Blonde* (Deck Crew). Jared wants to thank everyone who was involved in this production for their hard work and dedication!

## Production biographies

**Sarah Dugan** (Dresser) is a Sophomore Marketing major and Theatre Arts minor. Sarah is the current Production Manager for Musical Theatre Club at Pitt and Treasurer of Performance Collaborative. Past credits include *Spring Awakening* (Run Crew), *Legally Blonde* (Assistant Stage Manager), *Julius Caesar* (Production Manager), and they are currently a Co-Dramaturg for *As You Like It* with Pitt Stages.

**Julia Ferranti** (Scenic Designer) is very excited to be designing her first Pitt Stages production. Julia is a Junior theatre arts major with a certificate in nonprofit management. Some of her previous works include Pitt Stages' productions *Morning Reckoning* (Scenic Charge Artist), *The Inseparables* (Assistant Stage Manager, Assistant Scenic Charge Artist), and *Dead Man's Cellphone* (Scenic Artist). Julia hopes everyone enjoys the show!

**Karla Frank** (Lighting Designer) is thrilled to be the lighting designer for this production of *The Actor's Nightmare*. She previously enjoyed designing lights for *The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon* during undergrad and is excited to be back behind the board while pursuing her graduate studies in bioengineering.

**Olivia Kessler** (Dramaturg) is thrilled to dramaturg her first Pitt Stages show! Olivia is from Delaware and founded her school's dramaturgy program for

## Production biographies continued

their production of *Mean Girls*. For the past two years, Olivia has worked with New Light Theatre Company, a Philadelphia based non-profit professional theatre company aimed at shining a light in the darkness by creating politically informed art. Outside of theatre, Olivia is a double major in communications and public and professional writing. She would like to thank her friends, family, and entire company for all their hard work.

**Ceili Schiller** (Assistant Stage Manager/Fight Captain) is a Junior theatre arts major, and a recent transfer student from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg. She is excited to work on another student led production this semester as an assistant stage manager! Ceili has recently stage-managed productions including *Cincinnati* (SM), *The Inseparables* (ASM), *Oliver!* (SM), and *Love Sick!* (SM). She has recently worked on other productions including *Fun Home* (Dress/Run Crew), *Rabbit Hole* (Production Assistant), along with *I and You* (Director). Ceili enjoys all aspects of theatre, and is excited to continue her work with Pitt!

**Marie Southall** (Sound Designer) is extremely honored and excited for the opportunity to sound design for the Pitt Stages' production of *The Actor's Nightmare*. Marie has worked on other projects with Pitt Stages, including *Cheating Fate* (Associate Sound Designer)

## Production biographies continued

and *Spring Awakening* (A2). She also looks forward to working on the upcoming Pitt Stages production, *As You Like It: The Musical* (Associate Sound Designer). Marie would like to thank the cast and crew for their support in this creative process and her sound mentor, Howard Patterson, for his teaching hand and encouragement throughout this entire process and beyond. Now, let's go do a show!

**Claire Stemmer** (Fight Choreographer) is a senior double major for theatre arts and linguistics. Normally found in the costume shop, or backstage doing wardrobe duties, for this show Claire is serving as the fight choreographer for the first time! This experience has been very fast and very fun, so please enjoy the hard work of everyone involved in this production!

**Cade Teribery** (Costume Designer) is a senior theater arts major with a chemistry minor. They are ecstatic to have their first Pitt Stages designing opportunity! They have also designed and constructed their wardrobe as a drag artist (Thiqqi Nikki).

# Special Thanks To

**Ricardo Vila-Roger**  
**Paint Shop Staff and Students**  
**Tonya Lynn**



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# Production Crew

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Production Director.....	Hadley Armstrong
Technical Director.....	JC Bardzil, Liza Brown
Assistant Technical Director.....	Abbie Wagner
Director of Lighting, Sound and Projections.....	Forrest Trimble
Costume Shop Manager.....	Ricky Lyle Campbell
Costume Shop Assistant Manager.....	Brittany Graham
Properties Artisan.....	Julia Ferranti
Scenic Artist.....	Maddie Decker
Dresser.....	Sarah Dugan
Light Board Operator.....	Aiden Wilt
Sound Board Operator.....	Kaitlyn Clougherty
Directing Advisor.....	Ricardo Vila-Roger
Scenic and Props Advisors.....	Natalie Rose Mabry, Britton Mauk
Paint Supervisor.....	Gianni Downs
Lighting Supervisors.....	Eve Bandi, Annmarie Duggan
Sound Supervisor.....	Howard Patterson

# Support this work

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# About Pitt Stages

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Pitt Stages is the in-house production company for the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Pittsburgh, an accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Theatre. The department believes in a philosophy of theatre education based on the integration of theory and practice, academic and creative work, and educational and professional theatre.

## Faculty

Department Chair..... Annmarie Duggan  
Director of Graduate Studies..... Michelle Granshaw  
Director of Undergraduate Studies.....Gianni P. Downs  
Head of MFA in Performance Pedagogy..... Cynthia Croot  
Head of Design, Technology, and Management.....Karen Gilmer  
Head of History/Literature/Criticism.....Michelle Granshaw  
Head of Performance..... Ricardo Vila-Roger  
Faculty..... Eve Bandi, Kathleen George, Qianru Li,  
Britton Mauk, Patrick McKelvey, Tom Pacio,  
Howard Patterson, Becki Toth, Kelly Trumbull

Chosky Teaching Artist-in-Residence.....Natalie Rose Mabry  
Richard E. Rauh Teaching Artist-in-Residence..... Tonya Lynn

Professor Emeriti..... W. Stephen Coleman, Don Mangone and  
Bruce McConachie

## Administrative Staff

Arts Administrative Officer..... Ashley Martin  
Production Director..... Hadley Armstrong  
Academic Operation Manager..... Erin Delaney  
Department Coordinator.....Micky Krenek  
Academic Administrator..... Connie Markiw  
Graduate Student Services Administrator..... LJ Woolcock-Srolovic  
Marketing and Outreach Manager.....Daniel Fleegle  
Patron and Rental Services Manager.....Jeremy Seghers  
Marketing and Engagement Specialist.....Nicole Sauter  
Business Coordinator..... Amanda Raczkowski

## Production Staff

Technical Director..... JC Bardzil  
Assistant Technical Director..... Abbie Wagner  
Costume Shop Manager.....Ricky Campbell  
Costume Shop Assistant Manager.....Brittany Graham  
Director of Lighting, Sound and Projections.....Forrest Trimble



# Save the date for the final production!

2024-25 Season  
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University of Pittsburgh

## As You Like It

A Musical Adaptation of  
William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*  
Written and Adapted by  
**Shaina Taub and Laurie Woolery**  
Director: **Tom Pacio**  
Music Director: **Becki Toth**  
Music and Lyrics by **Shaina Taub**

**Friday, 4.4.25**  
through  
**Sunday, 4.13.25**



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Forced from their homes, Orlando, Duke Senior, his daughter Rosalind and niece Celia escape to the Forest of Arden, a fantastical place of transformation, where all are welcomed and embraced. Lost amidst the trees, the refugees find community and acceptance under the stars. A musical adaptation of William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*



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