

פאסאזש



THIS PRODUCTION IS PRESENTED AS A PART OF THE 2019 CAPITAL FRINGE FESTIVAL, A PROGRAM OF THE WASHINGTON, DC NON-PROFIT CAPITAL FRINGE.

**CAPITAL
FRINGE**

Pineapple - Riverside Baptist Church

July 11th - July 24th, 2019

The Indian Ocean Theatre Company Presents An Original Play

Written By John Sowalsky

Directed By Harley Venton

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The Holocaust has its own DNA.

CAST

Margaret Anne Murphy..... GRETCHEN/HANNAH

Cristen Stephansky EMMA/RUTH

CREW

Harley Venton Director & Stage Hand

Stephanie Zambrano Stage Manager & Understudy

Hannah Halpern Artwork

Ann Venton Production Assistant

John Sowalsky Producer, Stage Hand & Draft Horse

SETTING

Scene I: West Hartford, CT, Thursday, March 31st, 1988

Scene II: Germany, Thursday, March 29th, 1945

Scene III: Germany, 12 days later

Scene IV: West Hartford, CT, Thursday, March 31st, 1988

Scene V: West Hartford, CT, Wednesday, April 8th, 2020

ABOUT THE PLAY

This play had an unusually long gestation period. The story first came to me in 2010, but, as I first conceived it, there were technical challenges which prevented it from making the leap from a story in my head to a play on the page. I placed the idea on the back burner and moved on to my next project. In the meantime I did a fair amount of research on the Holocaust and World War II. Every so often I would come back to the story idea, but I could never quite see how to address the problems inherent in it. There is a wide gap between a premise and a script, and most premises are never able to bridge that gap. Trying to force the issue almost invariably results in inferior work. Thus, although I never completely wrote the project off, I had given up hope of ever completing it.

Then one night in 2017, as I was reading in bed, I experienced an Archimedean moment and, springing up, much to the chagrin of my cat, bounded into my office shouting, "Eureka!" I jotted down the outline which had popped into my head and, within a few days, had a completed draft which, subsequently, required only minor edits. That summer I presented a reading of the piece, entitled *Passing*, at the Kennedy Center's Page-to-Stage Festival. Its four scenes only ran for about 35 minutes, so I paired it on a double bill with another piece of similar length, a companion to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, entitled *Waiting*.

Passing was very well received, but due to its length there was not much I could do with it. So I stuck it on a shelf and turned my attention to my next project, a comedy questioning the existence of God, entitled *A Theist*. My plan was to bring *A Theist* to the 2018 Capital Fringe Festival, and I set those gears into motion. Then, in March of 2018 I had to undergo quintuple bypass surgery. I pulled out of the Fringe and set my sights on the summer of 2019, essentially postponing my plans by a whole year. In October of 2018 the Tree of Life shootings in Pittsburgh took place. Suddenly, I felt compelled to bring *Passing* to the stage.

I wrote a fifth scene, which brought the story from 1945 through 1988 and into the present day. And that is the play you're about to see.

We live in a world in which, for the first time since the Holocaust, the probability of a second Holocaust strays further from zero with each passing day. The time for remembrances is now.

MARGARET ANNE MURPHY as GRETCHEN and HANNAH



Margaret trained at Interlochen Center for the Arts and Drama Studio London, and recently earned her BFA in Acting from the Hartt School. Her credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (Elm Shakespeare); *A Christmas Carol* (Hartford Stage); *Pride and Prejudice* (Annapolis Shakespeare); *1984*, *Q*, and *The Witch and The Magical Orb* (Maryland Ensemble Theatre); *The Servant of Two Masters* (ArtFarm); *Twelfth Night*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *The Changeling*, and *Othello* (4615 Theatre Company); and *Flight of The Xenophobe* (2018 Capital Fringe).

Cristen is a Washington, DC-area actor, and a graduate of the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts, who also enjoys writing short plays and films. She was most recently seen in *A Shayna Maidel* (Peace Mountain Theatre). Cristen is also a company member of Crash of Rhinos and Arcturus Theater Company. Her other appearances include *Lost in Yonkers* (Peace Mountain Theatre); *Play, The Point*, and *Distracted* (Arcturus Theater Company); *Everyone's a Critic* (The Highwood Theatre); and *Artful Justice* (Wisdom Productions), among many others.



CRISTEN STEPHANSKY as EMMA and RUTH

HARLEY VENTON: DIRECTOR



Mr. Venton became an AEA member at the Guthrie Theater in MPLS. In addition to many regional stage credits his Broadway credits include Barnette Lloyd in *Crimes of the Heart*, and Edward Luton in *The Circle* opposite Sir Rex Harrison and Roma Downey. His extensive SAG credits include a featured role in *Sleeping with the Enemy*,

leads in the pilots *Blood Ties* and Wes Craven's *Laurel Canyon*, as well as many guest starring roles on such shows as *Seinfeld*, *Ellen*, *Murphy Brown*, *L.A. Law*, *Cybil*, and *Law & Order*. Devoted fans of the *Guiding Light* may remember his two years as earnest attorney Derek Colby. A complete list of his Film and Television credits are available on IMDB.com.

Stephanie is a 2017 graduate of University of Maryland. She has studied with Katie Killacky at Capital Coaching; William Esper Studio; and Academy of Fine Arts. She has done professional modeling and is an accomplished makeup artist as well.



STEPHANIE ZAMBRANO: STAGE MANAGER & UNDERSTUDY

HANNAH HALPERN: ARTWORK



Hannah is a graduate of Oberlin College, has worked in education, and has taught performance poetry to local children. Her team won 2nd place in the international slam poetry competition, Brave New Voices. Hannah has tutored young people with dyslexia, and has worked at Namibia's Planned Parenthood. She has also interned for an art therapist, where she taught fine art classes to children and worked with adult groups that have disabilities. Hannah hopes to attend graduate school for art therapy, focusing on working with children in pediatric hospitals. Her work can be found on Instagram at @hannahalpernarts.

A native of Washington, DC, John has studied cultural anthropology at Marlboro College and music composition at Catholic University. He has earned his livelihood in fields as diverse as database design and dishwashing, and is currently the office manager for Feynman School in Potomac, MD. His writing includes stage plays, short stories, verse, essays, technical writing, and blogging. He is also a composer, a drummer, a used record dealer, and a very proud uncle twice over. He currently resides in Gaithersburg, MD with his trusty cat, Annie, and enjoys musty old books, crusty old music, and dusty old movies.



JOHN SOWALSKY: WRITER & PRODUCER

SPECIAL THANKS

Thanks, as always, to my entire family: Mom, Dad, Richard, Susan, George, Rob, Madeline, and Jacqueline. Thanks also to my talented cast and crew, Cristen, Margaret, Stephanie, and Hannah, whose patience, hard work, suggestions, and insight cannot be sufficiently praised. A very special thanks goes out to my inimitable director and very good friend, Harley Venton. Thanks also to Ann Venton for allowing her husband to come out to play, and for providing invaluable production assistance. All my thanks also to: The Shapiros (Jon, Jackie, Maddy, and Molly); Gaby de Luna; Deana Kussman and Steve Quan; Andre Hicks; Wendi Wertheimer Evans; everyone at The Playwrights' Collaborative; and my Feyman School family, with an extra special shout out to all of our incredibly talented and dedicated teachers!

CHARITIES

For those who feel inclined to help fight anti-semitism, all forms of bigotry, and move us closer to a more just society, please consider making donations to one or more of the following charitable organizations:

- Bend the Arc (www.bendthearc.us)**
- The Anti-Defamation League (www.adl.org)**
- The American Civil Liberties Union (www.aclu.org)**
- Planned Parenthood (www.plannedparenthood.org)**

Please support the independent arts as you are able!

The Indian Ocean Theatre Company



"As far off Broadway as you can get!"
Visit us at www.indianoceantheatre.com

**Co-Directed by
Stephanie Zambrano**

**Original Music by
John Sowalsky**