

The Brookfield Theatre for the Arts, Inc.

September 2022

Dear theater family & friends,

I am so excited and grateful to be celebrating Brookfield Theatre's 65th year providing quality live theatre and arts opportunities to the Brookfield area. From the very beginning, this has been a welcoming and supportive place for artists and people discovering talents, practicing the craft of acting, and sharing a sense of community and friendship. This building and organization are here today thanks to all the board members past and present who have invested an incredible amount of time, talent, and treasure to keep Brookfield Theatre strong, and all the volunteers on stage and off who have given so much of themselves to create shows and events that Brookfield Theatre is rightfully proud of.

Some special thanks are due to our treasurer **Danette Bottelsen** who helped us secure much needed grants, to the generosity of our **donors**, and to our loyal **subscribers**, who helped us weather the pandemic and keep going! Thanks also to **Andrew Okell** for being the theatre handyman and reorganizing the shop area, **David Jurman** and **Art Stueck** for repairing the outdoor snack shed, **Art Stueck** for rejuvenating the landscaping, **Chris Fay** for redecorating & repairing the actors' area, **David Anctil** for designing, building and decorating the new green room, and **Jane Farnol** and **Vermilion Novak** for reorganizing and sorting costumes and props. Thank you!

Here's how you can help:

- Spread the word—tell your friends about us or bring them to a show!
- Support us with your donation, subscription, or membership!
- Join us as a volunteer and help make wonderful theatre happen!

Enjoy The Show,

Lou Okell, President

OUR HISTORY

The Country Players of Brookfield was founded in 1957 by Tillie Cicala and Dot French with an ad in the local newspaper asking, "Are you a ham?" They found many hams to join their ranks and their first play was produced in 1958. Plays were initially performed in church halls and school auditoriums. After a school complained about an actor appearing on stage with no shirt, it became clear that the band of players needed a home of its own. After refurbishing this building (originally the Curtis school gym built in 1907), it has been the permanent home of Brookfield's community theater. The organization eventually grew to include a wide range of cultural offerings and, in 2003, changed its name to "The Brookfield Theatre for the Arts, Inc." to reflect this commitment. At the same time, plans began for the building of a lobby annex to offer a gathering place for social events and concerts, and gallery space for art exhibits. The new lobby was dedicated in 2005. This year marks Brookfield's 65th year as an all-volunteer, non-profit organization providing quality live performances, cultural events, and educational workshops to the community. We rely on YOU to add your love of theatre and your willingness to volunteer to help keep this dream alive! Please help us by spreading the word or consider donating your time and talent and help keep the arts in Brookfield!

Thank you for supporting our work—please help us spread the word!

Sweat

by Lynn Nottage

directed by Lou Okell

Co-commissioned by

Oregon Shakespeare Festival's American Revolutions:

The United States History Cycle and Arena Stage.

World premiere produced by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival

This production of SWEAT was first presented in New York by The Public Theatre

(Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director)

Originally produced on Broadway by Stuart Thompson and Louise L. Gund.

Brookfield Theatre's 65th Anniversary Season
is made possible with the support of the Department of Economic
and Community Development, Office of Arts;

Support has also been provided to Brookfield Theatre from
CT Humanities (CTH), with funding provided by
the Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community
Development/Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) from the
Connecticut State Legislature;

And with the support of a grant from the Rodney L. White Foundation,
along with the generous donations of our many
supporters and subscribers.

Running Time:

Approx. 2½ hours with a 15 minute intermission.

**THE VIDEOTAPING OR MAKING OF ELECTRONIC OR OTHER AUDIO
AND/OR VISUAL RECORDINGS OF THIS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTING
RECORDINGS OR STREAMS IN ANY MEDIUM, INCLUDING THE INTERNET,
IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED, A VIOLATION OF THE AUTHOR(S)'S RIGHTS AND
ACTIONABLE UNDER UNITED STATES COPYRIGHT LAW.**

SWEAT is presented through special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service

For the safety of performers, the courtesy of patrons, and in compliance with copyright laws, the taking photos or recordings of any kind is strictly prohibited. **PLEASE TURN OFF ALL** non-essential electronic devices as they can interfere with our technical systems. **Patrons are welcome to text or tweet in the lobby.**

Sweat

by Lynn Nottage
directed by Lou Okell

CAST

(in order of appearance)

EVAN. Jeramie Gladman
JASON. Tony Benedetti
CHRIS. Kevoy Sommerville
STAN. Joe Harding
OSCAR Erick Sanchez
TRACEY Alicia Dempster
CYNTHIA Loretta Fedrick
JESSIE. Dana DiCerto
BRUCIE. Jeramie Gladman

SETTING

Reading, Pennsylvania

TIME

2000 / 2008

SCENES

With historical notes from the script

Prologue

Excerpt from “Let America be America Again” by Langston Hughes

ACT ONE

Scene 1—Parole Office—September 29th, 2008

Outside it’s 72°F. In the news: The 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly closes. The Dow Jones Industrial Average falls 777.68 points, marking the largest single-day decline in stock market history. Reading residents sample fresh apple cider at the annual Fall Festival on Old Dry Road Farm.

Scene 2—Bar—January 18th, 2000

Eight years earlier. Outside it’s 19°F. In the news: American think tanks report that the booming stock market is widening the income gap between the poorest and richest U.S. families. Reading proposes an aggressive dog ordinance to regulate ownership of certain pet breeds, including pit bulls.

Scene 3—Bar—February 10th, 2000

Outside it’s 44°F. In the news: Billionaire Steve Forbes drops out of the Republican primary after investing more than \$66 million of his own money on this campaign

SCENES

and his first failed, 1996 campaign. Work begins on the downtown civic convention center in Reading.

Scene 4—Bar—March 2nd, 2000

Outside it's 48°F. In the news: Republican presidential debate—Alan Keyes, John McCain, and George Bush. In Reading, an overnight fire leaves a mother with five children homeless. Baldwin Hardware Corps, a brass hardware maker, announces plans to open a new 280,000 square foot facility in Leesport.

Scene 5—Bar Exterior—April 17th, 2000

Outside it's 60°F. In the news: Three days after a record 617.77-point drop in the Dow Jones as the tech bubble bursts. D.C. protesters disrupt World Bank and International Monetary Fund meeting. A 26-year-old man is shot leaving a bar on Woodward Street in Reading.

Scene 6—Bar—May 5th, 2000

Outside it's 84°F. In the news, the U.S. unemployment rate tumbles to a thirty-year low, 3.9%. The City of Reading fires a dozen employees, fearing a deficit of \$10 million. Allen Iverson and the Philadelphia 76ers prepare for Game 1 of Eastern Conference Semifinals.

Scene 7—Bar Exterior—July 4th, 2000

Outside it's 84°F. *Working Woman* magazine reports the salary gap narrowing between men and women in some U.S. industries. Reading police crack down on high-crime neighborhoods in response to a recent rise in violent crime. The City of Reading purchases a number of run-down buildings and will demolish them in an effort to combat urban blight.

15 minute intermission

ACT TWO

Scene 1—Tracey's Home / Cynthia's Home—October 13th, 2008

Outside it's 79°F. Inside the news: The Dow Jones gains 916 points, its largest gain ever, following news that the government-funded bank bailouts were approved around the world. In Berks County, Pennsylvania, power shut-offs for delinquent utility customers rise 111% over previous year.

Scene 2—Bar—July 17th, 2000

Eight years earlier. Outside it's 82°F. In the news: Federal eligibility guidelines ease, allowing more families in Reading public schools to receive free and reduced school lunches. Several U.S. companies including 3M, Johnson & Johnson, and General Electric increase leadership development internally, expanding opportunities for minority employees.

Scene 3—Bar—August 4th, 2000

Outside it's 80°F. Partly cloudy and pleasant. In the news: Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush begins a post-convention train blitz across the Midwest.

Scene 4—Bar—September 28th, 2000

Outside it's 63°F. In the news: First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton posts strong polling numbers in her NY Senate race against Rick Lazio. Americans Venus and Serena Williams win a gold medal in women's doubles tennis at the Sydney Summer Olympics. Three Mexican migrant farm workers are killed when their car crashes into trees in Reading.

SCENES

Scene 5—Bar—October 7th, 2000

Outside it's 72°F. In the news: After yet another gun incident at a school, Attorney General Janet Reno reassures the public that "American schools are safe places." Two hundred people camp overnight at a Reading electronics superstore hoping to be the first to buy the \$350 Sony Playstation 2.

Scene 6—Bar—November 3rd, 2000

Outside it's 66°F. In the news: It's four days before the U.S. Presidential Election; George Bush and Al Gore are running neck and neck in the polls. The mayor of Reading proposes a budget to increase earned income tax.

Transition

President Bush presents "a very dire warning" to the American people. He will suggest that unless Congress approves a seven-hundred-billion-dollar bailout for Wall Street, and approves within a matter of only a few days, there are going to be ominous consequences for the entire U.S. economy and for millions of Americans.

Scene 7—Parole Office—October 15th, 2008

Eight years later. Outside it's 77°F. In the news: Baghdad and Washington reach final agreement on a pact requiring U.S. forces to withdraw from Iraq by 2011. U.S. stocks plunge 733 points, the second-biggest point loss in history. John McCain and Barack Obama hold their final televised debate at Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY. Federal prosecutors convict multimillion-dollar drug ring that converted several Reading houses into indoor marijuana farms.

Scene 8—Bar—October 18th, 2008

Outside it's 58°F. In the news: Thousands of Latin American immigrants are returning home as U.S. jobs dry up in the construction, landscaping, and restaurant industries. Pennsylvania's Republican Party sues the community activist group ACORN, accusing the group of fostering voter registration fraud. Philadelphia Phillies prepare to face off against the Tampa Bay Rays in the 2008 Major League Baseball World Series.

SPECIAL THANKS to our 65th Anniversary Partners

Thank you to spring intern **Bella Dumitrascu** and summer intern **Penelope Wade** for their work in discovering and documenting images from Brookfield Theatre's past. Special thanks to **Beth Young** for all her work on the 65th Anniversary video project, to **Chris Bird** for his videography and creative input, and to all those who were interviewed for sharing their stories. We look forward to sharing their work with you later this year!

BIOGRAPHIES



Lynn Nottage (AUTHOR) is a playwright and a screenwriter. She is the first, and remains the only, woman to have won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama twice. Her plays have been produced widely in the United States and throughout the world.

Most recently, Nottage premiered MJ THE MUSICAL, directed by Christopher Wheeldon and featuring the music of Michael Jackson, at the Neil Simon Theater on Broadway, CLYDE'S directed by Kate Whoriskey at Second Stage Theater on Broadway and an opera adaptation of her play INTIMATE APPAREL composed by Ricky Ian Gordon and directed by Bart Sher, commissioned by The Met/Lincoln Center Theater.

Her other work includes, FLOYD'S (retitled- Clyde's) (Guthrie Theater), the musical adaptation of Sue Monk Kidd's novel THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES, with music by Duncan Sheik and lyrics by Susan Birkenhead (The Atlantic Theater), MLIMA'S TALE (Public Theater), BY THE WAY, MEET VERA STARK (Lilly Award, Drama Desk Nomination- Second Stage/Signature Theater), RUINED (Pulitzer Prize, OBIE, Lucille Lortel, New York Drama Critics' Circle, Audelco, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Award- MTC/Goodman Theater); INTIMATE APPAREL (American Theatre Critics and New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards for Best Play Center Stage/SCR/ Roundabout Theater); FABULATION, OR THE RE-EDUCATION OF UNDINE (OBIE Award - Playwrights Horizons/Signature Theater); CRUMBS FROM THE TABLE OF JOY; LAS MENINAS; MUD, RIVER, STONE; POR'KNOCKERS; and POOF!

Her play SWEAT (Pulitzer Prize, Evening Standard Award, Obie Award, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, Tony Nomination, Drama Desk Nomination) moved to Broadway after a sold-out run at The Public Theater. It premiered and was commissioned by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival American Revolutions History Cycle/Arena Stage. Inspired by her research on SWEAT, Nottage developed THIS IS READING, a performance installation based on two years of interviews, in Reading, PA in July 2017.

She is the co-founder of the production company, Market Road Films. Over the years, she has developed original projects for Amazon, HBO, Sidney Kimmel Entertainment, Showtime, This is That and Harpo. She was a writer and producer on the Netflix series SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT, directed by Spike Lee and a consulting producer on the third season of DICKINSON (Apple+).

Nottage is the recipient of a MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellowship, Steinberg "Mimi" Distinguished Playwright Award, PEN/Laura Pels Master Playwright Award, William Inge Festival Distinguished Playwright, TIME 100 (2019), Signature One Playwright, Merit and Literature Award from The Academy of Arts and Letters, Columbia University Provost Grant, Doris Duke Artist Award, The Joyce Foundation Commission Project & Grant, Madge Evans-Sidney Kingsley Award, Nelson A. Rockefeller Award for Creativity, The Dramatists Guild Hull-Warriner Award, the inaugural Horton Foote Prize, Helen Hayes Award, the Lee Reynolds Award, and the Jewish World Watch iWitness Award. Her other honors include the National Black Theatre Fest's August Wilson Playwriting Award, a Guggenheim Grant, Lucille Lortel Fellowship and Visiting Research Fellowship at Princeton University. She is a graduate of Brown University and the Yale School of Drama. She is also an Associate Professor at Columbia School of the Arts.

Nottage is a board member for BRIC Arts Media Bklyn, Donor Direct Action, Dramatist Play Service, Second Stage and the Dramatists Guild. She recently completed a three-year term as an Artist Trustee on the Board of the Sundance Institute. She is member of the The Dramatists Guild, WGAE, and the American Academy of Arts & Letters and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. She is currently an artist-in-residence at the Park Avenue Armory.

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Gayle Baker (COSTUMER) is happy to be costuming her first adult show having costumed several children's shows with Miss Beth including INTO THE WOODS JR and SEUSSICAL JR. She thanks Lou for the opportunity and her family for their love and support.

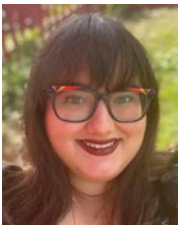


Tony Benedetti (JASON) is excited to be back at Brookfield Theatre and to be part of this production. He was last seen here as Edsel in THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS and as a ballplayer in DAMN YANKEES. During the lockdown, he was also in the virtual shows THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH and MISS BENNET CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY with Brookfield. Most recently, he was Eric Birling in AN INSPECTOR CALLS, The Mute in THE FANTASTICKS, and Carr Gomm in THE ELEPHANT MAN, all with Town Players of Newtown and played Stage Manager in MURDER AT THE PROP TABLE with Phoenix Stage Company. Tony would like to thank his friends and family for all of their support.



Alicia Dempster (TRACEY) is a local theatre artist who has, over the years, directed, produced, and acted in several local productions. Favorite roles include Nora in A DOLL'S HOUSE, PART 2, Nurse Ratched in ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST and Sarah in TIME STANDS STILL. Alicia is thrilled to return to Brookfield Theatre after having choreographed AMERICAN IDIOT. Thank you to Lou for the opportunity to bring this powerful script to life with such a wonderful team of artists and volunteers. For information, visit www.aliciadempster.com.

Delaney Dempster (MAKEUP/CREW) As the daughter of local theatre alums Billy and Alicia, Delaney has shared in the family obsession earning credits on stage and off. Most recent credits are with PAC @ 32 Below including LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS and many others. She was Stage Crew for BLOOD AT THE ROOT and also the video operator for Brookfield's recent production of AMERICAN IDIOT.



Sarah Denn (STAGE MANAGER) is happy to be laboring on this important show with such a talented cast! Sarah has numerous credits both on stage and backstage and virtually here at Brookfield. Thanks to Tzipora for putting up with the long hours and for Babka for refusing to be ignored. Enjoy the show!



Dana DiCerto (JESSIE) is thrilled to make her debut at Brookfield Theatre in this powerful play. Favorite roles include Prudence in BEYOND THERAPY (Ridgefield Theater Barn & Curtain Call), Felicia in I HATE HAMLET (Curtain Call), Paulette in LEGALLY BLONDE (Downtown Cabaret), Tatiana Racon in A COMEDY OF TENORS (Curtain Call), Billie Dawn in BORN YESTERDAY (Town Players of New Canaan), Lorraine Sheldon in THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER (Curtain Call), The Girl in HOT'L BALTIMORE (Curtain Call), Betty Logan in HEAVEN CAN

BIOGRAPHIES

WAIT (Curtain Call), Teresa in ITALIAN AMERICAN RECONCILIATION (Wilton Playshop), and Marie in MULBERRY STREET (Curtain Call). Thanks to Lou and Brookfield Theatre for the opportunity!!



Loretta Fedrick (CYNTHIA) is thrilled to return to Brookfield Theater after playing Dottie in DOT last winter! She has performed in THE REVOLUTIONISTS (Marianne Angelle) at Phoenix Stage Company; DOG FIGHT (Librarian, Ruth Two Bears, and Chippy), GODSPELL (Jesus/Pit Ensemble), DREAM GIRLS (Joan/Ensemble), HAIRSPRAY (Lauren/ Ensemble), and SISTER ACT (Nun/ Ensemble) at Thomaston Opera House. She also appeared on stage in DOUBT (Mrs. Mueller) at Goshen Players; PROPERTY (Mahalia) at Warner Theater; BARE (Sister Chantelle), and CROSSED SWORDS (Rosa Parks) here with Brookfield Theater. Loretta would like to thank Lou for her patience and flexibility and for pulling her in for this awesome production with a group of such talented individuals.

Janice Gabriel (FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER) is excited to be working on another show at Brookfield having previously choreographed for DISASTER!, BLOOD AT THE ROOT, and THE WILD PARTY. Recent stage credits include DISASTER! here at Brookfield. When not performing, she can be found at Newtown High School working with her favorite actors—her students. She thanks the entire production team for this opportunity and the cast for their hard work and dedication to this show. She thanks her family for always supporting her, the JMSA ladies, and Michelle for putting up with the long hours. Love y'all!



Jeramie Gladman (EVAN/BRUCIE) is happy to return to Brookfield after appearing last year as Donnie in DOT and previously as Burrs in THE WILD PARTY. Other credits include Paula in STRAIGHT MEN CAN'T DANCE (Brookfield Theatre virtual reading), Marty in DREAMGIRLS (Fairfield Center Stage), Annas in JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR (Downtown Cabaret) L.A. Theatre: GAINING GROUND (Ark Theatre), INSURRECTION: HOLDING HISTORY (Celebration Theatre).

Thanks to Lou, Sarah and the rest of the cast for this incredible experience and especially to Jojo for going on this journey with me. This and every performance is dedicated to Mom and David who are watching from the best seats!



Joe Harding (STAN) is celebrating a 30 year association with the Brookfield Theatre for the Arts with his first show dating back to 1992 as Richard Sherman in THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH. Joe has also appeared in: COMPANY, MURDER AMONG FRIENDS, ISN'T IT ROMANTIC, THE 20TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE and JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR, and quite a few more.

Andrew Okell (SET DESIGN-2011 Volunteer of the Year) first started in theatre at the tender age of 8 in THE TIME MACHINE. He has been building/designing sets at Brookfield since 2008. Favorites include LAST OF THE RED HOT LOVERS, MOONLIGHT & MAGNOLIAS (Rose Brand Best Amateur Set Design 2012), STEEL MAGNOLIAS, LION IN WINTER, MOON OVER BUFFALO, and

BIOGRAPHIES

personal favorite NOISES OFF. Thank you to his building cohorts for enabling him, Lou for tolerating him, and Emma for letting him build her doghouse.



Lou Okell (DIRECTOR/TECHNICAL DIRECTOR-2009 Volunteer of the Year) currently serves as theatre president. She is a graphic arts professional by day and began volunteering with Brookfield Theatre making free flyers in 1987. Her first show role was as Child Wrangler for Alicia's PETER PAN in 2008 and she has had the time of her life working backstage (and once or twice on stage) on many, many shows. She thanks Sarah for having her back and to Joe, Alicia, Dana, Erick, Jeramie, Kevoy, Loretta & Tony for embracing this script. Thanks also to Andy and his team for the beautiful set, to Jane, Renee, and Janice for your help and advice, and to Delaney, Lizzie, Melissa & Gayle for all of your hard work on the show. Love always to Andy and Emma.

Anna Patin (SET TEAM) is a graduate of Parsons School of Design with a concentration in Photography. Anna is happy to join the set build team at Brookfield Theatre and thanks Sharon for encouragement and love.



Erick Sanchez (OSCAR) is excited to be back at Brookfield Theatre. In the past year alone he has been around CT working with some amazing companies such as Fairfield Center Stage (MAMMA MIA!, SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS), Brookfield Theatre (DISASTER!, SWEAT), and has done 2 seasons with The Connecticut Gay Men's Chorus (21-22). Erick would like to thank his family and friends for all the support! Enjoy the show! Instagram: @Erick_Sanchez_CT



Kevoy Somerville (CHRIS) is excited to return to Brookfield after lending a hand as Jake/Chef in DISASTER! He also performed here as Justin in BLOOD AT THE ROOT and in a virtual RICHARD II (Duke of Aumerle). Other credits include SHAKESPEARE MONOLOGUES with Shakespeare in Sharon, Wren in a staged reading of INSOMNIACS at Playhouse on Park, and Be-leaguered Geek in HEATHERS at Landmark. Kevoy is a graduate of NVCC where he performed in numerous shows including MR. BURNS, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, THE LARAMIE PROJECT, GOLDEN BOY, HEARTS LIKE FISTS, CABARET, and GODSPELL. Kevoy has also directed and run tech for many shows. He thanks his family and friends for their continuing support.

Sharon Suchecki (SET TEAM) has volunteered over at Richter and has done some indoor construction work renovating kitchens. Sharon thanks Andy for making me part of the set team!

Liz Valencia (ASM/CREW) is a student at Westconn studying Psychology and works as a preschool teacher. She has been a part of the cast of AVENUE Q, has been a stage manager for BLOOD AT THE ROOT, stage hand for LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, and helped out for AMERICAN IDIOT here at Brookfield. She is very excited to be part of SWEAT and to share this important story alongside this wonderful cast and production team.

Sweat

by Lynn Nottage
directed by Lou Okell

PRODUCTION CREW

DIRECTOR Lou Okell
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER Janice Gabriel
STAGE MANAGER Sarah Denn
LIGHTING & SOUND DESIGN Lou Okell
SET DESIGN Andrew Okell
COSTUME DESIGN Gayle Baker
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER/CREW Lizzie Valencia
MAKEUP ARTIST/CREW Delaney Dempster
TECH CREW Melissa May
SET BUILD & DECORATION Andrew Okell, Sharon Suchecki,
Lou Okell, Anna Patin
HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER Stephen Cihaneck
OPENING NIGHT PARTY Andy & Lou

Special Thanks

Arkettype Graphics, Liz Milazzo & Savers,
Jane Farnol, Tom Heydenburg, Renee Sutherland

In compliance with CDC recommendations, please follow current mask & social distance guidelines. Remain seated throughout the performance and mingle with cast and friends in the lobby or outdoors after the show.

EMERGENCY FIRE NOTICE

Please observe the **EXIT** sign nearest to the seat which you occupy. It is the shortest route to the exterior of the building. In the unlikely event of an emergency, theatre personnel will be available to assist your orderly departure.
