

PEGASUS THEATRE presents



Festival of New Comedies

The Art of Martyrdom written by RITA ANDERSON directed by GERALD TAYLOR II

Mutability written by STRATON RUSHING directed by LESLIE PATRICK

The Robotics of Love and Longing written by GERMAINE SHAMES directed by NATALIA M. BORJA

2023 SEASON



The staff and management of the Bath House Cultural Center

MUTABILITY WILL FEATURE A 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION.

Photography and the use of any audio or video recording devices is strictly prohibited. Please silence or turn off all noise-making electronic devices such as mobile phones, beepers, and watches. The use of mobile phones in the theatre is prohibited.

PEGASUS THEATRE

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PEGASUS THEATRE

CDE ARC OF MARCYRDOM written by RITA ANDERSON directed by GERALD TAYLOR II

Phoenix Clasby	. Ensemble/Understudy
Isabelle Culpepper	Clarice
Gordon Fox	The Bishop
Jennifer Hoeppner	Understudy
Martin Jaramillo	Understudy
Vivian King	. Ensemble/Understudy
Melania MacDonald	The Servant
Nisha Mathews	Reader
Liv Murphy	The Abbess
	Hrosvitha
Dez Simmons	Muse
Ariana Stephens	Agatha
	Igaina

MUTABILITY written by STRATON RUSHING directed by LESLIE PATRICK

Isabelle Culpepper	Cheli
Joseph Figueras	Understudy
Martin Jaramillo	Rusty
Melania MacDonald	Mary
Sheila D. Rose	Understudy
Kevin Small	Frank
Alex Trevino	Young Man

The Robotics of Love and Longing written by GERMAINE SHAMES directed by NATALIA M. BORJA

Isabelle Culpepper	Jane
Courtney Dyamond	Maya/Madison
Martin Jaramillo	Understudy
Nisha Mathews	Reader
Liv Murphy	Nicole/Whitney
Hadley Shipley	Understudy
Alex Trevino	Simon

Playwrights' Statements

RITA ANDERSON, The Art of Martyrdom

I was born in the Midwest to a large, working-class family, but I latched onto theatre in school as a way to escape, and I became an actor. In 2010, frustrated that there were few "good roles" for women, especially over age 30, I had my "Gandhi moment" and said, "If not me, then who? If not now, then when?" So, I pursued an MA Playwriting to write roles that I would love to play, not yet knowing how difficult it was for female playwrights to get produced—and the statistics are startling: In 2023, female playwrights still only see a 17% representation on American stages. Nevertheless, she persists, and I'm proud to say that, to date, I have written 22 full-length plays, all of which feature strong, female+ leads of all ages, sizes, races, and orientations. I love what I do, creating worlds and stories that entertain (and dare I say, educate and inform, ha!). And I want to help make theatre a "warmer welcome" for the female playwrights behind me!

STRATON RUSHING, Mutability

We've all seen at least a dozen movies where a gang of scary hicks (perhaps of the mutant or inbred variety) kill some lost, innocent suburbanites in the "middle of nowhere". I grew up watching these films. They're great. Something about venturing outside of the cozy bubble of light pollution and familiar fast-food chains invites mystery. "The middle of nowhere" gives this feeling that anything could pop out of the dark woods.

Unless you're like me and you grew up in a county with a population of 3,000 people. Then the "middle of nowhere" is not scary, it's just home.

I wondered what could happen when I played with the "killer hillbilly" trope. The result was a love letter to what is left of my hometown, disguised as a love letter to horror cinema.

While I will be the first person to admit to you that this play is a strange scrapbook of genres and emotions, I hope you can feel the love I put into it. I hope it makes you laugh. I hope it shows you a little piece of my world. I hope it gives you a thing or two to think about.

Synopsis

GERMAINE SHAMES, The Robotics of Love and Longing

A lonely, overworked medical resident buys a state-of-the-art female pleasure robot, with which he begins an intimate relationship — until his mother discovers the lifelike gynoid sprawled, half-naked, on his bed. The Robotics PEGASUS THEATRE of Love and Longing, a tender family dramedy, explores technology, taboos, and the lengths to which the human need for connection may drive us.

Sex robots are readily available, growing in number, and raising a stir among feminists, lawmakers and psychologists. A 2017 survey found that half of respondents think that having sex with robots will become a common practice within 50 years. In an age of consent, what does sex tech auger for the future of romance, marriage and procreation? With cautious optimism, The Robotics of Love and Longing suggests that the answers to this question may be myriad shades of gray, and human-robot interaction as enlightening as it is unpredictable.

Directors' Notes

LESLIE PATRICK, Mutability

You never really know what is going on in someone else's head, why they do the things they do, for better or for worse. Everyone is just trying to get through their life the best way they can, and we are all the stars of our own show. The small annoyances of the jerks in traffic, the rude people, the Karen in line ahead of you build up and it can seem like everyone is actively trying to get in your way. It can be hard to remember that it isn't about you, and they may have things going on in their lives too that are affecting how they interact with the rest of the world. With each choice we make, we affect change in ourselves, others, and the world around us. Sometimes it's funny, often painful, but I think we learn more about ourselves in how we react to change than any other situation. Something as harmless as fulfilling another person's preconceived notions of you may be funny in the moment, but it can possibly have catastrophic consequences and cause change in ways you never intended. Each of the chosen plays this year deals with change in one form or another. Mutability literally means change and proves that no matter how terrible the circumstances are that cause the change, there is always a positive somewhere in there if you look at it in just the right way.

GERALD TAYLOR II, The Art of Martyrdom

I loved this script from the moment I started reading it. The name Hrosvitha triggered fuzzy memories from my theatre history courses, but nothing concrete. Rita Anderson believed that this pioneer nun deserved more notoriety than a brief mention in textbooks; and now I am certainly inclined to agree. My personal experience could not be more dissimilar to Hrosvitha's. Yet somehow, this 10th century German nun's struggle uncannily reflected my modern Black, Queer, male presenting existence.

Rita found the universal truths in Hrosvitha's very specific story. All artists know the constant battle between the creative self and the real world. Femme and Queer individuals everywhere still feel the burden of navigating a hetero-centric society. Every woman who will see this production has been overlooked or discredited by a man in power at some point. Hrosvitha's problems didn't perish along with her in the 10th century.

That was my guiding principle while directing this reading. I needed the girls, gays and theys to feel seen in a way that Hrosvitha never did. She was screaming into the void from the seclusion of a German convent. For better or worse, now we can share our stories and know that somebody will hear us. Our fight may seem never ending, but today more then ever, we know that we aren't alone. This production is for Hrosvitha, and me, and all of you who walk a path less traveled and have the scars and stories to prove it.

Meet the Cast

PHOENIX CLASBY (Ensemble/Understudy) is delighted to work with Pegasus Theatre! They are a recent graduate of Coppell High School and plan to attend Pace University in the fall to pursue a BA in Acting. Other credits include Endlings (Dallas Children's Theater), Art of Broken Things (Cry Havoc Theater), Lord of the Flies (Out of Line Concepts), and The Forever Quest (Cry Havoc Theater). They would like to thank their teachers and mentors for their immense support. @phoenixslemontown

ISABELLE CULPEPPER (Clarice/Cheli/Jane) is thrilled to return to Fresh Reads in all three of these amazing new scripts. She's had the privelege of working with Pegasus in many roles since 2011. Her first roles were backstage on the Living Black & White[™] shows, then FIT, Fresh Reads, and a few Radiovizion[™] shows. Favorite roles in DFW Theatre community include Gabriella in Boeing Boeing! (Mainstage Irving Las Colinas), and Jayne Mansfield in Dead Wait (Festival of Independent Theatres), and any role where she gets to work with her inimitable husband, Jared. Many thanks to her family for their nonstop support.

COURTNEY DYAMOND (Maya/Madison) makes her Pegasus debut in this year's production of Fresh Reads The Robotics of Love and Longing. She studied theatre at Virginia Commonwealth University and made her Dallas debut as Crystal in the Crisdee and Company's 2015 production of The Worst Kept Secret. Her most recent credits include Narrator (Griwerrtones chapter 1-3) and Ester Trunk (The Canyon chapter 1-3) on the Writer Wrong ⁶ PEGASUS THEATRE</sup> podcast. Her favorite roles include The Lady in the Plaid in the Colored Museum (Virginia Commonwealth University) and Lucinda (Crisdee and Company).

JOSEPH FIGUEIRAS (Understudy) had his onstage Pegasus debut as Marko the Magnificent in the RadioVizion production of *Mind Over Murder!* Previously the men's understudy for *Death Is a Bad Habit!*, he's also been seen in the hit streaming show, *The Chosen*, and spends most of his time working in voiceover when he's not doing theatre and being on-set!

GORDON FOX (The Bishop) is pleased to be returning to Pegasus Theatre, where he was last seen as Otis Digby in Mind Over Murder. Other Pegasus credits include A Proper Man, The Frequency of Death, Rehearsal for Murder and 3 seperate productions of XSR: Die! Other local credits include; The Tempest (DTC), The Fantasticks and Gross Indecency (Theatre Three), The Young Man from Atlanta (Uptown Players), Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (Dallas Children's Theatre), Taming of the Shrew (Texas Shakespeare Festival), and 1776 (Lyric Stage).

JENNIFER HOEPPNER (Understudy) is joining Pegasus Theatre for the first time with The Art of Martyrdom. She was last seen in The Fleetwood Project's production of The Spitfire Grill as Effy. Prior to that, her favorite role was as Daisy with SR Festivals. She is very excited to be part of this show, and would like to thank her husband and children for all of their support.

MARTIN JARAMILLO (Rusty/Understudy) joins Pegasus Theatre for his first time. His most recent works are "The Bad Die Old" and "Existential Changes" with Human Spirit Theatre. Other credits include Orcus (She Kills Monsters), Gros-Rene (The Imaginary Cuckold), and Tanner (Good Kids). A current student at Sherrill Actors Studio, Martin always sees the joy in learning something new.

VIVIAN KING (Ensemble) debuts at Pegasus and is thrilled to be here! Vivian is a Texas commercial and TV/film actress who practices Meisner and improvising. She has also performed at Collin College. She homes in on her many characters and is happy to bring them to the stage!

DEZ SIMMONS (Muse) is new to Pegasus but not new to acting. After doing theatre throughout grade school, in 2011 they attended the New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts in Manhattan. Since then, they have been expanding their skillset into the realm of voiceover. Dez is excited to re-visit their theatrical roots and thanks Pegasus theatre for the opportunity to have fun in a safe, inclusive environment. KEVIN SMALL (Frank) is excited to be in his first Pegasus production! Kevin is currently the Training Director and performer with Four Day Weekend. He is a professional SAG/AFTRA actor with 75+ national commercials to his credit. While in Los Angeles, Kevin trained in the Master Class at the prestigious Beverly Hills Playhouse, under the Direction of Howard Deutch (Pretty In Pink, Some Kind of Wonderful, True Blood, Empire, Young Sheldon) and has performed on stage with the likes of Bryan Cranston, Wendi McLendon-Covey, Mayim Bialik, William Shatner, Doris Roberts, Harry Hamlin, to name a few. smallkevin.com

ARIANA STEPHENS (Agatha) considers herself a lifelong student of theatre and is excited to be working on her first show at The Pegasus. She recently played as Frenchie in Arts Mission Oak Cliff x The Lost Boy Presents' production of CABARET, as well as Maid Marian in The Adventures of Sherwood (Mainstage Irving Los Colinas), Laura Wingfield in The Glass Menagerie (Mainstage Classic Theatre), and Puck in A Midsummer's Night Dream (Upright Theatre). She'd like to thank her family, friends, and her partner Sal for their continued love and support.

ALEX TREVINO (Young Man/Simon) is a graduate from KD Conservatory who has always had the dream of entertaining. He is a new up and comer when it comes to acting, but he can finally say that he has found his passion. Keep an eye out for his future productions! Thank you to Pegasus Theatre for giving me this opportunity and thank you to my friends and family for their support. I love you all!

Meet the Designers, Production Staff, and Crew

NATALIA BORJA (Director) is very excited to be directing with Pegasus for the first time! Natalia has appeared in a number of Pegasus shows including: Dimension of Death (Madge Bootinski), Primetime for Murder (Lee Freeman), Radiovizion: Death on Delivery (Nurse Crabtree) and A Proper Man (Nell Gwyn). she is represented by the Boysen Agency.

KURT KLEINMANN (Artistic Director, Playwright) is the founder of Pegasus Theatre and the author of numerous plays. He is a member of The Dramatists Guild and Actor's Equity Association and a co-founder and Past President of the Dallas Theatre League from 1992 to 1996. Mr. Kleinmann has received many awards for his work in theatre, including a 1995 Leon Rabin Award for Sound Design; the 1997 Ken Bryant Vision Award from The 500 Inc.; and the 2005 Standing Ovation Award from the Dallas Theatre League. LESLIE PATRICK (Director) has worked with multiple Dallas area theatres as an actor and behind the scenes. Her most recent outing with Pegasus was as Alice Windomere in the Living Black & White[™] production of The Dimension of Death! She has performed in too many other Living Black & White[™] productions with Pegasus Theatre to name. (And they are all her favorite!) She has also worked with Echo Theatre, Circle Theatre, Plano Repertory Theatre, Act I Productions, Theatre Three, Audacity Productions, Uptown Players, and The Bathhouse Theatre Collective. Some of her favorite roles include *52 Pick-up* (Woman), *The Collection* (Stella), *Arsenic & Roses* (Katherine), *Die, Mommie, Die!* (Edith), *Mauritius* (Jackie), and *Boy Gets Girl* (Harriet). Most recently, she performed the role of Suffragist Maud Wood Park in Echo Theatre's production of *It's My Party!*

SHEILA D. ROSE (Understudy/DEI Advocate/Producer) returns for another Fresh Read Festival! Sheila is a veteran of Pegasus Theatre, having performed in nine Living Black & White[™] productions and two RadioVizion plays. She was last seen on stage in Kitchen Dog Theatre's regional premier of Man Cave by John J. Caswell, Jr. Local credits include Theatre Three, MainStage ILC, Wingspan, Teatro Dallas, and Theatre Arlington. Sheila has produced Pegasus Theatre's Fresh Reads festival of new comedies since its premier and serves on the Pegasus Operations Team as well as the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee.

GERALD TAYLOR II (Director) is a Dallas-based artist/performer/ puppeteer and now director. He graduated from Texas A&M University Commerce with a B.S. and M.A. in theatre. Gerald has performed with Pegasus Theater (Death on Delivery Radiovision), MBS Productions (Hotel California, Dream Café, The King of Cage Street, The Trial of Nat Turner), Theatre Three (Funny You Don't Act Like a Negro, It Came From Theatre Three, The Elephant Man), Dallas Children's Theatre (The BFG, Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters, The Snowy Day, Very Hungry Caterpillar Christmas Show, Dragon's Love Tacos, 10 Seconds, Last Stop on Market Street), and the Dallas Theatre Center (A Christmas Carol '21).

BOBBY SELAH (Stage Manager) is thrilled to return to Pegasus Theatre as a Stage Manager after previously working as the Assistant to the Producers on the Living Black & White[™] shows for 10 years. Previously he served as the Resident Stage Manager for WingSpan Theatre Company for five years. Bobby has also worked in various roles at WaterTower Theatre, Lyric Stage, Contemporary Theatre of Dallas, and many others.

BARBARA WEINBERGER (Co-Producer, Pre-Show Speaker) is a www.pegasustheatre.com

producer, problem-solver, and public speaker who has worked with Pegasus Theatre for the past 33 years. She is also the wife and editor for her amazing husband, Kurt Kleinmann, and looks forward to many more years of theatrical adventures together.

... and finally, Meet the Playwrights

RITA ANDERSON (The Art of Martyrdom) has an MFA Creative Writing and an MA Playwriting, and she served as Dramatists Guild Regional Representative and as Faculty for Interlochen. She went on scholarship to The O'Neill, and Frantic is the Carousel won a National Partners of American Theatre nomination. Rita won the Ken Ludwig Playwriting Award, the top national prize from The Kennedy Center for "Best Body of Work." She has had 100 productions, including plays in Paris, London, NYC, L.A., Dubai, Canada, and Australia. Her publications include the Smith & Kraus anthologies: Best New Ten-Minute Plays, Best Men's Monologues, and Best Women's Monologues (2019, 2020, 2022, 2023). Early Liberty, Final Conversations, The 27 Club, Woman Hollering Creek, and Saint Somebody are "Best Selling Plays," and Rita is published in She Persisted: Thirty New Ten-Minute Plays by Women 40+. (Introduction, Theresa Rebeck. Applause Books.) Rita was Playwright in Residence (Lakeview Performing Arts Center), and she has developed work with Axial Theatre, The 24-Hour Plays Project, Madison New Works Laboratory, Soul Rep Theatre Company, Woven Theatre & The Loom New Works Festival, HBMG Foundation & Creede Repertory Theatre, JumpStart Theatre, Illinois College, The PlayGround Experiment, The Barrow Group, Pegasus Theatre, Texas State University, Missouri State University, James Madison University, Reading Theater Project, Mildred's Umbrella: Museum of Dysfunction, Our Lady of the Lake University, Siena Heights University, and Mélange Theatre Company. Rita was a pilot playwright with Hyde Park Theatre Writers' Group, but the highlight of her emerging career so far was sitting on a playwriting panel with Christopher Durang-and sharing a playbill with Caridad Svich. Rita is a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee for The Entropy of Rocketman, and Watched Pots (A Lovesong to Motherhood), and she is Moderator for HONOR ROLL!, an advocacy group for womxn playwrights 40+ whose goal is our equal representation in theatre.

STRATON RUSHING (*Mutability*) is a playwright originally from Sonora, Texas. In 2022 he was the recipient of the Bela Kiralyfalvi Playwriting Award, the Hear Me Out Golden Ear Award, and an Honorable Mention in the William Faulkner Literary Competition. He was most recently a finalist for PEGASUS THEATRE the 2023 Judith Royer Award. His works have been featured with Phoenix Theatre Company, Capital Repertory Theatre, Orpheus Theatre Company, SceneShop, the Festival De La Bête Noire and other companies around the US and internationally. Recent publications include plays in the Silk Road Review, Apricity Magazine, the Ponder Review and with Smith & Kraus. Straton holds degrees in Theatre and Philosophy from the University of Texas at Arlington. In May, he received his MFA in Dramatic Writing at Arizona State University where he was recognized as an Outstanding Graduate for Excellence and Innovation in Creative Practice. By day, he works as the Sales & Marketing Director for Theatre Arlington. Straton is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild of America.

StratonThePlaywright.com

Production Inquiries: StratonRushing@gmail.com

GERMAINE SHAMES (*The Robotics of Love and Longing*) is a Kilroys List playwright and recipient of her state's Literary Fellowship in Fiction. She is author of the award-winning novels, Between Two Deserts and You, Fascinating You. Writing under the pen name Casper Silk (Hotel Noir, Echo Year), she has been compared to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Graham Greene and P.D. James "on steroids".

After covering the first Palestinian Uprising for two winters as a correspondent and witnessing firsthand the gamut of senseless tragedies behind the headlines, Shames realized that hard news could never convey an iota of the deeper story she was gleaning. She turned to fiction writing and learned that she can find light in the most horrific situations and leave readers (and now an audience) with hope.

Your donations are critical!

They allow us to continue to bring you the annual Living Black & White™ gala production of new comedy-murder-mysteries, featuring the inept but endearing detective Harry Hunsacker, as well as other new and original comedies in a professional setting, highlighting the talents of North Texas theatre artists.

In a well-run theatre, ticket prices typically generate about a third of the budget. Non-profit theaters are expected to show community support by getting another third from individual donors like you. The final third comes from corporations and foundations. All donations to Pegasus Theatre are deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Pegasus is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a charitable institution under section 501(c)(3) of the tax code.

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