

Melancholy Play was first produced at the Piven Theater Workshop, directed by Jessica Thebus, produced by Joyce Piven.

WAM
theatre

Melancholy Play

by Sarah Ruhl



**Portion of proceeds
to benefit Women's
Fund of Western MA**



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Thank you for choosing to leave your warm comfortable homes to see something new, something unknown. We welcome you to the WAM community, where we combine theatrical non-profit work with humanitarian causes, focusing on uplifting the lives of women and girls.

We took a leap when we founded WAM Theatre. Thanks to the plethora of people who are supporting our efforts, we are having a terrific first year! In April we produced 'A WAM Welcome' which resulted in a \$1000 donation to our first beneficiary, Women for Women International. We staged several fundraising efforts over the summer, including a sold-out TheatreSports Tournament and a successful online Kickstarter Campaign.

Now we are producing our first full-length play, 'Melancholy Play' by Sarah Ruhl, for our first local beneficiary, Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts. The donation from this event will be used as part of the Women's Fund granting initiatives, where women with dreams and aspirations can apply for the financial support necessary to help make those dreams a reality. WAM Theatre is thrilled to aid and inspire others to fulfill their potential. So think of this: our double philanthropic model means that by being here tonight you are both supporting the arts and supporting women and girls. A double positive. Or, put another way: 'a double WAM-my'!

We look forward to seeing you again you at our third event, the 'Oh Solo Mamma Mia' Festival, a collection of solo women's shows in the spring of 2011. We will stage this event in both Berkshire County, MA and the Capital Region of NY. We are delighted to announce that a portion of the proceeds from the festival will go towards training one (and if we are lucky, and you encourage all your friends to attend, two) Community Midwives at the Friends of Edna Hospital in Somaliland. The goal of the hospital is to train fully qualified health care professionals and to train and dispatch midwives throughout the country. The health of the people of Somaliland is among the worst in Africa, with one of the highest Maternal and Infant Mortality rates in the world.

We thank you for being part of the WAM Theatre community. We hope you enjoy the quirky, contemporary, melodramatic farce that is 'Melancholy Play'.



Leigh Strimbeck & Kristen van Ginhoven
Co-artistic Directors

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Illustration by Gayle Kabaker

THE women's Times

The award-winning publication for women in the Berkshires & Pioneer Valley

On behalf of the board of WAM Theatre, I want to welcome you to this, our second production and our first, full-length play. Sarah Ruhl's 'Melancholy Play' is a very deliberate choice by director Kristen van Ginhoven, as the work represents many aspects of what WAM Theatre stands for. The aesthetic of this play, the theatricality, is very much in tune with the principles both Kristen and co-artistic director Leigh Strimbeck stand for. That this is a play by a contemporary female playwright harmonizes with one of the goals of WAM Theatre, to provide professional opportunities for female theatre artists. The second part of WAM Theatre's mission is achieved by our commitment to donate a significant portion of our proceeds from this event to the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts.

This production brings to a close our inaugural season. There will be many more seasons to come, but there is only one first. This season has been an incredible journey, from inception of the company, through the official acceptance of our 501(c)(3) non-profit status, to this, our first major production. This journey wouldn't have been possible without the support and hard work of many people, and I want to take this opportunity to thank both the board and the advisory board of WAM Theatre.

When we started, the board comprised three people, Kristen, Leigh and myself. We were then delighted to welcome Brenny Rabine and Tammy Valincenti. In the New Year, we'll expand still further, with Ashley Berridge and Sharon Small joining the board. The current advisory board, comprising Abby von Schlegell, Kevin Craig West and Paul Rapp, provide us support, advice and direction. If you want to join WAM Theatre in any capacity, don't hesitate to talk to any of us. We always need more help.

This is just the first of many successful seasons for WAM Theatre. We look forward to you joining us for many more.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Webb', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Nick Webb
President of the Board

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CAST

Tilly	Betsy Holt
Lorenzo.....	Per Janson*
Frances.....	Karen Lee
Frank.....	Todd Quick
Julian	Erika Helen Smith
Joan.....	Leigh Strimbeck

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States, appearing under a Special Appearance Contract.

CREATIVE TEAM

Director	Kristen van Ginhoven
Production Stage Manager/Props	Emily Curro
Musical Director.....	Erika Helen Smith
Assistant Director & Choreographer.....	Jamuna Yvette Sirker
Fight Choreographer	David Bunce
Scenic Designer	Juliana Haubrich
Costume Designer.....	Yvonne Perry
Assistant Costume Designer	Elivia Bovenzi
Lighting Designer.....	Nick Webb
Sound Designers	Joe Jurchak
.....	Jan Jurchak
Playwright.....	Sarah Ruhl
Composer.....	Michael Roth
Marketing Associate	Kaitlyn Squires
Web Design and Graphics.....	Nick Webb

The length of the show is just under 2 hours including one 15 minute intermission.

WAM THEATRE'S MISSION STATEMENT

WAM Theatre is a theatre company based in the Berkshires of Massachusetts and the Capital Region of New York State. Inspired by the book 'Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide' by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, WAM Theatre was founded in 2009 by professional theatre artists Kristen van Ginhoven and Leigh Strimbeck. WAM's philanthropic mission is two-fold. First, producing theatrical events for everyone, with a focus on women theatre artists and/or stories of women and girls. Second, to donate a portion of the proceeds from those events to organizations that benefit women and girls.

THE CAST



BETSY HOLT is thrilled to play Tilly – a role she has dreamed of playing since she first read the play two years ago. She is a graduate of Ball State University in Acting and Musical Theatre and now calls NYC home. This summer, Betsy played Audrey in *Leading Ladies* with the Oldcastle Theatre Company in Bennington, Vermont. She would like to thank

Kristen and Leigh for this incredible opportunity and Brenny for her encouragement.



PER JANSON Theatre: *Chain of Fools* (Guthrie Theater); *Twelfth Night* and *A Christmas Carol* (Trinity Rep); *This Is My Office*, *Baz and Me*, and *Girls on the Clock* (Playwrights Rep); *Richard III* (Guerrilla Shakespeare Co.); *Wild Porcelain* (Workhorse Theatre), and *Line* (Perishable Theatre). Graduate theatre: *Uncle Vanya*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, *Hamlet*, *Mad Forest*, *A*

Doll's House, and *Blood Wedding*. Education: Grinnell College, Accademia dell'Arte, and Brown/Trinity Rep.



KAREN LEE began her professional career as a Broadway dancer/singer for 10 years touring on stages across the country and Europe before her move to the Berkshires where she has performed with Mixed Company, Shakespeare & Co, The Unicorn at BTF, The Mount, Chester Theater Company, Main Street Stage, The Red Herring, Castle Hill Theatre, Berkshire Fringe

Festival and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Karen has recorded six award winning radio plays for the BBC as well as commercials and film. She is also a dancer/choreographer/teacher and owner of two businesses in Lenox: Pilates Central & Karendipity. Ms Lee performs as hostess/MC for Gypsy Layne Burlesque.



TODD QUICK is thrilled to be working with WAM Theatre on this beautiful play. Regional credits include seasons with the Shakespeare Theatre Company in D.C., the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Shakespeare in the Valley and Pax Amicus Castle Theatre. Todd has also toured with Shakesperience Productions, The Theatre at Monmouth and Chamber Theatre Productions.

Todd has a B.A. in Theatre Performance from SUNY Geneseo. Thanks to Jae for making this all happen.



ERIKA HELEN SMITH is thrilled to be a part of MELANCHOLY PLAY! A graduate of NYU-Tisch, she has worked on TEMPEST TOSSED (Classic Stage Company), OUT OF TIME: A PUPPET SPECTACLE (St. Ann's Warehouse), THIS IS OUR YOUTH (Full Circle Theatre Company), and THE QUEEN (Notorious Films- Best of the Fest, Palm Springs Short Fest). Special thanks to

Chris Wendelken, Justin Smith, Laura Jean Deming, and especially, Jane Hollander. For more info: www.erikahelensmith.com



LEIGH STRIMBECK - Actor: favorite roles include Martha in Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf, Grusha in Caucasian Chalk Circle, & Petruchio in TAMING OF THE SHREW. Director: various regional theaters; CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD, ON THE VERGE, TONIGHT WE IMPROVISE, THE MYSTERY OF IRMA VEP, DEATH OF A SALESMAN and PRIVATE EYES. Co-writer and director of BERWICK, AMERICA

and THIS HOUSE BUILDED, both history plays commissioned by their communities. Creator and director of the devised theater pieces MIRROR, MIRROR and I'M NOT A FEMINIST, BUT.... about issues affecting young women today, created at Russell Sage College in Troy, NY. Co-Artistic Director, WAM Theatre; Professor Russell Sage College in Troy; Associate Member Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble. LeighStrimbeck.com

CREATIVE TEAM

KRISTEN VAN GINHOVEN, (Director) is a director, actor and educator. Selected credits: Barrington Stage Company, Huntington Theatre, Actor's Shakespeare Project, Cohoes Music Hall. She is currently adjunct faculty at Emerson College in Boston, MA and an international theatre artist for ISTA. Member of Canadian Actor's Equity Association. www.kristenvanginhoven.com

EMILY CURRO (Production Stage Manager/Props) is an actress, stage manager, and lover of all things theatre. Acting credits include seasons with Cohoes Music Hall, Park Playhouse, and a year at The Shanghai Repertory Theatre. She has stage managed for the New York State Theatre Institute, the N.Y.C Fringe Festival, and The Shanghai Repertory Theatre. She holds a dual B.S in Musical Theatre and English from Russell Sage College, and would like to thank her family and the B.N.B for being her rocks in life.

YVETTE "JAMUNA" SIRKER (Assistant Director/Choreographer) is an award winning playwright, as well as a producer, director, actress and choreographer. Her latest work, *Hell and High Water* won first prize in Multistages Theater Company's 2009 New Works Contest and premiered in the spring of 2010 to rave reviews at the Hudson Guild Theater (NYC). Professional affiliations include A.E.A., S.A.G, and Dramatist Guild Associate membership. She serves as adjunct faculty in the Division of Humanities at Berkshire Community College.

JULIANA HAUBRICH (Scenic Design) moved to the Berkshires almost 7 years ago, after retiring from a scenic design career in NYC. While there, she designed opera and theatre productions at The Juilliard School, national tours for The Acting Company, and various off-Broadway productions. Prior to NYC, Juliana designed in L.A. for theatre (Mark Taper Forum, Echo Theatre Company) and film/tv (Paramount Pictures, Focus Features). She has an MFA in Scenic Design from the California Institute of the Arts (Calarts) and is originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, where she received a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Michigan. She was also one of the founding members of the Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit.

YVONNE PERRY (Costume Design) Yvonne is a professional actress by trade. She focused on costume design as part of her studies for her BFA in Acting (Adelphi University) and her MA in Theatre History (UAlbany). She often has a heavy influence on costuming choices when she performs onstage regionally, or on camera, or when directing. This winter she will be directing *My First Time* at UAlbany, where she has been an adjunct in

the Theatre Dept. for 11 years. She has also taught and directed at Union College and Siena College. Go WAM Wimmins'

ELIVIA BOVENZI (Costume Design Assistant) an actress as well as a costume designer, holds a BS in Musical Theatre from Russell Sage College in Troy, NY. Most recently she has worked with The New York State Theatre Institute as a costume shop intern/dresser on their 2009-2010 season, and designed Peter Pan: The Musical for Russell Sage. She is excited to be working with all involved at WAM Theatre!

NICK WEBB (Lighting Design) This is Nick's second design for WAM Theatre, having worked on "A WAM Welcome" in April. Before moving to the US, Nick served as lighting designer for various theatre companies in the UK, where notable designs included Whelan's 'The Herbal Bed', Pinter's 'A Kind of Alaska' (SADATA Stagecraft award winner) and Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. In the last five years, Nick has designed a number of shows for theatres across the region, including several productions at SCP (Our Country's Good, Stage Door, Triangle Factory Fire), and SLOC's 'The Music Man', the first ever production at the GE Black Box Theatre at Proctors, in Schenectady, NY.

KAITLYN SQUIRES (Marketing Associate) is a photographer, freelance writer, and enjoys web and graphic design. She was born and raised in the Berkshires and is very passionate about giving back to the community through her creativity. Among her many projects she maintains a blog called EideticBerkshire.com which is focused on her experiences and the



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events in the Berkshires. Kaitlyn also enjoys fashion photography and has photographed designers such as INDASHIO, Stylish Blooms, and House of NikkiNicole.

JOE JURCHAK (Sound Design) has been designing sound for theatre and doing audio system installations since 1991. His work in regional theaters in this area includes *Suddenly Last Summer* and *Ciao!* at Barrington Stage; *The Swan*, *Wit*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep* and *Ten by Ten* at Stageworks, and *The Puppetmaster of Lodz* and *Private Eyes* at The Egg. Outside the Capital Region he has worked on such shows as *Baltimore Waltz*, *An Empty Plate* at the Grand Boeuf, *Hippolytus* and *Death of a Salesman*. Television sound design credits include *Voices of East Africa* and *Windows to a View*, produced for PBS and *Vriesland* produced for NPR. Joe has a long-standing collaboration with Leigh Strimbeck which includes their two sons, Jan and Griff.

JAN JURCHAK (Sound Design) has designed sound for such shows as "Waiting for Joe," "Mirror, Mirror," "Bon Appetit," (soundscape), and "I'm Not a Feminist, But..." As an actor, he has performed in "Maudville," (2 years running) and "Our Town." (with *Walking the Dog Theatre*.) He has been taking piano lessons with Uel Wade for 10 years, and saxophone for 5.

SARAH RUHL (Playwright) plays include *In The Next Room or the Vibrator Play* (Glickman Prize, finalist for Pulitzer Prize, 2010), *The Clean House* (Susan Smith Blackburn award, 2004, finalist for Pulitzer Prize, 2005), *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, (Helen Hayes award for best new play), *Demeter in the City* (nominated for 9 NAACP awards), *Eurydice*, *Melancholy Play*, *Orlando*, a new version of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, and *Passion Play* (Kennedy Center Fourth Forum Freedom Award). Her plays have premiered at the Lyceum Theater on Broadway, produced by Lincoln Center Theater; off-Broadway at Lincoln Center Theater, Playwrights' Horizons, and Second Stage; and regionally at Berkeley Repertory Theater, Yale Repertory Theater, the Goodman Theater, Cornerstone Theater, Arena Stage, Woolly Mammoth, Cincinnati Playhouse, and the Piven Theater Workshop in Chicago, as well being produced at many other theaters across the country. Her plays have also been performed in England, Poland, Germany, Israel, New Zealand, and Australia, and have been translated into Spanish, Polish, Russian, Korean and Arabic. Sarah received her M.F.A. from Brown University where she studied with Paula Vogel, and is originally from Chicago. In 2003, she was the recipient of a Helen Merrill award and a Whiting Writers' award, a PEN/Laura Pels award, and in 2006 was the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship. Her work is published by TCG and Sam French, and she is a member of New Dramatists and 13P. She lives in New York City with her family.

MICHAEL ROTH (Composer) is a California-based composer, musician, and sound designer whose work encompasses film, dance, opera, chamber music, and over 200 theatrical productions and premieres. Recent projects: the score for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival production of *The Tempest* with Christopher Plummer (also filmed for Bravo), the score for the new documentary *Jews and Baseball*, in theatres soon and on PBS in the spring, and music direction of Randy Newman's songs for the Disney animated feature *The Princess & The Frog*. Other credits included the premieres of *Margulies' Brooklyn Boy* (Broadway) and *Dinner With Friends* (off-Broadway), directed by Daniel Sullivan; *The Persians* (National Actor's Theatre, NY/Shakespeare Theatre, DC); Des McAnuff's productions of *Romeo & Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and *As You Like It* (Stratford); many productions as a resident composer at La Jolla Playhouse and South Coast Repertory including the premieres of *Mr. Marmalade*, *Wit*, *A Walk in the Woods* (also Broadway, PBS), and *Culture Clash's The Birds*; many additional collaborations with Randy Newman including editing five songbooks, orchestrating his *Faust*, and the upcoming *Harp & Angels*; and many collaborations with Mac Wellman (including *Allegory of Whiteness*, music/theatre, Humana Festival), Anne Bogart (*The Women*), Tom Stoppard (US premieres of *Indian Ink* and *Invention of Love*), and Sarah Ruhl (the LA premiere of *Melancholy Play*, for which this score was composed, further developed through productions in Fort Worth, Seattle, et al). He has worked with many singers, from Marni Nixon to Alicia Keyes, is collaborating on a new performance piece with Alice Ripley, and his opera *Their Thought & Back Again* is available via i-tunes and myspace.com/rothmusik

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James Farrell for introducing
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O SOLO MAMA MIA

A festival of shows written and performed by women
including:

PERFORMING THERAPY: this one-woman, group-therapy comedy about depression is a sideways safari through loss, displacement, dementia, depression and the surprise healing nature of upstate New York. Written by Camilla Schade and Kira Lallas, and performed by Camilla Schade.

MOTHER, MAY I?: part cabaret, part performance art, this memoir with music, tells the story of a life called to service, explores the experience of death, and sings the song of an extraordinary relationship with Mother. Written and performed by Sandra Bargman.

MY SALVATION HAS A NAME: A WIENERMOBILE JOURNEY:
Based on the true story of an insecure goody-goody who overcomes bullying and finds her true voice behind the windshield of the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile. Written and performed by Robin Gelfenbien.

The beneficiary will be Edna's Hospital in Somaliland. A portion of proceeds will go towards training at least one Community Midwife.

MORE TO COME!

Visit WAMTheatre.com for the latest news on
O Solo Mama Mia and our 2011 Season