

PRESENTS

THE NORMAL HEART

By Larry Kramer
Directed by Christopher Shaw

SCENIC DESIGN
Tom Buderwitz

COSTUME DESIGN
Emma Kremer

LIGHTING DESIGN
Josh Epstein

SOUND DESIGN
Stephen Jensen

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
MJ Adamson

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
Jessica Bryan

CAST OF CHARACTERS *(in order of appearance)*

Kona Brumsickle
Craig Donner

Matthew Jarzyna
Mickey Marcus

Brett Morachnick
Ned Weeks

Jared Pheffer
*David/Grady/
Examining Doctor*

Ariel Davis
Dr. Emma Brookner

Ben Larson
Bruce Niles

Christian Labertew
Felix Turner

Alex Nimrod
Ben Weeks

Johnny Marx
Tommy Boatwright

Nick Kassoy
Hiram Keebler

TIME 1981-1984

PLACE New York City

There will be one 10-minute intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Asst. Scenic Design Dominique Jakowec | Asst. Costume Designer Crystal Son | Asst. Lighting Designer Jace Smolansky
Asst. Technical Director Zoe McCracken | Costume Design Mentor Terry Gordon
Crew Bitu Aghaee, Max Allen, Keanu Gonzales, Luis Martinez Paz, Louise Pang, Grace Robinson, Lisa Toudic

WARNING

Please be advised that this production contains mature language and themes.

Original New York Production by New York Shakespeare Festival
Produced by Joseph Papp

The Normal Heart is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

October 7-10, 2021 | Scene Dock Theatre

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The words of the great Joseph Papp, 1985:

“...*The Normal Heart* is a play in the great tradition of Western drama. In taking a burning social issue and holding it up to public and private scrutiny so it reverberates with the social and personal implications of that issue, it reveals in its origins the theatre of Sophocles, Euripides, and Shakespeare. Yet at the heart of *The Normal Heart*, the element that gives this powerful political play its essence is love — love holding firm under fire, put to the ultimate test, facing and overcoming our greatest fear: death.”

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Christopher Shaw is an Assistant Professor of Theatre Practice in acting and directing at the USC School of Dramatic Arts. Christopher has worked professionally in theatre, film and television in NYC, Los Angeles, and numerous regional theatres throughout the United States. Work in Los Angeles as an actor includes originating the role of Tchaikovsky in the world premiere of Tommy Smith's *Fugue* with the award-winning Echo Theater Company and as a director: *Death and the Maiden* (USC MFA 2020), *Mad Forest* (USC BFA Senior Production 2019), *Passion Play* (USC BFA Senior Production 2017) and *Escape from Happiness* (USC BFA Senior Production 2016).

SPECIAL THANKS

Furthermore, our special thanks to Center Theatre Group.

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It is the author's express wish that an excerpt from W.H. Auden's poem "September 1, 1939" be included in all programs along with the following copyright acknowledgment of the poem:

Reprinted from *The English Auden*, edited by Edward Mendelson by permission of Random House, Inc. The specific excerpt can be found in the published acting edition from Samuel French, Inc.

The windiest militant trash
Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love
But to be loved alone.

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

Portion of *September 1, 1939*
Copyright © 1940
by W. H. AUDEN

AFTERWORD *A copy of this letter was given to every member of the audience as they left the theatre.*

PLEASE KNOW

Thank you for coming to see our play.

Please know that everything in *The Normal Heart* happened. These were and are real people who lived and spoke and died, and are presented here as best I could. Several more have died since, including Bruce, whose name was Paul Popham, and Tommy, whose name was Rodger McFarlane and who became my best friend, and Emma, whose name was Dr. Linda Laubenstein of New York University Medical Center. She died after a return bout of polio and another trip to an iron lung. Rodger, after building three gay/AIDS agencies from the ground up, committed suicide in despair. On his deathbed at Memorial, Paul called me (we'd not spoken since our last fight in this play) and told me to never stop fighting.

Four members of the original cast died as well, including my dear sweet friend Brad Davis, the original Ned, whom I knew from practically the moment he got off the bus from Florida, a shy kid intent on becoming a fine actor, which he did.

Please know that AIDS is a worldwide plague.

Please know that no country in the world, including this one, especially this one, has ever called it a plague, or dealt with it as a plague.

Please know that there is no cure.

Please know that after all this time the amount of money being spent to find a cure is still miniscule, still almost invisible, still impossible to locate in any national health budget, and still totally uncoordinated.

Please know that here in America case numbers continue to rise in every category. In much of the rest of the world, like Russia, India, Southeast Asia, and in Africa, the numbers of the infected and the dying are so grotesquely high they are rarely acknowledged.

Please know that all efforts at prevention and educations continue their unending record of abject failure.

Please know that there is no one in charge of this plague. This is a war for which there is no general and for which there has never been a general. How can you win a war with no one in charge?

Please know that beginning with Ronald Reagan (who would not say the word AIDS

publicly for seven years), every single president has said nothing and done nothing, or in the case of the current president, says the right things and then doesn't do them.

Please know that most medications for HIV/AIDS are inhumanly expensive and that government funding for the poor to obtain them is dwindling and often unavailable.

Please know that pharmaceutical companies are among the most evil and greedy nightmares ever loosed on humankind. What research they embark upon is calculated only toward finding newer drugs to keep us, just barely, from dying, but not to make us better or, god forbid, cured.

Please know that an awful lot of people have needlessly died and will continue to needlessly die because of any and all of the above.

Please know that as I write this the world has suffered at the very least some 75 million infections and 35 million deaths. When the action of the play that you have just seen begins, there were 41.

I have never seen such wrongs as this plague, in all its guises, represents, and continues to say about us all.

—Larry Kramer July 2011