59 59

dog & pony dc presents

BEERTOWN

DEVISED BY
DOG & PONY DC

DIRECTED BY
RACHEL GROSSMAN

JANUARY 29 - FEBRUARY 16, 2014

E:BILL THEATER C



dog & pony dc presents

Beertown

Devised by dog & pony dc
Directed by Rachel Grossman







Cast

Mayor Megan Soch
Wyckham Avery

MJ Soch
Rachel Grossman

Rep. Lawrence Pickel-Cooper
Max Freedman

Joann Ryals
Elaine Yuko Qualter

Edwin McFarlan
J. Argyl Plath

Arthur Whiting
Colin Hovde

David Guy
Jon Reynolds

Karine Oppenheim
Yasmin Tuazon

Creative Team

Touring Co-Director: Shannon Davies Mancus

Devising Ensemble: Wyckham Avery, Colin K. Bills, Joshua Drew, Cory Ryan Frank, Max Freedman, Jess Holman, Rachel Grossman, Kate Langsdorf, Jessica Lefkow, Mitch Mattson, Elaine Yuko Qualter, J. Argyl Plath, Lorraine Resseger-Slone, Jon Reynolds, Ivania Stack, Elizabeth Stone, Matthew R. Wilson

Production Designers: Colin K. Bills, Ivania Stack

Lighting Designer: Zachary A. Dalton

Music & Lyrics Arranged by: Wyckham Avery, Mitch Mattson, Kate Langsdorf, J. Argyl Plath, Jon Reynolds

Production Management by: Melanie Harker with Ellys Abrams & Adelaide Waldrop

Graphic Artist: Kate Ahern Loveric

The running time of ***Beertown*** is 2 hours and 15 minutes with a short recess

Important Dates in Beertown's History:

1839
Rhys Bramblethorpe born (Holyhead, Wales); Aloysius P. Thompson born (New York)

Early 1860s
Bramblethorpe and Thompson meet at McSorley's Old Ale House in Manhattan

1894
Bramblethorpe's house is robbed, and a chambermaid accidentally killed

1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900

1864
Bramblethorpe and Thompson select land along the Thakawaki River as the spot for their new venture – The B&T Brewery

1868
The B&T Brewery brews its first batch

1878
As the brewery prospers, the land and its nearby settlement are incorporated as 'Beertown'

1897
Suffra
a sma

Who We Are

Ring Leaders

Rachel Grossman, Jon Reynolds, Lorraine Ressegger-Slone

Conspirators

Ellys Abrams, Wyckham Avery, Colin K. Bills, Melanie Harker, Jessica Lefkow, J. Argyl Plath, Elaine Yuko Qualter, Rebecca Sheir, Ivania Stack

Board of Directors

Jeffrey Gee (chair), Wyckham Avery, Rachel Grossman, Jeffrey Herrmann, Jason Loewith, J. Argyl Plath, Elissa Preheim, Lorraine Ressegger-Slone, Jon Reynolds

Who Helps Make It Happen

Beertown Takes Manhattan Sponsors

Lisa Carr, Melissa Galletto and Justin Wiley, Pete Miller and Sara Cormeny, Tim Plant and Bob Yule, Penelope Winkler and Ross Waldrop, Jonathan Zucker

Programming Support

Dave and Beryl Bills, The Max & Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; Weissberg Foundation, DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities, The Humanities Council of Washington, DC, Capitol Hill Community Foundation, Victor Shargai (Toast developmental sponsor), and the numerous amazing individuals who understand we are saving paper by not listing them here but rather online dogandponydc.com/supporters

Special Thanks

Peter Tear, Jackie LaVanway, Ginger Dzerk, Jim Sparnon, Karen Greco and the entire 59E59 Theaters team, Jordan Beck, Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, Chef Bill, CulturalDC, Sean Paul Ellis, Stacy Hayashi, Brianna Lux, Peter Marks, Jared Mezzochi, Pete Miller, Aaron Mosby, Mike and Mayumi Qualter, Neila Radin and Norman Abrams, Ryan Rumery, August Schulenberg, Teresa and everyone at McSorley's Old Ale House, Matt Winterhalter, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

Stay Connected

Email us:
info@dogandponydc.com

Follow on:
Twitter.com/dogandponydc

Friend on:
Facebook.com/dandpdc

Log on:
dogandponydc.com

Explore on:
VisitBeertown.com or **Storify.com/dogandponydc** or **ToastLabNotebook.com**

1901
Thompson commits suicide the morning it is discovered his son tried to murder Bramblethorpe

1908
The Thakiwaki River floods, causing extensive damage

1910

1914
The first planned Quinquennial Time Capsule Day Celebration

1919
18th Amendment passes, making the distribution, manufacture, and sale of alcohol illegal

1920

1930

1932
Future U.S. Congressman Fred Soch born (Beertown)

1933
Bramblethorpe dies, only hours after Prohibition is officially repealed with the ratification of the 21st Amendment (New Beers Day)

1940

1948
Leonard Fishman incorporates th
as The Bugle, establishing it as t

1950

1960

1963
Thom
its firs

gist and community leader Ada Dot (nee Fassbinder) Beckner born (Beertown);
llpox outbreak kills over 65% of the remaining Thakiwaki people and Bramblethrope's daughter

A Short History of Beertown

The Story Behind the Quinquennial:

Beertown's Time Capsule was originally part of the opening celebration of ***Beertown***'s newly built City Hall in 1894, to be unearthed 100 years later. Included was Aloysius P. Thompson's revolver, which he claimed he brought with him from New York. By 1900, it was suspected that the late Richard Thompson (Aloysius' son) used the gun in the 1894 murder of Rhys Bramblethorpe's chambermaid. The Time Capsule was unearthed and the gun fingerprinted in 1901; that same morning, Aloysius drowned himself in the Thakawaki River and fingerprinting confirmed Richard's guilt. In 1904, Aloysius' suicide note replaced the gun in the capsule, which was then re-interred, as a reminder that history should occasionally be reexamined, in order to better understand the truth. With the flood of 1908, the time capsule was again unearthed and repaired for water damage. Beertonians agreed the capsule's contents should be re-examined every five years, in order to preserve the most accurate and complete spirit of ***Beertown***. 1914 marked the first official Quinquennial celebration; 2014 marks the twentieth.

How We Did It (and Other Information)

The Origins of Beertown...

In the summer of 2010, we were wrapping up two projects: ***Courage***, a 'NASCAR-punk, political theatre revival' adaptation of Brecht's ***Mother Courage*** and ***Separated at Birth***, a clown show exploring missed connections in public-transportation stations. Rachel (directing ***Courage*** and performing in ***SAB***) and Wyckham (performing in ***Courage*** and directing ***SAB***) frequently found themselves in conversation about the formation, preservation, and deterioration of communities.

Around that same time, the company decided our next production should be creating through a consensus-based process. Topic and approach seemed perfectly in sync.

So in October 2010, an ensemble of 14 artists embarked on a devising journey starting with two books--***Winesburg, OH*** by Sherwood Anderson and ***Everything is Illuminated*** by Jonathan Safran Foer–and the question 'What does it mean to be American?' 16-months later, we premiered ***Beertown***, having added three more artists to our community and expanded our sources of inspiration to include episodes of NPR's ***Radiolab*** and ***This American Life***, Studs Terkel interviews, WPA projects, ***Our Town***, census data,and maps. Lots and lots of maps.

Did you have any ideas when you started about what the end product would look like?

Rachel had a vision of performers and audience sitting together, eating popcorn and watching a montage of home movies. Don't think that survived past month two.

Continues on next page...



town historic photos provided by Sam and Jean Grossman. Production photos by C. Stanley Photography and Clinton Brandhagen.

Where did the idea for the time capsule come from?

For a few months, the ensemble worked in two groups: 'character group' and 'narrative group.' The narrative group developed a primary story (what we refer to as the 'framework') around a town hall meeting in which the citizenry must decide if they are going to be annexed into the neighboring town, losing fiscal management and their town name–the vessel of their identity. When the framework was presented to the ensemble, questions flew: How would we navigate this? How could we possibly build the audience's investment enough? Would decisions end up just being uninformed gut reactions?

It was determined that we needed to lower the stakes; still create a point of focus to 'care' about but one that was less complicated. Then someone mentioned the time capsule episode of ***Parks and Recreation***. And someone else suggested we make it absurd; like, they take the time capsule out every five years and vote on the contents. The rest is, literally, ***Beertown*** history.

Wait: is Beertown a real place? Can I go visit?

Beertown is not a real town. When we created the town and its history, we plotted out pivotal moments in American history over the past 150 years and then developed the back-story of this small town and its inhabitants. The Thakawaki are a real native indigenous tribe; Kawanii of the Thakawaki is not. Events like New Beers Day are 100% real; though they seem made up. And, of course, McSorley's Ale House is a New York institution, but two brewers named Bramblethorpe and Thompson never existed.

The website **VisitBeertown.com** became a repository for all the history we created that never fit into ***Beertown***. It came out of our desire to surround the show with a 'rich dramaturgical environment.' All the people, businesses, and events were created based on research of small towns.

What is the balance of script to improv for Beertown?

Beertown is about 55-60% scripted. The script is 43 pages long and 'act two' consists of nine pages. (Half of which is the antecedent 'Thesis Statement.') Led by our 'audience integration' principle, we want to provide the audience with agency and space to world-build and story-build ***Beertown*** with us. As a result, we can only script or plan ahead so much or it becomes disingenuous. Improv shows are traditionally created in front of an audience but not in partnership with them. d&pdc walks this fine line between scripted and improvised, and spends considerable time working on how to use the scripted parts to engage the audience in improv-scripting ***Beertown*** at every performance.

How complex is that?

Uh, look at **VisitBeertown.com**. It's crazy detailed and ungainly. When we built the show, we hadn't considered a life for it past 2011. The history and timeline was shaped around the quinquennial occurring every five years, starting in 1911 and occurring on the '1s and 6s.' We've had to alter history every calendar year since then, so the quinquennial occurred on the '2s and 7s' and the '3s and 8s,' and now occurs on the '4s and 9s.' When we hit 2016, should ***Beertown*** still be active, the quinquennial will advance from the 20th to the 21st. It is vital to the success of the show, the ability to integrate audiences into ***Beertown***, that it always take place in the present. It's that first gesture of authenticity that starts their on-boarding to become Beertonians.

Do you have plants in the audience?

Nope. But it always seems to be the complete strangers accused of being shills, not spouses or friends of the family.

What happens if no one speaks during the debate?

No clue–that's never happened before. (Knock wood!) Sometimes hands fly up immediately and we are off running. Sometimes the hands come up one at a time, with contemplative silences between them. But there is always that tipping point when suddenly many people have something to say. The show is intricately crafted in order to prepare as many people as possible to be ready to participate fully–from the potluck, to saying the Pledge of Allegiance, to the newspaper interview antecedents.

What happens if audience members make up new stories about Beertown? Do you ever keep them as permanent parts of the show?

Sometimes. Each performance is it's own ***Beertown***, it's own unique community. We seek to world-build that community each night with the specific audience that's there. But just as much as we fill in Beertown history as needed, so does the audience. More importantly, every show we learn from the audience new or nuanced ways of arguing for or against the artifacts. Similar points are raised show to show, but there's always something special that comes out.

How much has Beertown changed from its first inception? Will the show ever be 'done?'

Beertown's catch phrase is 'creating community and revising its history, nightly.' It would seem disingenuous if this was not 100% true. The show performed at 59E59 has material that hasn't changed since we workshopped the show in June 2011. It also has significant language re-crafting. We are rigorous in our craft and strive to have our work reflect our growing understanding of the artform and the world.

NEXT IN THEATER C — FEB 20 - MAR 9



GOOD EGG PRESENTS

GIDION'S KNOT

BY **JOHNNA ADAMS** DIRECTED BY **AUSTIN PENDLETON** WITH **KAREN LEINER*** AND **DARA O'BRIEN***

Over the course of a parent/teacher conference, an emotionally overwhelmed primary school teacher and an anguished mother have a fraught conversation about her troubled son, Gidion. He may have been bullied severely–or he may have been an abuser. As Gidion's story is slowly uncovered, the two women struggle against each other to reconstruct a satisfying explanation for Gidion's actions and come to terms with excruciating feelings of culpability.

$18 (59E59 MEMBERS **$12.60**) TUE, WED, THU 7:30, FRI & SAT 8:30, SUN 3:30

*Member of Actors' Equity Association.
Gidion's Knot is an Equity Approved Showcase

BUY TICKETS: IN PERSON 59E59 THEATERS BOX OFFICE 59 EAST 59TH STREET (PARK/MADISON)
BY PHONE 212-279-4200 **ONLINE** WWW.59E59.ORG

59 E:BAR 59

MEET YOUR FRIENDS AND THE CASTS OF OUR SHOWS AT
THE BEST THEATER BAR IN TOWN!



SPECIALTY COCKTAILS CHAMPAGNES AND WINES
SINGLE MALT SCOTCHES ALL GREAT PRICES!

$3 OFF EVERY DRINK FOR 59E59 MEMBERS!

RATED NO.1 THEATER BAR IN NEW YORK! TIME OUT NEW YORK TOP TEN 2009!
Time Out New York

59E59 THEATER STAFF

ELYSABETH KLEINHANS President and Artistic Director
PETER TEAR Executive Producer
BRIAN BEIRNE Managing Director
JAMES SPARNON Production/Facility Manager
GINGER DZERK Director of Ticketing Services
KENNY NUNEZ House Manager
GINA YETNER Office Manager/Accounting Associate
SPONDEE House Guy
CHRISTINE HUERTAS Theater Technician
SARAH ARNOLD Theater Technician
KAREN GRECO Press Representative
JACKIE LaVANWAY Associate Producer/Marketing
BARBARA IAMS KOREIN Archivist
JOHN ROTONDO Membership Coordinator
GEORGINA RICHARDSON Box Office Manager
PETER CARRIER Box Office Supervisor
LEAH GABRIEL Box Office Supervisor
MAYKEL C. FARRONAY Box Office Associate
BRIAN J. HECK Box Office Associate
GREGORY ISAAC Box Office Associate
STEVEN SPERA Box Office Associate
JOEL STIGLIANO Box Office Associate
ALBERTO ROSARIO E:BAR Manager
MOLLY GROOME E:BAR Staff
EVELYN JEREZ E:BAR Staff
ALICE JOHNSON E:BAR Staff
WILFREDO FELIZ Assistant House Manager
QUENTIAN DIEGO Front of House Assistant
LUIS GUZMAN Front of House Assistant
COLLIN McCONNELL Front of House Assistant
DEMI AGAPITOS Usher
CHRISTIAN ARIAS Usher
ANDY BAUTISTA Usher
ABRAHAM FERNANDEZ Usher
KIMBERLY FLORES Usher
AMANDA FURFARO Usher
CHRISTIAN JAIME Usher
ERIK DE JESUS Usher
RUDDY DE JESUS Usher
CHASTITY JIMENEZ Usher
JOHN KARCHER Usher
JASMINE LEWIS Usher
EMILY MALDONADO Usher
KATHYA MARTINEZ Usher
GENESIS NERY Usher
IASIS TEJADA Usher
HANDRIEL TORRES Usher
CANDY VAZQUEZ Receptionist
JUNIOR GOMEZ Facilities Supervisor
JASON HOPKINSON Facilities
TYRONE SAPP Facilities

LOVE THEATER? LOVE NEW YORK?
IF YOU DO ONE THING THIS YEAR
BECOME A MEMBER OF
59E59 THEATERS
NO.1 OFF BROADWAY!
JOIN THE BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO OFF-BROADWAY SINCE OFF-BROADWAY!

OUR 2000 MEMBERS RECEIVE:
30% OFF THE FULL TICKET PRICE
FOR ALL 59E59 SHOWS (UP TO SIX TICKETS PER SHOW)
30% OFF ALL PRIMARY STAGES SHOWS
(UP TO FOUR TICKETS PER SHOW)
15% DISCOUNT AT SELECT LOCAL RESTAURANTS
$3 DISCOUNT ON ALL DRINKS AT THE E:BAR
NO-FEE TICKET ORDERING BY PHONE
TICKET EXCHANGE UP TO 3 HOURS
PRIOR TO PERFORMANCE (SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY)

BECOME A 59E59 MEMBER TODAY
FOR ONLY
$59.59
TO JOIN CALL
212-753-5959 x104
OR VISIT
WWW.59E59.ORG

This presentation is not a production of the Elysabeth Kleinhans Theatrical Foundation, Inc. which offers its facilities, when available, for productions by not-for-profit theater companies. For further information regarding licensing this theater or other theaters in this Theater Building, contact Peter Tear, Executive Producer. The use of cameras and other recording devices in this Theater is prohibited by law. There is no smoking in this Theater or any part of the Theater Building.