



SHIRA HELENA GITLIN

directing
portfolio

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Indecent

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Videos, photos, reviews, and information about other shows can be found at

www.shirahelenagitlin.com

f the 80s

A killer disease is creating a new class of lepers. LEE RUDAKIEWYCH reports from New York.



THE NORMAL HEART

ARE CANCER SEEN
IN 41 HOMOSEXUAL

Aids toll likely to
double this year

Outbreak Occurs Among Men
in New York and California

A number of people in
are known to be in-
with the deadly Aids
uld double this year.
test June issue of the
logical News Bulletin
to 40 new cases
d to be discovered
end of the year.
f be a phenome-
n-on-year total
doubles the

AIDS SCREEN

ard foreign prostitut
h Aids sent home

AIDS (foreign-
been sent home
positive foreign
Sciences (AIDS
This (AIDS
side-infected foreign
repeatedly

California Butchery
NEW YORK
NATIVE



The Normal Heart

By Larry Kramer
New Repertory Theatre
June 2023

Creative/Production Team:

Director	Shira Helena Gitlin
Producer	Michael Hisamoto
Stage Manager	Renee E. Yancey
ASM	Athéna-Gwendolyn Baptiste
Lighting Design	Michael Clark Wonson
Set Design	Melody Hsu
Costume Design	Sandra Zhihan Jia
Dramaturg	Marina Sartori
Sound Design	Mackenzie Adamick
Prop Design	Michael Hisamoto
Production Photos	Nile Scott Studios

Cast List

Ned Weeks	Dylan Wack
Felix Turner	Chingwe Pdraig Sullivan
Ben Weeks	Luis Negrón*
Mickey Marcus	Will McGarrahan*
Bruce Niles	Brian Demar Jones*
Dr. Emma Brookner	Cailin Doran*
Various/Ensemble	Zach Kelley
Various/Ensemble	Ken Yotsukura



Production
Images



Production
Images



Production
Images

“When I first came out as queer and transgender almost 10 years ago, I was completely unaware of the incredibly rich culture and history that exists within the LGBTQ+ community. As I got older, I found myself craving stories from the past. I read and watched everything I could get my hands on, but I realized just how many voices were missing. Where are our elders? Why hadn’t I learned about gay history in school? As I read more and more about the AIDS crisis, it felt like someone pulled a rug from under me. Since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic more than 700,000 people have died of AIDS in the United States alone, and I had no idea. In examining our past, I quickly learned that the fight towards queer liberation has always been one step forward and two steps back.

In the 40 years since Larry Kramer wrote *The Normal Heart*, the LGBTQ+ community has gone through many highs and lows. We won rights that did not exist for gay people in 1984. We are now covered under certain discrimination measures, we can get married, and we have more representation both on screen and off than ever before. Yet, we also face vicious political attacks that utilize the exact same rhetoric used in the 1980’s. Transgender Americans in particular seem to have a target on their back, with over 558 anti-trans pieces of legislation introduced this year alone. It is clear that a loud minority feels that LGBTQ+ people should not have autonomy over their bodies and lives. Even in the community itself, there is constant debate over what should be done to address this hate. For many young queer people, it feels like we are facing an insurmountable battle.

Continued.....

In *The Normal Heart*, we see this same battle play out during the AIDS crisis. Fear, ignorance, and homophobia directly caused the deaths of thousands of members of the LGBTQ+ community. Refusal and failure of the American government and healthcare systems to address the crisis left the queer community to fend for itself, and in doing so, rifts formed. People who wanted to assimilate versus those who wanted to stand out. People who saw being gay as an important and proud part of their identity versus those who firmly believed that their preferences should be private. This is what is so overwhelming about queer liberation—the pieces don't always fit together nicely. If there is one thing to be learned from this era, it is that we are stronger together. Especially now, when there are more allies than ever before. We all have a part to play, whether that is community care, activism, or just sharing our history so that we do not forget what we have been through.

Recently, I spoke with a young queer person who couldn't remember a time before marriage equality. This person felt overwhelmed and hopeless, but I reminded them that we have been fighting the battle towards queer liberation for hundreds of years, and we aren't going to stop now. The way forward is to learn our history, know our stories, and never stop telling them loudly. That is why we continue to put on *The Normal Heart*, 40 years later. In the foreword to the play, Larry says, "Learn from it and carry on the fight. Let them know that we are a very special people, an exceptional people. And that our day will come." Our day is coming, but only if we fight for it."

—Shira Helena Gitlin, June 21st, 2023

When I was hired to direct *The Normal Heart* I had just finished reading *And The Band Played On*, which was a fantastic entry way into this show. As I did my research, I focused on the AIDS epidemic then and now, Larry Kramer, The Gay Men's Health Crisis, ACT UP, and much more. I found the podcast [Making Gay History](#) particularly helpful in my research. I was assisted by Marina Sartori, who pulled dramaturgy together for the production. You can find more dramaturgy [here](#).

The Normal Heart : The Real People Behind the Characters in the Play
prepared by Marina Sartori . May 2023

"Ned Weeks" : Larry Kramer (1935-2020); he was a film producer, writer, playwright and an AIDS activist; he helped to found Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) (1981), and AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) (1987); he was diagnosed with HIV in 1988

Larry Kramer



Larry Kramer with Molly, his Wheaten Terrier, New York



Episode Notes

An Edited Timeline of HIV and AIDS 1981-1986

prepared by Marina Sartori . April 2023

sourced and quoted from: <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/history/hiv-and-aids-timeline/#year-1981>

1981

June 5: The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) publishes an article in its *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*: Pneumocystis Pneumonia—Los Angeles. The article describes cases of a rare lung infection, *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP), in five young, previously healthy gay men in Los Angeles. Los Angeles immunologist Dr. Michael Gottlieb, CDC's Dr. Weiss Shanderson, and their colleagues report that all the men have other unusual

THE AIDS MEMORIAL @theaidsmemorial · 19h
On July 3, 1981, on PAGE 20 of The NY Times, an article appears with the headline: "RARE CANCER SEEN IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS."

It took until May 25, 1983, before AIDS appeared on the FRONT PAGE and not until 1,450 cases had been reported!
#whatismemberedlives

RARE CANCER SEEN IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS

Outbreak Occurs Among Men
in New York and California
—8 Died Inside 2 Years

By LAWRENCE K. ALTMAN

Doctors in New York and California have diagnosed among homosexual men 41 cases of a rare and often rapidly fatal form of cancer. Eight of the victims died less than 24 months after the diagnosis was made.

The cause of the outbreak is unknown, and there is as yet no evidence of contagion. But the doctors who have made the diagnoses, mostly in New York City and



Character	Description	Impressions	Descriptors	Colors		
Ned Weeks	Male or Transgender or Gender Nonconforming. 30s. Jewish. Vocal writer and confrontational activist for gay rights, he is fed up with the lack of action from the city regarding the yet-unknown AIDS epidemic. Hot-tempered and adamant, he feels deeply lonely in his mission to raise awareness about the issue. He's always speaking his mind, which makes him unpopular both among the city officials and his community.	Ned has so much WANT!! He sees the world in contrast colors and has always been precocious and not taken seriously. Interested in casting a bit younger than LK himself... Ned reminds me of a lot of young activists who burn bright hard and quick but have no patience for the time change takes.	Passionate, intellectual, Born the wrong age, haughty, sometimes flighty, loves so deeply it hurts, chaotic	Saffron Hex #F4C430 RGB 244, 196, 48 CMYK 0, 20, 80, 4	Flax Hex #EEDC82 RGB 238, 220, 130 CMYK 0, 8, 45, 7	Dijon Hex #C49102 RGB 196, 145, 2 CMYK 0, 26, 99, 23
Felix Turner	Male or Transgender or Gender Nonconforming. 30s. Ned's partner. Editor for the New York Times, he writes about fashion and culture. Coming from a modest background, he is proud of making it in NYC, and will not risk his position by coming out and writing about the epidemic. He was once married to a woman and has a son who he cannot see.	Buttoned up but sensitive - what does it mean to live one life and then leave everything behind? Very Claud from the Hair movie...such a shift from the beginning of the play to the end. Such a lovely character for such a devastating end.	Inquisitive, hungry, non-newtonian, smart, a bit self-suffering	Indigo Hex #4B0082 RGB 75, 0, 130 CMYK 42, 100, 0, 49	Palatinate Hex #72246C RGB 114, 36, 108 CMYK 0, 68, 5, 55	Pansy Purple Hex #78184A RGB 120, 24, 74 CMYK 0, 80, 38, 53
Bruce Niles	Male, 30s. Former green beret. Reluctant to describe himself as an activist, he is nevertheless one of the more determined members of Ned's organization. His approach to gaining the attention of the public is gentler and more cautious in his hesitation to include other social groups in their fight. He's skeptical of Ned's methods which causes tensions between them.	So funny what brings people together as friends - it's clear that Bruce and Ned are friends out of coincidence/convenience since they are in the same group, but then there are moments when it seems as though they really know each other or trust each other. Is it just because they are gay or is it something more?	Upright, afraid, powerful, imposing, fierce, scared, meticulous	Deep Brown Hex #410200 RGB 65, 2, 0 CMYK 0, 97, 100, 75	Deep Taupe Hex #7B6660 RGB 123, 102, 96 CMYK 0, 17, 22, 52	Dark Khaki Hex #9B8F55 RGB 155, 143, 85 CMYK 0, 8, 45, 39
Ben Weeks	Male, 40s-50s. Ned's older brother, a lawyer. An authority to Ned until he refuses to associate his firm with the gay community. Serious and unapologetic, he is dismissive of Ned's urgent calls to action. Believes himself to be looking past the prejudice and homophobia but is skeptical of sexual freedom.	The age difference between Ben and Ned feels almost father - son. Assholery seems to run in the family - both brothers are living in their own worlds and feel affronted when they are called out about it. Ben's office is a little home in itself, which feels correct for an attorney of the caliber	distant, reticent, one toe in, cares but doesn't realize he cares	Yale blue Hex #00356B RGB 0, 53, 107 CMYK 100, 50, 0, 58	Everton Blue Hex #003399 RGB 0, 51, 153 CMYK 100, 67, 0, 40	Aegean Blue Hex #4E6E81 RGB 78, 110, 129 CMYK 40, 15, 0, 49

When I prepare for a show, I create a character breakdown for myself based on textual analysis, initial reactions, energy, colors, thoughts, feelings, historical descriptions (ie. for an established show, how has a character been described by other directors in casting breakdowns). I use this primarily during auditions, but often bring it back for my own use when having character based conversations with actors. I also share this with designers so they can get a feel for my approach to each character.

The Normal Heart

New Repertory Theatre

Directed by Shira Helena Gitlin

In my concept slide show, I was very focused on aesthetics, vibes, and tone. In the following pages, you will see polaroids and double exposure photography, which connect to the feelings of nostalgia, déjà vu, queer temporality, and the cyclical nature of queer liberation I was interested in exploring through this production.

You will also see some images of fashion and style from the late 80's. I initially interested in playing with contrast and color aesthetically, but this vision shifted as the costume and set designs were solidified.

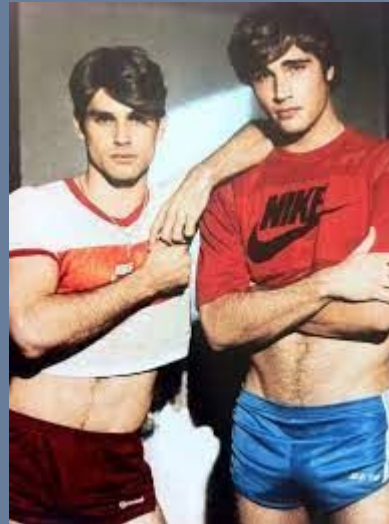
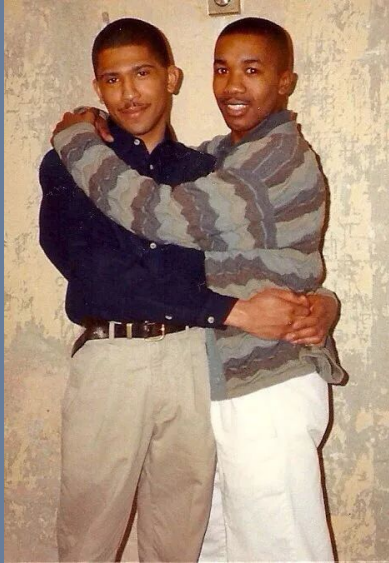
Lastly, I created a word cloud of different thoughts that came to me during pre-production to help spark a larger conversation around the project.





Photos by Ken Yotsukura (not edited, do not share)





queer
present
memory
past
love
community
temporality
grief
future
time
tool
joy
feeling
remembering
looking
diversity
experience
devastation
forward
infighting
liberation
abstract
anger
stuck
histories
generational
differences
back
oppression
look



This photo was taken during our first rehearsal. I was inspired by old polaroid images from the AIDS era, so I brought my camera in to take a few photos. This polaroid lives in my scrapbook now!



These photos were taken by a photographer for The Boston Globe. The top one is me taking notes (exciting!) and the bottom one is our Ned and Emma rehearsing their first scene together.

Rehearsal Images

Run	Pgs	Location	Scene	#	Ned Weeks	Ben Weeks	Bruce	Felix	Mickey	Tommy/David/O
2	13	Emma's Office Waiting Room	Waiting	1a	Ned Weeks				Mickey	David
4	15	In Emma's Office	What's Happening?	1b	Ned Weeks					
2	19	In Emma's Office	Craig	1c	Ned Weeks		Bruce		Mickey	
2	21	Felix's desk at the NY Times	NY Times	2	Ned Weeks			Felix		
2	23	Ben's Law Office	The House	3	Ned Weeks	Ben Weeks				
4	27	Ned's apartment	A First Date	4	Ned Weeks			Felix		
3	33	Ned's apartment	Activists	5a	Ned Weeks		Bruce		Mickey	Tommy
4	40	Ned's apartment	Boyfriend	5b	Ned Weeks		Bruce	Felix	Mickey	Tommy
3	43	Ben's Law Office	Model House	6	Ned Weeks	Ben Weeks				
2	48	Ned's apartment	Domestic Life	7	Ned Weeks			Felix		
			Intermission							
2	53	Emma's Apartment	Brunch	8	Ned Weeks					
2	57	Basement of City Hall	City Hall	9a	Ned Weeks		Bruce		Mickey	Tommy
2	61 ?	Basement of City Hall	Hiram	9b	Ned Weeks		Bruce		Mickey	Tommy
2	64 ?	In Emma's Office	Diagnosis	10				Felix		
2	68	Small, crowded office	Phone Bank	11a			Bruce		Mickey	Tommy
2	72	Small, crowded office	Getting Worse	11b	Ned Weeks		Bruce		Mickey	Tommy
2	76	Small, crowded office	Albert	11c	Ned Weeks		Bruce			
4	79	Empty stage? TBD	Pitch	12						
2	82	New, open office	New Office	13	Ned Weeks		Bruce			
4	87	Ned's apartment	Groceries	14	Ned Weeks			Felix		

I always make my own scene breakdown (complete with color coding) and keep it separate from stage management. I use it to make my own notes and keep track of what we have and have not covered. I also use it for scheduling and intimacy purposes. It also helps me plan out table work. For example, during this process I led a relationship discussion with Ben and Ned after having them read through all of their scenes in order. After we had an understanding of trajectory of their relationship, we were able to start initial blocking. I ran through this same process with Ned and Felix.

Name	Pg	Note
a	general	noise backstage
a	general	fast - new york pace
a	general	stakes and tension up up up
b	19	watch ken's head when you put him down!!!
b	33	feel the discomfort around ned more, you have clashed before. particularly in the craig moment
b	36	you can direct "who is he" to mickey instead of ned
b	71	bigger breath before "aren't you supposed to be in rio"
b	77	agree with you about upstaging yourself - lets look at this
b	78	you can be slower on the exit during this transition
b	84	this section is typically amped way up, with much more bite - assume this is because you didn't have the letter?
b	60	more power with "did you see his latest native article?"
c	15	you can wait just a beat in the light before you notice ned
c	18	"Maybe they're just waiting for somebody to lead them." watch the wording of this line, otherwise the response doesn't make sense otherwise
c	56	they were terrified of me, there can be a bit of joy in this
c	65	emma comes out first in this transition?
c	66	you can't park downstage for that long during the hospital a monologue or you'll be out of light. when you park come closer to the bed
c	81	FANTASTIC JOB ON THE MONOLOGUE!!
c	93	can you pause and acknowledge ned a beat more before you head out
c	27	the response to "this is a date, isn't it?" can be more playful
c	28	can have a stronger reaction to the "get laid" brush off moment
c	28	when do you want to take off your shoes? maybe during ned's first rant?
c	29	can we bring back the pointing at the writers so that we establish the bookshelf

censored for confidentiality

As I get into runs, I take notes electronically using google sheets. After rehearsal, I organize the notes by actor (or design team member) and email them out. I save time at the top of the next day to go over any notes, and always offer to explain notes further. I have found that doing notes virtually helps me prioritize and edit my notes before sharing, and gives the actors time to take in the notes in before returning.

Rehearsal Notes

For *The Normal Heart*, I collaborated with sound designer Mackenzie Adamick on an inspiration playlist. This playlist includes queer anthems, both old and new. Some of these songs ended up in the sound design, some didn't.

Other artists not shown here include Madonna, Whitney Houston, Soft Cell, Janet Jackson, Mazzy Star, Kate Bush, Tegan and Sara, Le Tigre, and more. You can listen to the whole playlist [here](#).

Public Playlist

"THE NORMAL HEART" - Inspo

Mackenzie Adamick and asterhythm • 5 likes • 42 songs, 3 hr 2 min

#	Title	Album	Added by	Date added
1	Hold On Sarah McLachlan	Fumbling Towards Ecstasy (Lega...	Mackenzie Adamick	May 22, 2023
2	On Every Corner Ani DiFranco	Not So Soft	Mackenzie Adamick	May 22, 2023
3	Hush, Hush, Hush. Paula Cole	This Fire	Mackenzie Adamick	May 22, 2023
4	Being Boring - 2001 Remaster Pet Shop Boys	Behaviour	Mackenzie Adamick	May 22, 2023
5	Il Adore Boy George	Cheapness And Beauty	Mackenzie Adamick	May 22, 2023

Inspiration Playlist

"'The Normal Heart' is in good hands at New Repertory Theatre. Director Shira Helena Gitlin and a wholly committed cast [...] have fashioned **an intense and powerful production** that's worthy of its grim subject." - [The Boston Globe](#)

"New Rep stages **a thoughtful and timely** production of 'The Normal Heart'" - [WBUR](#)

"This is a dramatically rich play with several important themes...under Shira Helena Gitlin's **taut direction**, the New Rep cast brings forceful expression to all of these themes." - [Jewish Journal](#)

"New Rep's stage director for 'The Normal Heart,' Shira Helena Gitlin, has staged **a fine adaptation** of Kramer's story with a minimal cast, minimal sets and **optimal performances**." - [Metrmag](#)

INDECENT

אויסגעלאסן



Indecent

By Paula Vogel
The Concord Players
February 2023

Creative/Production Team:

Director	Shira Helena Gitlin
Assistant Director	Hannah Levinson
Producer	Jay Newlon
Stage Manager	John Murtagh
ASM	Deborah McBride
Lighting Design	Rick Shamel
Set Design	Allen Bantly
Costume Design	Hannah Clifford
Sound Design	Tom Powers
Prop Design	Anne Bantly
Production Photos	Chris Pollari
Song Coach	Susan Minor
Yiddish Dialect Coach	Adina Linden
Projection Design	Shira Helena Gitlin

Cast List

Lemml	Dan Kelly
Chana & Others	Aiden O'Neal
Halina & Others	Judi Olson
Vera & Others	Kate Beattie
Avram & Others	Michael Jay
Mendel & Others	Jon Linden
Otto & Others	John Small
Ens. & U/S Chana & Halina	Alison Butts
Ens. & U/S Otto & Mendel	Joel Hersh
Ens. & U/S Vera	Wendy Linden
U/S Ensemble Track	Hannah Clifford
Violin	Siri Smedvig
Accordion	Erica Risti
Clarinet	Mike Jacobs





Production
Images



I rarely heard Yiddish as a child. When I did, it was what we now refer to as “Yinglish”: words like chutzpah, schlep, klutz, and tchotchke—even the word bagel comes from Yiddish! Growing up, I learned that my grandfather’s first language as a child in Argentina was Yiddish, not Spanish. When he immigrated to the United States in 1957, he left behind not only a language, but a whole culture. He was not the only one. Many Jewish immigrants spoke Yiddish at home, often as their first language. How then, in just two generations, did spoken Yiddish practically go extinct? The answer unfolds in the story told in *Indecent*.

Over the last few months I found myself thinking about my grandfather and his journey a lot, as he battled illnesses and ultimately passed away in January. With him went Jewish stories, songs, and traditions that my sisters and I only briefly witnessed. In these last few months of rehearsal I have found a community of artists who care deeply and passionately about telling these stories. Some are Jewish, some are not, but all relate to the themes of immigration and assimilation, of being an outsider, and the importance of telling stories to keep history alive.

This production is dedicated to my grandfather and all of those who worked hard to keep Jewish culture alive from generation to generation. May their memories be for a blessing.

—Shira Helena Gitlin, February 10th, 2023

Indecent is a really interesting piece from a dramaturgical perspective, because there are scenes that imitate real life, scenes that are fictionalize, and scenes that very loosely echo real events. A lot of the research I did ahead of time was historical in nature. I wanted to make sure that our production reflected the span of time and locations, as well as the actual events surrounding *The God of Vengeance*.

I found that there were lots of references in the show that I instinctively knew as a Jewish person, so I worked with my assistant director Hannah Levinson to make sure the piece was accessible to our non-Jewish artists as well. You can find more research [here](#) and our dramaturgy packet [here](#).

Staging Tradition: Piety and Scandal in *God of Vengeance*

Author: Naomi Seidman

Date: 2004

From: Sholem Asch Reconsidered

Publisher: The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Reprint In: Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (Vol. 251.)

Document Type: Critical essay

Length: 5,142 words

Words, References, & Pronunciation (in alphabetical order)

Images:

[Original Manuscript of GOV](#)

Content Warning: includes derogatory words included in the script

-Le ending of Words (ie Rifkele) - Yiddish word ending to add endearment, usually means little. Rifkele would translate to "Little Rebecca," Chanale would be "Little Hannah", etc. Pronounced -eleh at the end of names.

'GOD OF VENGEANCE' PLAYERS CONVICTED

Jury Takes Ninety Minutes to
Find 13 Guilty of Presenting
an Immoral Performance.

Character	Player	Character 1	Character 2	Character 3	Colors		
Lemml	The Stage Manager. Male. 30s to 50s. A country tailor who becomes leader of the Yiddish Art Theatre of Lodz troupe; naïve in his youth, over time as Asch's company manager he experiences the good and the terrible that the world has to offer, but he is never consumed by cynicism; holds fast to his belief in the transformative power of performance.	Lemml in Poland: Innocent, wanting, sparkling, alive, wants to be a part of something bigger than himself, taking a deep breath in, a follower	Lemml in America: Excited, dedicated, jaded, focused, holding his breath, defeated, a watcher	Lemml in Lodz: Has let the breath he was holding out, open, protective, sad, earnest, hopeful, eager, a leader	<div>Myrtle green Hex #317873 RGB 49, 120, 115 CMYK 59, 0, 4, 53</div>	<div>Dark Moss Green Hex #4A5D23 RGB 74, 93, 35 CMYK 20, 0, 62, 64</div>	<div>Camoufl Hex #78 RGB 120 CMYK 10</div>
Chana	The Ingenue. Female. 20s to 30s. Sweet, earnest, and passionate. Always plays Rivkele.	Magda: Asch's wife; has a discerning mind for literature and an enviable depth of feeling. She and her husband are equals at the start of the play, but by the end they live in two different worlds. She is just as intelligent as he is, but he is lauded as a genius while she is relegated to wifehood.	Ruth: Jewish actor living in Greenwich Village, in love with Dorothee, cast as Rivkele in the New York premiere of Asch's play, speaks English poorly, outspoken, defender of her heritage. Passionate, protective, risk taker, hopeful, tries as hard as she can but fails	Virginia: American ingénue. Replaces Ruth as Rivkele in the New York production. Energetic, eager to please, and eager to shock her parents. Very interested in kissing women! Baby gay in a big world!	<div>Deep Ruby Purple Hex #843F5B RGB 132, 63, 91 CMYK 0, 52, 31, 48</div>	<div>Mountain's Majesty Hex #9078C0 RGB 144, 120, 192 CMYK 25, 38, 0, 25</div>	<div>Old Lave Hex #796 RGB 121 CMYK 0,</div>
Halina	The Middle. Female. 20s to 40s. Practiced, sly, protective, quick to adapt. Always plays Manke.	Freida: a respected German actor; she plays Manke in the Berlin production of Asch's play; speaks frankly and with an air of sophistication. Bisexual but always with men. Practiced, a bit of a diva, but ultimately loves her art form and loves Berlin	Dorothee: Jewish actor in Greenwich Village; in love with Ruth; cast as Manke in the New York premiere of Asch's play; sensitive and full of feeling; she wants to assimilate into American culture. Pulled between love and success.	N/A	<div>Red Fox Orange Hex #985629 RGB 152, 86, 41 CMYK 0, 43, 73, 40</div>	<div>Chocolate Cosmos Red Hex #58111A RGB 88, 17, 26 CMYK 0, 81, 70, 65</div>	<div>French Hex #4E RGB 78, CMYK 0</div>

Indecent was a fun project to breakdown character-wise. There are the “players” - Chana, Halina, Avram, Vera etc. but there are also the characters that each “player” plays (Chana, for example, plays Madje, Rifkele, Virginia and more). Lemml is always himself, but he goes on such a distinct journey that I broke up his character description as well. Casting this show was a fun challenge because we had to search for the core of each “player” to find someone who could play each of their roles while in character as the “player”.

Character Breakdown

INDECENT

אויסגעלאסן

by Paula Vogel

Directed by Shira Helena Gitlin

For this production, I joined a team that was already put together (The Concord Players have a number of designers that are part of their “company” or are on their board). This meant that I ended up being one of the only Jewish artists on the production side. Because of this, I really wanted to make sure that the history, culture, and magic of Jewish heritage was reflected accurately.

I also wanted to share my own connection to the material as a grandchild of Jewish immigrants, particularly one who lost family in the Holocaust.

I used this presentation to set the scene for the people, music, locations, and time periods we would be covering within *Indecent*.

My great grandmother Celia (middle), who immigrated from Europe in the 1920's



Production Concept Slide Show



“From ashes they rise”



1906 Warsaw

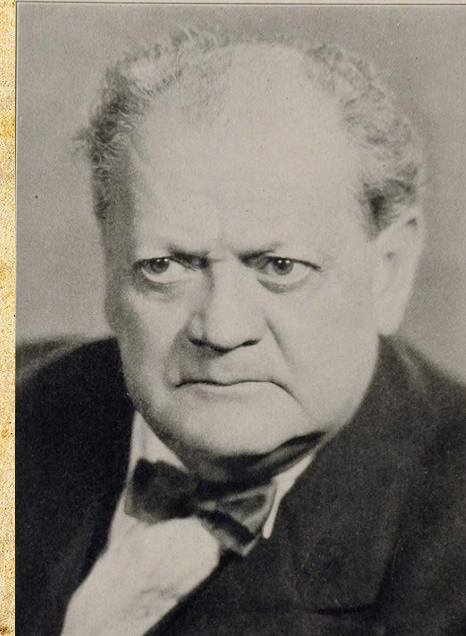
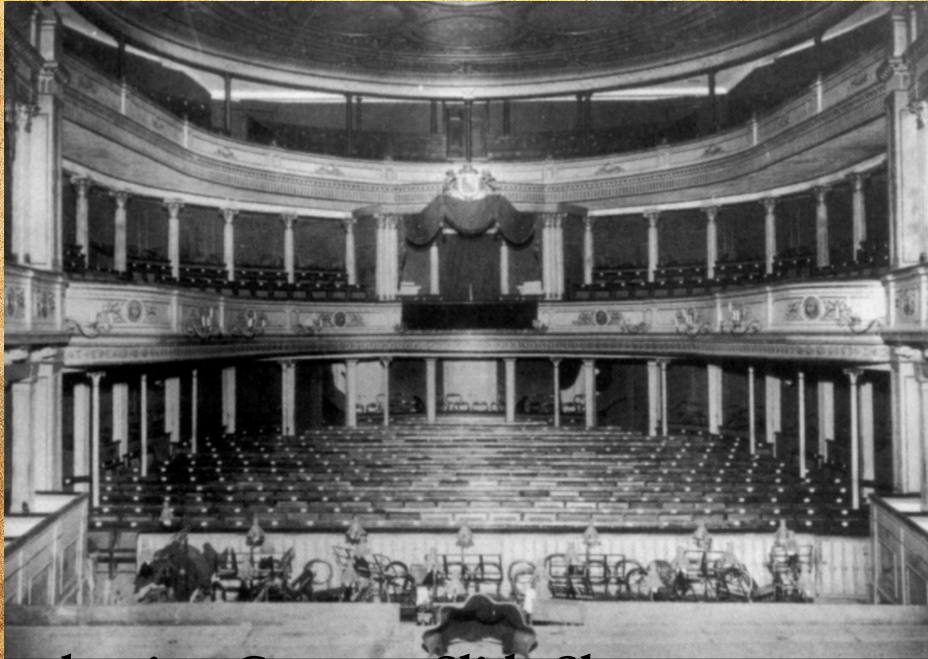


1907 Berlin Cabarets



Production Concept Slide Show

1907 Berlin, The Deutsches Theatre

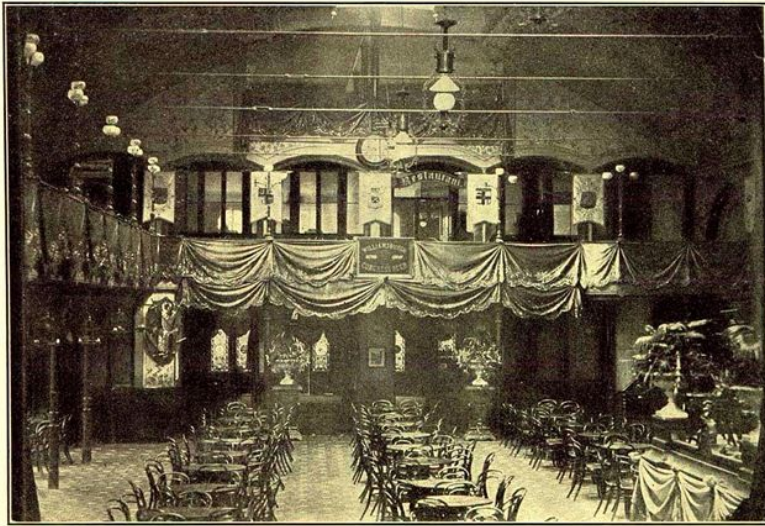


Rudolph Schildkraut

1920s Ellis Island



1920's New York Downtown Theatre Scene



INTERIOR OF ATLANTIC GARDEN ON THE BOWERY, NEXT DOOR TO THE BOWERY THEATRE, ABOUT 1880.



Broadway, 1923



God of Vengeance



1938, Grossinger's Catskills Resort



Poland, 1939-1941

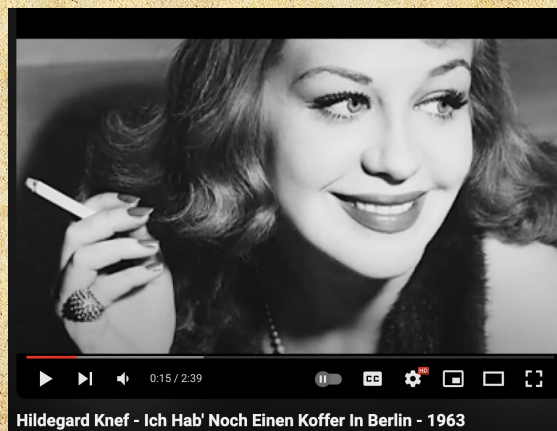
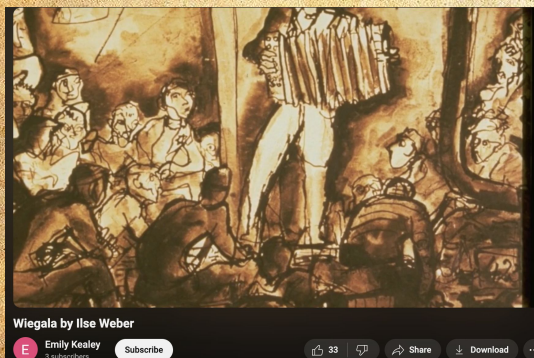


“An impossibly long line”



Production Concept Slide Show

The Music of Indecent



Production Concept Slide Show

ACTING WITH AN ACCENT

















YIDDISH

David Alan Stern, PhD

a blink in time
אן אויגנבליק

The rights for *Indecent* do not include the subtitle projections, so I created those myself with help from Adina Linden. It was really cool to utilize my ability to read Hebrew/Yiddish for this production.

Yiddish Dialect

-  Names.m4a 
-  German song 4a take two.m4a 
-  Reina and Dorothee (p. 44).m4a 
-  P. 62 with translation.m4a 
-  Esther (p. 29).m4a 
-  Song_ Wiegala (p. 59).m4a 
-  Lou, Esther (p.36).m4a 
-  Song_ Ale brider (p.10).m4a 

While I speak a small amount of Yiddish, we wanted to make sure that pronunciations were accurate. It happened that the mother of one of our cast members, Adina Linden, speaks fluent Yiddish. We visited her at her assisted living home (she is 95!) and she recorded Yiddish pronunciations for us!

You can listen to one of her pronunciations [here](#).

Page 25-26

Kayn Amerike tse kimen, hob ikh kayn mi geshpurt.
Kh'hob gedenkt a ruv tse veyrn un farlozn sikh a burd.
Kh'hob gehat tsvey sheyne peyes, vi yeyder frimer yid.

Scene	Name	Pages	Lemml	Avram	Chana	Halina	Mendel	Vera	Otto	Ens - Joel	Ens - Alison	Ens - Wendy	Musicians
1	From Ashes	9-10	Lemml	Avram	Chana	Halina	Mendel	Vera	Otto	Ensemble	Ensemble	Ensemble	
1.5	Ale Brider 🎵	10-11	Lemml	Avram	Chana	Halina	Mendel	Vera	Otto	Ensemble	Ensemble	Ensemble	
2	First Draft	11-13		Asch	Madje								
3	Peretz Salon	13-17	Lemml	Asch			Nakhmen		Peretz	Isaac	Lazar		
3.5	Peretz Medicine	17-18	Lemml	Asch			Nakhmen	Mrs. Peretz	Peretz	Isaac	Lazar		
4	Berlin 🎵	18-20	Lemml	Avram	Chana	Halina	Mendel	Vera	Otto	Ensemble	Ensemble	Ensemble	Onstage
5	"I'll be the butch"	20-21			Elsa	Frieda							
5.3	A Yiddish genius	21	Lemml		Elsa	Frieda							
5.5	First Rehearsal	21-22	Lemml	Asch	Elsa	Frieda	Company	Company	Schildkraut	Company	Company	Company	
6	Berlin Opening	22	Lemml	Asch	Rifkele			Sarah	Yekel				
6.3	St. Petersburg	23	Lemml	Asch	Rifkele			Sarah	Yekel				
6.5	Constantinople	23	Lemml	Asch	Rifkele			Sarah	Yekel				
6.7	Bratislava	24	Lemml	Asch	Rifkele			Sarah	Yekel				
7	Ellis Island	24-25	Lemml	Asch	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	
8	Welcome to America 🎵	25-26	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	
9	The Bowery	26			Rifkele			Sarah	Yekel				
10	"Mein hor..."	26-27			Ruth	Dorothee							
10.5	Rehearsal	27-28	Lemml		Ruth	Dorothee			Schildkraut				

The scene breakdown for *Indecent* was super important because each actor has multiple characters. I also ended up creating three ensemble tracks. I added these roles for a few reasons. First, we were working in a community theatre settings and could only get the musicians for tech/shows, so there were characters (such as Lazar and Isaac in Peretz' salon) normally played by the musicians that were not covered. Second, there was a huge turn out and lots of interest at auditions, so I wanted to include as many people as possible. Finally, we anticipated a covid spike since the performances were going to be in winter, so we doubled the ensemble members as understudies in case of illness.

Day	Date	Time	Called	Ensemble	Content	Page Numbers	Schedule (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)	Absent
Sunday	November 27	No Rehearsal			-			
Wednesday	November 30	7-10pm	All	All	10-13, 17-18.5	p27-36 (Mein Hor through End of Act 1), p42-45 (Obsenity through Threshold)	7-7:30 read through + discuss p27-36 (all) 7:30-8:30 work p27-36 (all) 8:30-8:40 BREAK 8:40-9:15 cont work p27-36 (all) 9:15-9:20 read through + discuss p42-45 (Lemml, Chana, Halina, Mendel, Vera) 9:15-10 work p42-45 (Lemml, Chana, Halina, Mendel, Vera)	Michael Jay, Joel f
Thursday	December 1	7-10pm	Chana + Halina		5, 10, 18.5, 26, 29, 11.5	p20-21 (Butch), p26-27 (Mein Hor), p44-45 (Threshold), p57-58 (Rain Scene), p62 (Rain),m p29-30 (Rehearsal), p31-32, p 40 (Onstage Act III)	7-10 boundries, read through, work through etc 7-8 Plug in Otto pg 27-28, p29-31, p34-36 (all) 8-8:30 work through p48 (Otto) 8:30-8:40 BREAK 8:40-9:20 read and stage "GoV" scene p22-24 + 26 (Vera, Chana, Otto) 9:20-10 read through + work p39-40 (Vera, Chana, Halina)	Dan Kelly, Michael
Sunday	December 4	7-10pm	All		16, 17, 21, 6-6.7 + 9 (minus lemml and asch)	p39-40 (Onstage Act III) , p48 (The Verdict), p22-24+26 (Berlin through Bratislava + The Bowery, minus Lemml and Asch) - plug in Otto into 10.5, 11, 13 (p27-28, p29-31, p34-36)		Dan Kelly, Michael
Wednesday	December 7	7-10pm	Chana + Halina		Chana and Halina Intimacy	p29-34 (Virginia McFadden Rehearsal), p57-58 (Rain Scene), p62 (Rain), p39-40 (Onstage Act III)	7-10 Intimacy 7-7:45 Work through p42-43 (Mendel) +	Dan Kelly, Michael

Since this show was at a community theatre, the role of the Director was a bit more expansive. For this show, I covered some of the stage manager's tasks, including creating and sharing the schedule, sending out the rehearsal reports, and being main contact for the actors (our stage manager did not own a cell phone). Community theatre tends to have more conflicts since the actors are not getting paid. The scheduling for this show was particularly complex because two of our actors had to get surgery during the rehearsal process. You can see in the above snapshot that I broke up the time very specifically and made sure to account for the time needed to plug actors back into scenes. I also made sure to include breaks in the schedule.

Scene	Name	Pages	Lemml	Avram	Chana	Ens - Alison	Halina
1	From Ashes	9-10	Lemml	Avram	Chana		Halina
1.5	Ale Brider 🎵	10-11	Lemml	Avram	Chana		Halina
2	First Draft	11-13		Asch	Madje		
3	Peretz Salon	13-17	Lemml	Asch		Lazar	
3.5	Peretz Medicine	17-18	Lemml	Asch		Lazar	
4	Berlin 🎵	18-20	Lemml	Avram		Ensemble + Sing Chana's part	Halina
5	"I'll be the butch"	20-21			Elsa		Frieda
5.3	A Yiddish genius	21	Lemml		Elsa		Frieda
5.5	First Rehearsal	21-22	Lemml	Asch	Elsa		Frieda
6	Berlin Opening	22	Lemml	Asch	Rifkele		
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6.5	Constantinople	23	Lemml	Asch	Rifkele		
6.7	Bratislava	24	Lemml	Asch	Rifkele		
7	Ellis Island	24-25	Lemml	Asch		Immigrant	Immigrant
8	Welcome to America 🎵	25-26	Immigrant	Immigrant		Immigrant	Immigrant
9	The Bowery	26			Rifkele		
10	"Mein hor..."	26-27			Ruth		Dorothy
10.5	Replacement	27-28	Lemml		Ruth		Dorothy
10.7	Lou	28-29	Lou		Ruth		
11	Virginia McFadden	29-31	Lou	Carnovsky	Virginia		Dorothy
11.5	"It's lesbian, right?"	31-32			Virginia		Dorothy
12	Provincetown Playhouse	32-33	Lou		Virginia		

+ ≡ Full Cast ▾ Chana Understudy ▾ Halina Understudy ▾ Vera Understudy ▾

Since performances were during the winter, we anticipated illness could strike. Initially we had three understudies, although we ended up adding a fourth to cover an ensemble track in case someone had to bump up to a named character. Since much of the staging involved the entire ensemble, we needed to find a way to create split tracks where the important ensemble roles were covered.

My assistant director Hannah Levinson and I worked together to create tracks for each understudy. These tracks helped the actors know when to stick to their ensemble track and when to slide into their understudy track. Generally, we had them stay in their normal location for group numbers and songs unless there was a solo for the named character.

Number	Song	Cue	Script Page	Notes to work th
1	Opening - Freedom	all actors in position on suitcases at top of show	9	
1a	Ghost Waltz	follow from 1	9	m37 introduction
2	Happy Rain Foreshadow	"No matter, I can remember how it begins " [GO]	10	
2a	Ale Brider	follow from 2a	10	m. 75-78 repeat :
3	Transition to Salon	"Teach me, take me, I want to taste you " [GO]	13	
3a	Ale Bider Quote (Solo Violin)	follow from 3	13	
3b	Blinks in Time	multiple, see score	15	Work
4	Going to Berlin	"I've always wanted to see Berlin [GO]	18	Work musician en the last D7/F#) on
4a	Ich hab' noch einen Koffer in Berlin	follow from 4	18	
4b	...Koffer in Berlin Playoff	follow from 4a	20	
5	Let's Begin - Opening Night	"Let's begin !" [GO]	22	
5a	GoV European Tour	multiple, see score	23	Work

I made a serious error when I directed Indecent - I did not hire a music director. This was mainly due to resources available from the theatre, but ultimately what it meant is that I had to act as de facto music director. Since I don't play piano, we found someone to record tracks for rehearsals and teach the vocals initially. I ran the rest of the music rehearsals throughout the process using these tracks. Once the musicians joined us during tech, we quickly figured out that the score and script were not 100% aligned. I created score notes and cues for the musicians that reflected the choices we had made on stage and worked with them on dynamics and tempo. Throughout tech, I took notes for them much like I did for the actors and designers.

censored for confidentiality

Who?	Pg	Note
A	9	when waking up, make sure to "let the dust fall" from your sleeves and hands
j	9	at the top of the show during the introductions - when you are the accordion player, your gesture is not super clear. When the name is called, you should mime playing the accordion and then point to the musician in the loft
j	9	Can you unbutton your jacket for "all the vamps?" at the top of show
v	9	at the top of the show during the introductions - when you are the clarinet player, you should mime playing the clarinet and then point to the musician in the loft and hold there while they play a little solo
A	10	when you are singing first verses of ale brider, dont clap along if you are singing (ie. when men sing the first two lines and pick up their suitcases)
A	11	end of ale brider music - we repeat that end 4 times total, everyone seemed to be confused again
a	13	work transition from first read to peretz with the blanket cover dive
j	13	"oy another play set in a brothel" delivered right after the line before it
r	13	transition from first read to peretz with the blanket cover dive
c	15	when you read that first passage of GoV pg 15 can you go a bit quicker and pick one "moment of magic"
a	16	last peretz blink, more of a difference - watching with interest/disgust/confusion
c	16	"this is theatre" directly after he says "end of play" during peretz, it should feel a little innapropriate but lemml has forgotten his place for a second
j	16	last peretz blink, more of a difference - watching with interest/disgust/confusion

Much like *The Normal Heart*, I used google sheets to craft my rehearsal notes. Since I had an assistant director for this show, I had her email me her notes and added those in as well before I sent them off to the actors. This was a much longer process, so I had the ability to get very granular with notes. Working in community theatre meant that each actor came in with a different level of knowledge - some had acted professionally, some had never acted before. Over time, I was able to see where each actor struggled (for example, one actor had issues with line memorization, another didn't differentiate their characters, etc) so I was able to personalize my notes and provide a lot of support.

"The brilliantly complex production is extremely well executed [...] the Concord production, under the detail-driven direction of Shira Helena Gitlin, is a technically intricate piece" - [Metrmag](#)

EMACT DASH Awards

Special Award given to John Murtagh - "The Show Must Go On"

John Murtagh, Stage Manager (Play) - Nominated

Boston Broadway World Awards

Best Play (Non-Professional) - Nominated

Aiden O'Neal, Best Performer In A Play (Non-Professional) - Nominated

Michael Jay, Best Performer In A Play (Non-Professional) - Nominated