

# AMY and the ORPHANS



**ROUNDAABOUT  
THEATRE  
COMPANY**

**UPSTAGE GUIDE**

A publication of **EDUCATION AT  
ROUNDAABOUT**

# UPSTAGE SPOTLIGHT



## AMY AND THE ORPHANS

by **Lindsey Ferrentino**  
Directed by **Scott Ellis**

Hop in, buckle up and hold on for dear life in this raucous family road trip. After their father's death, two unhinged siblings reunite with Amy, their movie-loving sister who has Down syndrome. Together, they careen down the Great American Long Island Expressway, navigating strip malls, traffic jams and some serious (and not-so-serious) family drama. An unexpected turn reveals the moment that changed their lives...and the fact that Amy may be the only one who knows her own mind.

### A NOTE FROM **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TODD HAIMES**

*Amy and the Orphans* is a very personal play for Lindsey, and I am in such awe of her courage and talent. Inspired by the real-life experiences of Lindsey's own family members, these characters unearth decades of grudges and frustrations in order to arrive at some of the most fundamental questions of what it means to know, love, and care for one another as a family, especially when one of their number has been perpetually "othered" for decades. In amplifying the voice of a member of the Down syndrome community, *Amy and the Orphans* explores just how little we might know about those who share our blood – and just how deeply they can surprise us.

**WHEN** Then and Now

**WHERE** A plain room that is both nowhere and everywhere

### **WHO**

**Sarah:** 30s

**Bobby:** 30s

**Jacob:** 60-ish, tightly wound and clenching to keep it that way, Amy's brother

**Maggie:** a few years younger, unspooled and unspooling, Amy's sister

**Kathy:** visibly pregnant, the walking embodiment of Long Island, New York

**Amy:** strong-willed woman with Down syndrome



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Interview with Playwright Lindsey Ferrentino .....	Page 4-5
National Down Syndrome Society Preferred Language Guide .....	Page 6
The Science of Down Syndrome .....	Page 7
Interview with Director Scott Ellis .....	Page 8-9
Social History of Disability .....	Page 10-11
Interview with Actor Jamie Brewer .....	Page 12-13
Down Syndrome in the Media .....	Page 14
Advocating for Actors with Down Syndrome.....	Page 15
Representing Disability on Stage: The Breakthrough Plays .....	Page 16
Family Perspectives of Down Syndrome .....	Page 17
Designer Statements .....	Page 18-19
Pre-Show and Post-Show Activities.....	Page 20-21
Resources .....	Page 22
About Roundabout and Staff Interview .....	Page 23

## **UPSTAGE CONTRIBUTORS**

### **MANAGING EDITORS:**

Kim Oria, Senior Manager of Education Programs  
Jill Rafson, Director of New Play Development

### **WRITERS:**

Jason Jacobs, Teaching Artist  
Leah Reddy, Teaching Artist  
Nick Mecikalski, Artistic Assistant  
Miranda Haymon, Roundabout Directing Fellow  
Anna Woodruff, Education Apprentice  
Lucy Powis, Artistic Apprentice

Copyright © 2018 Roundabout Theatre Company, Inc.  
All rights reserved.

### **INTERVIEWS:**

Ted Sod, Education Dramaturg

### **GRAPHIC DESIGN:**

Darren Melchiorre, Associate Director, Art and Design  
Bo Krucik, Graphic Design Apprentice

### **EDUCATION STAFF:**

Jennifer DiBella, Director of Education  
Mitch Mattson, Associate Director of Education  
Katie Christie, Assistant Director of Education  
Abby Case, Education Program Manager  
Karen Loftus, Education Program Manager  
Sarah Kutnowsky, Education Coordinator  
Jackie Maris, Education Assistant  
Olivia Atlas, Education Apprentice  
Aasim Rozier, Education Apprentice

# INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT LINDSEY FERRENTINO



**Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with Playwright Lindsey Ferrentino about her play *Amy and the Orphans*.**

**Ted Sod: What inspired you to write *Amy and the Orphans*? Does the play have personal resonance for you and, if so, how? What do you feel your play is about?**

**Lindsey Ferrentino:** My aunt Amy had Down syndrome and was raised mostly in state-funded institutions, foster homes, and group care. We always had a close but, at the same time, distant relationship with her. She was picked up and taken home for holidays, visited a few times a year, flown to Florida for an annual two-week family vacation, but no one in my family was ever a part of Amy's life on a daily basis. After her death and the death of my grandparents, I was left wondering how my grandparents—extremely loving, family-oriented individuals—gave up their child to foster care. In my search for an answer to this question, I came across some journals from my grandparents during a time when they were in couple's therapy. What fascinated me was that giving up Amy was certainly mentioned, but it was given equal weight to their other problems—stress about money, a daughter at home who was chronically ill, concerns about their body image, sex life, etc. These journals helped me to see them as more complicated human beings in an extremely difficult situation. My family's relationship to Amy was complicated to say the least—filled with equal measure of joy, guilt, pain, and happiness, but the guilt and pain were all ours. Amy remained a loving, funny, movie-obsessed soul whose language was limited, but whose ability to express herself was not. After Amy's death, I was left wondering how well we really knew her. This play is about personal responsibility to family and to yourself. It is about the meaning of family. Is family comprised of people you choose and spend your time with, or is blood really thicker than water? How well can you ever really know someone else, especially those you are related to? I think the play is also, and importantly so, about joy. To celebrate, onstage, the life of a person with Down syndrome and to see them as autonomous human beings.

**TS: Will you give us a sense of the kind of research you had to do in order to write this play and how you went about doing it?**

**LF:** In writing this play, I did a lot of personal family research. In addition to reading my grandparents' therapy journals from the '70s, I interviewed my mom, aunt, and uncle about their childhood memories of Amy, how it felt growing up with a sibling with Down syndrome during a time when this was not as culturally welcome as it is now. I then contacted an agent—Gail Williamson—who represents talented actors with Down syndrome throughout the world. Jamie Brewer, who Gail recommended to me as a potential Amy, happened to be free during a visit to New York. She was walking the catwalk during NYC's Fashion Week (Jamie was the first person with Down syndrome to ever appear there). She had some time between a press junket and a party, and we sat down at her hotel to chat about all sorts of things: life, ambition, men, dreams, hopes, family and—more than anything—her love of the theatre. Spending two hours in Jamie's company completely blew my mind in terms of what people with Down syndrome are capable of—even though I'd known someone with Down syndrome all my life. My aunt was raised in group homes. Jamie went to public school, lived independently, and attended college. She also memorized lines, shared scenes with the likes of Jessica Lange (on "American



Lindsey Ferrentino

Horror Story") and performed her own stunt work on the show. Jamie is the most driven, focused, passionate, hard-working actor I've ever had the privilege to work with. She not only loves the work, but it is her life. She spends her time off studying film and great performances, taking lessons, dreaming of her next project, connecting with other actors and directors, and giving speeches as an advocate for the Down syndrome community. This play would not exist without Jamie Brewer—her feedback and love of theatre made me determined to write the title role for her. Jamie spoke to me at length about how she was used to "dumbing herself down" to play someone with Down syndrome because her own cognitive abilities were higher than an audience's perception of her capabilities. I promised to write Jamie a role that not only honored my aunt's life, but also let the audience experience Jamie Brewer as an autonomous, career-driven human being.

I also had a similar experience when I met the actor Eddie Barbanell—Eddie is the understudy for this production. I returned to Jamie's agent, asking to take meetings with additional actresses. I told her that I'd consider meeting with an actor if they were passionate about doing a play. She introduced me to Eddie who, as it turns out, lives a few hours from my parents in South Florida. Eddie and his mom met my dad and me at a diner along I-95. I told Eddie he didn't need to prepare anything but that we'd just chat about the play. Eddie brought me a signed copy of his movie *The Ringer* along with offering to perform Shakespeare. "Shakespeare?" I said. "What Shakespeare?" He had Julius Caesar, Romeo, and Puck prepared and proceeded to perform the most word-perfect, clear Shakespeare I have ever heard.



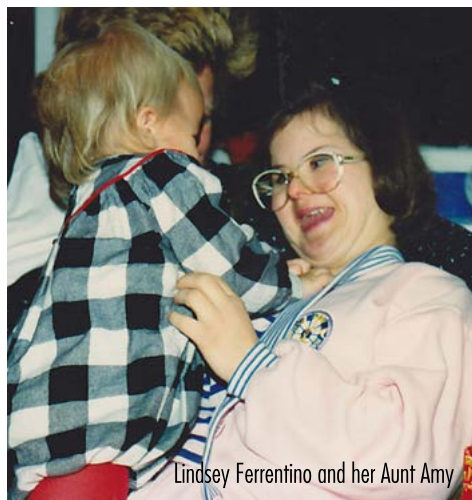
I determined to write a male version of the play—*Andy and the Orphans*—so that Eddie could perform in it as well.

**TS: What have you learned about Down syndrome that surprised or enlightened you while working on this play?**

**LF:** I think everyone has been surprised at how thoroughly both Jamie and Eddie have memorized their lines. But then again—why shouldn't they? That was our own bias and nervousness being projected onto them, rather than any indication as to their ability. Roundabout participated in this year's Buddy Walk, which is an annual charity walk through Central Park to raise money for NDSS (the National Down Syndrome Society). Roundabout's staff did fundraising, had a vendor booth, and flew Eddie and Jamie in to participate. Jamie gave the opening remarks and cheered the crowd on. It was the theatre community I am part of getting involved in the Down syndrome community—an intersection that wouldn't have existed had I not written this play about my aunt. What moved me more than anything was the sheer volume of people with Down syndrome, of every ability level, and their friends, family, and support networks coming together in Central Park. All of them capable, loud, proud, and independent. Events like these didn't exist when my aunt was born, and I can't help but think how her life might have been different if they had. And as far as inclusion goes, we still have a long way to go, but events like the Buddy Walk are a definite start.

**TS: Will you talk about the development process for this play?**

**LF:** I wrote this play about three years ago, during my second year at the Yale School of Drama. I was taking a course taught by Dan LeFranc, who encouraged us to write wildly and personally. As my last assignment for that class, I decided to bring in some scattered memories of my aunt Amy in scene form, with no real structure. I collected everything I remembered she ever said...a lot of which were repeated movie lines from her favorite films. I was surprised at how well those pages went over in class. I worked on the play for the next two years, and it was produced as my thesis project. Yale was very supportive. They brought Jamie in to do the production. After that, Scott, Jamie, and I went on to continue working on the play at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago and at New York Stage and Film.



Lindsey Ferrentino and her Aunt Amy

**TS: Do feel you will continue to rewrite throughout the RTC rehearsal and preview process?**

**LF:** This play has had a number of workshops as well as a student production at Yale, so I don't anticipate major, architectural rewrites, but I am constantly refining, cutting, and responding to what the actors bring into

the room. Sometimes they have a better line than I do, sometimes they'll stumble over something I've written clumsily. There is nothing better than being in a room with actors—especially actors well-suited for their roles. I think that's definitely what we have with this cast—actors with great comic timing, dramatic chops, empathy, and big hearts. I can't wait to be in a room and see what we come up with together.

**TS: What traits do the actors need for acting in this play? What made you decide an actor was right for the roles you've written in *Amy and the Orphans*?**

**LF:** I'm always looking for actors who look and feel like real people (rather than actors). People who have a solid handle on both the drama of the moment and the humor as well. People who are willing to be outside of themselves. My plays require actors who have a knack for my language and its rhythms. I've developed a certain meticulousness as to how I write dialogue—with italics, and punctuation—scored a bit like music—just in that its very specific. I love when actors give that a go, so that I can at least hear what is in my head. I'm never married to that, but it is very useful for me to get to hear at least once. I love it when actors deliver a line completely differently from how I imagined it. When that surprises me, I absolutely love it.

**TS: This play was commissioned by Roundabout after your play, *Ugly Lies the Bone*, was presented as part of Roundabout Underground. Can you talk about how a commission affects you as a writer and what you made of your experience as an Underground playwright?**

**LF:** A commission for a future work helps the writer live. Financially, it is usually a solid chunk of money and oftentimes a playwright's only income. It also supports the playwright artistically. You know that whether your show is a success or a flop, the theatre believes in you and your voice. Roundabout specifically makes this investment in their Underground artists. You aren't invited to Roundabout for one production. You are invited in for a career-long conversation—a gym where you can develop what's on your mind and get the support you need to see a play through to completion. Roundabout helped me get Jamie Brewer for all the readings and workshops, without whom this play wouldn't exist.

**TS: What other projects are you working on? Any other productions coming up?**

**LF:** This is a very busy year for me. When this play goes into previews, I'll start rehearsals at Playwrights Horizons for a production of my play *This Flat Earth*. So, for a few weeks, I'll be running across Times Square between the two theatres. There will be a time where my two plays will be running simultaneously in New York. I'm also writing a screenplay for my favorite film director, David O. Russell, and working on a new musical. I have a production of a new play entitled *The Year to Come*—that I'm very much still writing—opening at La Jolla Playhouse in California next fall.

**TS: Is there a question that you wish I had asked?**

**LF:** Yes, how can people get involved in Down syndrome advocacy? •  
*See resources provided by Lindsey on page 22*

# PREFERRED LANGUAGE GUIDE



The National Down Syndrome Society recommends the use of this language when referring to Down syndrome and people who have Down syndrome:

People with Down syndrome should always be referred to as **PEOPLE** first.

**TYPICALLY DEVELOPING** or **TYPICAL** is preferred over "normal."

People **HAVE** Down syndrome, they do not "suffer from" it and are not "afflicted by" it.

Down syndrome is a **CONDITION** or a **SYNDROME**, not a disease.

NDSS strongly condemns the use of the word "retarded" in any derogatory context. Using this word is hurtful and suggests that people with disabilities are not competent.

Instead of "a Down syndrome child," it should be **A CHILD WITH DOWN SYNDROME**.

Also avoid "Down's child" and describing the condition as "Down's," as in, "He has Down's."

**INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY** or **COGNITIVE DISABILITY** has replaced "mental retardation" as the appropriate term.

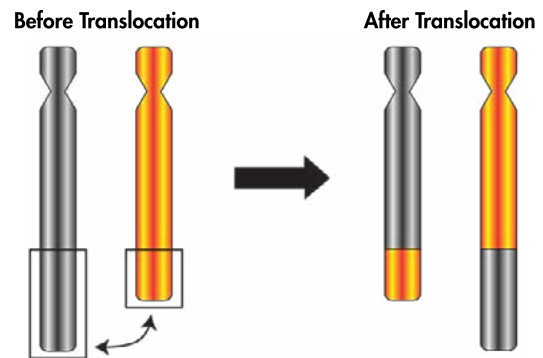
# THE SCIENCE OF DOWN SYNDROME

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one in every 700 babies in the United States is born with Down syndrome, making Down syndrome the most common chromosomal condition. About 6,000 babies with Down syndrome are born in the United States each year. Every cell in the human body contains a nucleus, which holds all the genetic information that codes our inherited traits. These codes are grouped structures called chromosomes, with each nucleus containing 23 chromosomes. Down syndrome occurs when there is a partial or full extra copy of chromosome 21.

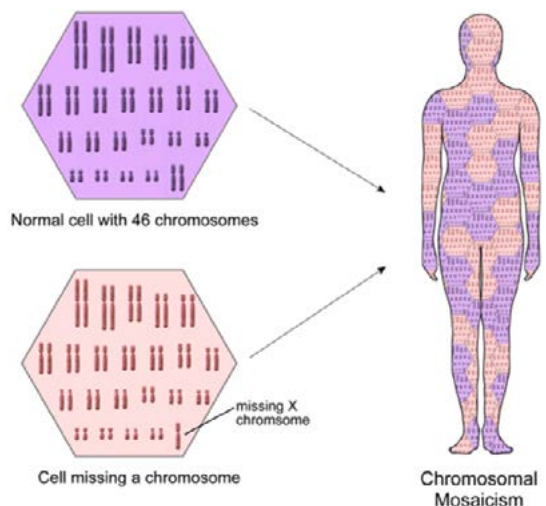
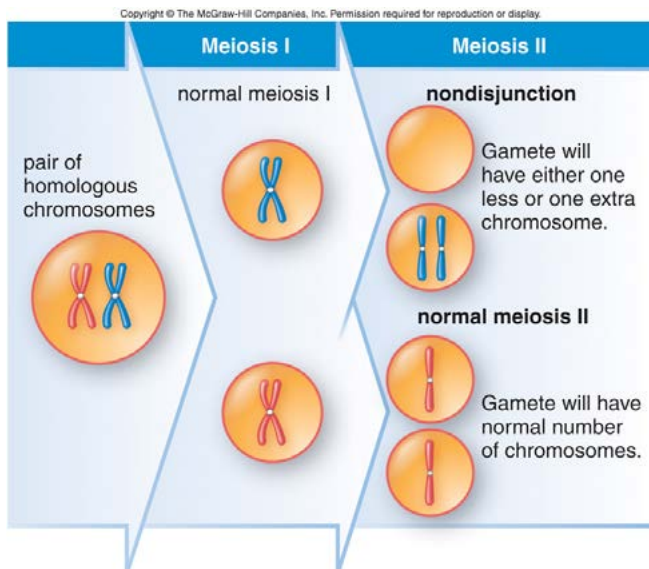
The added genetic material changes an individual's course of development and causes the physical characteristics of Down syndrome. Some of the physical characteristics include low muscle tone, small stature, an upward slant of the eyes, and a single deep crease across the center of the palm. However, it is crucial to remember that every individual with Down syndrome is a unique person, so they may have these characteristics in varying degrees, or not at all.

There are three types of Down syndrome: trisomy 21, translocation and mosaicism. Trisomy 21 accounts for 95% of all cases and is caused by an error in cell division referred to as "nondisjunction." Nondisjunction results in an embryo with three copies of chromosome 21 instead of the average two. Before or during conception, a pair of 21st chromosomes fail to separate, which can happen in either the sperm or the egg. While the embryo continues to develop, the extra chromosome is replicated in each and every cell in the body.

In translocation, which accounts for about 4% of cases of Down syndrome, the total number of chromosomes in the cells remains 46. However, an additional full or partial copy of chromosome 21 attaches to another chromosome, typically chromosome 14. The presence of the full or partial extra chromosome 21 results in the characteristics of Down syndrome.



Mosaicism (also known as mosaic Down syndrome) is diagnosed when there is a combination of two kinds of cells, some containing the typical 46 chromosomes and others containing 47. The cells with 47 chromosomes have an extra chromosome 21. Mosaicism is the least common form of Down syndrome, only accounting for 1% of all cases. The reason behind the additional full or partial chromosome is still unknown. Maternal age is the only factor that has been linked to an increased chance of having a baby with Down syndrome. However, due to higher birth rates in younger women, 80% of children with Down syndrome are born to women under 35 years of age. There is no definitive scientific research that indicates that Down syndrome is caused by environmental factors or the parents' activities before or during pregnancy.



# INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR SCOTT ELLIS



Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with Director Scott Ellis about his work on *Amy and the Orphans*.

**Ted Sod:** Why did you want to direct *Amy and the Orphans* by Lindsey Ferrentino? How did you get involved with this production?

**Scott Ellis:** This play is a Roundabout commission, and while I was at a staff meeting, it was brought up that Lindsey had written a play about a pair of adult siblings, a sister and a brother, who have another sibling named Amy who was born with Down syndrome. I thought that sounded like a unique idea, and I wanted to read it. I wasn't reading it with the intention of directing it; the subject matter piqued my interest because when I was seventeen, I worked at an institution populated by adults and children with Down syndrome in Fairfax, Virginia. I was fascinated by the idea that Lindsey had written a play about a person with Down syndrome, and I really only wanted to know what this story was.

**TS:** When during that first reading did you decide you should approach Lindsey about directing it?

**SE:** I found I was connected to the writing immediately. It's a beautifully written story. I also love that Lindsey wanted to cast an actress with Down syndrome. I knew that was the only way it could be done. Lindsey wrote the role of Amy for the actress Jamie Brewer specifically.

**TS:** What do you think the play is about?

**SE:** Family, like so many plays. But Lindsey's play is also about creating a family for yourself when yours isn't a part of your day-to-day life. This play puts a spotlight on a woman with Down syndrome who has become her own person. One of the things I love about this play is, how often do we get to see people on stage who have Down syndrome, or any disability for that matter? Lindsey wrote it about her own family. She investigates a very difficult family decision. A decision that one can regret or one can embrace. Most families, at some point, are damaged. I think in this play, Lindsey is asking, "How do we heal that damage? How do we try to make that better?"

**TS:** Can you talk a bit about the kind of research you have to do in order to direct this play?

**SE:** There wasn't a ton of research, only because, as I already mentioned, I had worked in a group home like the one Amy lives in. It's not that I don't like to do research, but I had a visceral, gut reaction to the play when I read it. It was something I related to and understood immediately. I suppose I understand it in a different way because I have experience with people like the character of Amy.

**TS:** This is going to be the world premiere production. What are the director's responsibilities and challenges when he works on a new play?

**SE:** I think as director you're there to support the storytelling and the writer's intention. That's the actor's job as well. For me, to have the opportunity to explore it with the writer and these amazing actors in a rehearsal room is a gift because we are all still in discovery mode, figuring out what everything means and how it all fits together. It's important for me as a director to try to focus on what the playwright



wants to say to the audience. I feel when I'm directing a new play, we are all discovering things that none of us have ever thought of before. We'll find out so many things about the arc of the story and the characters during our rehearsal process. And it's my job to support that exploration.

**TS:** Do you ask a lot of questions of Lindsey? Will you give us an example of one of the first questions you asked her?

**SE:** My questions for Lindsey are usually about finding where the relationships in this family exist. The parents are different from their children. And certainly, the children are all very different from each other. So, I ask Lindsey questions in order to find out what they have in common and also what their profound differences are. That was something that I talked a lot about with Lindsey early on. I talked about how she visualized the movement of the piece before working with the design team. We move to different locations quite a bit in the play. Lindsey writes scenes where the environment should be very real. Her scenes have texture. There needs to be storytelling with the objects of the room, so that was something that we talked a lot about. The next thing we have to talk about will be the sound and music cues.

**TS:** A substantial amount of the play takes place in a car—correct?

**SE:** A good chunk of it, yes.





**TS: Isn't that hard to do on stage?**

**SE:** You are right, it is. We've had many conversations about how this piece should look on stage, and what the car will be was a major part of those conversations. We have discussed all the possibilities: whether the car should be realistic or more abstract, and we've come up with a combination of both styles that I think will serve the play and specifically the action that takes place inside the car.

**TS: You've assembled a talented design team. It seems to me that two of the designers are new collaborators for you. You've never worked with Rachel Hauck, the set designer, or Alejo Vietti, the costume designer, have you?**

**SE:** No, I have not worked with Rachel or Alejo before. I knew some of Rachel's work, and it was Lindsey who asked if I would consider working with her because Lindsey knew her work and admired it. I thought, if this is someone she feels comfortable with and has worked with before, that's probably a good reason to explore a new collaborator. When I met her, I knew right away ours would be a good collaboration, and it has been. It's a very difficult piece because the play moves to so many locations in the course of the action. So, Rachel and I have been asking each other, "How do we get the various set pieces moving?" It was a challenge, and Rachel has done a phenomenal job. As for Alejo, I was around *Holiday Inn*, overseeing it during rehearsals. He designed over 400 costumes for that show. I hired him because I watched him and I liked how he worked. I liked how he dealt with the actors. I thought he was very level-headed, and I remember thinking, someday, I'm going to use him. So, when this project came up, I called him and said, "Come on in and let's talk!" I was happy it worked out.

**TS: Does working on a play like this alter the way you think about being a parent?**

**SE:** My whole life has changed because of being a parent. I don't think I look at anything the way I used to in the same way. I think what I learned most as a parent is there's no black or white. There's no wrong or right way, every parent does the best they can, and they try parenting their children without really knowing what the answers are. It's a responsibility that is constantly moving and changing. You make

decisions, and sometimes it's the right decision and other times maybe it isn't the right decision.

**TS: You've worked with both Debra Monk, who is playing Amy's sister Maggie, and Mark Blum, who is playing her brother Jacob, before. What makes you decide to work with an actor multiple times?**

**SE:** People always say that casting is 75% of the director's job. It can be the most important thing one does. It's easy to work with people you love; that happens all the time now. I'm fortunate enough that I've worked with a lot of great people throughout the years and I love being in the rehearsal room with them. There's a shorthand. You know and trust each other. I am thrilled to work with Mark and Debra again and all the other actors who we cast and am working with for the first time.

**TS: The understudy for Jamie's character, Amy, is a male actor, correct? What is that going to be like?**

**SE:** I said to Lindsey that I felt this play can work with a male or a female protagonist, with some minor line changes. I said ultimately the option should be explored because you don't want to limit the play's opportunity for possible productions. The understudy we've hired is an actor named Eddie Barbanell.

**TS: When Eddie goes on, will the title change?**

**SE:** There will be an announcement at the start of the show about the title change, which will become *Andy and the Orphans*. Eddie will be performing some matinees once we get up.

**TS: That will be fascinating. What else are you working on? I know you've been directing some television in Los Angeles.**

**SE:** Yes, I directed "A Christmas Story Live" for television, and I'll be directing the stage musical version of *Tootsie*.

**TS: Will that happen before you direct *Kiss Me, Kate* next season at Roundabout?**

**SE:** Yes. It's going to be a busy year, and it hasn't even started yet! •



## EDWARD BARBANELL

Depending on which performance you attend, you might be seeing *Andy and the Orphans*, with the titular character played by Eddie Barbanell. Eddie grew up in Florida and has been acting since the year 2000.

In addition to his many theatre credits, he has appeared in films such as *The Ringer*, *Hall Pass*, *Down*, *Dumb and Dumber To*, and *Addicted to Fresno*, as well as documentaries such as *Jackass 3D*, *Ridiculousness*, and *Diffability Hollywood*. In addition, he is a comedian, an advocate and athlete for the Special Olympics, and has spoken for the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign. In his role as the Special Olympics International Board Director, Eddie was part of a delegation of athletes and self-advocates who were present for President Obama's historic signing of Rosa's Law. The law banned the use of "mental retardation" and "mentally retarded" in federal policy, replacing them with people first language "intellectual disability" and "individual with an intellectual disability."

# SOCIAL HISTORY OF DISABILITY

In *Amy and the Orphans*, Amy has Down syndrome, a condition that can cause a range of physical and intellectual disabilities. This timeline explores how humans have understood and responded to individuals with disabilities. Throughout much of history, Down syndrome was lumped together with all other differences, including epilepsy, cerebral palsy, autism, and cleft palates.

## 900-192 BC

In Sparta, a council of elders examined newborn babies and determined if they should survive. Visibly disabled children were killed by exposure to the elements. Parents were required to comply with the council. Ancient Romans also frequently killed babies with visible disabilities. Aristotle, one of the most influential philosophers in history, wrote, "Let there be a law that no deformed child shall live."

## 900 BC - 323 BC

Ancient Greeks used the term *idiots* to describe people with intellectual disabilities. The word comes from the word *idios*, which was originally used to describe a man who was not a public official, but it later came to be used to describe people who were uneducated. In Ancient Rome, individuals with disabilities were called *monstra*, a term that comes from the Latin words for "to show" or "to admonish." Those who survived childhood were employed as beggars or as freak-show style entertainers. Children with disabilities from wealthy families sometimes received better treatment.

## 1848 AD - 1857 AD

Dr. Samuel Howe established The Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth. This boarding school sought to prepare students with intellectual disabilities for participation in society, using a variety of educational approaches. During the next decade, similar training institutions were started in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York.

## 3000 BC - 500 AD

Many ancient cultures believed that disabilities were caused by the gods. Either the child's parents had angered the divine, or the child with disabilities was sent as a warning to the community. Some civilizations believed that children with disabilities were possessed.

## 500 AD - 1500 AD

During the Middle Ages, the growing power and influence of the Catholic Church changed how people with disabilities were understood. They began to be seen as Holy Innocents, sent from God and endowed with special grace. Some people with disabilities were sheltered in asylums or monasteries run by the church. Others spent their days in "idiot cages."

## 1350 AD - 1700 AD

Specialized institutions for treatment of the mentally ill were established in Europe. These facilities soon came to house all those considered abnormal, including the disabled. Patients were held in deplorable conditions and were often chained to walls. Bedlam, originally called St. Mary of Bethlehem, was established in London in 1247 and is the most notorious. The word "bedlam" eventually came to mean "chaos" as a result.

## 609 AD - 632 AD

The Quran, the key religious text in Islam, includes the verse, "And give not unto those who are weak of understanding, the substance which God hath appointed you to preserve for them; but maintain them thereout, and clothe them, and speak kindly unto them."

## 1690 AD

John Locke, an English philosopher, published an influential essay in which he asserted that experiences and reflection allow the mind to develop. This idea inspired successful experiments in educating people with disabilities. He also differentiated between idiots and lunatics, or between those with intellectual disabilities and those with mental illness.

## 1866 AD

British physician John Langdon Down described the syndrome that now bears his name, Down syndrome. He used the term Mongolism, because he thought that the characteristic facial features of a person with Down syndrome looked like the features of those descended from the Mongols in Central Asia.

### 1896 AD

The first public school special education class in the U.S. began in Rhode Island.

### 1900 AD - 1925 AD

The Eugenics movement sought to improve humanity through genetics. Disability was blamed for social problems like crime and addiction, and intellectual disability was thought to run in families. Eugenics was behind Nazi ideology.

### 1920 AD - 1975 AD

The Eugenics movement led to forced sterilization of those with disabilities, often without their consent. Additionally, the idea that intellectual disability was hereditary led families to hide or institutionalize their children out of shame. Institutions become even more overcrowded, and conditions worsened.

### 1950 AD - 1975 AD

Parents of children with intellectual disability came together in local groups to advocate for better education and lives for their children. The National Association of Parents and Friends of Retarded Children formed in 1953. Celebrities like author Pearl S. Buck publically wrote and spoke about having children with intellectual disabilities. Books and articles documented the incredibly terrible conditions inside institutions for the disabled, raising public concern. Conditions in these institutions were caused primarily by a lack of funding.

### 1959 AD

The genetic cause of Down syndrome was discovered by Jerome Lejeune.

### 1875 AD - 1975 AD

In the United States, training institutions slowly gave way to custodial institutions, where large numbers of individuals with disabilities could be housed indefinitely, separate from the rest of society. The focus of these institutions shifted from educating pupils to making the institutions themselves financially self-sufficient, in part because of difficult economic circumstances across the U.S. Institutions relied on the free labor of those housed there and were overcrowded. Willowbrook was one such institution.

### 1980 AD - PRESENT

Individuals with Down syndrome most commonly live and attend school in their communities and participate in a wide range of activities, including theatre-making. Adults with Down syndrome attend college and may live independently or in a community-based, supportive housing environment. Individuals with Down syndrome are now self-advocates, leading the conversation about their own lives and the programs, stigma, and laws that affect them.

### 1961 AD

President Kennedy, whose sister Rosemary had an intellectual disability, created the President's Panel on Mental Retardation.



### 1963 AD

In his State of the Union Address, President Kennedy advocated for closing institutions and creating services that would allow people with disabilities to return to their communities. Residential institutions began to be phased out.

### 1968 AD

The Special Olympics was founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, President Kennedy's sister.

### 1972 AD

The Social Security Act of 1972 created Supplemental Security Income, a cash benefit to people with disabilities. Additional legislation in the 1970s established funding for rehabilitation and independent living facilities for people with disabilities.

### 1975 AD

The United Nations adopted the General Assembly Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, which emphasized the right to self-determination of people with disabilities.

# INTERVIEW WITH ACTOR JAMIE BREWER



Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with actor Jamie Brewer about her role as Amy in *Amy and the Orphans*.

**Ted Sod:** Where were you born, and what made you decide to become an actor? Where did you get your training? Did you have any teachers who profoundly influenced you?

**Jamie Brewer:** I was born in Los Alamitos, California. I started studying acting/theatre when I was in 8th and 9th grades. It was part of a College for Kids summer program that helped me learn everything about theatre from development of characters to getting the play on its feet, including costuming and building and painting sets. I learned everything about theatre production. When I was in high school, I was part of a theatre club and learned fun facts about theatre and helped with productions. After graduating from high school, I got involved in Dionysus Theatre in Texas. Deb Nowinski, the founder of Dionysus, brought together actors with disabilities and actors without disabilities to audition for parts equally, and we performed in plays together. I became a resident troupe member, and we traveled around to schools and other places performing in plays. After living and working in Texas, I moved back to Southern California and continued my theatre education at a local college. I've been involved with different theatres here in California. I've gone to school to learn the Sanford Meisner technique for acting. I started learning Meisner when I went to Ruskin School of Acting, and I've been continuing to learn those techniques. I'm also part of a theatre class called Born to Act Players. I'm taking college classes, and I am learning about many other areas of theatre when my work schedule allows. I have a Musical Theatre certificate, and I am going for my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. All the teachers I've had were—and still are—a positive influence on me.

**TS:** Why did you choose to play the role of Amy in Lindsey Ferrentino's *Amy and the Orphans*? What do you think the play is about?

**JB:** I chose to play Amy because I can relate to her personality, her love for movies, and her independence. There are many traits to Amy that I love, and I want to thank Lindsey for thinking of me for this role. This is an amazing play about a road trip among three siblings, Jacob, Maggie, and Amy, and who they are, what they learn from each other, and how they begin to understand the choices their parents made in caring for Amy.

**TS:** What kind of preparation or research do you have to do before rehearsals begin in order to play this role, if any?

**JB:** In preparing to play this role, I talked with Lindsey for several long sessions in order to understand her Aunt Amy's personality and how she talked. This helped me to understand who Amy really was and how she lived her life. I always prepare for a role by studying and reading the script front to back—multiple times. Then I highlight and tab each line I say, so I won't lose my place when I'm in rehearsals. After highlighting my lines, I write them out in a composition book that has my notes on the character in it. I find this allows me to take my time while memorizing each line.

**TS:** How is this character relevant to you? I realize the rehearsal process hasn't begun yet, but can you share some of your initial thoughts about



Jamie Brewer

**who your character is with us? What do you find most challenging/exciting about this role?**

**JB:** I see a lot of myself in Amy—her personality is a little like mine. Amy is someone who is like glue in certain ways. Amy's sister, Maggie, and her brother, Jacob, fight with each other often, and Amy finds humor where there's tension. I love that in Amy's eyes everyone who comes into her life is a friend. Every role is challenging, but this role is exciting for me because it's my first play in New York City. It allows me to show everyone that just because someone may have Down syndrome, it doesn't limit their opportunities. It allows me to show that we are all more alike than different. I'm excited to bring Amy to the New York City audience.

**TS:** At this early stage in your work, how do you understand Amy's relationship to her brother and sister, Jacob and Maggie? How do you understand Amy's relationship to Kathy?

**JB:** I understand that for a lot of Amy's life, she never really knew her family because she lived in Willowbrook for a short time and then in the foster care system. Amy's the younger sister to Jacob and Maggie. She's the baby of the family. I feel that we start to see the relationship build among all three when the road trip begins. Amy's relationship with Kathy started when Amy started living in the group home after she was too old for the foster care system. Kathy and Amy act like sisters even though they are not biologically related.



**TS: What do you look for from a director when working on a play?**

**JB:** A director who's always amazing at his/her job. I love to work with a director who's open minded. It's interesting to learn from their vision and see all the characters develop. I'm always excited to work with directors because they are the ones who help us bring the written words to life. It's also nice when the director learns from actors that they work with. I love to make spontaneous choices, find humor, and bring in choices that all the actors have the chance to give their opinions about.

**TS: How do you keep yourself inspired as an artist?**

**JB:** I keep myself inspired by reading and studying all sorts of media. I read a variety of things: stage plays, books, etc. I also listen to different genres of music, including Spanish and French songs. I love to write. I also love to dance to different styles of music. I love all forms of the arts. I love all things creative. I do some gardening. I'm growing fresh herbs. I get inspired by the people who I meet through my advocacy work. I

have been an advocate for people with disabilities for a very long time. We all need each other.

**TS: Public school students reading this interview will want to know what it takes to be a successful actor. What advice can you give young people who say they want to act?**

**JB:** Always use your voice to ask for what you want. Always listen to advice from family and friends. Remember, this includes the teachers you see at school every day. Always listen to yourself and never give up on what you want. All hobbies can become a career. Always say to yourself and others, "Yes, I can," instead of saying, "I can't!" There's no harm in trying new things that might be challenging. If you get stuck, ask for help when you need it. Don't be afraid to ask for advice to help you reach your goals. Be inspired by others, and you should always try to inspire others around you! •

Debra Monk and Jaime Brewer  
in rehearsal for *Amy and the Orphans*



# ADVOCATING FOR ACTORS WITH DOWN SYNDROME

When Lindsey Ferrentino started work on *Amy and the Orphans*, she wanted to ensure an actor with Down syndrome would play the title role, so she called Gail Williamson, a Los Angeles-based talent agent. Williamson has spent over 20 years advocating for more, and more authentic, characterizations of individuals with disabilities and Down syndrome in TV and film, and she knew at once that Jamie Brewer would be the perfect “Amy.”

When Williamson’s second son, Blair, was born with Down syndrome in 1979, she experienced first-hand how people with the condition were treated. “I would carry him into a restaurant, and there would be total silence.” Ten years later, she noticed a big change. It had to do with “Life Goes On”—the first major TV series to feature a lead character with Down syndrome (see next page for more). Suddenly, strangers treated Blair like a human being and waiters would ask him for his order. Williamson saw the

impact of the media: “The images we see on TV teach in a nonaggressive way; they introduce us to new stories. We learn from these stories, and the next time we meet somebody different, we might not be so afraid.”

“Life Goes On” gave Blair a role model and encouraged him to pursue his love of performing. He filmed a commercial for the Special Olympics in 1991 and received such positive feedback that Williamson began submitting him for auditions. He went on to guest star on “ER,” “Nip/Tuck,” “CSI,” and other popular TV shows. On the sets, Williamson provided extra coaching while subtly helping directors and crews learn how to work with actors with disabilities.

Williamson has seen that people with Down syndrome have a strong tendency to perform, in part because their socialization parallels traditional actor training. “We send them to therapy, where they first learn how to wait. Then, their therapists direct them to do tasks, over and over again. People with Down syndrome are great improv artists. They don’t have an internal editor. They say exactly what they think, but they also follow direction.”

Williamson quickly began advocating for other actors with DS. “Blair’s agent said I was the worst stage mother ever, because when I took him to auditions, I brought a stack of headshots of other actors they should see as well. For me it’s always been about the bigger picture. It’s about Down syndrome becoming more accepted in the world.” To this end, she worked with California’s Media Access Office to promote the employment and accurate portrayal of persons with disabilities in the media. In 2004, Williamson founded Down Syndrome in Media and Arts, a non-profit casting liaison service, and today she runs the Diversity department for the LA-based agency Kazarian/Measures/Ruskin, where she is the “go-to” agent for producers—like Ryan Murphy of “Glee” and “American Horror Story” or John Wells of “ER” and “Shameless”—looking for actors with disabilities.

While the entertainment industry has become more diverse, there’s room for growth. Just as it is not acceptable to cast a white actor to play a person of color, Williamson hopes for a future where major characters with disabilities will be played by actors with the same disability. She also looks forward to seeing more diverse casting for incidental roles, like waiters and receptionists, because more inclusion on TV and film screens promotes more inclusion for real people. •



Gail and Blair Williamson

# SOME FACES OF DOWN SYNDROME



## CHRIS BURKE IN "LIFE GOES ON" (1989-1993)

On the first network show to feature a major character with Down syndrome, Chris "Corky" Thatcher was an 18-year-old in a typical middle-class family who faced challenges of attending a mainstream high school. In later seasons, Corky had a job as a movie usher and a girlfriend (then wife), also with Down syndrome. Burke earned

a Golden Globe nomination and went on to serve as a Goodwill Ambassador for National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS). Today at age 52, he lives in Delaware County and hopes to someday work on the other side of the camera.

Watch Chris Burke in scenes from "Life Goes On" [HERE](#)



## LAUREN POTTER IN "GLEE" (2009-2015)

Potter appeared in 56 episodes as Becky Johnson, one of the McKinley High "Cheerios" and henchperson to Jane Lynch's Sue Sylvester. Becky's brassy personality and zippy one-liners gave a different image of people with DS, corresponding to the show's focus on inclusion of all types of people. "Glee" also featured a story about Sue's sister Jean, who also had Down syndrome and was played

by Robin Trocki. Potter was nominated for a Screen Actors Guild award and honored with the SAG/AFTRA Harold Russell Award at the 2012 Media Access Awards. In 2011, President Obama appointed Potter to a special Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities.

Watch Lauren Potter discuss her work on "Glee" [HERE](#)

## JAMIE BREWER IN "AMERICAN HORROR STORY" (2011-2015)



Jamie Brewer with Jessica Lange in "American Horror Story"

Brewer was featured in four seasons of AHS: in "Murder House" she played Adelaide ("Addy"), a young woman with Down syndrome tormented by her villainous mother Constance (Jessica Lange); then a clairvoyant witch in "Coven"; a living ventriloquist doll on "Freak Show," and as Hedda on "Cult." Brewer was featured in a major article in *Entertainment Weekly* about Actors with Down syndrome, and in 2015, she became the first model with Down syndrome to appear in New York's Fashion Week as part of Carrie Hammer's "Role Models Not Runway Models" campaign. Brewer continues to work as an advocate and activist for people with Down syndrome.

See Jamie Brewer discuss modeling and her work in the entertainment industry [HERE](#)

## "BORN THIS WAY" (2015-PRESENT)

A&E's Emmy-winning, unscripted reality show follows seven friends with DS in their 20s and 30s, living in Los Angeles, pursuing jobs and dreams, and interacting with family and romantic partners. The cast members have different levels of abilities and distinct personalities. Their parents are also featured, talking openly about the experiences of raising a child with Down syndrome. Noting that the show was created by the producers of MTV's "The Real World", *Hollywood Reporter* remarked that "by treating the cast in much the same way they would treat any reality-show participants, the producers avoid any kind of condescending or patronizing tone."

See the cast of "Born This Way" [HERE](#)

# REPRESENTING DISABILITIES ON STAGE: THE BREAKTHROUGH PLAYS



In a study conducted in September 2017 by the Ruderman Foundation, it was found that, while 20% of the US population has a disability, less than 2% of television characters do. The study also found that 95% of those characters are played by able-bodied actors.

The notion that characters with disabilities should be played by actors who have them is not a new one. In 1980, Phyllis Frelich became the first deaf actor to win a Tony Award®, for her performance in Mark Medoff's new play, *Children of a Lesser God*. The play, which chronicles the personal and professional relationship between a deaf student and her hearing teacher, played on Broadway for two years, with multiple deaf actors taking over Frelich's role. It was also adapted into a 1986 film, with Marlee Matlin (in Frelich's role) becoming the first deaf actor to win an Oscar. The play is being revived on Broadway this year, with deaf actor Lauren Ridloff making her Broadway debut.

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Simon Stephens also made waves recently, winning the 2015 Tony Award for Best New Play. Like Mark Haddon's novel from which it was adapted, the play chronicles a boy with autism investigating the death of a neighbor's dog. After much protest when the main role of Christopher Boone was repeatedly cast with non-autistic actors, Mickey Rowe became the first autistic actor to play Christopher in September 2017. In speaking about the role, Rowe noted that the only change that had to be made to the production in order to accommodate him was enlarging the font of the script. "All too often...we are learning about autism from others instead of going straight to the source and learning from autistic adults," he wrote. "If you are different, if

you access the world differently, if you need special accommodations, then theatre needs you! The world needs you!"

Elsewhere in recent history, Martyna Majok's play *The Cost of Living*, which played off-Broadway, explored the relationships of a double above-the-knee amputee and a man with cerebral palsy, both of whom were played by actors with the same disabilities. Madison Ferris made history as the first lead actor on Broadway in a wheelchair when she played Laura in the 2017 revival of *The Glass Menagerie*. While the play mentions that Laura walks with a limp, the character is typically cast with an able-bodied actor, with the recent production making the choice to more actively explore Laura's disability.

Deaf West Theatre has taken the casting of actors with disabilities a step further with their revivals of *Big River* in 2003 with Roundabout and *Spring Awakening* in 2015 on Broadway. While the text of neither musical refers to deafness, these productions saw them performed simultaneously in American Sign Language and English, often with both deaf and hearing actors playing one role. *Spring Awakening* marked the first time that a Broadway production was interpreted for deaf-blind theatregoers, which even in the last few years has become a more widespread offering.

The journey to fair representation on stage for those with disabilities is still far from over, but it is these breakthrough plays and productions that have allowed progress to be made and will continue to make progress in the years to come. •





# FAMILY PERSPECTIVES OF DOWN SYNDROME

Families of children with Down syndrome often grapple with others' misconceptions about the challenges and rewards that they might negotiate from year to year. Many assume that life with a child or sibling with Down syndrome primarily brings about additional stress or even dysfunction within a family unit—a perception likely reinforced by several early studies on such families, which did mainly focus on the negative effects on marital relationships, social interactions, and mental health that family members of a child with Down syndrome might experience. Certainly, there are special difficulties these families face that are important to identify, but recent studies have shifted focus to show that, on a large scale, a family's experiences with children and siblings with Down syndrome are much more positive than earlier studies and perceptions might have one believe.

These misconceptions are important to address, especially with the rise of noninvasive prenatal testing (NIPT), a procedure in which a blood test administered to a pregnant woman analyzes her unborn baby's DNA and assesses its chance of being born with a number of genetic disorders, including Down syndrome. While this test affords expecting mothers more information than ever before, members of the Down syndrome community worry that expecting mothers, when presented with the knowledge that their babies

would most likely be born with Down syndrome, might indiscriminately choose to terminate their pregnancies. A 2015 study conducted by Emily C. Higuchi and colleagues showed that, indeed, the rise of NIPT may inadvertently increase negative attitudes toward individuals with Down syndrome, supporting the fears of those who are concerned about the impact of NIPT on the Down syndrome community.

Armed with this knowledge, a number of organizations have endeavored to provide expecting mothers with a fuller description of life with a child with Down syndrome. Testimonials and studies in recent decades have shown that the vast majority of parents and siblings of children with Down syndrome are overwhelmingly proud and supportive of their children, and the presence of a child with Down syndrome in a family in fact often leads to a higher familial emotional "resilience" as compared to other families. A study by Cliff Cunningham published in 1996 showed that, for instance, the divorce rate of American couples with children with Down syndrome has always been lower than the national average. Siblings of children with Down syndrome, furthermore, often display higher levels of maturity, acceptance, and social literacy than their peers. Parents also report that, since having their child with Down syndrome, they and their typically-developing children were "less concerned with trivia [and] less materialistic and self-centred" than they had been before.

This is not to say that, overall, there are not moments of difficulty and transition for families of children with Down syndrome, especially as their children get older. As these children enter their teenage years, parents increasingly report strain on their lifestyles, likely because children with Down syndrome often don't quite achieve the same degree of independence as do their typically-developing peers. Studies have shown, moreover, that many children with Down syndrome display behavior problems that stretch from childhood into young adulthood and can complicate the responsibilities of parents and siblings.

The picture that emerges from these studies is an important one. Families of children with Down syndrome are very much like families with typically-developing children, and while the ups and downs that they experience may be unique to their situation, the majority of reports from these families are very positive. Especially for future parents of children with Down syndrome, it is vital to characterize the experiences of these families accurately. •



Lindsey Ferrentino's mother and Aunt Amy

# DESIGNER STATEMENTS

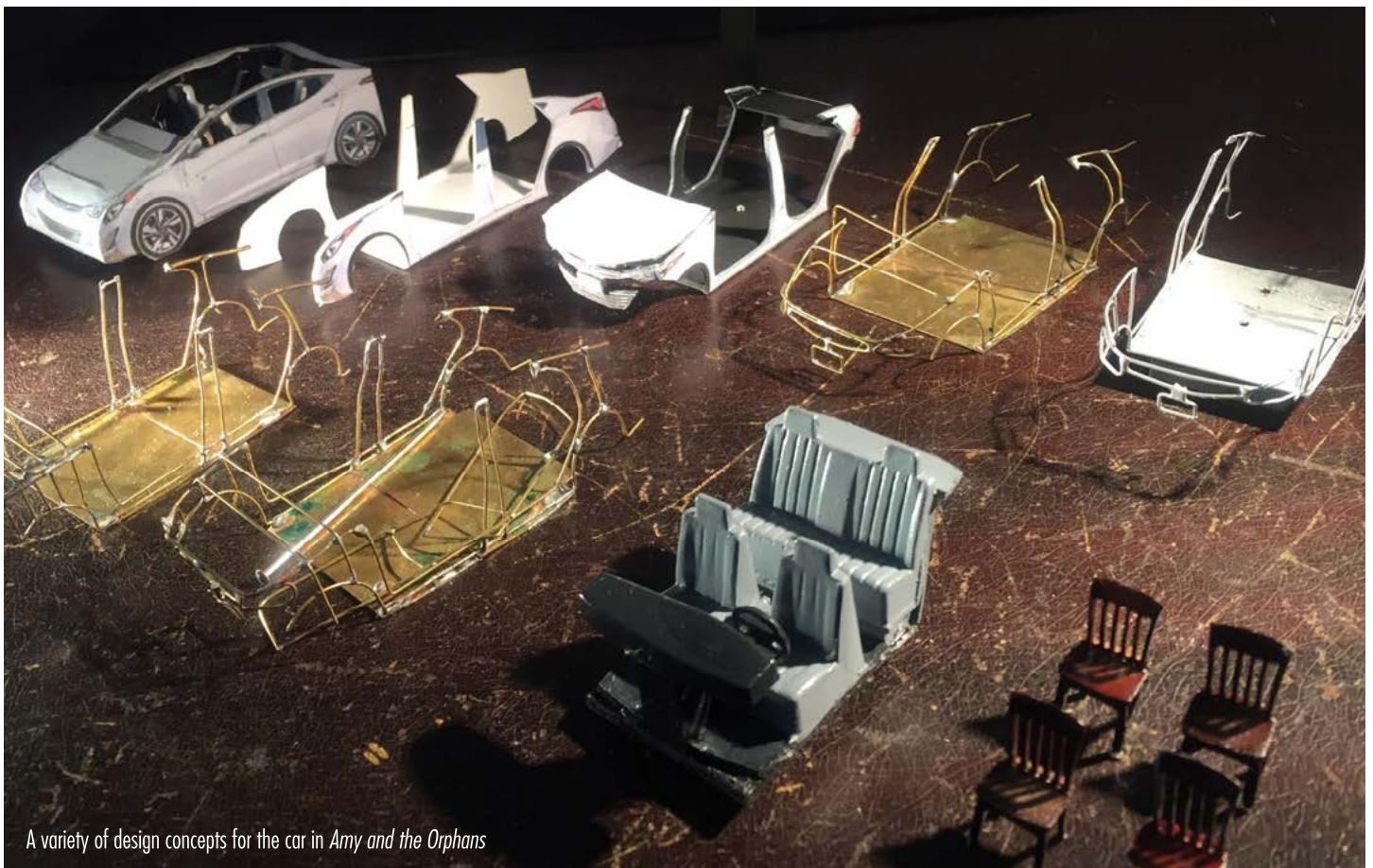
## RACHEL HAUCK—SET DESIGN

*Amy and the Orphans* is full of design challenges. For starters, it is a road trip play. Lindsey Ferrentino has written a play that has 18 scenes in 13 locations and in which there is no home base. Every location she describes is transient and impersonal, and most of the scenes take place in public locations. As a designer, the question becomes *why?* Before Scott Ellis, the director, and I could answer that, the technical needs of the play had to be addressed. We needed to find a way to bring the audience into multiple locations quickly and efficiently and, I hope, wittily. Lindsey's writing has a generous, comic, open heart, which would be easy to squash with cumbersome moving scenery. Finding a visual vocabulary that allows for speedy and efficient changes of location is essential. Ken Posner and John Gromada, who are designing the lights and sound, respectively, are remarkable partners in this endeavor. How best can we keep the action moving forward while still embracing the emotional needs of the play? With this play, the design had to start with the car. As with almost any play that involves a car, the aesthetic of the car defines the aesthetic of the production. This car has enormous and

complex needs. We considered every version of a car we could think of, from using four chairs and a steering wheel to putting a full car on a turntable. Ultimately, what is essential is the accessibility of the actors' physicality. If the audience can't see the actors' body language as well as being able to hear their dialogue, we wouldn't get the full emotional impact of these scenes. That was step one. Beyond that, with a play that is constantly moving, what became important was discovering where and why the characters find stillness. No spoilers, but... the answer turns out to be in response to the unasked question of why Amy loves the color red.

## ALEJO VIETTI—COSTUME DESIGN

*Amy and the Orphans* is a great challenge for me as a costume designer. With a contemporary, naturalistic play—when both the performers and the audience members are very familiar with contemporary dressing—it is important not to resort to clichés. The focus is on conveying, in a truthful and realistic way, the intentions of the playwright as well as the spirit of each character. My job is to reflect their true essence through the way they look and dress. Before any of the actors speak, the audience should have a great deal of



A variety of design concepts for the car in *Amy and the Orphans*

information about each one of them just from the way they present themselves onstage. While my work is to support the director's and the author's vision, I also collaborate with the actors and with my fellow designers in order to create a visually cohesive world.

For this particular project, I had to find practical solutions to the very specific demands of the script. For Jacob, I had to figure out how to create comfortable and credible braces; for Kathy, a realistic pregnancy belly and "papaya" tattoo. All these elements should look as real as possible. If at any moment any of these elements look phony or get in the way of the performers, the audience might be distracted away from the story. It's up to me to figure out the logistics of how these pieces come together, how they are designed, applied, and how they will last for the run of the show.

**KENNETH POSNER—LIGHTING DESIGN**

*Amy and the Orphans* speaks to me because of the challenges that people with Down syndrome face, especially regarding their fight for independence. There are many misconceptions about people with Down syndrome when it comes to their ability to thrive and persevere on their own. We meet the title character, Amy, as an adult and learn her story. She has successfully built a life for herself. The play takes place in both past and present. To reflect this, the lighting design will define the past by using severe angles of light and muted colors, and for the scenes that take place in the present, there will be softer, crisper light. The architecture of Rachel Hauck's blue paneled design will reconfigure to

become the many locations required in the play, and the quality of light I design will help define those spaces and inform the play's landscape.

**JOHN GROMADA—MUSIC AND SOUND DESIGN**

The music and sound design for *Amy and the Orphans* is about facilitating the transitions from location to location in a seamless way, propelling the action and imbuing the many scene changes with energy – all the while helping tell the story. Because there are so many locations that are sketched in with just a few scenic details, it is up to sound to flesh out each place we travel to – be it an airport terminal, a Chinese restaurant, or the inside of a car. Sound is able to spur the audience's imagination by filling in the details and by providing aural cues that are recognizable. It is my job to carry the energy from one scene to the next, providing a frame for the entire production and occasionally giving the audience a brief rest from the action. In *Amy and the Orphans*, the challenge is to do that in a way that is compelling and tasteful, not maudlin or cloying, remaining upbeat while dealing with some intense subject matter. For this show, I am establishing a musical theme and vocabulary at the outset of the show with a "mother piece," and then I will compose several variations on it for transitions. I will explore various permutations of the instruments used in the opening as the play progresses and introduce a few thematic ideas using rhythm and melody. I am working towards a suite of compositions that ideally add up to a cohesive whole and give shape, form, and color to the entire production. •



Costume research for *Amy and the Orphans*

# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

FOR  
EDUCATORS



## HOW DO WRITERS CREATE A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT DOWN SYNDROME?

---

(Common Core Code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4)

Prior to watching *Amy and the Orphans*, students develop their understanding of Down syndrome through a creative project.

**PREPARE** Explain that public service announcements (PSAs) are unpaid advertisements which raise awareness and change public attitudes about an issue. Today they will create a PSA to raise awareness about Down syndrome. Some examples of noteworthy PSAs for other issues may be viewed here: [Smoke the Bear](#) | [Safety Belt Education](#)

**RESEARCH** Working in groups of 4-5, students research Down syndrome on the National Down Syndrome Society website [HERE](#). Make sure they also review the preferred terminology on page 6 of this Upstage Guide.

**WRITE** Have students write a script and/or a storyboard for a PSA with the goal of raising awareness about Down syndrome. They may address causes, facts, preferred language, or advocacy policies. Challenge students to engage their audience, using narrative, emotional connection, and respectful humor, in a PSA that would run between 30-60 seconds.

**SHARE** Students act their PSAs for the class. If your class has time and technology, students may film their PSAs using phones or iPads.

**DISCUSS** How has your understanding of Down syndrome changed through this process? Why is it important for more people to understand DS? Tell students they will be seeing a play about a character with DS, played by Jamie Brewer or Edward Barbanell. They may wish to read Jamie's interview on pages 12-13 before seeing the show.

.....

## HOW DOES A DIRECTOR STAGE A DRIVING SCENE?

---

(Common Core Code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C)

Before attending *Amy and the Orphans*, students attempt to stage a scene set inside a moving car.

**ANALYZE** Share with the class that *Amy and the Orphans* is about three adult siblings driving across Long Island on Thanksgiving weekend. Some of the action takes place inside a car on the highway. Using a smartboard, analyze the view of the stage [found [HERE](#)] and the seating chart [found [HERE](#)]. What type of stage is this? How would you describe the theatre overall? What's the relationship between the actors and the audience in this theatre? How might we create a similar stage configuration in this classroom?

**REHEARSE** Break the class into groups of five (four actors and one director) and pass out this excerpt [found [HERE](#)] from *Amy and the Orphans*. Hold a table read of the script, either having the class watch one group or work individually in groups. After the table read, give students time to rehearse the scene, staging the scene using only set pieces available in the classroom.

**SHARE** Have each group perform for the class, using the stage space defined at the beginning of this activity. What were the challenges of staging a road trip scene? What techniques did the actors and director use to keep it visually interesting? What might you ask a set designer to create to help stage this scene?



# POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

---

## HOW DOES A PLAYWRIGHT EXPLORE HOW HUMANS USE MOVIES AND ENTERTAINMENT AS ESCAPISM?

---

(Common Core Code: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3)

In *Amy and the Orphans*, we meet a character who uses movies as a way of coping with the struggles of daily human life. This activity has students write their own monologues using quotes that they hold close to their experience.

**READ** Read Amy's ending monologue in which she quotes different classic films.

**DISCUSS** Talk with the students about the way we use television and movies to escape our own lives. Is there a healthy way to do this? Is there an unhealthy way to do this? How can the entertainment industry garner empathy, and how does empathizing with a character change our own experience?

**WRITE** Write your own monologue using quotes from your favorite movies. Think about why you chose these specific quotes and how they relate back to your own life.

**SHARE** Students act out their monologues for the class. Discuss the writer's intention behind the monologue and how it resonated for other individuals.

---

## HOW DOES A GRAPHIC DESIGNER CREATE AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY POSTER?

---

(Common Core Code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5)

After seeing *Amy and the Orphans*, students create a poster that clearly advocates for one aspect of the National Down Syndrome Society's Legislative Agenda.

**RESEARCH** Today, people Down syndrome are self-advocates, working with their families and communities to lead the conversation about the programs and laws that affect them. Study the National Down Syndrome Society's legislative agenda (or one segment of the agenda), [found [HERE](#)] and ask students to choose one priority they feel strongly about.

**CREATE** Distribute 11x17 sheets of white paper and the art supplies of your choice. Ask students, working alone or in small groups, to design a poster for use on a march advocating for individuals with Down syndrome. Their poster should advocate for just one point of the NDSS legislative agenda and should quickly and clearly communicate its message. (If desired, study images from recent marches and generate a list of effective visual characteristics.)

**SHARE** Hang posters on one wall of the classroom. Gather students in the far end of the room and take one minute to study the posters at a distance. Have class turn their backs on the posters and discuss: Which posters best communicate their message? How? What made them memorable? Which principles of design are used?

# RESOURCES

During her interview, playwright Lindsey Ferrentino offered up a list of different resources for those looking for more information about Down syndrome advocacy. Here is what she provided:

## National Down Syndrome Congress

30 Mansell Court, Suite 108  
Roswell, GA 30076  
Toll Free: 800.232.NDSC (6372)  
Local: 770.604.9500  
Fax: 770.604.9898  
Email: info@ndscenter.org

## NYC Buddy Walk:

<http://www.ndss.org/play/national-buddy-walk-program/>

## Take the pledge not to the say the "R-word" anymore:

<http://www.r-word.org/>

If you want to work with a differently-abled actor, Lindsey suggests connecting with:

## KMR Diversity Department:

Cindy Kazarian  
Gail Williamson  
<http://kmrtalent.com/diversity/>

## VisABLE Talent

<http://visiblepeople.com/>

# RESOURCES

American Theatre wing, "Working in the Theatre: Sign Language Theatre," 20 January 2016. <http://americantheatre.org/working-in-the-theatre/sign-language-theatre/>

Amy Amatangelo. "Born This Way": TV Review." Hollywood Reporter. Dec 7 2015. Web. Accessed Dec 20, 2017.

Bower, Anna, et al. "Hardiness in Families with and without a Child with Down Syndrome." *Down Syndrome Research and Practice*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1998, pp. 71-77., doi:10.3104/reports.79.

Brignell, Victoria. "Ancient World: Smeared in Mustard, Paraded Naked - the Curious and Often Cruel Treatment of Disabled People in the Ancient World." *New Statesman*, New Statesman, 7 Apr. 2008. [www.newstatesman.com/blogs/crips-column/2008/04/disabled-slaves-child-roman](http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/crips-column/2008/04/disabled-slaves-child-roman).

The Broadway League, "Children of a Lesser God." IBDB: The Internet Broadway Database. <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-show/children-of-a-lesser-god-2548>

"Chris Burke, 'Life Goes On' Actor, Reflects On The Message Behind His Success (VIDEO)." *Huff Post/OWN*. August 22, 2014/Updated Dec 6 2017. Web. Accessed Dec 20, 2017.

"Chris Burke: Then and Now." *ABILITY Magazine*. Volume 2007, Issue 2. Web. Accessed Dec 20, 2017.

Connor, Jackson. "Autism Community Criticizes Hit Broadway Play for Opting, Again, to Cast a Non-Autistic Lead." *The Village Voice*, 18 August 2015. <https://www.villagevoice.com/2015/08/18/autism-community-criticizes-hit-broadway-play-for-opting-again-to-cast-a-non-autistic-lead/>

Cunningham, Cliff. "Families of Children with Down Syndrome." *Down Syndrome Research and Practice*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1996, pp. 87-95., doi:10.3104/perspectives.66.

The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Poor Law." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 14 Feb. 2017. [www.britannica.com/event/Poor-Law](http://www.britannica.com/event/Poor-Law).

Engels, David. "Monstrum, Greek and Roman." *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* - Engels - Wiley Online Library, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 26 Oct. 2012. [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah17493/abstract](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah17493/abstract).

"Glee." *Disabled TV Characters*. April 24, 2017. Web. Accessed Dec 20, 2017.

"Guide for Preferred Methods for Acceptance of Product." *NDSS Preferred Language Guide*, <http://www.ndss.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/NDSS-Preferred-Language-Guide-2015.pdf>

Hannah, Charlie. "Jamie Brewer, Down Syndrome, & American Horror Story." *Moviepilot.com*. August 18, 2016. Web. Accessed Dec 20, 2017.

Higuchi, Emily C., et al. "Non-Invasive Prenatal Screening for Trisomy 21: Consumers' Perspectives." *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part A*, vol. 170, no. 2, 9 Nov. 2015, pp. 375-385., doi:10.1002/ajmg.a.37460. <http://www.ndss.org/about-down-syndrome/down-syndrome/Internet-Encyclopedia-of-Philosophy>, [www.iep.utm.edu/aris-pol/](http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-pol/).

"Mental Illness During the Middle Ages." *Science and Its Times: Understanding the Social Significance of Scientific Discovery*, Encyclopedia.com, [www.encyclopedia.com/science/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/mental-illness-during-middle-ages](http://www.encyclopedia.com/science/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/mental-illness-during-middle-ages).

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. "Parallels In Time A History of Developmental Disabilities." *Parallels In Time | A History of Developmental Disabilities*, The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2017, [mn.gov/mnddc/parallels/index.html](http://mn.gov/mnddc/parallels/index.html).

"Noninvasive Prenatal Tests (NIPTs)." *NDSS, National Down Syndrome Society*, [www.ndss.org/advocate/ndss-legislative-agenda/healthcare-research/noninvasive-prenatal-tests-nipts/](http://www.ndss.org/advocate/ndss-legislative-agenda/healthcare-research/noninvasive-prenatal-tests-nipts/).

"Online Service to Locate Talent with Developmental Disabilities." *Down Syndrome in Arts and Media*. 2008-2013. Web. Accessed Dec 20, 2017.

Park, Madison. "'Glee' star tapped to join Obama's committee." *The Chart*. CNN. Nov 14, 2011.

Peterson, Margie. "Muhlenberg College grad makes Broadway history in *The Glass Menagerie*." *The Morning Call*, 14 April 2017. <http://www.mcall.com/entertainment/arts/mc-madison-ferris-glass-menagerie-wheelchair-sally-field-20170415-story.html>

Petski, Denise. "'Born This Way' Docuseries Renewed For Season 4 By A&E." *Deadline Hollywood*. August 23, 2017. Web. Accessed Dec 20, 2017.

"A Promising Future Together: A Guide for New and Expectant Parents." *NDSS, National Down Syndrome Society*, [www.ndss.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NDSS-NPP-English.pdf](http://www.ndss.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NDSS-NPP-English.pdf).

Reynolds, Tammy, et al. "Early Medical Explanations Of Intellectual Disability." *Mental Help Early Medical Explanations of Intellectual Disability Comments*, 21 May 2013, [www.mentalhelp.net/articles/early-medical-explanations-of-intellectual-disability/](http://www.mentalhelp.net/articles/early-medical-explanations-of-intellectual-disability/).

Rice, Lynette. "The EW Report: Actors with Down Syndrome." *Entertainment Weekly*. March 2, 2012.

Rowe, Mickey. "The First Actor with Autism to Play *Curious Incident's* Autistic Lead Speaks Out." *Playbill*, 18 December 2017.

<http://www.playbill.com/article/the-first-actor-with-autism-to-play-curious-incidents-autistic-lead-speaks-out>

Skotko, Brian G., et al. "Family Perspectives about Down Syndrome." *American Journal of Medical Genetics*, vol. 170, no. 4, 22 Dec. 2015, pp. 930-941., doi:10.1002/ajmg.a.37520

Skotko, Brian G., et al. "Having a Brother or Sister with Down Syndrome: Perspectives from Siblings." *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part A*, vol. 155, no. 10, 9 Sept. 2011, pp. 2348-2359., doi:10.1002/ajmg.a.34228.

Skotko, Brian G., et al. "Having a Son or Daughter with Down Syndrome: Perspectives from Mothers and Fathers." *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part A*, vol. 155, no. 10, 13 Sep. 2011, pp. 2335-2347., doi:10.1002/ajmg.a.34293.

Squire, Tari Hartman and Kristina Kopic and Daryl "Chill" Mitchell. "The Ruderman White Paper: On The Challenge to Create More Authentic Disability Casting and Representation on TV." *Ruderman Family Foundation*, September 2017. [http://rudermanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/tv\\_challenge\\_wp.pdf](http://rudermanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/tv_challenge_wp.pdf)

Stasio, Marilyn. "Off Broadway Review: Cost of Living." *Variety*, 8 June 2017. <http://variety.com/2017/legit/reviews/cost-of-living-review-play-1202458260/>

Van Sickle, Eli. "Deafness on Broadway." *HowlRound*, 21 October 2015. <http://howlround.com/deafness-on-broadway>

"What Is Down Syndrome? | National Down Syndrome Society." *NDSS*, [www.ndss.org/about-down-syndrome/down-syndrome/](http://www.ndss.org/about-down-syndrome/down-syndrome/).

# ABOUT ROUNDABOUT

## ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director/CEO) is committed to producing the highest-quality theatre with the finest artists, sharing stories that endure and providing accessibility to all audiences. A not-for-profit company founded in 1965, Roundabout fulfills its mission each season through the production of classic plays and musicals; development and production of new works by established and emerging writers; educational initiatives that enrich the lives of children and adults; and a subscription model and audience outreach programs that cultivate and engage all audiences. Roundabout presents this work on its five stages and across the country through national tours. Roundabout has been recognized with 36 Tonys®, 51 Drama Desks, 62 Outer Critics Circle, 12 Obie and 18 Lucille Lortel Awards. More information on Roundabout's mission, history and programs can be found by visiting [roundabouttheatre.org](http://roundabouttheatre.org).

## 2017-2018 SEASON



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: INTERVIEW WITH KIM ORIA, SENIOR MANAGER OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**Ted Sod:** Tell us about yourself. Where were you born and educated? How and when did you become the Education department's Senior Manager of Education Programs?

**Kim Oria:** I grew up in Chicago and attended public schools. I was fortunate to have access to free arts programs—these programs were offered to the schools I attended, so I was bitten by the theatre bug early on. My senior year of high school, I decided I wanted to pursue the management side of theatre, so I attended Ithaca College for Theatre Arts Management. That degree allowed me to take classes in directing, acting, and design while also studying finance, marketing, and business. I came to New York after graduating from Ithaca and got hired as the Education Apprentice here at Roundabout. After completing the nine-month apprenticeship, I went to work at Manhattan Theatre Club as their Education Coordinator. I completed one season with MTC, and then I transitioned into my current job at Roundabout in 2013.

**TS:** Describe your job at RTC. What are your responsibilities?

**KO:** I manage Roundabout Education's theatre-based programming, which includes our afterschool program, the Roundabout Youth Ensemble (RYE), the intern and apprentice programs, and Theatre Plus, our audience engagement programs. I'm responsible for these programs running smoothly and serving our various constituencies well. Every project I work on offers a wide range of programming to its participants, so to do my job I have to wear different hats. In

any one day, I might be acting as hiring manager for the career development programs, mentoring the students in RYE, and/or working as an events manager. It's a job that keeps me on my toes!

**TS:** What is the best part of your job? What is the hardest part?

**KO:** Over the summer, the RYE fully produces a student-written play in Roundabout's Black Box Theatre. Students make all of the artistic and managerial decisions. Seeing this come together is the best part of my job. I act as producer for the show, and I get to work with these students as directors, stage managers, technicians, actors, and designers. I get to see a group of 30 young people transformed by creating art with one another and own the work they're doing. It's inspiring to see the stories they choose to tell and to see them come together as an ensemble. The hardest part is working with these students for four years and then having to say goodbye when they graduate. The consolation is seeing them go on to do inspiring work in their own lives!

**TS:** Why do you choose to work at Roundabout?

**KO:** I choose to work at Roundabout because the work we do bridges my passion for community outreach and for theatre. It's a wonderful environment because I am able to introduce students from many of the boroughs of NYC to the world of theatre and to foster in them a passion for the arts. •

Learn more at [roundabouttheatre.org](http://roundabouttheatre.org). Find us on:



# WHEN YOU GET TO THE THEATRE

FOR EDUCATORS



## TICKET POLICY

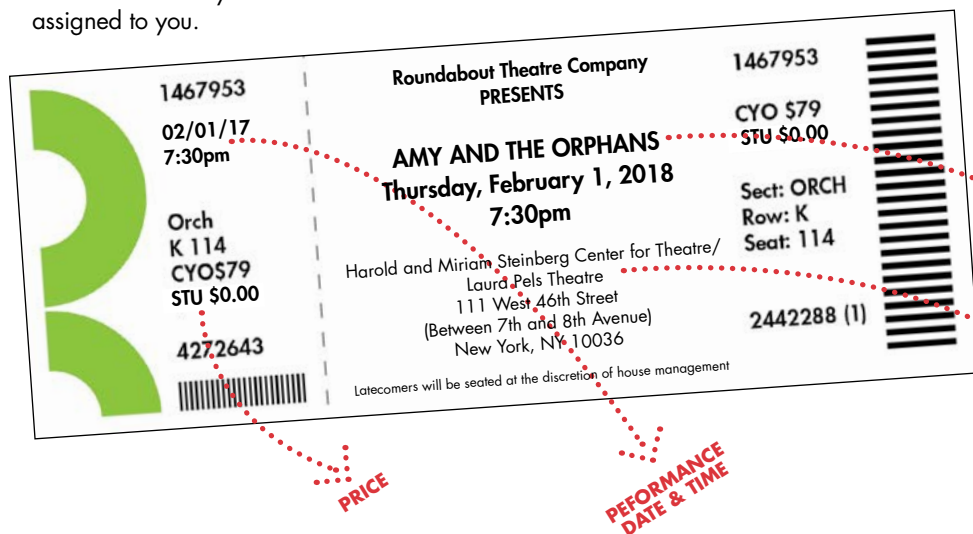
As a student, you will receive a discounted ticket to the show from your teacher on the day of the performance. You will notice that the ticket indicates the section, row, and number of your assigned seat. When you show your ticket to the usher inside the theatre, he or she will show you where your seat is located. These tickets are not transferable and you must sit in the seat assigned to you.

## PROGRAMS

All the theatre patrons are provided with a program that includes information about the people who put the production together. In the "Who's Who" section, for example, you can read about the actors' roles in other plays and films, perhaps some you have already seen.

## AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

As you watch the show please remember that the biggest difference between live theatre and a film is that the actors can see you and hear you and your behavior can affect their performance. They appreciate your applause and laughter, but can be easily distracted by people talking or getting up in the middle of the show. So please save your comments or need to use the restroom for intermission. Also, there is no food permitted in the theatre, no picture taking or recording of any kind, and if you have a cell phone or anything else that might make noise, please turn it off before the show begins.



Major support for *Amy and the Orphans* is provided by The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation and the Laura Pels International Foundation for Theater.

This production is also supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Roundabout's work with new and emerging playwrights and directors, as well as development of new work, is made possible by Kathryn Patterson and Tom Kempner.

We gratefully acknowledge the Roundabout Leaders for New Works: Alec Baldwin, James Costa and John Archibald, Linda L. D'Onofrio, Peggy and Mark Ellis, Jodi Glucksmann, Sylvia Golden, Hess Foundation, Inc., Judith and Douglas Krupp, K. Myers, Laura Pels International Foundation for Theater, Laura S. Rodgers, Seedlings Foundation, Mary Solomon, Lauren and Danny Stein, Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, and Dr. Leonard Tow.

Roundabout Theatre Company is thankful to the following donors for their generous support of \$5,000 or more to Roundabout's education programs during the 2017-2018 fiscal years.

Anonymous  
The Aeroflex Foundation  
Altman Foundation  
Bank of America  
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation  
Rose M. Badgley Residuary Charitable Trust  
The Theodore H. Barth Foundation  
The Honorable Joseph Borelli  
Philippa and James Burke  
Karen McKeel Calby  
Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity  
R. Martin Chavez and Adam Norbury  
Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation  
Con Edison  
Dalio Foundation  
Jeanne Feldhusen and Gerry Jager  
Kathleen Fisher and Rocco Maggionato  
The Ford Foundation  
The Honorable Daniel R. Garodnick  
Myrna and Freddie Gershon  
The Golden Family  
Gray Foundation

Mr. Barry Gurin and Mr. Buzz Kelly  
Barbara McIntyre Hack  
Meryl Hartzband  
Muna and Basem Hishmeh  
Tracey and Craig Huff  
Karen and Paul Isaac  
JobsFirstNYC  
The JPB Foundation  
The Kaplen Foundation  
James and Josie Kelly  
Elroy and Terry Krumholz Foundation, Inc.  
Ms. Barbara Lee and Mr. Alston Gardner  
Peter J. Lyon  
Tristin and Marty Mannion  
David and Anita Massengill  
Sara Miller McCune/SAGE Publications, Inc.  
Mellam Family Foundation  
The Michael and Pamela Miles Gift Fund  
Carol Mitchell  
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs  
New York Community Trust  
New York State Council on the Arts

Cynthia Nixon  
Charles R. O'Malley Charitable Lead Trust  
The Pinkerton Foundation  
The Honorable Debi Rose  
The Rudin Foundation  
Ms. Samantha Rudin and Mr. David Earls  
May and Samuel Rudin Foundation  
S&P Global  
Steven Sanders and Madelyn Simon  
The Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation  
Denise R. Sobel  
Mary Solomon/Goldman Sachs Gives  
Stavros Niarchos Foundation  
Jeffrey and Janis Ing Strauss  
Theater Subdistrict Council, LDC  
Tikkun Olam Foundation, Inc.  
Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund  
Michael Tuch Foundation  
Diane and Tom Tuft  
The Walt Disney Company  
Emily J. Zuckerman, Esq. and Dr. Edward H. Bonfield

Education programs at Roundabout are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

