

PENN STATE ALTOONA'S DIVISION OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES PRESENTS

CIRCLE MIRROR
TRANSFORMATION
BY ANNIE BAKER



November 14 & 15, 7:30 p.m.

WOLF KUHN THEATRE

MISCIAGNA FAMILY CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS



PennState
Altoona

Circle Mirror Transformation

By Annie Baker

Directed by Leila McCrumb

Cast List

Emma Freidhof	Marty
Aruzhan (Ari) Hawranick	Lauren
Nicolas Johnson	Shultz
Preston Pinos	James
Adria Schmidt	Theresa

Playwrights Horizons, Inc., New York City, produced the World Premiere of CIRCLE MIRROR TRANSFORMATION Off-Broadway in 2009.

CIRCLE MIRROR TRANSFORMATION was developed, in part, with the assistance of the Sundance Institute Theatre Program, with additional support from the Sundance Institute's Time Warner Storytelling Fellowship.

Director's Note

It's not possible to take the humanity out of acting. By its very nature, studying the human condition can teach us countless lessons about ourselves and each other, though getting there is seldom easy. As many of my actors continue to discover, it requires a great deal of self-awareness, discipline, and fearlessness to look inward and shed our egos. However, both of which are absolutely essential to embodying a character, and beyond making us good actors, doing so frees us from physical and emotional tension, builds self-love, trust, and confidence, increases our sense of self and others, and ultimately allows us to lead a more intentional and fulfilling life. I viewed this play as an opportunity to re-enforce these lessons to my students while offering the audience a unique, fly-on-the-wall perspective into the training, as the lessons you see in this production are many of the same lessons which informed these actors' performances. Annie Baker's exceptional writing demonstrates how deeply this usually fun, often challenging, and sometimes vulnerable environment can affect our lives beyond the work that we do, all while highlighting the impermanence of meaningful human connections.

The beauty of this play lies in its subtleness: an unglamorized slice of life that is as equally momentous as it is mundane. These characters carry themselves like real people, and they are willing to explore and look inward for the chance at growing both as individuals and members of society. Even better, they're played by real people who are doing just the same. As Baker says, this play is "a strange little naturalistic meditation on theatre and life and death and the passing of time." Though it resonates a little extra with anyone who's ever taken an acting class, there's certainly something to take away for everyone. I truly love this play, and I sincerely hope that you do, too.

- *Leila McCrumb, Director*

Cast Bios

Emma Freidhof (Marty) is a first-year student studying chemistry. She has performed in multiple high school productions in the past and is excited to take acting a step further in college.

Aruzhan (Ari) Hawranick (Lauren) is a first-year student pursuing a degree in criminal justice with a minor in Russian. After graduation, she aspires to work in the law enforcement industry in Washington, DC. She has had many years of dance experience, as well as involvement in the music department and singing.

Nicolas Johnson (Shultz) is a first-year student pursuing a degree in environmental studies. In the past, he played multiple smaller roles in various plays, only fully committing to theater in high school. His performance in various one act plays and speech and debate tournaments have won several awards, and he is excited to continue his work in this production as Shultz.

Preston Pinos (James) is a first-year student studying agricultural science and intends to minor in theatre. Though he began acting only four years ago, he has been in many productions within both school and the community. By his high school graduation, he was inducted into the International Thespian Society (ITS) as an Honor Thespian. He is so excited to participate in this production and continue this work in future productions.

Adria Schmidt (Theresa) is a first-year student pursuing a degree in English literature. She participates in several branches of the arts, including visual arts, live performances, and filmmaking as an actor, voice actor, cameraman, and director. Among her accolades, Schmidt has had poems published in several prestigious collections, won awards for her short films, and received a thespian award from her high school for her contributions to the arts.

Production Team Bios

Kyle Artone (costume designer) is a New York-based designer for theatre and film. Select credits include *The Dastardly Thornes vs. The Town of Goldhaven* (The Brick), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Yale Repertory Theatre), *the father, the son, and the holy spirit* (Yale Summer Cabaret), *Gidion's Knot* (Ripple Effects Artists, Theatre Row), *Four Meddling Kids and One Dumb Dog* (Yale Cabaret), *The Winter's Tale* (Iseman Theater, Yale School of Drama), *Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical* (Virginia Repertory Theatre), *Venus in Fur*, *The Nightman Commeth* (Shafer Alliance Laboratory Theatre), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Raymond Hodges Theater), *The Seagull* (Short Film, NY) and *Luther* (Life Without Limbs Production). He holds an M.F.A. in design from the Yale School of Drama and a B.F.A. in costume design and technology from Virginia Commonwealth University. He is the fall 2023 artist in residence for design at Penn State Altoona and an adjunct instructor.

Maxwell Doherty (lighting designer, technical director) is in his second semester as the new technical director for the Misciagna Family Center for Performing Arts. Recently, he has worked on such shows as Disney's Hollywood Studios' *The Indiana Jones Epic Stunt Spectacular* and *The Wonderful World of Animation*. In addition to his recent experience at Disney World he is also a recent graduate of Penn State's School of Theatre, where he worked on such productions as *Brigadoon*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Seawall*, *Angels in America*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Legally Blonde*, and many more.

Cara Groome (stage manager) is a first-year student pursuing a degree in visual art studies. She has been involved in theatre since she was ten, and she has performed as well as worked behind the scenes in countless productions. Her recent credits include set designing, stage managing, and performing in *Cinderella* and *The Sound of Music*. Throughout high school she won awards and was commissioned for her artwork. In the future, Cara hopes to be involved in more productions at Penn State Altoona and continue to combine her passions for art and theatre.

Production Team Bios

Leila McCrumb is a graduate of the integrative arts program at Penn State Altoona. She performed in several productions during her time at Penn State Altoona, and she received a Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) nomination, placed in the Undergraduate Research Fair, and the Liszka Award. She went on to obtain her M.A. in actor/performer training at Rose Bruford College of London, where she performed in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. She has directed many productions throughout her career, ranging from film to the stage. Locally, she works closely with Things Unseen Theatre Company at The Church in The Middle of the Block as an actor and director. She returned to Penn State Altoona in 2021 as the assistant director of their film/theatre-hybrid production of *Two Rooms*, and currently returns as theatrical director and an instructor of theatre on the Altoona campus. Most recently, she directed an original production of *Big Noodles*.

Logan Sava (stage crew) is a sophomore at Penn State Altoona pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering. He has been involved in a total of 16 musicals and straight productions in a stage management position and is excited to take part in backstage crew.

Benjamin Weaver (scenic designer, theatre technical assistant) graduated from Centenary University with a degree in technical theatre. Past credits include set design for *1984*, *Avenue Q*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Sweat* at NEXTStage Rep, scenic artist for *A Christmas Carol* at Centenary Stage Co., and assistant scenic design for *The Evolution of Mann* at the American Theatre Group. His Instagram is @yellowbensets.

Production Team

Costume Designer Kyle Artone

Director Leila McCrumb

Lighting Designer Maxwell Doherty

Scenic Designer Benjamin Weaver

Stage Crew Logan Sava

Stage Manager Cara Groome

Technical Director Maxwell Doherty

Theatre Technical Assistant Benjamin Weaver

Upcoming Performances

Nov 30 - Dec 1, 2023 7:30 p.m.
Ivyside Pride Performance

Dec 9, 2023, 2:30 p.m.
University Jazz Band
Performance

Special Thanks

To my actors, who have been so incredibly disciplined and fearless throughout this entire process, and my stage manager, for her unwavering attentiveness and enthusiasm. Thank you all for your vulnerability, trust, and dedication.

-Leila McCrumb, Director

Acknowledgements

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Melissa Wilt, graphic designer, Strategic Communications
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Kylea Myers, theatre and gallery coordinator, Misciagna Family Center
Brandon Eichenlaub, theatre and gallery assistant, Misciagna Family Center
Maxwell Doherty, technical director, Misciagna Family Center
Benjamin Weaver, assistant technical director, Misciagna Family Center
Kathy Bumberger, janitorial worker, Facilities and Operations

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