

PENN STATE ALTOONA'S DIVISION OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES PRESENTS

THE WAKE OF JAMEY FOSTER

A play by **BETH HENLEY**

Directed by Leila McCrumb



THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 21-22
7:30 P.M. | WOLF KUHN THEATRE
MISCIAGNA FAMILY CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS

Free and open to the public through the Kjell Meling Arts for All Initiative.



PennState
Altoona

The Wake of Jamey Foster

By Beth Henley

Directed by Leila McCrumb

Cast List

MARSHEL FOSTER	Lissette Green
LEON DARNELL	Alex Clarke
KATTY FOSTER	Leila McCrumb
WAYNE FOSTER	Preston Pinos
COLLARD DARNELL	Adria (Jay) Schmidt
PIXROSE WILSON	Sydney Kent
BROCKER SLADE	Aaron James

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The action of the play takes place throughout Marshael Foster's house and yard in Canton, Mississippi

ACT 1

Scene 1: Morning
Scene 2: Supper Time

ACT II

Scene 1: Late that Night
Scene 2: Throughout the Night
Scene 3: The Following Morning

World Premiere at Hartford Stage Company, Hartford Connecticut.

Director's Note

When it came time to choose the production for this semester, my Assistant Director and I plowed through dozens and dozens of plays, trying to find the right one. Finally, he said to me, "I found this one on my bookshelf, but I've never read it. Want to give it a try?" And almost immediately after we started reading, we started laughing, and we both knew this was the one.

Our program has grown so much in just the last year, I couldn't wait to take on a piece with so many contrasting, personality-driven characters. Through moments of laughter and absurdity, *The Wake of Jamey Foster* explores how our behavior changes in stressful situations, and just how differently we process the deaths of our loved ones.

Beth Henley was inspired to write this play after dealing with the sudden death of her own father. Henley stated in an interview with the NYT, "Someone suddenly drops out of your life, and you can't talk to him again . . . How do you deal with something that bizarre? And if you have something unresolved with that person, how do you resolve it by yourself? I thought it would be interesting to write about that."

Despite the inspiration, it was not lost on Henley that the comedy of errors which we call life continues to play on. It's what makes life so equally challenging as it is beautiful; and as an artist, embracing the funny within the serious, and recognizing that you can't have one without the other, is one of my absolute favorite themes to dig into.

I will be forever grateful to the grand scale of people who have wanted to get their hands on this project and who have made it all possible - from students to faculty and staff, and even members of the community. It's impossible not to feel the magic of the theatre when so many people have poured their hearts and souls into the making of a production; a production that wouldn't be here if it weren't for the love and support of our audience.

From the bottom of our hearts, we all thank you for being here. So sit back, enjoy the show, and don't be afraid to laugh!

-Leila McCrumb, Director

Cast Bios



Lissette Green (Marshael Foster) is a second-year student at Penn State Altoona. *The Wake of Jamey Foster* is Green's debut production in the Wolf Kuhn Theatre. She is originally from the Dominican Republic with her first two languages being Spanish and English. She resides in Summit, New Jersey. She intends to pursue a bachelor's degree in communications and a minor in theatre. Green has participated in numerous productions including *Hairspray* (Little Inez), *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (Veruca Salt), *Newsies* (Maddie), *Footloose* (Rusty), *The Little Mermaid* (Ursula), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet/Nurse). In addition to her experience in theatre, she has previously modeled with Wilhemina Models and attended numerous private workshops with Broadway actresses Renee Elise Goldsberg, Kara Lindsay, and more.



Alex Clarke (Leon Darnell) is a first-year student at Penn State Altoona. This is his first show here at Pennstate Altoona and he has been doing theater since he was in kindergarten, but most recently performed in Chatham High School's *Puffs* (Clumsy Longbottom), and *Beauty and the Beast* (ensemble).



Aaron James (Brocker Slade/Assistant Director) is a graduate of the Letters, Arts, and Sciences program at Penn State Altoona. In the spring of 2023 his play *Big Noodles* premiered here at the college. He will next be co-directing and acting alongside Leila McCrumb in *The Woolgatherer* by William Mastrosimone for Things Unseen Theatre.

Cast Bios



Sydney Kent (Pixrose Wilson) is a first-year student. This is her first show at Penn State Altoona, and she hopes to participate in many more alongside her amazing cast members. She plans to continue her education in business management with a minor in theatre, while also serving in the United States Army Reserves.



Preston Pinos (Wayne Foster) is a first-year student who has been participating in theatrical events for several years, starting in the middle of Covid. He reached the title of honors thespian in the International Thespian Society in just three years. This is his second show at Penn State Altoona. He loves and is proud of his fellow cast members. He intends to major in plant science horticulture with a minor in theatre.



Adria (Jay) Schmidt (Collard Darnell)(Collard Darnell) is a first-year student pursuing a degree in English literature and a minor in theatre. She participates in several branches of the arts, including visual arts, live performances, and filmmaking. 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. She has previously worked with Penn State Altoona's drama department in *Dark Side of The Moon: A Tribute To Pink Floyd* and *Circle Mirror Transformation*.

Cast Bios



Leila McCrumb (Director/Katty Foster) is a graduate of the Integrative Arts Program at Penn State Altoona. She performed in several productions during her time at PSUA, where she received a KCACTF nomination, a placing in the Undergraduate Research Fair, and a 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 stage to promenade. Locally, she works closely with Things Unseen Theatre Company at The Church in The Middle of the Block as an actor and director and has also appeared in the Haunted Rails & Tales event at the Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum as both performer and director. She returned to Penn State Altoona in 2021 as the Assistant Director of their film/theatre-hybrid production of *Two Rooms*, and has since taken on the role of Director and an Instructor of Theatre on the Altoona campus. Recent credits include *Circle Mirror Transformation* and the premiere production of *Big Noodles*. Upcoming credits include co-directing and acting alongside Aaron James in *The Woolgatherer* with Things Unseen Theatre.

Production Team Bios

Maxwell Doherty (Technical Director/Lighting Design/Sound Designer) is the 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 the Penn State 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.

Production Team Bios

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



Cara Groome (Stage Manager) is a first-year student majoring in visual art studies and minoring in theatre. She has been involved in theatre since she was ten and has performed as well as worked behind the scenes in countless productions since then. Her recent credits include set designing, stage managing, and performing in *Cinderella* and *The Sound of Music*, as well as stage managing for *Circle Mirror Transformation* last semester. In the future Groome hopes to be involved in more productions at Penn State Altoona and continue to combine her passions for art and theatre.



Christian Howard (Assistant Stage Manager/Props Supervisor) is a graduate of the Integrative Arts Program at Penn State Altoona. He was an active performer on the college's stage during his time as a student and was the recipient of a Liszka Award and Kenneth M. Kuhn Memorial Award as well as a two-time winner of National Association of Teachers of Singers vocal competition in the musical theatre category. He also participated in a Masterwork Chorus Festival where he performed in Carnegie Hall along with Penn State Altoona's Ivyside Pride choral group. Currently, he is the theatre and gallery assistant for the Misciagna Family Center for Performing Arts and is an active member of the local performing arts community.

Production Team Bios

Kylea Myers (Props Master) is the theatre and gallery coordinator for the Misciagna Family Center for Performing Arts at Penn State Altoona. She received her B.A. in visual art studies in 2017 from Penn State Altoona. She has painted for Altoona Community Theatre's productions of *She Loves Me*, *Our Town*, *Places: A Theatrical Celebration of ACT's 75th Anniversary*, and *Angel Street (Gaslight)*.

Audrey Wawrynovic (Hair and Makeup/Costumer) is a sophomore and local sewist with 5 separate awards for their costume making. Recently they took on the task of lead make up design for Penn State Altoona's productions of *Dark Side of the Mood: A Tribute to Pink Floyd*, and *Circle Mirror Transformation*.

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.

Austin Vitsas (Assistant Stage Manager) is a first-year student at Penn State Altoona. This is his second production and his first time being part of a stage crew. Austin plans to graduate from University Park with a degree in aerospace engineering. He would like to work for NASA, Space X, and other space programs as an independent employee.

Logan Sava (Assistant Stage Manager/Light Board Operator) Logan is a third year in mechanical engineering who is excited to take on the role of assistant stage manager! This is his fifth production at Penn State, serving primarily in technical roles. He hopes you enjoy the show!

Production Team

Director.	Leila McCrumb
Assistant Director	Aaron James
Technical Director.	Maxwell Doherty
Theatre Technical Assistant.	Benjamin Weaver
Stage Manager.	Cara Groome
Assistant Stage Managers	Christian Howard Logan Sava Austin Vitsas
Scenic Designer.	Benjamin Weaver
Lighting Designer.	Maxwell Doherty
Sound Designer.	Maxwell Doherty
Dramaturg	Emma Freidhof
Costumer	Audrey Wawrynovic
Assistant Costumer.	Adria Schmidt
Hair and Make-up.	Audrey Wawrynovic
Props Master	Kylea Myers
Props Supervisor	Christian Howard
Light Board Operator.	Logan Sava

Upcoming Performances

April 18 - 19, 2024 7:30 p.m.

Ivyside Pride Performance
Sunrise Over Broadway

April 27, 2024, 2:30 p.m.

University Jazz Band
Performance

Special Thanks

Altoona Community Theatre
Everything Old is New Again
Bethany Helsel
Sue Michrina
Patrick Brennen

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

Performances are free thanks to the Kjell Meling Arts for All Initiative.

Penn State encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact the box office at the Misciagna Family Center for Performing Arts by calling 814-949-5452 in advance of your participation or visit.

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