



BROWN

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Monday, April 20, 2015

Brown University Theatre presents
You Are The Circus
by Katie Pearl '15 MFA

PROVIDENCE, RI - The Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Brown University proudly presents *You Are the Circus* written and directed by final year M.F.A, Playwriting student, Katie Pearl '15 MFA. Pearl's thesis production will take place at the Pell Chafee Performance Center on May 14 – 17 as part of the extended *Writing Is Live* festival.

Pearl invites audiences to spend an evening roving the Pell Chafee Performance Center with six women on their way to something big—they just aren't exactly sure what... Dana is looking for a glorious experience of self. Trace wants Case but Case is with Elyse, who is working on her passion through methodical research. Case can't stop watching surprise military homecoming videos on YouTube. Meanwhile, Lee has fallen for the Pizza Guy who is obsessed with getting onto America's Best Dance Crew, and Niko is intent on wrangling the whole group into a series of questionably therapeutic scenarios. All this in the service of figuring out: is there anything in your life that care enough to die for? Audiences are invited to eat snacks, chat with friends, have a deep conversation, and be part of a play. All at the same time.

Speaking of her new production, Pearl said:

“As an artist, I am committed to creating imaginative, curious, and playful theatre to be both catalyst and home for conversation, connection, and creative exchange. I believe that if I am to really make a difference as a theater artist, if I want to move an audience, I must begin with welcoming that audience into a conversation. *You Are The Circus* is designed for audiences to experience both sitting in seats observing as a play or moving through the space. Audience members are free to engage as much or as little as they wish, engaging with the characters in individual conversation or just sitting and enjoying the show. I hope to create a show that is hospitable, casual, and exemplifies a permeable, generous performance that allows audiences to bring their whole selves to an experience without requiring that they ‘sit still, shut up, and watch.’ ”

You Are The Circus is part of *Writing Is Live*, a festival that celebrates the diversity and strength of new theatrical voices while simultaneously exploring the meaning of text in performance. The festival emphasizes the idea of what it means for writing to be *Live*. It also provides space for the development and evolution of new work, putting writers in conversation with directors, actors, designers, and audiences. In February this year, *Writing Is Live* presented a new workshop piece by Rick Burkhardt '16 MFA working with co-writer, Jermaine Golden, as well as readings of new writing from Diane Exavier '17 MFA, Carlos Sirah '17 MFA, and Sophie Netanel '15 MFA.

Writing Is Live showcases the work of Brown University's M.F.A Playwriting graduate students. A central site in New England for the formation of new playwrights, Brown's graduate playwriting program grants its students broad inventive license while offering close mentorship and profound resources in the department, the university, and the greater local to international communities. Run by playwright and department Chair, Erik Ehn, the program cultivates writers dedicated to the development of their craft, the deep interrogation of the forms and purposes of their art (and of the place of art in the larger world), and a leaning into authentic transformation of society through theatrical action. Alumni of the program include Pulitzer Prize winner, Quiara Alegría Hudes '04 MFA (*In the Heights, Water by the Spoonful*); MacArthur Genius Grantee, Nilo Cruz '94 MFA (*Anna in the Tropics*); and Pulitzer Prize nominee, Sarah Ruhl '01 MFA (*The Clean House, In the Next Room*). The festival (formerly the *New Plays Festival*) is made possible through support from an endowed fund for the Adele Kellenberg Seaver '49 Professorship in Literary Arts.

You Are The Circus runs May 14 - 17 at Pell Chafee Performance Center, 87 Empire Street, Providence, RI 02903. Performances at 7:30pm May 14 - 16 and 2pm on May 16 and 17. Tickets for all performances are free but booking is advised. Tickets are available online at www.brown.edu/tickets or from the Brown Theatre Box Office. Call (401) 863-2838, or visit the Box Office in the Leeds Theatre Lobby (83 Waterman St, Providence), Tuesday - Friday from 12pm - 4pm, or email boxoffice@brown.edu.

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You Are The Circus
Written and Directed by Katie Pearl '15 MFA

Designed by Deb O. Olivera Gajic and Barbara Samuels
Properties Design by Trevor Elliott
Sound Design by Alex Eizenberg

Another night, another hang out, this time at Dana's house: six women are on their way to something big - if only they could figure out what that is. When an oracle-like Pizza Delivery Guy knocks at the door, the night unwinds into a circus of inaction: conversations about what it really means to feel, to love, and to live an authentic life mix with idiosyncratic animal acts and private moments of daring and prowess. Audiences are invited to eat snacks, chat with friends, have a deep conversation, and be part of a play. All at the same time.

Thursday, May 14 at 7:30pm
Friday, May 15 at 7:30pm
Saturday, May 16 at 2pm & 7:30pm
Sunday, May 17 at 2pm

Katie Pearl '15 MFA is an Obie-Award winning theater maker who generates new works of performance with artists around the country. Pearl is co-founder and co-Artistic Director of PearlDamour, an interdisciplinary theater company she shares with playwright Lisa D'Amour. As PearlDamour, Katie is the recipient of the 2011 Lee Reynolds award, given annually by the League of Professional Theater Women to a woman whose work in the medium of theatre has helped illuminate the possibilities for social, cultural, or political change (for PearlDamour's 8-hour performance installation *How to Build a Forest*). PearlDamour's current projects include *Milton*, a spoken-and-sung performance which examines what it feels like to be American made with and performed for 5 small towns named Milton throughout the country, and *Lost in the Meadow*, a collaboration with designer Mimi Lien, is a large-scale outdoor work sited in an 86 acre meadow in the famed Longwood Gardens outside Philadelphia (September 2015). PearlDamour is a 4-time recipient of the MAP fund award, a 2009 Creative Capital Artist, and will be in residence at the University of Washington throughout 2015/16 working with students and faculty to extend their *Milton* work into Seattle communities.

Apart from the 16 projects she has made as PearlDamour, Pearl's directing work has been seen nationally and throughout New York with companies such as The Magic (San Francisco), Salvage Vanguard (Austin), Speakeasy Stage (Boston), HERE, New Georges, the Talking Band, Clubbed Thumb, the Woman's Project, and New Dramatists (all NYC). Her project *The Wrestling Patient*, created with playwright Kirk Lynn (Rude Mechs) and actor Anne Gottlieb (42 Magnolias), was a 2008 finalist for the NEA Outstanding New American Play Award. Katie was a 2010 finalist for the Zelda Fichandler Award for directors from SDC. She is a 2015 recipient of a Steinberg

Playwriting Commission from Trinity Rep Theatre. Along with filmmaker Michelle Memran, Katie will return to Brown next year as a Fitt Artist in Residence, where she will spend time devising a new piece of theater based on the life and work of Maria Irene Fornés.

Pearl has been on faculty at University of Texas and Whitman College, and is will complete an M.F.A. in Playwriting at Brown University where she was a Lucille Lortel Playwriting fellow.