

**PITTSBURGH
PLAYHOUSE**
POINT PARK UNIVERSITY

**POLAROID
STORIES**

March 10 – 14, 2021



Steven Breese, Artistic Director
Drew Martorella, Managing Director
Kim Martin, General Manager/Producer
Antonio Colaruotolo, Associate Producer

POLAROID STORIES
By Naomi Iizuka
Directed by Steven Wilson

**Assistant Directors/
Dramaturgs**
Sophie McClung
Patrick Mizzoni

Production Designer
Rose Egan

**Associate Production
Designer**
Cedar Ranson

Costume Designer
Abigail MacKay

Stage Manager
Maya Holmes

Production Manager
James Ogden II

Audio and Video Production Team
Katelyn Colwell
Steve Shapiro
Antonio Colaruotolo

March 10 – 14, 2021
pittsburghplayhouse.com

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DRAMATURG'S NOTES

Polaroid Stories revolves around young people in a world of struggle, uncertainty, and addiction. Inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Jim Goldberg's 1995 photojournalistic piece entitled "Raised By Wolves," Naomi Iizuka's *Polaroid Stories* mends real-life interviews with street kids to the epic chronicles of Greek mythology. The title captures the immediacy of this piece as it is told through a series of snapshots into the lives of those living on the fringe of society.

While this story feels timeless and relevant to today, it is steeped in the aesthetic and circumstances of the 1990s. Drug hysteria, the disenfranchisement of homeless youth, and rave culture all find their way into the world of *Polaroid Stories*. Iizuka's work often takes shape in poetic adaptations of myth that empower marginalized individuals with the significance and justice of the gods. The characters in *Polaroid Stories* hold the names of these infamous figures, and their stories parallel the Greek myth in oftentimes chilling, unexpected ways. For example, the character Orpheus represents a modern version of the Greek figure, with the added ideologies of Tereus, a king in mythology known for his villainous deception. He abuses his power to strip Philomel of her voice, similar to how Orpheus struggles with his impulse to silence women in his life. By pulling from both of these stories, Iizuka allows for complexity in her adaptation of Orpheus.

These 10 individuals follow a journey that we've set "Right Now." The ambiguity of time allows this story to continually stay alive. Although inspired by a very specific group of individuals, the hardships displayed can be applied to you, me, and communities across the country. These ideas of pain, isolation, and insanity are pushed to the furthest degree in *Polaroid Stories*. The virtual medium caused a lot of limitations, and yet struck inspiration. Our production verbalizes the stage directions through each respective character, so that they are able to convey the action of the script through voice with allusions to physicality. When it came to building our costumes, sets, and lighting, we worked with what actors had available in their own spaces. Our student production designer, Rose Egan, found inspiration in the collection of memories that each character tells. Each actor is set in their own couch fort filled with drapes, lights, and polaroids to emulate a bedtime story environment. This comforting visual safety net contrasts the at times gritty and harsh dialogue. All of these components culminate into a new medium of art. Director Steven Wilson feels that Zoom performance is an innovative frontier that teeters between theater and film. We all helped to develop this piece, in a new way that many of us have never worked in before.

The world of our play finds a semblance of our current situation in the theme of isolation. These characters are defined by their mistakes, unable to break from self

destruction and find a grounding, which instills a feeling of abandonment and invisibility. They are stripped of their power, their sense of belonging, and are forced into a world dependent on drugs. A repressing theme of escapism shows itself in the use of these drugs. We are experiencing a similar crave for retreat during this pandemic, and as a source of hope fades further away, the issue prolongs. These characters face this same hurdle. They live each day faced with fatality. This narrative allows us to follow different paths: some get out, some meet their end, and others continue to search for purpose. *Polaroid Stories* concludes with a communal sense of tranquility. There is so much destruction in the world, and yet in all spaces, peace can shine through.

Creating theatre during this time can feel like a daunting, frustrating task. Mr. Wilson, having worked recently on virtual productions, focused on making the Zoom rehearsal and production process feel more engaging. With an emphasis on collaboration among everyone involved, Mr. Wilson developed a rehearsal process that utilized Zoom breakout rooms to allow multiple scenes to be worked on at once. Because the material of this piece carries emotional weight, we, as a collective, made an effort to uphold boundaries that were necessary to maintain the safety of our team. Ultimately, we ended up finding a lot of freedom to explore and take advantage of what was possible in Zoom, pushing our own expectations of what we'd be able to convey. Rather than prescribing or restricting the specific choices of actors, power was held in each individual's intuition and creativity. In mapping the character of Philomel's journey through song, for example, we took advantage of the opportunity to create a "playlist" that served the story while also allowing the actress's unique artistry to shine through. In perhaps an unexpectedly poignant way, we found that presenting this story through Zoom highlights the exclusion and loneliness that is felt in the lives of these characters. As much as they may be literally "stuck" in their Zoom squares, their lives are also confined to the painful circumstances they've been dealt, and sometimes genuine connection with others can feel scarce.

This story represents a turning point for each of these young people. Our production intends to bring out the resilience that each of these characters harness as the world continually beats them down. Inspired by means of contemporary reality, fantasy, and history, we are able to see a new type of storytelling. One that concludes in the revelation of peace, allowing us to see the light at the end of the labyrinth.

- Patrick Mizzoni & Sophie McClung (Assistant Directors/Dramaturgs)

CAST

Eurydice	Edwin June Almonte
D/Dionysus	Camron Bartelt
SkinheadBoy	Joseph Cannon
SkinheadGirl	Shae-Lin Carr
Echo	Maggie Clark
Persephone/Semele	Angela Jade B. George
Orpheus	Anthony Giancola
Philomel	Zoe Gonzalez
G	Evans Malkin
Narcissus	Kevin Tinsley

TRIGGER WARNINGS:

Strong Language, Violence, Drug Use, Loud Noises, Flashing Lights,
Homophobia

SETTING:

RIGHT NOW

CAST

Edwin June Almonte (Eurydice) is a junior acting major. They are so excited to be playing the role of Eurydice and loved this experience so much. If you'd like to see more of them, you should follow them @edlosingsleep on Instagram! They hope you enjoy the show!

Camron Bartelt (D/Dionysus) is a junior musical theatre major. He was last seen as Camera Crew in *Pippin*, Leonato in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and in *I Know You Are...?* at the Pittsburgh Playhouse. He has an associates in musical theatre from Florida School of the Arts, where he was seen as George in *She Loves Me* and Bernard in *Boeing Boeing* among others. He wants to thank his cast and crew for a great experience, and his class and family for their love and support! @jcbartelt

Joseph Cannon (SkinheadBoy) is a junior B.F.A acting major from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is very excited to be working on *Polaroid Stories* with such an amazing cast and crew. Previously, he studied at Stella Adler in New York. His Film/TV union credits include: *Archive81*, *The Chair* and *Manhunt*. He would like to thank his supportive family, Jill Wadsworth and Bubi for the endless love and support.

Shae-Lin Carr (SkinheadGirl) is a sophomore musical theatre major at Point Park University. This is their debut production with the Pittsburgh Playhouse, and they couldn't be more thrilled to be a part of such a fantastic show! They would like to thank the cast, crew, and artistic team for this opportunity (as well as their roommate, Blake, for willingly putting up with their loud, late-night bedroom rehearsals).

Maggie Clark (Echo) (MT '23) is beyond excited to be making her (virtual) mainstage debut at the Pittsburgh Playhouse. You may have seen her last semester in the Pittsburgh PlayLab reading series. Huge thanks to Steven and the entire production team!

Angela Jade B. George (Persephone/Semele) is a sophomore musical theatre major at Point Park University. She is very grateful to make her debut on the Point Park stage (even though it's virtual) as well as be a part of an extremely amazing and talented cast. She appreciates the hard work put together by the cast and crew to make this possible, as well as those who supported the production from the outside. She is very thankful to be part of this production.

Anthony Giancola (Orpheus) is a senior acting major who has previously appeared in *History Boys* (Timms) and worked as Assistant Director and Dramaturg for *Much Ado About Nothing*, both at the Pittsburgh Playhouse. He is also the acting President and

Artistic Director for Pinnacle Productions where has produced multiple productions. He thanks Maya, Steven, and the rest of the cast and crew for their hard work to get this production of the ground!

Zoe Gonzalez (Philomel) is thrilled and honored to be a part of the virtual production of *Polaroid Stories*!! This will be her second time performing for Point Park University in the new virtual season for the 2020-2021 academic year. Her previous role was Yas in *Water by the Spoonful*, directed by Christie Vela. She could not be more excited to work with such smart, talented artists and learn so much along the way. Although we are living through some strange times, she hopes this show can bring you both entertainment and fabulous story telling. Thank you to everyone involved with this production, we hope you enjoy!

Evans Malkin (G) is a senior acting major. He was last seen as Sagot in Point Park's production of *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. He is very delighted to be a part of this show and would like to thank his family for the constant support throughout his time at Point Park!

Kevin Tinsley (Narcissus) is very excited to be performing again with the Pittsburgh Playhouse. Kevin is a junior musical theatre major at Point Park. This is his third main stage production, previously appearing in *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Pippin*. He would like to thank his family, friends, Bennett, Andrew, and Joie for all their amazing love and support, and he wants to congratulate the entire *Polaroid Stories* team on a truly unique experience.

PRODUCTION

STEVEN BREESE (Artistic Director and Dean, Conservatory of Performing Arts) has enjoyed a national and international acting-directing-playwriting career that has spanned more than 35 years. He holds his M.F.A. from California Institute of the Arts and has acted and/or directed at some of the nation's finest theaters including the Tony Award-winning South Coast Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, the Cleveland Playhouse, American Heartland Theatre, Forum Theatre (Chicago), The Royal George Theatre (Chicago), Watertown Theatre (Dallas), Shakespeare Festival of Dallas, Ft. Worth Shakespeare in the Park, Virginia Stage Company, Virginia Shakespeare Festival, and other regional theaters/touring companies. As a playwright, Steven has completed over 25 plays including, *The Trial of Hamlet* (classical courtroom drama), *Brotherly Love* (contemporary love story), and *Actus Fidei* (historical fiction). In 2013, he published a new book on acting theory and practice entitled, ["On Acting, A Handbook for Today's Unique American Actor"](#). Prior to joining us at Point Park, Steven served as an academic dean at three separate institutions, including: Long Island University (Arts, Communications & Design), Southern Connecticut State University (Arts & Sciences), and Christopher Newport University (Arts & Humanities). His career in the educational and artistic arenas has been defined by innovation, creative vision, and an entrepreneurial approach to institutional improvement.

DREW MARTORELLA (Assistant Vice President, Managing Director) was formerly the Executive Director of UCCS Presents at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS). There he was responsible for building support for arts and fostering community engagement through the operation of the Ent Center for the Arts and its programs including the Artists Series; Theatreworks, the region's premiere professional theater; the Galleries of Contemporary Art, and the University Center and Event Services. He was a 2013 recipient of CU's prestigious Thomas Jefferson Award and was the 2019 recipient of Drew University's Alumni Arts Award. Prior to becoming an administrator, Martorella was a professional production manager and stage manager working for regional theatres across America including the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, New Mexico Repertory Theatre and the Mark Taper Forum. He received his M.P.A. in Non-Profit Management from the University of Colorado Colorado Springs and a B.A. in Theatre from Drew University in Madison, N.J.

KIM MARTIN (General Manager/Producer) graduated from Point Park University in 1987 where she received a B.A. in Fine, Applied and Performing Arts and graduated again in 2016 with an M.B.A. in Sports, Arts & Entertainment Management. She remained involved with the University since her undergrad and returned in 1999 as Production Stage Manager for The REP, where she also created and developed the Stage Management Program. In 2013,

she was promoted to Director of Production at the Pittsburgh Playhouse and in 2016 became Producing Director. In addition, Kim has directed, acted in, produced and stage-managed over 400 productions. Some favorites over the years include: *Playboy of the Western World*, *The Devil Inside*, *Becky's New Car*, *The Lonesome West*, *Mojo*, *Killer Joe*, *The Birthday Party*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Guys & Dolls*, *Drinking in America*, *Deathtrap*, *The Dumb Waiter*, *Annie*, *La Ronde*, and *Three Sisters*.

ANTONIO COLARUOTOLO (Associate Producer) is originally from Italy and studied lighting design and video production at the New University of Cinema and Television in the Cinecittà film studios in Rome. Antonio has designed and worked for various video productions for the Italian National Public TV (RAI), specifically in the documentary and news department. He never missed an opportunity to work in the special effects department and created video effect for short films. Thanks to lighting knowledge, he worked as lighting director and video editor for video commercials and music videos. For the Pittsburgh Playhouse he has designed the video projections for: *Pippin*, *Bound in Before*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The History Boys*. Antonio's video design productions include: *Florenzia en el Amazonas* (Opera Steamboat Spring Colorado) *Don Giovanni* (Undercroft Opera), *Oceano Mare*, *Mentre Piango Rido* and *Il Paese Dei Giganti* (Teatro K.O. - Italy). As lighting designer Antonio had the pleasure to design for the CSA Performance Series by the New Hazlett Theater, Pittsburgh Playhouse, Quantum Theater, PICT, Bricolage Production Company, Carnegie Stage, Youngstown State University, Slippery Rock University, Carnegie Mellon University and Steamboat Opera. For more information visit lightingbyantonio.com.

STEVEN WILSON (Director) is a freelance director, writer, actor and educator specializing in collaborative and inclusive ensemble theatre-making with an emphasis on community building. Steven has twenty years of history as a Chicago theatre artist where his acting and directing was showcased as a longtime company member with The Hypocrites and as an Artistic Associate with A Red Orchid Theatre. Steven's work has been featured regionally in Arkansas (TheatreSquared), Texas (Zach Theatre), Pittsburgh (City Theatre), Chicago (Goodman Theatre) and Florida (Asolo Rep). He has recently returned home to Pittsburgh, where he continues his freelance career while working as an adjunct professor and visiting director at Point Park and Seton Hill Universities, teaching Directing and Devising Theatre. Steven is a member of Pittsburgh Public Theatre's inaugural Writer's Group where his adaptations of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and Sheridan's *The Rivals* were featured as part of their PlayTime Series. Steven will be directing *Miracle in Rwanda* this Spring for Prime Stage Theatre.

SOPHIE MCCLUNG (Assistant Director/Dramaturg) is a sophomore BFA Theatre Arts major. She is incredibly grateful for this opportunity to work alongside and learn from this

group of tremendous artists in a new way. Sophie would like to thank Steven for this opportunity, all of the *Polaroid Stories* team, Cam, and friends and family for all of their love and support.

PATRICK MIZZONI (Assistant Director/Dramaturg) is thrilled to collaborate on this project. He is a sophomore Theatre Arts major. Recent credits: *Blood at the Root* (RLM One Acts), *Waiting for Fair* (Playhouse NPRS), and *He* (BridgesTheatreCo.). Upcoming: *35mm* (PinnacleProductions). Patrick is grateful to continue making art in such an uncertain time. Thank you to Steven and everyone involved that made this snapshot come to life!

ROSE EGAN (Production Designer) is a junior at Point Park University, studying Theater Production: Design. After being a scenic artist for her high school productions, Rose is thrilled to go from learning about set design to designing for shows. This is Rose's second show as a Production Designer since designing for *Water by the Spoonful* last season.

CEDAR RANSON (Associate Production Designer) is a sophomore at Point Park University studying Theatre Production: Design. He is focusing on scenic painting, having worked in both the paint and prop shops. His last production, he was a props artisan for Point Park's production of *Water by the Spoonful*.

ABIGAIL MACKAY (Costume Designer) is thrilled to be a part of this show at Point Park University! Recent credits include Designer/Animator/Student Collaborator for *Through Broken Doors* at Point Park University. Other recent credits include Costume Designer for *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* with Belmont University, and Lighting Designer for *The House at Pooh Corner* with Belmont University. Abby wants to thank all of her friends and family who have supported her through the journey of reaching her dreams!

STEVE SHAPIRO (Audio and Video Producer) is pleased to return to the Playhouse for his eleventh season as Resident Sound Designer. Before joining our staff, Steve spent 30 years as a professional sound designer around the country and the world. He is the National Sound Designer for *Menopause the Musical* and *THE PLAY* with Rocky Bleier, now touring. Locally, you can also hear his work at Quantum Theater, City Theatre, University of Pittsburgh and PICT. From 1990 to 2006, Steve was the Resident Sound Designer at the world-renowned Coconut Grove Playhouse in Miami. Other credits include the Russian language premiere of *The Skin of Our Teeth* in Novosibirsk, Russia, helping the sound board for the 1995 South American Tour of *The Phantom of the Opera*, composing the original score for the South Florida premiere of *Angels in America*, and the score composition and sound design of Alan Ginsburg's only play, *Plutonian Ode*.

MAYA HOLMES (Stage Manager) is a sophomore Stage Management major at Point Park University. She has previously worked on shows such as *Much Ado About Nothing* and Pittsburgh PlayLab. She is very proud of the cast and crew of *Polaroid Stories* and cannot wait for you all to enjoy the show!

GWEN ROBB (Assistant Stage Manager) is a freshman Stage Management major at Point Park University. She has previously worked on *Water by the Spoonful* at Point Park and has participated in many high school plays back home in Missouri! She is so happy to be a part of the wonderful cast and crew of *Polaroid Stories*!

JAMES OGDEN II (Production Manager) received his B.F.A. in Theatre Arts from Point Park University in 2012. James joined Actors' Equity Association in 2011 and has remained a proud member since. James spent several years working with Charlotte Ballet, taking on positions from Stage Manager to Director of Artistic Operations. He traveled to China, Russia, Italy, and Turkey as the Production Supervisor for Martha Graham Dance Company. Most recently, James held the role of Production Director for Alonzo King LINES Ballet, traveling frequently to France, Germany, and Spain. Throughout his career, James also freelanced with the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, Pittsburgh Playwrights, Elisa Monte Dance, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. He is excited to be back in Pittsburgh and working with the company that cultivated his career.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Stage Manager	Gwen Robb
Michael Montgomery	Costume Shop Supervisor
Properties	Katie Mikula-Wineman
COVID Compliance Officer	Kelly Haywood
Assistant Safety Supervisor	AJ Robbins
Technical Director	James Dworek
Master Electrician	Jeff Sherman



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