

**LA MAMA** <sup>57</sup>  
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB  
*presents*

# CONTRADICT THIS! A BIRTHDAY FUNERAL FOR HEROES

**PART OF STONEWALL 50 AT LA MAMA**

**By The Bearded Ladies Cabaret**



**Ellen Stewart Theatre**  
**66 East 4th Street, NYC, 10003**  
**June 20 - 29, 2019**

# **CONTRADICT THIS!**

## **A BIRTHDAY FUNERAL FOR HEROES**

Director: John Jarboe

Written By\* John Jarboe and the Ensemble with Mary Tuomanen

Music Supervisor/Band Leader: Heath Allen

Choreography: Jumatatu Poe

Performed by: Fernando Contreras\*\*, Daniel de Jesús, Elah Perelman,  
Emily Bate, Jackie Soro, Pax Ressler, and Veronica Chapman-Smith

\*\*Fernando Contreras is playing a role originated by Anthony Martinez Briggs

Featuring the Whitman Choir

Choir Director: Elizabeth Braden

Choir Coordinators: Emily Bate and Veronica Chapman Smith

Band: Heath Allen, Josh Machiz, Nick Wight

Scenic Designer: William Boles

Costume Designer: Tyler Mark Holland

Lighting Designer: Reza Behjat

Associate Lighting Designer: Baxter Pitt

Sound Designer: Daniel Perelstein

Associate Sound Design: Lucas Fendley

Props Designer: Sara Outing

Vocal Coach: Pax Ressler

Dramaturgy: Sally Ollove

Stage Manager: Nic Labadie-Bartz

Production Manager: Calvin Anderson

Technical Director: Briana Abbott

Assistant Stage Manager: Ilana Khanin

Assistant Costume Design: Scott McMaster

Production Intern: Jem Rubin

A1 Sound Mixer: Jackson Williams

Followspot Operator: Evan Spigelman

General Manager: Brandi Burgess

Bearded Ladies Artistic Producer: Dan O'Neil

Bearded Ladies Company: Heath Allen, John Jarboe, Rebecca Kanach, Sally Ollove

PR: Matt Gross and Blake Zidell and Associates

Contradict This! was commissioned by the University of Pennsylvania Libraries for Whitman at 200: Art & Democracy, a series of cultural events marking Walt Whitman's 200th birthday. Major support for Whitman at 200 artistic commissions has been provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

\*This was a collaborative writing process led by John Jarboe. Much of what performers say is their own writing or text they adapted to be their own. Interstitial dialogue and structure by John Jarboe with contributions by Mary Tuomanen.

## **MUSIC IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE**

**The Song of Who Is Here- Lyrics JJ Music HA**

**Welcome- Lyrics JJ Music HA**

**Song of the Players- Lyrics JJ and Ensemble Music HA**

**Song of How We Got Here- Lyrics JJ Music HA**

**Song of Expectations- Lyrics JJ Music HA**

**Song of Who Whitman is To Us- Lyrics JJ Music HA**

**Camden- Lyrics JJ Music HA**

**Daddy Poet- Lyrics and Music DDJ**

**Best Sex I Never Had- Lyrics and Music by PR and JS**

**Take Off Your Hat- Lyrics WW Music EB**

**Welcome to the Trial of Walt Whitman- Lyrics JJ Music HA**

**Black Twitter- Words JS Music HA**

**I Know We All Hungry- Lyrics by AMB, music by AN, AMB & HA, with vocal arrangement contributions from PR**

**Hero Song- Lyrics EB with JJ and Music EB**

**Too Much Space-Lyrics and Music PR**

**The Judge's Song of Recusal- Lyrics JJ and VCS Music PR**

**I Am Large- Lyrics WW Music HA**

**Do I Contradict Myself?- Lyrics WW Music HA**

**Poeta de la Barba- Lyrics and Music DDJ**

**Cancel Ballet- Lyrics JS & EB, music as performed by T, with various samples**

**What Is Grass?- Lyrics JJ, Music HA and EB**

**If You Are the Soil- EP**

**And Don't We Need It- Lyrics and Music EM with contributions from AMB**

### **Composers/Lyricists**

**HA- Heath Allen**

**EB- Emily Bate**

**VCS- Veronica Chapman-Smith**

**DDJ- Daniel de Jesús**

**JJ- John Jarboe**

**AMB- Anthony Martinez-Briggs**

**EP- Elah Perelman**

**PR- Pax Ressler**

**JS- Jackie Soro**

**WW- Walt Whitman**

**With contributions from/samples of Andrew Nittoli (AN), and Taio Cruz (T)**

**Additional incidental lyrics by JJ & music by HA**

**Heath Allen (Music Supervisor, Composer, Arranger, Band Leader)** has been doing this kinda thing since the 1970's and has been creating the music world of the Bearded Ladies since 2009. Projects he remembers fondly include *Andy, A Popera* (a collaboration with Opera Philadelphia); *Mommie Queerest* (an opera for two drag queens and choir); *Marlene and the Machine*, *Wide Awake: a Civil War Cabaret*, *Beards are for Shaving* (a James Bond cabaret). Other recent works include *Reports of a Rare Mammal* (a play for actor and saxophonist); *Time/Here/There/Hope*, an SATB song cycle of Brecht poems. He has composed many songs and plays for children and is putting the final touches on an opera for children, *The Half Boy*. Heath has also recorded many CD's and vinyl of his original jazz. Look for them in a cut-out bin near you.

**Calvin Anderson (Production Manager)** is a Lighting Designer and Production Manager based in Brooklyn, New York. They have worked with dance, theater, opera, musical theater, fashion, and live music. Select projects in New York have been seen at Brooklyn Academy of Music, HERE Arts, Joe's Pub, NYLA, Ailey Citigroup Theater, and many others. Select US and international projects include working with Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Toronto Fringe Festival, Jacob's Pillow, A.R.T./Oberon, The Pittsburgh Playhouse, and Perseverance Theatre. Calvin is also a Visiting Assistant Professor at Wesleyan University. They are a proud member of USA 829 and Wingspace Theatrical Design.

**Emily Bate (Performer/Composer)** is a harmony fanatic whose work manifests in a wide variety of disciplines (music performance, theater, film, performance art) and roles (composer, vocalist, arranger, conductor, facilitator, performer). Recent projects include: the score for the film *Queer Genius* by Chet Catherine Pancake; several shows as co-composer and performer with frequent collaborator Erin Markey, including *A Ride on the Irish Cream*, *Boner Killer* and *Wet Food*; and original music-driven performances *It's A Seduction* (Trade School Festival, 2019) and *Going Down Mount Moriah* (Fringe Arts, 2020). Emily founded and conducts a queer community chorus called *Trust Your Moves*, which focuses on new work.

**Reza Behjat (Lighting Designer)** is a lighting designer for theater, dance and installations. He began his career in Iran - where he worked with some of the prominent directors for several years. He was nominated for 2017 Henry Hewes Design Award for *Hamlet*. Reza is a member of USA Local 829 and Wing Space Theatrical Design. Off-B-way: *Veil Widow Conspiracy*, *Henry VI* (NAATCO), *Hamlet* (Waterwell). Regional and others: *Everybody Black*, *The This Place* (Actors Theater of Louisville, Humana 2019, Nina Simon: four Women (Alabama Shakes), *The Roommates* (Long Wharf Theater, CT), *The Vagrant Trilogy* (Mosaic Theater, Washington D.C), *Guards at the Taj* (Central Square Theater, MA) Other NYC Credits: *Waiting For Godot* (New Yiddish Rep), *Dead Are My People* (Noor Theater), *Yogibogeybox* (Target Margin), *Whore from Ohio* (New Yiddish Rep), *Labor of Life* (New Yiddish Rep), *This Is The Color* (New Georges), *Fillx7* (The Flea Theater).

**William Boles (Scenic Designer)** is an artist based in Chicago. His work spans Theater, Musical Theater, Opera, and Landscape Architecture. Ninety percent of his work focuses on new stories. NYC: The Cherry Lane Theatre, La MaMa. REGIONAL: Kennedy Center, Kirk Douglas Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, Actors Theater of Louisville, Pig Iron Theatre Company, Huntington Theater Company, Wolftrap Opera, Minnesota Opera, Milwaukee Rep, Artist's Rep CHICAGO: Goodman, Steppenwolf, Paramount Theater, Second City, Lyric Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Victory Gardens Theater, The Hypocrites, American Theater Company, A Red Orchid, Chicago Children's Theatre, Sideshow (artistic associate), First Floor Theater, Emerald City. INTERNATIONAL: Stockholm Vocal Academy and Opera Siam in Bangkok. MFA, Northwestern. Represented by Abrams Artists Agency.

**Veronica Chapman Smith (Performer)** With a voice that has been described as "exquisite," "sublime," and "pure beauty," Veronica Chapman-Smith has performed with leading opera companies and orchestras across the country in both opera and concert work. Ms. Chapman-Smith has performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera Birmingham, Opera Philadelphia, Opera Colorado, Opera Delaware, Memphis Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Charlotte Symphony, and Orquesta Sinfonica Municipal de Caracas among others. Along with being a soloist, Ms. Chapman-Smith was a part of the new music ensemble The Crossing for 8 years and can be heard on the ensemble's 2018 Grammy award winning recording for Best Choral Performance.

**Fernando Contreras (Performer)** is an actor, dancer, singer and life enthusiast. Dominican Republic born, Jersey raised, Queens living. He sometimes considers himself a Bearded Lady so getting to join this production is very exciting. He is a founding ensemble member of Pipeline Theatre Company based in NYC. Most recently seen in Pipeline's production of *Playing Hot* a concert-parade-play-dance party. He currently performs in the monthly show, *Shiz: Broadway Meets Sketch Comedy* at UCB, is a member of The Dance Cartel and is a lead instructor at the fitness studio Switch Playground. He has toured the US and Asia with *Ghost the Musical*. BFA Drama NYU. Love to FBI (B and Ismael) and family. Happy Pride!

**Daniel de Jesús (Performer/Composer)** is a painter, composer, and songwriter versed in the worlds of visual & sonic tapestries. His musical practice of building tribal beats, ambient sonic spaces, and gut wrenching string arrangements with soaring vocals has taken audiences by storm. His work has been described as Baroque pop and Neo-Goth, filled with dramatic themes based on mysticism, the occult, and Latin American lore. Daniel de Jesús has nine studio recordings of his own music, and performs with orchestras and rock bands in the region and around the world.



**Tyler M. Holland (Costume Design)** Off Broadway/NYC/International: *I spy a spy, Enter Laughing, Marry Harry, Christmas in Hell, Theatre Smash!, Peter Pan* (Beijing, China), *Culture Shock!* (Toronto, Canada) *Toe Pick!*, *Dance/Immersive: Midsummer: A Banquet, Red Line, Zero Space, My Life Among the Serial Killers, On Foot*. He trained at UNCSA receiving a BFA in Costume Design and a Master of Fine Arts from Carnegie Mellon in Costume Design. For more examples of his work please check out [www.tylermarkholland.com](http://www.tylermarkholland.com)

**John Jarboe (Director/Writer)** is a cabaret artist, director, writer, historian, and host serving you revolution, herstory, queer community making, and a whole lot of glitter. He is the founding artistic director of The Bearded Ladies Cabaret. Going back to the interdisciplinary roots of cabaret, Jarboe is transforming opera, cabaret, and live performance from her home in Philadelphia, making work that is insistent on its liveness and interactivity, work that will make you sing, dance, clap and question. She plays host to a community of cabaret misfits from around the world, trying to stitch together the history of and practice of a much needed form.

**Nic Labadie-Bartz (Stage Manager)** is a freelance stage manager based in Philadelphia. Since graduating from The University of the Arts in 2016, they have worked with Applied Mechanics (where they are an associated artist; *Chronotope: Rough Draft, FEED, The Bandits, This Is On Record*), The Bearded Ladies (*Marlene and the Machine, Do You Want a Cookie, You Can Never Go Down the Drain*), Orbiter 3 (*I Am Not My Motherland, Peaceable Kingdom*), Nichole Canuso Dance Company (*Pandaemonium*, upcoming: *Being/With, Sneakers*), Pig Iron Theatre Company (*A Hard Time*), New Paradise Laboratories (*Gumshoe*), Ninth Planet (upcoming: *Honey, Honey*), Headlong (*A Perfect Day*), Cursed Church Theatre (*Me First: An Autobiographical Comedy About Dying*), and self-produced artists MJ Kaufman (*Destiny Estimate*), Mary Tuomanen (*Hello! Sadness!*), Annie Wilson (*At Home with the Humorless Bastard*), Michael Kiley (*Close Music for Bodies*), Suli Holum (*The Bakken*), Trey Lyford (*The Accountant*), and Martha Stuckey (*Due to the Sensitive Nature*).

**Scott McMaster (Assistant Costume Design)** is very pleased to be making his costuming and wardrobe debut with the Beards! By day, Scott is a freelance props master, costume designer and set designer in the Philadelphia area. By night, she performs as her drag alias, Miss Elaineous in the Gayborhood and surrounding areas. Miss Elaineous is the Cycle 9 winner of Philly Drag Wars and Breakthrough Artist 2018 at the Philly Drag awards. You can follow her on instagram at [its\\_miss\\_elaineous](https://www.instagram.com/its_miss_elaineous).

**Sally Olove (Dramaturg)** is a Philadelphia and Seattle based director and dramaturg and the associate artistic director of Philadelphia's Bearded Ladies Cabaret. She believes in art that is silly and audacious, insists on its liveness, asks provocative questions, and provides space for the audience

to fill. Formerly the literary manager at Arden Theatre Company, the resident dramaturg of Azuka Theater and programming director at the Rendezvous/Jewelbox Theater, her work has additionally been seen at ACT (Seattle), Book-It Repertory, On the Boards, Philadelphia Theater Company, and TheaterExile among others. Sally has served as faculty at Rowan University and University of the Arts, and holds an MFA from the ART/MXAT Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard.

**Elah Perelman (Performer)** is a performer, writer, queer advocate, high schooler by day, and Bearded Ladies's intern by night. They aim to impassion, inspire, and stir up trouble with their art.

**Daniel Perelstein (Sound Designer)** is a freelance sound designer, composer, and musical director. Notable designs at Opera Philadelphia, Roundabout Theatre Company, Primary Stages, McCarter Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Cincinatti Playhouse in the Park, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Geva Theatre, Wilma Theater, Arden Theatre, People's Light & Theatre, others. Over a dozen shows with the Bearded Ladies Cabaret. Associated Artist at the Wilma Theater. B.S. Engineering and B.A. Music, Swarthmore College.

**Pax Ressler (Performer/Composer)** is a gender non-binary performer, music director, designer and composer who works in the intersections of theatre and music. In Philadelphia, they have worked for theatre companies including Arden Theatre Company, Nicole Canuso Dance Company, Theatre Horizon, Shakespeare in Clark Park, Wilma Theater, and 11th Hour Theatre Company. In 2018, Pax traveled to Wellington, New Zealand to perform in The Performance Arcade with The Bearded Ladies Cabaret. They have written choral music for ensembles across the country since 2013. Pax collaborates with Justin Yoder on *Art Isn't Easy*, a parody/comedy video series about the trials and triumphs of being an artist. <https://paxressler.wordpress.com/>

**Jackie Soro (Performer)** is a Philadelphia-based multimedia artist with a deep interest in the performance of truth-telling. Much of her work centers in the feminist performance art sphere, where she is a deviser, vocalist, collaborator, and solo performer. Her recent projects include co-creating with Ninth Planet Theater Company's honey honey project and performing as Joan in the Arden Theater's Barrymore Award-winning production of *Fun Home*. Offstage, Jackie works with teens and young adults as a coach with Girls Rock Philly.

**Mary Tuomanen (Co-writer)** is a writer/deviser/performer in Philadelphia who has made over 10 shows with the Bearded Ladies. Her plays include *Peaceable Kingdom*, *Hello! Sadness!* and *Marcus Garvey and Emma Goldman Have Hot Hot Sex*.

**Thanks to Bearded Ladies Season Sponsors:** Dolfinger McMahon, the William Penn Foundation, the Independence Foundation, Linda and David Glickstein, the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, the Wyncote Foundation, and The John S and James L Knight Foundation

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**Creative Contributions by:** Anthony Martinez Briggs, Jimmy Coleman, Flannel & Hammer, Joy Taney, and Melody Wong.

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# LA MAMA

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# LA MAMA



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*Rendering: 74 East 4th St.*

La MaMa's historic, landmark building at 74 East 4th Street is undergoing an urgently needed complete renovation and restoration to preserve the historic façade, create building-wide ADA accessibility, and provide much needed performance, exhibition and community space for decades to come.

La MaMa, founded by Ellen Stewart in 1961, has been on east 4th Street since 1967. La MaMa embraces every person in its community and is legendary as the place where new artists of all nations, cultures, races, and identities are given opportunities. It is the place where art begins.

To learn more about the renovation, or to make a donation please visit [www.lamama.org/remakeaworld](http://www.lamama.org/remakeaworld)