

The Wesleyan University Theater Department Presents:  
A Senior Thesis Production by Emily Hunt



## The Kindness of Strangers

Thursday 2/28/13 - 8pm

Friday 3/1/13 + Saturday 3/2/13 - 7pm + 9pm

Patricelli '92 Theater

Center for the Arts - Wesleyan University - 860-685-3355

Written, directed, and performed by Emily Hunt\*

In 1957, Leon Festinger proposed a theory called "Cognitive Dissonance," which describes what we experience when there is "an inconsistency among some experiences, beliefs, attitudes, or feelings. According to dissonance theory this sets up an unpleasant state that people try to reduce by reinterpreting some part of their experiences to make them consistent with the others." When learning about this theory in my introductory psychology class, I immediately thought of my experiences with theater. As actors, we are constantly trying to rationalize our dissonance between reality and the world of the work we are performing. How do we step in and out of a performance without feeling guilty that we are deceiving an audience and ourselves? How can we commit acts that we would never commit in real life on a stage? These questions have intrigued me for years, and have been the main questions of my thesis.

I chose to explore the psychological components of Bertolt Brecht and Konstantin Stanislavski's teachings on acting for two reasons—first, their two "styles" are both brilliantly rational in terms of how they handle cognitive dissonance, but their methods still clash strongly against one another, which fascinated me. Second, both of their methodologies have been romanticized and often stereotyped incorrectly by other artists (for example: Stanislavski's method has often been confused with "method acting," a practice that Stanislavski strictly warns his students *not* to do).

Blanche DuBois is an interesting character to observe through this mindset because her personality and behavior are already so double-sided throughout *A Streetcar Named Desire*. She wants to be loved and accepted by those around her, yet shudders at the thought of having to reveal her true self. Also, with me exploring the character, someone whose appearance is probably not close to anyone's vision of the character, you can hopefully be more attuned to the process of transformation into Blanche rather than the transformation itself.

This performance is in no way a lecture on whose acting methodologies I think is better or worse than the other. Rather, it is a chance for you to observe the complexities of preparing a role (and how one specific actor chooses to do so), and how heavily it is related to the psychology of the human condition in everyday life. Hopefully, you will notice in this performance something that you find yourself doing in your life in social interactions, in private, and more. I truly believe that understanding the acting process has the potential to help us understand humanity at a much deeper level, and I dedicate this performance to that cause.

Thank you so much for coming,  
Emily

Crew

Stage Manager.....Sivan Battat  
Scenic Designer.....Dominique Moore  
Lighting Designer.....Ariella Axelbank  
Costume Design.....Paulie Lowther  
Poster Design.....Ariella Axelbank  
Properties Manager.....Leah Rosen

\*This production is in partial fulfillment of Emily Hunt's Senior Thesis in Theater.

Faculty Advisors

Thesis Tutor.....Ronald Jenkins

Special Thanks

Mom, Dad, Louis & Raymond, The Lodge, Kyra Sutton, Myles Potters, Hanna Meltz, Tessa Young, Tennessee Williams, Ron Jenkins, Yuri Kordonsky, Marcela Oteiza, Kris McQueeney, Claudia Nascimento, Jack Carr, Ed Chiburis, Quasimodal, and everyone who has supported me throughout this process!

## Theater Department Faculty and Staff

Chair, Professor ..... John Carr  
Professors ..... Ronald Jenkins  
Associate Professor ..... Yuri Kordonsky, Cláudia Tatinge Nascimento  
Adjunct Associate Professor ..... Marcela Oteíza  
Assistant Professor ..... Rashida Shaw  
Resident Artist in Theater & Dance..... Leslie Weinberg  
Visiting Assistant Professor..... Anne Swedberg  
Visiting Instructor..... Leigh Fondakowski  
Assistant Technical Directors ..... Charlie Carroll, Suzanne Sadler  
Costume Shop Manager..... Christian Milik  
Administrative Assistant ..... Kristin McQueeney

### Office Staff

Liza Goodstein

### Costume Shop Staff

Melissa Arroyo, Serena Berry, Jessica Jordan, Emma MacLean,  
Jaimie Nguyen, Grace Nix, Bianca Treto

### Technical Staff

Aime Arroyo-Ramirez, Ariella Axelbank, Sivan Battat, Matthew Catron,  
Brendan Coakley, Luis Corporan, Nathaniel Elmer, Rebecca Fredrick,  
Matthew Getz, Cicily Gruber, Lily Haje, Rachel Leicher, Nicholas Murphy,  
Nicholas Orvis, Natalia Powers-Riggs, Elizabeth Roche, Madeleine Stern

### THEA 105: Production Lab

Dominique Cameron-Rogue, Matthew Catron, Anna Cocuzzo, Yuon Flemming,  
Miranda Haymon, Derrick Holman, Brett Klapper, Linsin Smith, Anna Sproule,  
Trevor Wallace, Sarah Woolf

## Upcoming Theater Department Events

### *Fire & Bone*

A Senior Thesis production by Lily Haje '13  
March 28-30<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM & 9:00 PM

### *Super Frog Saves Tokyo*

A Senior Thesis production by Tessa Young '13  
April 4-6<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 PM

### *Peony Pavilion by Tang Xianzu*

Adapted and Directed by Jeffrey Sichel  
April 25-26 @ 8:00 PM, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM