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A note from Artistic Director, Krista Schafer Ewbank



Looking back over our 7th season, which I think of as “Theatre in the Time of Covid,” I’m both immensely proud of the work we’ve done, and EXHAUSTED. We began with Driveway Theatre in the summer of 2020, still holding out hope that we might be able to be back to theatre in the building, in some form, in the fall or shortly thereafter. But as it became clear that wouldn’t be happening, we began envisioning new ways to do LIVE theatre. We really leaned into two priorities:

- 1: living out our mission (to promote connection through theatrical storytelling)
- 2: keeping the things that make Open Book so special (intimacy, the connection between performers and live audience, and stories that get you talking and thinking!)

The art we created, and the things we managed to pull off during a global pandemic, are AMAZING. Just peruse this report to see the wide variety of offerings, and the reactions from audience and artists alike. We not only commissioned our first play... we produced 8 new commissions. We not only held our first new play festival... we held four months of festivals, with four new plays each, all created in 48 hours!

We also built on our commitment to be an anti-racist theatre. We’re not proud that it took us this long, but we are happy to say that we produced our first plays by BIPOC artists. We had a BIPOC director for the first time.

We learned how to use Zoom, create shadow puppets, bring the magic of Santa into homes, and fit an entire show in the back of our car. We firmly believe that art is important all the time, especially during a global pandemic! Our artists and our audience needed to be able to process their grief and anger and confusion and hope ... and we know that theatre is uniquely positioned to allow space for so many emotions.

And we made it! Through the generous giving of our donors, our audiences and artists who came along on our learning journeys, and some much needed relief grants to cover the difference, Open Book is still here, stronger than ever. We’ve learned so much this past year, and it will only serve us as we move into the future. Driveway Theatre is likely here to stay. And many of the new ways of thinking and doing will inform our future work. I’m looking forward to the future... although I do hope there’s a lot less ZOOM and a lot more in person gathering! I can’t wait to see everyone’s faces at the theatre!

Theatre in the Time of Covid

We explored new ways of creating and presenting live theatre, always focused on our mission TO PROMOTE CONNECTION THROUGH THEATRICAL STORYTELLING. We also chose to focus on the uniqueness that our audience loves, including our intimate settings and the immediacy of the audience/performer connection. We imagined and presented new forms of theatre that preserved the safety of our audience and performers as we explored what theatre is, what it can be, and how it brings people together.

Driveway Theatre took two performers out into the community for 30 minute socially distant performances.



From the end of June to the end of September we commissioned 2 world premiere plays and hired performers who lived together. We also offered interactive improv. We performed 42 shows for over 1000 audience members in driveways, back yards, parks, and parking lots throughout the Metro Detroit area.

Watch a video with clips from all three of our Driveway Theatre offerings! Click [HERE](#).

Watch an interview on Fox 2 about Driveway Theatre [HERE](#)

I just want to say again, how thankful we are for your willingness and creativity in "Coloring outside the box". When I saw that you were making this available, and that I could actually pull it off in a safe way...I jumped at the chance! I had 38 sign up for the event and 32 that actually attended on a 90 degree day. The Improv even got a few of them out of their seats!!! I enjoyed how easy it was to book the event, and on the night of the performance, it was just as easy to go right into some LIVE entertainment! I watched my crowd and they LAUGHED and had a good time...they even participated in shouting out! Thank you soooooo much for pursuing your craft, to brings smiles to all of us during a Pandemic and in a SAFE and COMFORTABLE way! - Pam Miller, Senior Coordinator, City of Woodhaven



Performers varied by show, but included:

Sean Paraventi, Jaclynn Cherry, Michael Lomas, Kara Markusen, Brendon Monaghan, Ryan McGillen, Dez Walker, Jeff Priskorn



The Complete Canon of Post Apocalyptic Fiction and Film (abridged)



Creative and Production Team

Playwright	Emily Rosenbaum
Director	Krista Schafer Ewbank
Cast	Annie Dilworth Jonathan Davidson
Tour manager	Maria Tejada
Costumes and Props	Krista Schafer Ewbank

Seeing a live performance in a completely Covid-compliant backyard space after months of being deprived of shows = priceless. – *Nick Rowley*



Creative and Production Team

Playwright	Sean Paraventi
Director	Krista Schafer Ewbank
Cast	Tiaja Sabrie Ryan Ernst
Tour manager	Maria Tejada
Costumes and Props	Krista Schafer Ewbank

Thank you. Definitely a welcomed event today. It was great to leave the house to see a craft we miss seeing. – *Andy Pawlowski*



For Haunted window Theatre two performers and over [40 shadow puppets](#) told spooky stories in our lobby windows, delighting audiences of all ages (including a 4 year old who told us that the Headless Horseman was his favorite!) watching from our parking lot. Director Sarah Hawkins Rusk adapted Edgar Allen Poe’s The Raven, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, and Dracula, the actors wore microphones and a thrilling soundtrack was added and played for the audience who could either sit in chairs in front of the windows or in reserved car spots further back.

Watch the trailer with video clips [HERE](#), backstage footage [HERE](#), and news coverage [HERE](#).



Creative and Production Team

Director & Adaptations	Sarah Hawkins Rusk
Cast	Eric Niece Hannah Niece
Puppeteer	Elise Panneman
Puppet Designer	Krista Schafer Ewbank
Stage Manager	Sarah Drum
Lighting Designer	Harley Miah
Production Manager	Maria Tejada

My husband and I had a great experience! It was so fantastic to be able to see live theater again. The production level was top-notch- the sound quality, lighting, music, everything was done super well. The two actors (and shadow puppeteer!) were compelling and fun, and all worked very well with each other. My favorite story was the Raven- I think I forgot to breathe during it, I was that mesmerized. Well done! – *PJ Sallans*

This was my first visit to your theatre. Thank You for creating a new way to enjoy theatre in 2020. It goes such a long way to lift spirits during a difficult year. I will definitely be back and continue to tell friends & family about The Open book Theatre. -*Jennifer Morris*

Congrats on an innovative, imaginative and often funny show. The actors were great - *Connie Cowper*



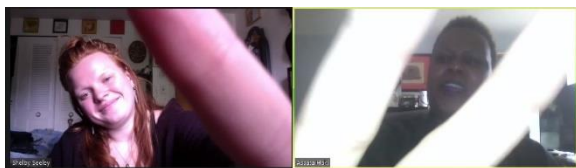
As it became clear that we wouldn't be able to welcome our audience indoors, and the weather grew too cold for outdoor performances, we developed a 6 play season of [One to One Virtual Theatre](#). Each show was just under 10 minutes: an intimate, live experience between one performer and one audience member (hence one to one!). The length and format allowed for the plays to be very responsive to current events, presenting material that goes deeper, opens introspection, and sparks conversation. Each play was a world premiere, commissioned for this new format.

Watch a 2.5 minute video with short clips from several of the plays [HERE](#).



What Matters by Madelyn Porter, directed by Krista Schafer Ewbank, featuring Assata Haki

What Matters centers on a Detroit native whose daily walk spurs memories of the changes she has seen over the years, and pushes her to focus on what truly matters.



As soon as I heard of one-on-one theatre, I knew I had to get a ticket! I've personally never heard of or experienced any theatre one on one, zoom or otherwise. I've been craving connection that is more intimate which you get from live theatre but is desperately missing in zoom theatre. Physically "touching", was

definitely the most effective part for me, and the actress played sharing that energy so beautifully. The time flew. I never felt awkward or like I didn't know how to react. The actress was extremely charismatic- I had a smile on my face the entire time. The story was interesting, poetic, musical, positive. - *Shelby Rae Seeley*

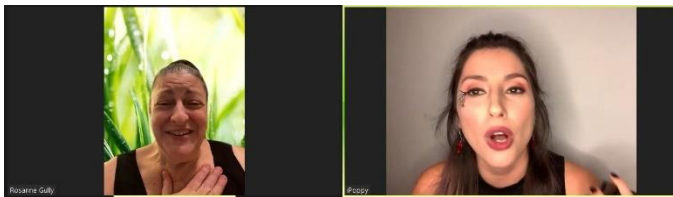
Better than any zoom/fb theatre performance I have attended since the pandemic began. The actor could actually see, hear and focus on my reaction - *Shawntai Brown*

It was a great monologue and something white America needs to hear. Feeling connected to a black woman may be a first for some of our Downriver citizens. As always, Open Book seeks to connect to the problems of today with thought provoking theater. High standards in a time of shutdown! - *Madeleine Jones*



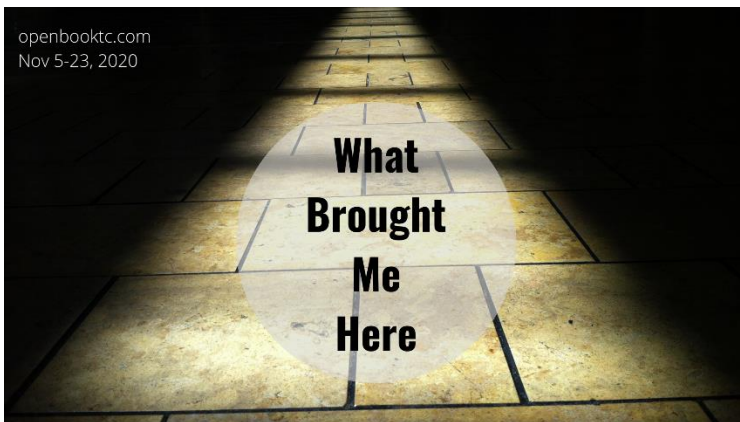
The Influence of iPoppy by MX Sotero, directed by Topher Alan Payne, featuring Marcela Garzaro
 iPoppy is an Instagram influencer, and she's going live for a special Halloween event! During the event she reveals some of the things that have influenced her life.

Watch the Promo Video [HERE](#)



iPoppy is by turns riotous, satirical, poignant, incisive, but always engaging. A one-woman ten minute show delivered 1:1 to each audience member via the quarantine-ubiquitous #Zoom, iPoppy is a frothy yet searing indictment of our present "culture," one that wallpapers over socioeconomic inequities, familial trauma, rampant materialism, and the

corrosive intersection of racism and sexism with a relentless and soul-crushing press of social media self-promotion and digital deception. iPoppy packs a wallop in its brisk and breezy ten minute run-time. – Roy Sexton, [ReelRoyReviews](#)

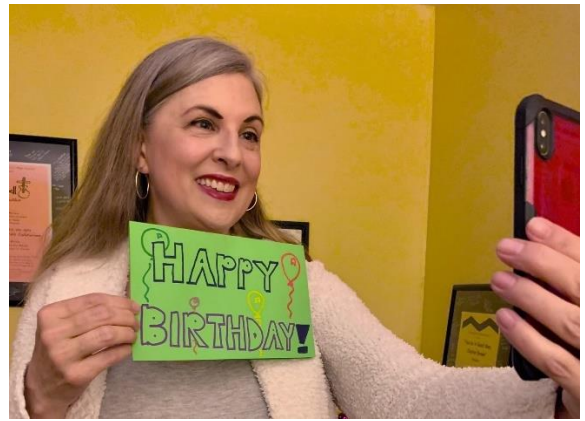


What Brought Me Here by Alyson Shelton, directed by Wendy Katz Hiller, featuring Lindel Salow
It's Kevin's first time leading an Al-Anon meeting, and he opens up about his journey to where he is now

Watch the Promo Video [HERE](#)

It was very moving and Lindel did a great job. Incredible how someone is able to illicit such emotion during a short period of time. Great job – Dawn Evola

I had a great experience! The performance, direction and script were awesome! - Cody Shelton



Home Less by Emily Rosenbaum, directed by Angie Kane, featuring Carrie Jay Sayer

On her child's 11th birthday, a mom reflects on bravery, helping, and the Hogwarts sorting hat.

Watch the promo video [HERE](#)

Story and acting were excellent! It was quite a journey through quite a few emotions in such a short span of time, from the mother's loving tribute to her child to the heartbreaking recognition of what it means to go through the pandemic without a safe home, and then back again. I laughed, teared up, and laughed some more. - *Lauren Cerruto*

Thank you for sharing the awareness. People are so isolated and concerned for themselves that the homeless and financially challenged communities are often forgotten. - *Sue Pine*

Sayer is a compelling presence, transcending the inherent limits of technology to connect with her singular audience member. We as viewer take the place of the birthday boy, with Sayer delivering her deepest thoughts and fears directly to us. ... This is an exceptional performance, not to be missed. Instructive, cathartic, essential. - *Roy Sexton*, [ReelRoyReviews](#)



Love Space by Joe Zarrow. Directed by K Edmonds. Featuring Jeremy Kucharek.

Captain Talosi attempts one last interstellar love connection as alien troops board the Starship Hieronymus watch news coverage [HERE](#) Watch the Promo video [HERE](#)

This was so much fun! I felt honored to have a performance just for me! Jeremy did an excellent job of connecting with me as an audience member. I was delighted by two surprise moments when I got to say one word! His acting was sincere, committed, energetic and engaging. The script was compelling. It was filled with imaginative science fiction references and situations. The directing was great. The pacing was terrific. The play was by turns exciting and moving and poignant. I nearly cried at one point, and I feel like my soul was touched. Thank you for a lovely evening of live theatre! - *Carrie Sayer*



Making New Friends During the Zombie Apocalypse by Joseph Zettelmaier, directed by Krista Schafer Ewbank, featuring Julia Garlotte

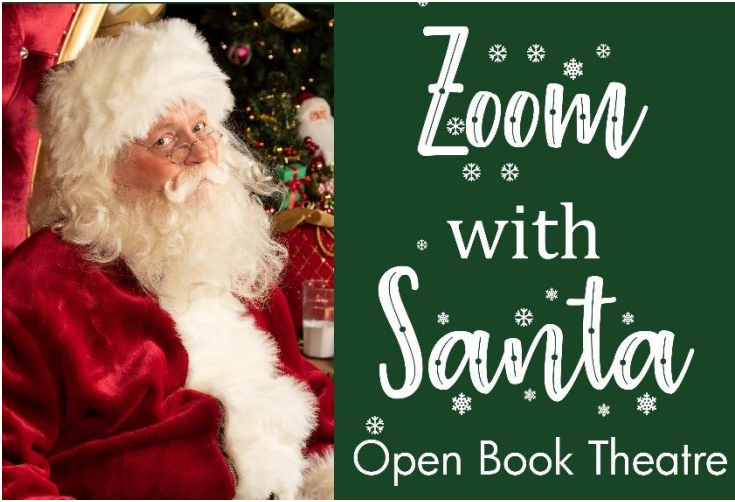
Tessa's been on the road, fighting for survival during the Zombie Apocalypse. While looking for fresh supplies in an abandoned home she stumbles upon a computer that seems to have an open video chat.

Watch the promo video [HERE](#)

The script was well-written and intriguing - not what you'd expect from a "zombie play" which made it all the more interesting. It had heart and Julia's character, someone in extreme circumstances, was relatable. The direction and lighting choices added to the ambiance. Great job! – *Jan Cartwright*

It was grabbing at my emotions from the very beginning. I could totally feel her loneliness and desperation. – *Emily Rosenbaum*

That was fun. I enjoyed it. It made me feel things. I felt connected for a minute. Thank you. - *Aubrey Martinson*



For the holidays we offered Zoom with Santa and children across the country - and even the WORLD – interacted live with Santa and Mrs. Claus. They were thrilled to see the letters they had sent in Santa’s hand, find out that Santa knew the names of their pets, and even dance with Santa! A set was built in the theatre. Santa and Mrs. Claus were a real married couple, and all our crew wore masks and practiced social distancing. Children were greeted by an elf, and then transferred to the North Pole to talk with Santa. Watch a 2 minute trailer with clips from actual visits [HERE](#).

Every part was so amazing that it's hard to narrow it down to a favorite part. If I must, the kids really loved: 1-Santa having their letters/drawing in hand, 2-Santa knowing things that ONLY Santa would know and 3- Santa talking to them personally. My twins are older (9) and this may be the last year they "believe". Although this event may



have guaranteed another year or more! I would recommend this event (and I have) to anyone and everyone that has kids. We will do this event every year that you offer it for as long as we have Believers. This event was absolutely PRICELESS! The wonder and amazement in their eyes and voices will bring me joy every time I watch the video. I hope your staff could feel the love, because it was coming through loud-and-clear! – *Diane D'Amico*

We purchased this for our grandchildren in Salt Lake City, who don't see that often. It was a wonderful way to share in their joy of the season. I have already watched the video about six times and will have to stop, because I've run out of tears. It's just so precious! – *Claudia Simons*

This was the best experience we could've asked for. As you could probably tell, my husband was definitely emotional and was so thrilled you were doing this. This time of year is hard for us for a variety of reasons, but finding a way to keep the Santa magic alive for a child during a pandemic is so special, and I am so excited this was a safe option. Thank you so much for offering this option and creating amazing memories for our family. We've recommended this to so many of our friends and family, and again, I want to thank you for doing something so special for families.

- *Susan Aumiller*





In winter of 2021 Open Book introduced the Weekend Wonders Online New Play Festival: a monthly online play festival presenting 4 new plays over the course of just one weekend! Playwrights had 24 hours to write a 10 minute play on a given theme for a specific cast. Themes, creative teams, and other fun challenges were announced on Thursday. By Friday the scripts were done and the directors and actors had 24 hours to memorize and rehearse, and all 4 shows were streamed live on Saturday night! From Zero to Zoom in 48 hours! Each month was sponsored by a local business or supporter of the theatre.

Quotes from audience during our live streams:

Amazing! One topic, such unique variations. - *Sue Brittain*

Everyone has been so talented! It's impossible to pick a best play. I can't believe these were 48 hours start to finish. Amazing!! - *Diana Trent*

This has been a very entertaining evening. Thanks for bringing back theatre. – *Ray Tejada*

That was great! We loved it! Tons of imagination! – *Erica Chappuis*

Magnificent work everyone! Thank you for a wonderful night of theater!!! Congratulations Open Book Theatre Company and thank you for this series! – *David Moan*

So so so so good. Well done! – *Taylor Johnson*

Thank you everyone. Always an enjoyable experience – *Margaret Zizka Gilkes*

Great job. So good! Thank you to all! - *Kelly Jo DeKiere-Danzy*

Quotes from artist participants:

My family and friends have found the festivals to be really watchable and enjoyable. It was great to get that feedback, and I'm glad that Open Book is creating something that is accessible to audiences. -*Danielle Peck*

It was so nice to have this creative outlet during this time. Thank you for organizing! – *Leah Fox*

Despite working with other theater companys' live virtual performances, I'm still not sure how you did this. It seemed far less complicated than other theaters' setups and it worked so well and efficiently! I'm impressed! - *Monica Spencer*

Thank you for this opportunity! It was a fabulous opportunity to write for two specific actors. I enjoyed the parameters of the theme, the two props, and the time. And the whole team was so "YES, AND!" including Maria and Krista, that it was a memorable and wonderful experience. - *Carrie Sayer*

Jan 28-30, 2021 Theme Alive @ 5

Watch the full event [HERE](#)

Weekend Wonders

Team A
Playwright Daniel DeRoy
Director D.B. Schroeder
Actors David Noon
Monica Spencer

January

Open Book Theatre Company



The Time We Have Left
by Daniel DeRoy



Weekend Wonders

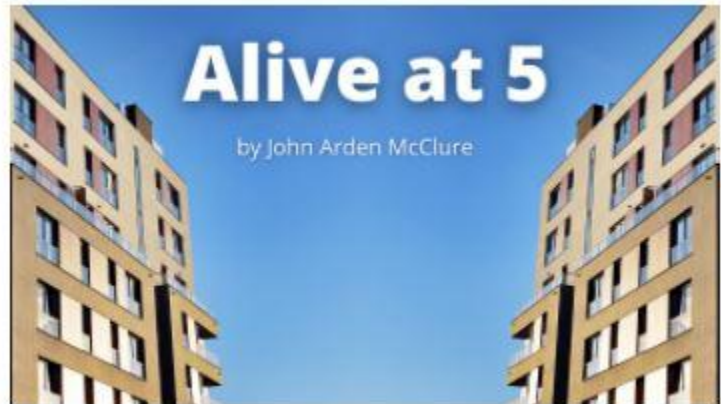
Team D
Playwright John Arden McClure
Director Mady McMahon
Actors Connie Cooper
Forest Hudson

January

Open Book Theatre Company



Alive at 5
by John Arden McClure



Weekend Wonders

Team C
Playwright Craig Ester
Director Kez Settle
Actors Jan Cartwright
Alexis Grace Clark

January

Open Book Theatre Company



Angie & Vera
by Craig Ester



Weekend Wonders

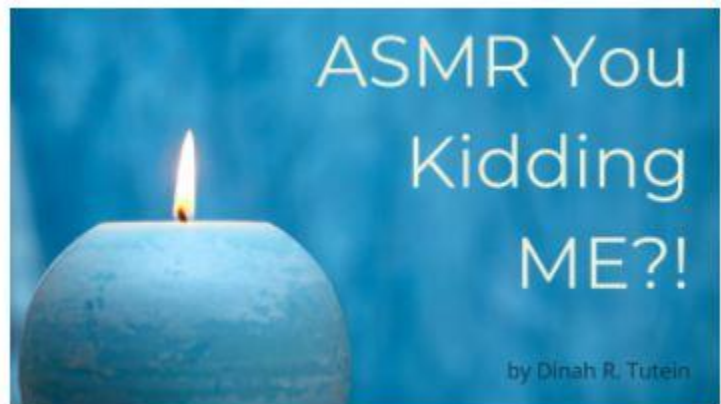
Team B
Playwright Dinah Tutein
Director Krissy Becker
Actors Angela Dill
Linda Robin Mammel

January

Open Book Theatre Company



ASMR You Kidding ME?!
by Dinah R. Tutein



February 25-27, 2021 THEME: Glass Ceiling
Watch the full event [HERE](#)



During his nightly prayer sessions, Gary is visited by God, and his entire belief system is called into question.



Jayne & Kat are working on a children's book for a class, and learn some lessons of their own.

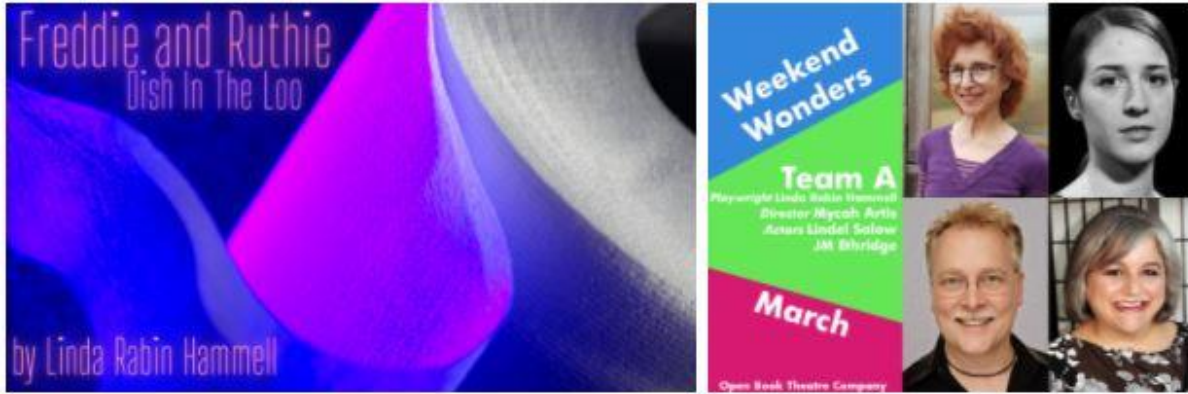


Nina and her assistant Elizabeth get ready for a big event by scrolling through mean tweets.



Cindi has a phobia and an urgent problem that only her Uncle Charlie can understand. Thank goodness for Zoom, because he's the only one she trusts to help!

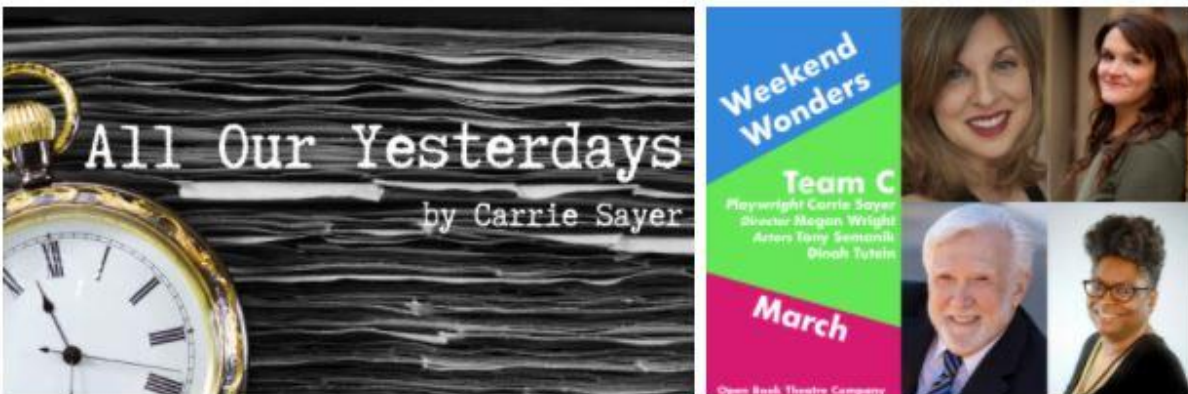
March 25-27, 2021 **THEME: Take a Hike**
Watch the full event [HERE](#)



Freddie Mercury, with more experience being dead, is mentoring RBG in the Great Beyond



Two sisters on Zoom playing out the same old patterns



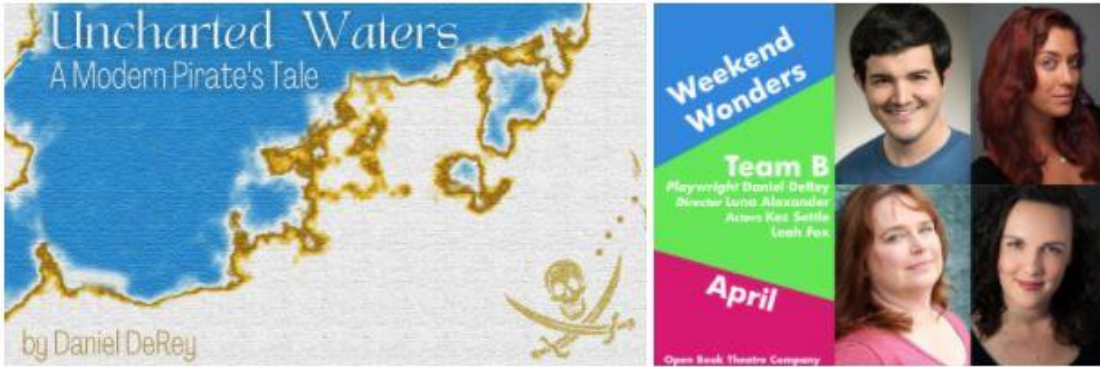
A retired ethics professor and a prize-winning author take a hike down memory lane



Two exes connect on FaceTime as they travel separately to spread the ashes of the dog they once shared

April 22-24, 2021 THEME: Pirates

Watch the full event [HERE](#)



In the distant future, piracy has returned to the seas and with modern technology, the sky is the limit for this new generation of buccaneers.



When two friends try and contact the spirit of an ancestral pirate uncle, hoping to find lost treasure, things don't go quite as planned.



In the wake of a police shooting of an unarmed Black man Rufus Watson, the number one radio host and his producer Julia Hicks have been banned from discussing police brutality on their show. Now that their jobs are on the line Rufus and Julia must decide whether Rufus will speak his truth, or hide his rage.



A couple plots revenge in their daily morning Zoom chat.

Revenue and Expenses

Our fiscal year runs January 1 -December 31. We are looking to change our fiscal year to match our season offerings.

Our 2020 finances reflect the reduction of ticket sales and earned income, and increase in individual giving and grants, which have helped us survive during COVID.

	Fiscal Year 20	Fiscal Year 19	Fiscal Year 18
Revenue			
Subscription Ticket Income	380	19,734	19,330
Single Ticket Income	15,673	61,267	38,781
Advertising revenue	0	1,825	500
Fundraising	907	4,347	6,015
Show Sponsorships	0	5,000	5,000
Individual Donations	61,549	35,671	46,873
Driveway Theatre	7,600	N/A	N/A
Government Grants	33,625	12,500	11,250
Other revenue	1,051	8,143	61
Total Revenue	120,785	148,487	127,810
Expenses			
Artist Stipends	21,324	22,260	16,450
Program expenses	71,569	90,050	81,096
General and Administrative	16,780	17,120	13,556
Fundraising	1,200	2,151	1750
Total Operating Expenses	110,873	131,581	112,852
Audience figures	20-21*	19-20	18-19
Number of Productions	15	3	5
Number of performances	*	48	75
Number of subscribers	*	296	226
Total attendance	*	2431	3743

*** these figures are almost impossible to calculate with online viewers, multiple people in cars for our window theatre. For virtual theatre, each performance was only 10 minutes long! See our detailed information about the shows for a better picture of what we offered**

Open Book Theatre company is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization.

2019-2020 Season Donors

Gifts given between July 1, 2020 and June 24, 2021

\$1-24

Mycah Artis
Becky Bausman
Myki Bowling
Lisa Brooker
Alejna Brugos
Donna & Ray Campbell
Anthony Caselli
Lauren Cerruto
Beth Chaisson
Jill Clements
Diane D'Amico
Jane Emmerich
Dawn Evola
Shirley Haddad
Jeremy E Hansen
Sarah Hawkins Rusk
Patricia Hicok
Noel Jackson
Christine & Mick Kuryvial
Therese Laskey
Mandy Logsdon
Sandy, Scott, & Wayne Marentette
Kevin McGillen
Kathy Nachtrab
Julia Ojeda
Tina Paraventi
Emily Rosenbaum
Melissa Ryder
Erik Sandstrom
Daniel Sanquist
Debra Sherman
Sandy Smallish
John Leon & Roberta Urbani
Liz Ventimiglia
Susan Washburn
Louise Zarrow

\$25-\$99 – Patron

Luna Alexander
Rachel Bellack
Margaret Berger
Leanna & Mark Bronni
Ann Cassidy
Erica & Laurent Chappuis
Emi Clark
Julie Delezenne
Krystle Dellihue
Annette Dumont

Dan & Judy Ellsworth
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Maya Gangadharan
Gail Gilchrist & Reynold Sutake
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Cynthia Keleman
Mona Kellie
Kristine Kelly
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Heather Laskos
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Suzanne L Pine
Kelly Pino
Debbie & Dennis Prunkard
Donna and John Rawson
Larry Rink
Ellen Roman
Tracy Rozman
Chuck Demske & Lindel Salow
Madelyn Sarich
Jennifer & Todd Schafer
Kez Settle
Jenny Simon
Sue Smith
Cindi Smith
Donna Stewart
Theresa Tejada
Daniel LaCombe & Lois Verhoeven
Scott William
Lisa Wysocki
Pat Zavadil
Jacob Zinke

\$100-\$249 – Applause

Ellen Andrews
Jan Cartwright & Jerry Gass
Charlene Clarke
Gene Dickirson
Dale & Karen Dobson
Dave and Eileen Ellis
Margaret and David Gilkes
Marie Hausch
Steve & Wendy Hiller
Jan Holmes
Matthew Hurst
Diane Johnson
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Topher Payne
Brandy Joe Plambeck
Ed and Kathye Quirk
Chuck Reynolds
Doris Richards
Amy J Roemer
Dr. Pat and Julie Sweeny
Mary & Nick Szczerba
Barbara Thayer

\$250-499 – Bravo

Linda Cleaver & Todd Cleaver
Tamara Howes
Chris Mathews
Jodi McGrew
Kenneth Rygwelski
Trenton Rotary Foundation
Bovitz CPA, P.C.

\$500-999 – Encore

John Colina & Nancy Colina
Kathy Benton & Steve Benton
Ron Brausch & Patricia Selby
Karen Wilson-Smithbauer
Melissa Struber
Trenton Business Association
Kathleen Rankin
Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber (SWCRC)

\$1000-\$2499 – Standing Ovation

Erica Chappuis & Laurent Chappuis
Richard and Connie Cowper
In memory of Bea and Jordan Rabin

\$2500 -4999

William Jasman
Duane Schafer & Judith Schafer

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the National Endowment for the Arts

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