

108th Season

HOW I LEARNED *to Drive*



FEB. 16 – MAR. 10, 2024



VAGABOND PLAYERS



VAGABOND PLAYERS

The Best of Broadway on Broadway

806 South Broadway
Baltimore, MD 21231
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www.vagabondplayers.org

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Vagabond Players is a founding member of the Baltimore Playwrights Festival. For more information, visit <http://www.baltplayfest.org>.

VAGABOND PLAYERS PRESENT

HOW I LEARNED *to Drive*

by Paula Vogel

Directed by Tessara Morgan Farley

Cast

Li'l Bit Sydney Marks
Peck Doug Krehbel
Male Greek Chorus Lucius Robinson
Female Greek Chorus Melissa Banister
Teenage Greek Chorus Morgan Wenerick

Understudies

Li'l Bit Elle Marie Sullivan
Peck Anthony Rufo

Setting

A collection of memories from 1962 to 1986.

How I Learned to Drive is presented without an intermission.

Content Warning: *How I Learned to Drive* deals with sexual harassment and abuse, incest, misogyny, and pedophilia.

HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE received its world premiere at the Vineyard Theatre, New York City. Off-Broadway production produced by the Vineyard Theatre in association with Daryl Roth and Roy Gabay. This play was made possible by generous support from the Pew Charitable Trust and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. It was written and developed at the Perseverance Theatre, Juneau Alaska. Molly Smith, Artistic Director.

How I Learned to Drive is presented by arrangement with Dramatists Play Service.
www.dramatists.com

Cast and Crew Biographies

Melissa Banister (Female Greek Chorus) was most recently seen as Cassandra in Spotlighters' production of *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*. Her favorite theatre credits include: *Three Sisters*, *Dr. Charcot's Hysteria Shows*, *The Great Fury of Phillip Hotz*, and *The Firebugs*. Look for Melissa in the upcoming local film, *Glove Match*. Melissa appreciates the cast and crew for their friendship and support. She is thankful to Tessa for the opportunity to be part of this family and for trusting her to tell this story. Melissa is forever grateful to Nicholas and Matthew for their constant support, inspiration, and love.

Doug Krehbel (Peck) is making his first Vagabond Players appearance. Previous roles in the Baltimore area: Arthur Conan Doyle in Sean Coe's *Hand Through the Veil*; Iachimo in *Cymbeline* at Chesapeake Shakespeare; and *Mankind* with Iron Crow Theatre. Other credits: *Sink the Belgrano!*, *War of the Worlds* and *The Marriage of Maria Braun* with Scena Theatre; *Henry VIII* with Folger Theatre; *The Real Inspector Hound* at MetroStage; *That Face and Sweet* and *Sad* with Studio Theatre; *Reckless* at Spooky Action Theatre; *Loves Labours Lost* and *Twelfth Night* with Cape Fear Shakespeare; *Four Cathedrals* at Capital Rep and *Noises Off* and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* at Opera House Theatre.

Sydney Marks (Li'l Bit) returns to the Vagabond Players stage after having last performed as part of the ensemble in *Chess*. Previously at Vagabonds, she appeared as herself in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*, Sandra in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and as Juror #7 in *12 Angry Jurors*. Other favorite theater credits include Peter Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Stephano in *The Tempest*, Lyuba in *The Cherry Orchard*, and Lucy the Slut in *Avenue Q*. Before moving to Baltimore, Sydney graduated with a degree in theatre teaching from Eastern Kentucky University. Love to Mom and Dad.

Lucius Robinson (Male Greek Chorus) is a Princess Grace award-winning performer, director, writer, and teacher who received his MFA from the DellArte International School of Physical Theater. As a deviser, he has created and performed in *Forgive Us*, *Gustavito*, *YOU'RE IN DANGER!*, *Fuzzy Goo's Guide to the Earth* (from the story by Dambudzo Marechera), *Hell to Pay* (from the poem by Shel Silverstein), *We Are Having A Nice Time*, and *Irvinville*. He has studied/trained with the Guthrie Theatre, Shakespeare & Company, RADA, and UNC-Chapel Hill and currently teaches for the city of Baltimore.

Anthony Rufo (Understudy Uncle Peck) most recently appeared at Vagabond Players as Molokov in this season's production of the musical *Chess*. Last season, he appeared as Dr. Spivey in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and was an alternate for Jack and Ben in Neil Simon's *Broadway Bound*, taking the stage as Jack for two performances.

Elle Marie Sullivan (Understudy Li'l Bit, she/her) is making her Vagabond Players debut! Previous credits include: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Stillpointe Theatre), *Once Upon a Moon* (Smithsonian's Discovery Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Shakespeare Opera Theatre), *The Tempest* (Grassroots Shakespeare), *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni* (Washington National Opera), *According to Shakespeare*, *The Legend of Pufferfish Pat*, *One Gold Coin – una moneta de oro* (InterAct Story Theatre), *Sleeping Beauty* (National Ballet of Canada), *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* (Anacostia Playhouse), *The Canterville Ghost* (Endangered Species Theatre Project). Elle is on the leadership team of Voices Unbarred and works as a teaching artist, director, dramaturg, and intimacy director.

Morgan Wenerick (Teenage Greek Chorus) is taking the stage in her third production at Vagabond Players, the most recent being *Witness for the Prosecution* (directed by Robert Oppel), and the first: *Stop Kiss* (directed by Belle Burr). Morgan graduated from Towson University in May 2020 with a B.F.A. in Acting and a Minor in Mass Communications. She continues to feel ever so happy and grateful to be back working with Vags yet again.

Tessara Morgan Farley (Director) is excited to be working with Vagabond Players! Originally from Minnesota, she is a freelance theater artist currently living and working in Baltimore. She has directed, produced, and stage managed throughout the Midwest including Cedar Rapids, Minneapolis, and Milwaukee. Since moving to Baltimore in 2017, she's worked with theaters like the Acme Corporation, Single Carrot, Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, Silver Spring Stage, Baltimore Rock Opera Society, Submersive Productions, and more. She is also a co-founder of Truepenny Projects, a small and independent arts organization in Baltimore.

Nichemat Judith "NJ" Saroff (Stage Manager, they/them) is a Jewish and trans artist and thrilled to be stage managing their first show with Vagabond Players. Acting credits: Strand's *High School Coven* and Rapid Lemon's *Variations on Change* where their play *Daylights Savings* was also performed. Stage manager credits: *Perfect Arrangement*, *Marcella de la luz Lights the World, Is Edward Snowden Single?*, *The First Thing That Happened*, and *TruPENNY's Immortal*. Outside of the theatre, they can be found in the literal woods of MD and CT working as an outdoor educator. While the meaning of "family is family" has entirely different connotations here, their family that is unable to be here means a lot to them and they are so thankful for their influence and inspiration.

Jennie Hardman (Assistant Stage Manager) is excited to be working with Vagabond Players! This is her first production after graduating from UMBC, where she received a B.A. in theatre. She previously worked on many UMBC Theatre Department productions as wardrobe crew and wardrobe head, including *She Kills Monsters*, *Trouble in Mind*, *Dracula: a Feminist Revenge Fantasy*, *Really*, and, most recently, a devised piece entitled *shOUT: The Queer Theatre Project*. She has also worked with the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company as costume designer for their intern production *Get in Line* in the summer of 2022.

Jaeden Arrington (Lighting Designer) is a Maryland-based lighting designer and programmer dedicated to crafting visually stunning and thought-provoking designs. He transforms the stage into an artistic canvas, using light and color to captivate audiences and convey fun and intriguing narratives. While his roots lie in theatre, his expertise extends to lighting for dance, music, and various live events, showcasing a versatile and dynamic approach to the art of lighting design. Adding light to the stage does more than allowing the audience to see what's happening, it allows them to feel what can't be seen and he tries to do that with every design.

Liz Dunlap (Costume Designer) is a multi-disciplinary artist from Baltimore who believes that clothing and adornment is the first language we learn in self-expression and actualization. As a costumer, she is new to Vagabond Players. Her most recent design work was for TruPENNY Project's 2023 production of *Lyra and the Ferocious Beast*. Outside of her artistry, she has worked with multiple arts-advocacy organizations based around Baltimore and currently works for an arts nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives and education of Maryland youth through arts-integrated programming. She is also the proud "cat mama" to a calico named Mars.

Anna Morse (Scenic Artist) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice encompasses drawing, sculpture, and installation. Through her process-based discipline, Anna is constantly learning and incorporating new techniques and materials in her practice. *How I Learned to Drive* is her first theatrical project, and she is looking forward to more similar projects. Morse graduated from Maryland Institute College of Art with a B.F.A. in painting in December 2022. She has shown work in various group shows in Baltimore where she is currently based, though originally from Northern California and Seattle.

Mark Navarro (Sound Designer) is a sound artist, composer, and music producer who employs his skills to craft immersive worlds. Making his production debut with Vagabond Players, recent endeavors include providing the original score and sound design for TruPENNY Project's 2023 production of *Lyra and the Ferocious Beast*. In addition to his artistic pursuits, Mark is employed at the Baltimore School for the Arts as an arts technologist, a part of a passionate, focused, and driven effort to support student and school faculty between art disciplines, and provide an interactive experience that mimics real-world environments. Mark was also a 2023 Bakers Artist Awards Finalist.

Shawna Potter (Intimacy Director, she/her) is working for the first time with Vagabond Players! She is the author of **Making Spaces Safer: A Guide to Giving Harassment the Boot Wherever You Work, Play, and Gather**, co-creator of the Safer Space Program, and a bystander intervention educator. Shawna added Intimacy Director to her resume over the pandemic and has been working non-stop ever since. She is also the front person for punk band War On Women, hosts the podcast But Her Lyrics, and repairs tube amps at Big Crunch Amplifier Service & Design.

**Special thanks to the theatre department of
University of Maryland Baltimore County.**

Production Staff

Director	Tessara Morgan Farley
Stage Manager	Níchemat Judith "NJ" Saroff
Assistant Stage Manager	Jennie Hardman
Lighting Design	Jaeden Arrington
Set Design	Tessara Morgan Farley
Set Construction	Jay Demarco Bruce Kapplin
Projection Design	Bruce Kapplin
Costume Design	Liz Dunlap
Sound Design	Mark Navarro
Intimacy Director	Shawna Potter
Scenic Art	Anna Morse
Photographer	Shaelyn Jae Photography
Marketing/PR	Audra M. Mullen Kerry Simons
Graphic Design	Sarah Hepworth
Box Office/Front of House	Michael Kranick
Producers	Steve Goldklang Holly Pasciullo

Director's Note

Throughout the development of this production, I've been asked the question, "Why this play now?" My answer has consistently been - because the play is still relevant. The themes in this work are as palpable today as when Vogel first penned this compelling narrative in the late 1990s.

How I Learned to Drive is a poignant exploration of our culture — a culture that continues to normalize, trivialize, and perpetuate sexual violence. The play delves into the intricacies of power dynamics, the impact of trauma, and the subtle ways in which abuse can be woven into the fabric of daily life. Vogel's play allows us to navigate the complex themes of sexual abuse and survival through characters who feel like our own family members. Rarely do we find ourselves invited to explore the darker corners of the human experience while simultaneously celebrating the strength that can arise from adversity. By presenting this narrative, we aim to contribute to the larger conversation about rape culture, challenging social norms and fostering a collective commitment to dismantling systems that enable sexual violence. As Paula once said in an interview, "How do you push the button without burning the bridge?"

While *How I Learned to Drive* is infused with moments of humor and inspiration, it is undeniably a challenging play to watch. If, at any point, you need to step away, please know that we understand. Your presence here is appreciated, and we thank you for engaging with this important piece of theater.

With gratitude,
Tessara Morgan Farley

VAGABOND ANGELS

Become an Angel today!

Support the arts, remember a loved one, or honor a fellow theatre lover.

Broadway Angels

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Cast and Crew
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Sheldon Shugarman
Susan Steele
Kimberly Swartz

Vagabond Players is a recipient of grants from the Maryland States Arts Council and Mayor Brandon Scott and the Baltimore Office of Promotion and The Arts



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ENJOYING THIS PRODUCTION? JOIN US FOR THE REST OF OUR 108TH SEASON!

APR. 5 – 28, 2024

DOUBT, A PARABLE

Written by John Patrick Shanley
Directed by Steve Goldklang

In this Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning 21st century American classic, Sister Aloysius, a strict, uncompromising Catholic middle school principal in the early 1960's, takes matters into her own hands when she suspects the charismatic and highly popular Father Flynn of improper relations with one of the male students — who happens to be the school's only African American student.

MAY 17 – JUNE 9, 2024

LOVE, LOSS AND *What I Wore*

Written by Nora Ephron and Delia Ephron
Based on the book by Ilene Beckerman
Directed by Belle Burr

An evening of hilariously funny and often poignant short scenes and monologues that depict how an item of clothing can hold a past identity, body shape, and hopes seized or abandoned. In this delightfully dishy trip down memory lane a dress, a shoe, a hat can serve as a jumping off point for bigger themes such as falling in and out of love, familial relationships, or a same-sex marriage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TICKET PRICES, VISIT
WWW.VAGABONDPLAYERS.ORG



CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Paula Vogel's HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE follows the strained, sexual relationship between Li'l Bit and her aunt's husband, Uncle Peck from her pre-adolescence through her teenage years into college and beyond. Using the metaphor of driving and the issues of pedophilia, incest, and misogyny, the play explores the ideas of control and manipulation.

While How I Learned to Drive is infused with moments of humor and inspiration, it is undeniably a challenging play to watch.

The play discusses and depicts the following topics:

*Sexual harassment and abuse
Incest • Misogyny • Pedophilia
Alcoholism • Bullying*

TAKE THIS INSERT WITH YOU

You are not alone -- If you, or someone you know, is struggling we encourage you to reach out to the resources provided on this insert or in the lobby.



HOT LINES AND RESOURCES

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

CALL 988 offers high-quality emergency emotional support and confidential care 24/7 from trained counselors,

Call 988 | [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)



Alcoholics Anonymous



Baltimore's 24/7 confidential helpline for meetings and support.

410-663-1922 | [baltimoreaa.org](https://www.baltimoreaa.org)

Al-Anon

Worldwide network for relatives and friends of alcoholics sharing experiences, support, and hopes for solving common problems.

1-888-425-2666 | [marylanddc-alanon.org](https://www.marylanddc-alanon.org)



Black Women's Blueprint



Specializes in helping traumatized women, cis and trans, and LGBTQ survivors of crime and abuse

347-533-9102 | [restoreny.org/black-womens-blueprint](https://www.restoreny.org/black-womens-blueprint)

Childhelp

Provides programs and services for advocacy, intervention, treatment, and prevention of child abuse worldwide.

1-800-4-A-CHILD | [childhelp.org](https://www.childhelp.org)



National Domestic Violence Hotline



Free 24/7, 365-day-a-year confidential hotline providing tools and support to help survivors of domestic violence in over 200 languages.

1-800-799-SAFE (7233) | [thehotline.org](https://www.thehotline.org)

RAINN / National Sexual Assault Hotline

Nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization, providing support and programs to help survivors and prevent sexual violence.

1-800-656-HOPE (4673) | [rainn.org](https://www.rainn.org)



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)



A free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

1-800-662-HELP (4357) | [samhsa.gov/national-helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/national-helpline)