



the constructivists
present
a virtual adventure

September 30
thru
October 4, 2020

tickets and info at theconstructivists.org
or by calling 414.858.6874

Women
Laughing Alone
with
Salad

By Sheila Callaghan
directed by jaimelyn gray

Featuring Paige Bourne, Liz Ehrler,
Sabra Michelle, and Rob Schreiner

Women Laughing Alone with Salad By Sheila Callaghan

directed by jaimelyn gray

Assistant Director	Maya Danks
Set and Costume Design	Sarah Harris
Lighting Design	Dawn Bankers
Sound Design	Joe Court
Properties Design	Rose Grizzell
Tech Direction/Set Construction	Les Zarzecki
Acting, Voice and Movement	Laura Sturm
Video Production	Matthew Huebsch
Production Photography	Christal Wagner
Literary Management	Matthew Ivan Bennett
Stage Manager	Jessica Herwig
Assistant Stage Manager	Rachel Hunsinger

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(Women Laughing Alone with Salad is 100 minutes. There will be one 10-Minute Intermission.)

WOMEN LAUGHING ALONE WITH SALAD by Sheila Callaghan, developed in part in Center Theatre Group's Writers Workshop, is presented virtually by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

cast of women laughing alone with salad

Rob Schreiner	Guy
Sabra Michelle	Sandy
Paige Bourne	Tori
Liz Ehrler	Meredith

hungering to be whole, by mike fischer

Midway through the first act of Sheila Callaghan's *Women Laughing Alone With Salad*, three anonymous women sit alone in a fancy restaurant, eagerly anticipating the gourmet lunches they've ordered from a waiter named – appropriately enough – Guy.

The first woman has ordered a red pepper. The second woman has ordered a yellow pepper. The third woman has ordered an onion.

Satire or truth? Or both? “This is not a dream,” one character says late in the play. “It’s an exaggerated reality. It sucks.”

Yeah, it does suck, living as we do in a society where Callaghan's title is taken from an actual meme, reflecting the shaming that treats women and their bodies as feared objects rather than self-realizing subjects. We live in a nation that is more puritanical about sex than any developed country – and that simultaneously consumes more porn than all of those countries. We live in a country where our fear of death leaves us afraid to live.

Callaghan makes clear that the control a patriarchy exercises over women's bodies – and the way women turn on each other as they internalize those controlling mechanisms – hurts women most. But she also drives home that patriarchy ultimately harms everyone. It warps our sex lives by distorting our fantasies, making us afraid and ashamed of what we want.

The Personal is Always Political

As suggested above, Callaghan's weapon of choice is satire, which doesn't just make this play wickedly funny as well as razor sharp. Satire also allows Callaghan to widen her frame beyond the individualized stories of her characters and indict the society that's made them who they are.

None of Callaghan's characters are villains. Sure: they make bad choices, often involving self-inflicted wounds. And yes: they can be ridiculous, although you'll also ache for them while laughing at some of the things they do. But even as Callaghan sketches the individualized stories of Guy and the women in his life, she's also making a larger point about how our obsessive and often narcissistic focus on our

bodies aligns with a political landscape that's selfish and mean – and with a toxic version of feminism which is less about replacing the patriarchy than duplicating it.

If the brilliant Caryl Churchill and plays like *Top Girls* come to mind, they should. Churchill's consistent focus on the intersection of class and gender – and how women therefore ignore their marginalized sisters while being consumed by their own drives and fears – is the encroaching darkness at the edge of Callaghan's play.

It's no accident that Callaghan is a writer and producer of the long-running *Shameless*, featuring its own indictment of America's regressive class politics. Nor is it an accident that one of the main characters in *Salad* spends her early days as a crusading Second Wave feminist, before devolving into a self-absorbed shadow of her formerly idealistic self.

Coming on the heels of August's heady celebrations of the 19th Amendment's centennial – and in the midst of a second pandemic involving this country's systemic racism – the Constructivists' production of *Salad* therefore asks some particularly hard questions that the largely white and upper-class feminist movement didn't ask itself enough 100 years ago. And still doesn't ask itself enough today.

For if we're going to liberate ourselves from the tyranny of a sexist world showcasing women laughing alone with salad, what will we build in its stead?

Are we going to settle for an ostensibly different but similar version of a world in which we're consumed by our need for control, all while perpetuating the power structures we've inherited? Will we settle for crumbs from the floor rather than effecting a wholesale change in the menu?

Or might we instead fight for a feast in which all of us can eat and drink at the same table, sharing our resources so that we might each fulfill our needs and become our best selves? Maybe, in such a world, we can actually enjoy a good salad and so much else, while laughing – and loving – together.

– Chicago, September 3, 2020



Rob Schreiner (Guy) – Rob is grateful to be working with Jaimelyn Gray and The Constructivists once again. Offstage, Rob can be found playing music in rock bands, studying philosophy at UW-Milwaukee, and fighting other men for sport. He has a charming dog named Al, who compensates quite well for his deficiencies of character. Enjoy the show!



Sabra Michelle (Sandy/Guy) – Sabra is thrilled to be in her first show with The Constructivists, which is a little outside her typical comfort zone. She is best known for playing leading ladies

in musicals such as Lola in DAMN YANKEES, Cassie in A CHORUS LINE, Roxie in CHICAGO, Morticia in ADDAMS FAMILY, and many others. She was featured on the National tour of THE PAJAMA GAME, cruising the Hawaiian islands as a dancer on Norwegian Cruise Line's PRIDE OF AMERICA, and on the "Bear in the Big Blue House LIVE!" video (released by Jim Henson/Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment), with whom she toured the world for 3 seasons.

A native of the Washington, DC area, Sabra received her BFA in Dance from Shenandoah Conservatory. While pursuing her musical theatre career in New York City for 12 years, between auditions, gigs, and classes, Sabra devoted herself to philanthropic work for Broadway Cares (performing twice in Jerry Mitchell's BROADWAY BARES) and founded THE COUGAR BALL, which has produced gala fundraisers for The Actors

Fund and the Phyllis Newman Women's Health Initiative since 2013.

Recently, Madison, WI has come to know her as an award-winning teaching artist and choreographer (she can also help you buy or sell your house as she is a licensed Realtor with the Stark Company). She lives in Cottage Grove with her husband stagehand Brian Weinkauff (both proud members of IATSE Local 251) and their cocker spaniels Zoey and Giovanni. For more information, please visit www.SabraMichelle.com



Paige Bourne (Tori) – Paige is thrilled to be in her first show with The Constructivists! She has previously been seen in CHARLOTTE'S WEB at Children's Theatre of Madison,

1-800-123-BOYS at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, THE BEAUTY OF PSYCHE with Milwaukee Entertainment Group, and AS YOU LIKE IT with Original Practices MKE. Paige recently completed an acting apprenticeship with Marin Shakespeare Company in San Francisco where she appeared in MACBETH. Paige also does on camera work, including several short films and commercials for Harley-Davidson and Steinhafels among other regional companies. Many thanks to her family, friends, and this awesome virtual production team!



Liz Ehrlar (Meredith) – Liz is bursting with glee to be a part of The Constructivist's virtual production of WOMEN LAUGHING ALONE

WITH SALAD! As a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin- Steven's Point, Liz moved from Madison to the greater

biographies continued

Milwaukee area to dive into the theatre scene. Her recent credits include COMEDY OF ERRORS (Prague Shakespeare Company), MEASURE FOR MEASURE (Aura Theatre Company), DEAD MAN'S CELL PHONE (Outskirts Theatre Company) and now one of her favorite shows! Having been introduced to Sheila Callaghan's works in 2017, "Women Laughing" has taken a special place in Liz's heart. 2020 has been quite a year and having the opportunity to bring theatre to people has been the motivating factor for Liz during this process. She wants everyone watching to enjoy this new experience with the actors and production crew as we continue to forge on in these unknown times. Special recognition to Jaime for always supporting her artistically and personally. Thank you to her friends and family for all their support and missed events due to rehearsal. And Brandon, thank you for letting her take over the living room for the past 7 weeks and continuously holding her hand through all these trying times. Enjoy the show guys! She guarantees you'll laugh, at least once. www.lizehrler.com

Profiles Theatre (Chicago), Eclipse Theatre (Chicago), TUTA (Chicago), and many other amazingly creative and driven Chicago storefront theatres. Most recently she collaborated with Luda Lopatina Solomon to form Chicago's only English-Russian cross-cultural theatre company, Bluebird Arts. "Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it." —Bertolt Brecht



Maya Danks (Asst. Director) — Maya is a Milwaukee-based actor, director, and text coach. She studied Theatre Arts at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Some of Maya's most recent credits include THE NETHER (The Constructivists - actor: Detective Morris), HENRY V (Voices Found Rep. - assistant director/text coach), and MERCHANT OF VENICE (Mad Rogues - director). Maya is excited to take on the challenge of virtual theatre during these uncertain times, and hopes that everyone in the theatre community is staying safe, happy, and healthy.

Creative Team



Jaimelyn Gray (Director) — Jaimelyn is Wisconsin-born Actor, Director, Producer who, after spending ten years in Chicago, relocated to Milwaukee in 2018 to return to her homeland and further advocate accessible passionate

visceral theatre by founding The Constructivists. Credits include the Utah Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Riverfront Theatre (Rockford),



Sarah Harris (Set and Costume Design) — Sarah is a Scenic, Costume, and Projection Designer who recently received her MFA in Stage Design from Southern Methodist University.

She is thrilled to be returning with The Constructivists where she has designed Costumes and Scenery for the past four shows. Other designs include PENNY CANDY and THE WOLVES (Dallas Theater Center); MAMA MIA, ANNIE, and SENSE AND SENSABILITY (Cape Fear Regional Theatre); SPRING

biographies continued

AWAKENING, THE CHERRY ORCHARD, IN THE BLOOD, EURYDICE, SMART PEOPLE, A BRIGHT NEW BOISE and ALCINA (SMU). Sarah currently resides in NYC and sends love to her family and Rich. Thank you Jaime for including me in this adventure. And thank you all for supporting the arts which are more important than ever!

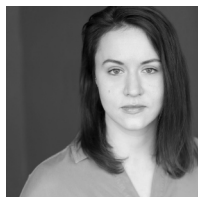
www.sharrisdesigns.com

Dawn M. Bankers (Lighting Design) –

Dawn received a Bachelor of Music in Bass Performance from Millikin University and a Master of Fine Arts in Lighting Design from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her theatrical lighting design credits include THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW, A Lady and a Woman, Twilight of the Golds, The Masque of Beauty and the Beast, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, and Evita. She is a member of the IATSE Local 251 in Madison, WI, and is the Performance Services Manager for the Office of Event Services at UW-Platteville. She is excited to work on WOMEN LAUGHING ALONE WITH SALAD, her first with The Constructivists and first virtual production.

Joe Court (Sound Design) –

Joe is an artistic associate with TUTA Chicago. From 2008 until 2016, he served as sound engineer for the Chicago production of the Tony Award-winning musical MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET. He has received three Joseph Jefferson Award nominations for his design work. Member, USA 829.



Rose Grizzell (Properties Design) –

Rose is an actor, properties artisan, and scenic painter based in Chicago. A graduate of Carthage College,

she has nurtured the deep love for all

things theatrical that she has held her whole life. Recently she has performed in Theatre Gigante's THE BEGGAR'S OPERA; Cooperative Performance's devised work MACHINA PERSONA, and THE PILLOWMAN as Katurian--with Jaime and The Constructivists! Rose was a 2018-19 scenic apprentice at Skylight Music Theatre, and this will be the third Constructivists show she has propped. Rose also plays harp for fun, wahoo!



Les Zarzecki (Technical Direction & Set Construction)

– Originally from just outside of Bialystok, Poland, Les moved to the United States in 2003. A carpenter and home exterior general contractor by trade, he has been responsible

for bringing Sarah Harris' set designs for The Constructivists to the stage from the start. He previously lent his skills for productions at TUTA Theatre Chicago.



Laura Sturm (Acting, Voice and Movement) –

Laura, a Constructivists' Artistic Associate from the company's inception, is a professional actor, director, teacher, and movement/acting coach. She received

an MFA from Northern Illinois University and has been working professionally in the Chicago area for over 20 years. Laura has taught acting and voice/movement for actors since 2001 at various professional training studios in Chicago including Act One Studios and The Actors' Center. She is an Adjunct Faculty member at Columbia College Chicago, and has taught at Governors State University, North Central

biographies continued

College and Oakton Community College. Her voice/movement work is primarily based on the work of Williamson/Laban/Lessac, and she also teaches Period Styles, which incorporates text work on heightened language with movement from other time periods. Laura specializes in the Meisner Technique of acting, but also teaches non-Meisner classes such as Scene Study and Audition Skills. Laura has been performing professionally in the Chicago area since 1994, and has worked with such theatres as New Colony, Mary-Arrchie, Remy Bumpo, Victory Gardens, Boho, Stage Left, Northlight, Signal, Bailiwick, Polarity and the Texas Shakespeare Festival. Directing credits include the Jeff Recommended production of Sarah Ruhl's MELANCHOLY PLAY and the world premiere of Chicago playwright Barbara Lhota's PHANTOM PAIN, both with Organic Theater, the musical I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE with Quest Ensemble Theatre, and Sheridan's 18th century comedy of manners, THE RIVALS. She also serves as a private acting and movement coach for professionals of all levels in Chicago. More information about classes, productions and private coaching at www.laurasturm.com.



Matthew Ivan Bennett (Literary Manager) –

Matthew has been Resident Playwright of Plan-B Theatre

Company since 2007, where he has premiered several stage plays and ten radio plays, including an adaptation of Frankenstein, the dystopian-thriller Stand, and full-lengths such as A VERSION OF EVENTS and ERIC(A)—which won Best Drama at the United Solo Theatre Festival in New York. In 2015 and 2016, he was a finalist at the Austin Film Festival for his screenplays co-written with Mark David Matthews. His play LET DOWN YOUR HAIR was a 2016 finalist at the Eugene O'Neill National Theatre Conference. ART & CLASS was a semi-finalist in 2019, which was originally workshopped with The Constructivists. Matt also serves as Assistant Business Manager at Pioneer Theatre Company and is a member of the Dramatists' Guild. His poetry has been published by the Western Humanities Review, Sugar House Review, and Utah Life.

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special thanks

We would like to first thank you, patron, for being here with us in this challenging time. Jaimelyn Gray and The Constructivists would also like to extend a very passionate thank you to the following for being especially helpful and supportive to this production and theatre company: Sheila Callaghan for her amazing play; Our Donors: Lesco Windows & Doors, Jill Anna Ponasik and William Bradley, Antishadows, LLC, Timothy Lonsdale, Merlaine Angwall and John Zarbano, Mike Moskal & Francie Moehring, Jodie Boldon, Sharon Gray, Ken Harris and Sharleen Leonard, Solana Ramirez-Garcia, Lori Konitzer, Samantha Meneau-Fischer, Amy Sherman, Laura Sawall, Brian & Katie Cummings, Luke Searl, Joe McCauley, Kira Renkas, and Russ Evans; Concord Theatricals and Samuel French; J.R. Sullivan; Amanda Bowen; Michael Rebekah; Will LaDuke and Active Culture; Jeff Jordan and Urban Milwaukee; Adam Rasske and Wisconsin Public Radio.

our mission

the constructivists are committed to creating viscerally driven accessible live theatre, exposing and exploring the complexity of human nature and the perils it creates.

passionate theatre is the necessary catalyst for change.

up next



Do you remember 2019 when we thought we had it bad? On **Saturday, October 17th**, we'll be revisiting our powerful and successful production of **Sam Shepard's "The God of Hell"** with a reading (of sorts). Joining us will be the original cast of **Cheryl Roloff, Robert W. C. Kennedy, Matthew Scales, and Matthew Huebsch**, and featuring original production images from **Christal Wagner**, all to help raise funds for final get out the vote efforts in Milwaukee. **7:30pm on our YouTube Channel**. Sign up for email on the website to find out how.

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Get in touch with us through our website at theconstructivists.org, send us an email at info@theconstructivists.org, or find us on social media.