

Kean College
theatre
presents

The How and the Why

by **Sarah Treem**

Directed by **Deana Nichols**

Harbach Theatre, CFA
May 5-8 @ 7:30 pm
May 8-9 @ 2:00 pm
2021

This production is supported in part by the
ELIZABETH JAHNKE METZ THEATRE FUND

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THANKS

Cathie Brush, Knox Facilities, Flores Printers, Arianna Tull, Jeff Grace

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Knox College Theatre

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THE HOW AND THE WHY

by Sarah Treem

Directed by Deana Nichols

Scenic Design by Craig Choma

Costume Design by Allison Smith Hahn and
Amelia Walz

Lighting Design by Craig Choma

Sound Design by Melina Minaya

Please: No photographs, video, texting, or recording. Turn off all cell phones,
notification alerts, or anything else that may emit light or sound.

THE HOW AND THE WHY is presented by special arrangement with
Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

THE HOW AND THE WHY was originally produced by
McCarter Theatre Center, Princeton, NJ
Emily Mann, Artistic Director; Timothy J. Shields, Managing Director;
Mara Isaacs, Producing Director

THE HOW AND THE WHY was commissioned by Playwrights Horizons
with funds provided by Kate and Samuel Weingarten.

Recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New American Plays award.

I, BEING BORN A WOMAN AND DISTRESSED

©1923, 1951 by Edna St. Vincent Millay and Norma Millay Ellis
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THE CAST

| | | |
|----------|-------|-----------------|
| ZELDA* | | Ro Ivaniszek |
| RACHEL* | | Jo Hill |
| ZELDA** | | Emma Bohman |
| RACHEL** | | Lindsay Drozdik |

* denotes performances on May 5 & 7 at 7:30, and May 8 at 2:00

** denotes performances on May 6 & 8 at 7:30, and May 9 at 2:00

TIME

Present. Late Autumn.

PLACE

A senior professor's office in Cambridge, Mass.

Later, a dive bar in Boston

The How and the Why is performed without an intermission.

Approximate run time: 90 minutes

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Chairperson..... | Liz Carlin Metz |
| House Management..... | John Harden, Jamie Heller, Veronica Langley |
| Box Office..... | Student Volunteers |
| Reservations..... | Jamie Kennelly, Deana Nichols |
| Tickets..... | Jeff Grace, Deana Nichols |
| Ushers..... | Student Volunteers |
| Contract Licensing..... | Jennifer Lazarz, Deana Nichols |
| Publicity..... | Cast & Crew |
| Poster Design..... | Craig Choma |
| Programs..... | Deana Nichols |

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director.....Deana Nichols
Assistant Director.....Alexis Brown
Technical Director.....Craig Choma
Stage Manager.....Rose Stout
Assistant Stage Managers.....Melina Minaya, Lili Smith
Dramaturg.....Ro Ivaniszek
Scenic Designer.....Craig Choma
Assistant Scenic Designer.....Sam Esteep
Scenery & Lighting T.A.s.....Iris Berto, Tristan Blus,
Mitch Boyle, Wesley Breyer,
Dana Cooper, Sam Esteep,
Zach Farmer, Marion Frank,
Zach Krawczyk,
Nic Meade-Greenman,
Cammie Stein
Scene Shop Volunteers.....Logan Nijensohn, Emily Oria,
Arianna Tull
Scenic Artist.....Sam Esteep
Costume Designers.....Allison Smith Hahn, Amelia Walz
Costume Studio Technician.....Morgan Bacon, Emma Bohman.
Greta Eanes, Jo Hill,
Rose Marshall, Melina Minaya,
Charlie Van Kirk, Amelia Walz.
Neori Yasumaru
Lighting Designer.....Craig Choma
Master Electrician.....Wesley Breyer
Lighting Board Operator.....Rose Stout
Sound Designer.....Melina Minaya
Sound Board Operator.....Melina Minaya
Props.....Lili Smith
Facilities Management Assistant.....Marion Frank

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: THE WHY & THE HOW

Welcome back to Harbach Theatre! I was slated to direct my first Knox production here last spring, but we all know what happened instead. I'm thrilled that, one year later, we've found a way to continue making live, in-person theatre. Zoom has been nice and all, but the communal act of being in a live theatre audience, even a masked and distanced one, is a precious one. I'm excited to be back in that particular saddle.

With all of the challenges we've experienced over the last year, you might be wondering: Why this production? And how does one make theatre under these circumstances? For the remainder of this Note, I'm going to share with you the Why and the How of *The How and the Why*.

The Why

I have, for the last several years, had a soapbox on which I periodically stand while waving my fist in the air: The continued taboo of menstruation in media generally and theatre specifically. I've challenged friends and colleagues to come up with play titles that address menstruation in a significant way; they could maybe come up with one title (usually Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*, if you're curious). But every now and then someone mentioned *The How and the Why*, so of course I read the play. I found myself fascinated by these compelling, strong, flawed women and their two conversations that add up to a play. I'm also drawn to the intersection of theatre and science that this play offers, in particular an intersection that highlights the experiences of women scientists. Women are wildly underrepresented in the STEM fields*, and though the statistics are creeping toward greater equity, I wanted to do my part – as someone who is demonstrably *not* in the STEM arena – to make the narratives of STEM women as visible as possible. And so here we are.

The How

Making theatre under pandemic conditions is quite challenging. The aspect of this play that lent itself toward working with these challenges is that it is, at its core, two forty-minute conversations between two characters. But how does one stage these conversations in a way that invites empathy while adhering to COVID

precautions? And how, if I care so much about representation, could I then direct a play that only featured two actors out of our many talented students?

I landed on two decisions: One was that I would double-cast the play, both to increase the opportunities for our students and to investigate the aspects of a performance that are unique to each individual actor. We performance folks are always talking about “what the actor brings to the role,” and this was an opportunity to see what that entails in a very immediate way. If your schedule permits, I highly suggest seeing both casts, so that you too can experience those varied interpretations.

The second decision I came to was the convention you’ll be seeing in this production: Masked actors, physically distanced, delivering all of their lines in the direction of the audience rather than toward each other. The fact that the convention works, that the performances still deliver an emotional punch, that after dozens of rehearsals I still find myself fascinated by these characters and the questions with which they grapple, is the product of a working with a great script and great collaborators.

Enjoy the show!

* For more, see NOVA’s excellent documentary *Picture a Scientist*, available to stream through May 12 at [pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org).

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

While the characters in this play use the generalized terms “women” and “female” to denote those who menstruate or undergo menopause, we recognize that this does not reflect the varied identities of those who experience these physiological functions.

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

EMMA BOHMAN (Zelda) is a senior majoring in Theatre and minoring in History. She was last seen in Harbach Theatre as Nora in *A Doll's House Part 2*. Other memorable roles at Knox include *The Glass Menagerie* (Amanda Wingfield) and *The Drowning Girls* (Alice Burnham). When they are not pursuing acting, Emma enjoys working in the department costume shop, reading, and making all kinds of art. She would like to thank her friends and family for their love and support, as well as her partner, Zach, for always helping with line memorization. Emma is from Schaumburg, Illinois.

LINDSAY DROZDIK (Rachel) is a sophomore double majoring in Theatre and Creative Writing. She has been seen in previous Knox shows such as *The Mill on the Floss* (Lucy), *Snapshot* (Park Ranger), and several New Plays performances. She would like to thank her friends and family for their continuous love and support. Lindsay is from St. Charles, IL.

JO HILL (Rachel) is a senior majoring in Environmental Studies and double minoring in Theatre and Youth and Community Studies. Favorite roles at Knox include *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Jean), *The Glass Menagerie* (Laura), and *The Laramie Project* (Romaine Patterson/ensemble). Offstage, she has served as a master electrician and costume crew lead for Rep Term XVIII and *The Mill on the Floss*, and is currently the costume designer for *Machinal*. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in environmental education. She would like to thank her family and friends for supporting her through everything. Jo is from St. Louis, MO.

RO IVANISZEK (Zelda, Dramaturg) is a sophomore majoring in Theatre and English Literature. They were previously seen in Knox's production of *The Mill on the Floss* (Aunt Glegg). Offstage, they served as the assistant stage manager of Studio Theatre's *The Violent Outburst That Drew Me to You*. They are currently serving as a co-House Manager on the Theatre Advisory Board. They would like to thank their family and friends for their endless support. Ro is from Aurora, CO.

WHO'S WHO IN THE CREATIVE TEAM

DEANA NICHOLS (Director) is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre. She received both an M.A. (2008) and Ph.D. (2014) in Theatre History, Theory, and Literature from Indiana University. Deana's previous directing work has included *Theatre Uncut*, *Knives in Hens*, *Independence*, and new work *Catalina*. Deana is beyond thrilled to be presenting *The How and the Why*, live and in person, after her production one year ago of *When We Were Young and Unafraid* was cancelled due to the onset of the pandemic. She would like to thank the cast and production team for *The How and the Why* for their simultaneous patience and fearlessness, as we undertook the craft of theatre-making under pandemic conditions. Deana is originally from St. Louis, Missouri, by way of California, Texas, and Indiana.

ALEXIS BROWN (Assistant Director) is a junior with a major in English Literature and a double minor in Spanish and Theatre. They have previously directed in both New Plays Workshops and New Plays Festival. Last Winter, she directed *Helter Skelter* (Neil LaBute) and was one of four directors involved in this past Fall's *Snapshot*. Alexis enjoys reading, improv, and inciting chaos with their friends. She'd like to thank these friends for being a constant source of love and support throughout this term and every other term when all she does is complain loudly. Alexis is from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

CRAIG CHOMA (Scenic Designer, Lighting Designer, Technical Director) is an Associate Professor of Theatre and Knox's resident designer and technical director. Favorite Knox designs include *The Laramie Project*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Drowning Girls*, *The Secret in the Wings*, Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*, *Rapture Blister Burn*, *The Caffè Cino Project*, *In the Next Room or the vibrator play*, *The Green Bird*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Under Construction*, *A Lie of the Mind*, Euripides' *Medea*, *Angels in America*, *Intimate Apparel*, *The Skriker*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *War and Peace*, and *Macbeth*. Craig has designed both sets and/or lights professionally in Chicago, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Minneapolis, Ohio, Toronto, Canada, and Avignon, France. Craig designs for both theatre and dance, and he enjoys each equally. He has designed in proscenium, thrust, and arena spaces, small storefront theaters, converted churches and libraries, and site-specific locations. He has been the production designer for a number of fundraising events, and he has collaborated on court cases, creating forensic models to be used in the presentation of evidence. Craig holds a B.A. in Theatre and Philosophy from Knox College (1993), and MFA's in both Scenic and Lighting Design from Carnegie Mellon University (1996). Craig is originally from Chicago, Illinois.

SAM ESTEEP (Assistant Scenic Designer) is a junior majoring in Theatre and Modern Languages. After taking several scenic design courses, this is her first fully realized design at Knox. She is currently serving as one of the co-Technical Directors for the Theatre Advisory Board, and she also works in the Scene Shop. Sam is from St. Louis, MO.

ALLISON SMITH HAHN (Co-Costume Designer) is Knox's resident costume designer and costume studio manager. She studied costume design under the mentorship of Margo Shively at Knox College where she earned her B.A. and was also a Post-Baccalaureate Fellow (2010-11). Since then, Allison has designed in Chicagoland for productions of *Multitudes* and *pool (no water)* with Vitalist Theatre. As the resident costume designer for Redtwist Theater, she designed *Good People*, *The American Clock*, *Red, I and You*, and *Another Bone*. Other designs include *Rhinoceros* (Theatre Heist), *Miles Away*, *Mike and Seth*, *Hello Failure*, F.X. Kroetz's *Through the Leaves*, and *Request Concert* (Side Project Theatre), *All Shook Up*, *How to Succeed in Business[...]*, and *You're a Good*

Man Charlie Brown (Wilmette Center for the Arts), *Next Fall* (AstonRep), *A 1940s Radio Show* (Moon of Hope Studios), and *Leading Ladies* (Black Hills Playhouse). Each fall term, she teaches Costume Design: Fashion History and Technical Artistry for the Stage. Allison is from Chicago, Illinois.

AMELIA WALZ (Co-Costume Designer) is a sophomore majoring in Theatre. She works in the costume shop where she has constructed costumes for *A Doll's House Part 2* and *The Mill on the Floss*. Previously she has designed costumes for Ballet Theatre San Luis Obispo and the Central Coast Shakespeare Festival. Most recently she has designed the costumes for a new musical in development, *Destination: Home*, with Moon of Hope Studios in Galesburg, IL. She would like to thank her friends, family, and mentors for the endless support and encouragement. Amelia is originally from Ohio and California, but now lives in Carmel, IN.

ROSE STOUT (Stage Manager) is a Junior majoring in Theatre and minoring in Psychology. This is Rose's first experience in stage management. They have been seen on stage in roles such as Karen in *Snapshot*, Mrs. Fridge in *Let Me Hear You Whisper* and lots of work in New Plays. They have also worked as a director for the show *All On Her Own* by Terrence Rattigan. Rose is also currently studying and pursuing playwriting. Rose currently serves as one of two New Plays Coordinators. After graduation Rose plans to pursue a career in Early Education.

MELINA MINAYA (Assistant Stage Manager, Sound Designer) is a sophomore majoring in Theatre and Music. Her interests include costume design, properties design, and musical composition. She has been credited as properties master for *Sorry, Wrong Number* and *The Mill on the Floss* and has recently played the role of Aisha in *Mrs. Harrison*. She is also currently serving as one of the two House Managers on the Theatre Advisory Board. When not involved in Theatre, Melina loves playing with the Ultimate Frisbee team, and talking with friends at the Gizmo. Melina is from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

LILI SMITH (Assistant Stage Manager, Props) is a Freshman who is undecided on her major. This is Lili's first time taking part in a production at Knox. Lili has also never helped backstage in a production before, but she was very excited to help this time with props and being an assistant stage manager. Her other interests include community service and dance. Lili is from Cahokia, Illinois.

DRAMATURGY NOTE

by Ro Ivaniszek

A 2016 study conducted by Clue and The International Women's Health Coalition found over 5,000 euphemisms and slang terms for menstruation – that is, vaginal bleeding that occurs on a monthly cycle. You might know it better as a period, shark week, or, if you are German, erdbeerwoche (strawberry week). But why do we need over 5,000 euphemisms for menstruation?

Despite roughly 26% of the world's population having a menstrual cycle, menstruation is still a highly taboo subject. Throughout history, there is a pattern of menstruation being stigmatized. Many religious texts state that those who are currently bleeding are considered “unclean” and must be barred from certain religious spaces. While many of these doctrines may have been born out of the lack of efficient devices to collect menstrual blood, thousands of years of said doctrine has led to warped views of menstruation, how we treat menstruating people, and how we talk about it.

Clue's study reported that the majority of people who menstruate are uncomfortable discussing it with people who don't experience menstruation, whether that is a family member or a coworker. Most mainstream novels, films, and television shows, even from those written by people who menstruate, refrain from mentioning this monthly occurrence. And when it comes to the stage, mentions of menstruation are historically few and far between.

In 1927, New York passed the Wales Padlock Act, which allowed them to censor any shows “depicting or dealing with, the subject of sex degeneracy, or sex perversion”. This led to the development of non-commercial and non-mainstream theatre. While the Act did not explicitly prevent the depiction or mention of menstruation on stage, these smaller and less mainstream theatres led to the freedom of menstruating playwrights to begin to write about experiences that would be considered taboo in mainstream society. However, it isn't until the 2010s that we really see plays about menstruation explode into the scene.

The How and the Why, written by Sarah Treem, premiered in 2011. It has appeared on the stage in New Jersey, New York, Virginia, and elsewhere – including, now, on the Knox stage. While it was warmly received, it is one of a few in the canon of plays that mention menstruation. And this play does not only mention menstruation; the action of the entire script is centered around the consideration of menstruation and how it fits, biologically, into the world. It is a scientific analysis of menstruation that we do not often find on the stage.

Since 2011, *The How and the Why* has been almost continually produced. Since 2015, plays exploring the concept of menstruation in a societal and literary sense have increased almost exponentially; plays like Liliana Padilla's *How to Defend Yourself*, the devised *Lady M*, and Emmy Lane Palmersheim's *The White Pants Play* have all made their way to the stage in the last few years, opening up an important conversation. But none of the plays have been wildly successful, or reached a wider audience beyond those who seek them out.

Despite have over 5,000 euphemisms for menstruation, society is obviously still hesitant to talk about menstruation. We hope that this production can bring us all closer to openly discussing and understanding menstruation—the how and the why of this common biological function.

Sources:

"Belasco Theater." nycgbtsites.org

"Many women still can't talk openly about their periods – this app is trying to change that." washingtonpost.com.

"Menstruation matters...period." blogs.unicef.org.

"Menstruation study finds over 5,000 slang terms for 'period'." independent.co.uk.