



WFU THEATRE
PRESENTS,

BACK STORY

FEBRUARY 24-25 AT 7:30 pm

FEBRUARY 26 AT 2:00 pm

THE RING THEATRE, SFAC

directed by **Michael Kamtman**



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I first encountered *Back Story* when it premiered at the Humana Festival for New American Plays in Louisville, Kentucky in 2000. To be honest, I remember next-to-nothing about the production, and so it does seem odd, in some ways, that I'd become so enamored of a play that I barely recall from its performance. What stuck with me, however, was the story of its creation---a story that was as intriguing as it was unique: an artistic adventure that involved an unusual collaborative effort. There are only two characters in this story, Ainsley and Ethan, who are sister and brother, respectively. Not so unusual so far. The play consists of 16 monologues and 3 scenes. Still not unusual. But these pieces can be performed by as many as 22 different actors in the show or as few as 2. Now we're starting to move into slightly different territory. Add to that the fact that these 19 different pieces (16 monologues and 3 scenes) were written by 18 different playwrights (I love math). And add to this that this play was originally a short story by playwright Joan Ackermann. A director came up with an idea to solicit 18 playwrights and ask each one to expand on one moment of the short story in dramatic form – either a monologue or a scene. Each playwright, essentially, would create a piece of backstory for the short story, and all these pieces of backstory would be compiled into one dramatic piece, essentially becoming the reversal of the way a play is created. The backstory (or background information) has become the play itself. And that's what you are about to see (or, if you are reading these notes later, what you have just seen). The cooperative effort between all these writers, not to mention the directors and actors who were initially involved in this great experiment, was truly a small marvel of collaboration.

Our production of *Back Story* is part of another experiment by the Department of Theatre and Dance here at Wake Forest: a new, smaller scale production that offers more opportunities for students to get involved (or continue their involvement) in theatre. And one more thing that I can't resist mentioning. This is my personal expansion of a central image of this play: a postcard. I love old postcards. I have a small collection of them at home. The ones I love the most are the ones that are old, colorized photos. And if there is a message and a postmark, they become even more wonderfully intriguing. Because they have been hidden in a shoebox or an old envelope for decades or generations, only to emerge in an antique store, they are like messages in bottles that roll up on our shores. They are sometimes haunting and sometimes sweet, and I wonder if any of them changed the lives of the senders or the recipients. There's just never enough time to think about them....

Michael dedicates these performances to his dad, an avid fisherman who always came home, and to his dear friend and colleague, director Louis Rackoff, whose many dimensions of influence changed Michael's artistic life for the better.

Back Story is produced by special arrangement with The Dramatic Publishing Company of Woodstock, Illinois.

This piece was originally commissioned by Actors Theatre of Louisville.

Wake Forest University Theatre presents

Back Story

based on characters created by Joan Ackermann

written by Joan Ackermann, Courtney Baron, Neena Beber, Constance Congdon,
Jon Klein, Shirley Lauro, Craig Lucas, Eduardo Machado, Donald Margulies,
Jane Martin, Susan Miller, John Olive, Tanya Palmer, David Rambo, Edwin Sanchez,
Adele Edling Shank, Mayo Simon, and Val Smith

February 24-26, 2023

Director

Michael Kamtman

Scenic & Projection Designer

Sean Jones*[§] ('23)

Costume Designer

Mary Wayne-Thomas

Lighting Designer

Zachary Atala*[§] ('24)

Sound Designer

Vir Gupta* ('25)

Assistant Director

Zhirun Reese Fan* ('23)

Stage Manager

Will Landau* ('23)

CAST BY SCENE

TIME TO THINK

AINSLEY.....Anna Kitts*

GOOD MORNING TO THE HORSE

ETHAN.....Casey Salzman*

AINSLEY.....Olivia Woods*[§]

WHAT BECAME OF THE POLAR BEAR?

ETHAN.....Joe Bruno[§]

THE RELUCTANT INSTRUMENT

AINSLEY.....Ruisi Nicole Liu*

ETHAN'S GOT GET

ETHAN.....Katharine Collie*

TRYING TO GET THERE

AINSLEY.....Frances Gray Riggs*

*Anthony Aston Players member

[§]Presidential Scholar in Theatre

CAST BY SCENE (*Continued*)

MAID OF ATHENS

AINSLEY.....Olivia Woods*[§]

MOBY ETHAN AT THE SCULPTOR'S MUSEUM

ETHAN.....Casey Salzman*

TURN DOWN

AINSLEY.....Anna Kitts*

MISADVENTURE

ETHAN.....Joe Bruno[§]

AINSLEY.....Maddie Koontz

SOMETHING TO DO WITH BOLIVIA

ETHAN.....Mary Grace Gower*

AINSLEY.....Anna Kitts*

OR MAYBE NOT

AINSLEY.....Isabella Biricik

DEAD MEN MAKE NO DOLLARS

ETHAN.....Maddie Koontz

THE DEAL

ETHAN.....Joe Bruno[§]

AINSLEY.....Mary Grace Gower*

BLACKFISH

ETHAN.....Katharine Collie*

STAR SKATING

ETHAN.....Ruisi Nicole Liu*

AINSLEY.....Olivia Woods[§]

BARBRA LIVE AT CANYON RANCH

AINSLEY.....Frances Gray Riggs*

BARBRA STREISAND.....Maddie Koontz

INTRODUCING DAD

ETHAN.....Joe Bruno[§]

NORMAN ROCKWELL'S THANKSGIVING IN THE YEAR 2000

ETHAN.....Casey Salzman*

AINSLEY.....Isabella Biricik

*Anthony Aston Players member

[§]Presidential Scholar in Theatre

INFORMATION

In consideration of everyone in the theatre, especially the cast who have rehearsed for weeks, please observe the following:

- ♦ Audience members are encouraged to wear a mask while inside the building including the entire performance. Masks are available at the box office upon request.
 - ♦ Turn off and put away your cell phone or any device that might ring, buzz, or light up.
 - ♦ If you are anticipating the need to be contacted during the performance, leave your name and seat location with the box office staff and the box office number with the person who may need you; the box office number is 336-758-5295.
 - ♦ Laptops are not allowed; pens and paper are great alternatives for taking notes.
 - ♦ Copyright laws prohibit recording in any format of any performance. Flash photography can be especially hazardous to performers and a distraction to the rest of the audience.
 - ♦ Eating and drinking (other than water) are never allowed inside the theatre.
 - ♦ **There is NO late admission or re-admission for events in the Ring Theatre.**
- If you leave during the performance, you CANNOT re-enter theatre.**

Thanks, and enjoy the show!

The show runs approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes without an intermission.



The graphic features a black background with white line art illustrations of musical instruments: a djembe in the top left, a snare drum in the top right, an electric guitar in the bottom left, and a saxophone in the bottom right. Musical notes and a treble clef are scattered around the instruments. In the center is a circular logo with a distressed, ink-like texture. The logo contains the text "established 1959" at the top, "MOORE" in large, bold, serif letters in the middle, and "music company" in a smaller, cursive script at the bottom. Below the logo, the text "Moore Music Company is a proud supporter of the arts in central NC and provider of instrument sales, rentals, repairs, accessories, music and lessons." is written in a clean, sans-serif font. At the very bottom, the contact information "Call/text: 336.274.4636" and the website "www.mooremusiccompany.com" are displayed in a bold, sans-serif font.

Moore Music Company is a proud supporter of the arts in central NC and provider of instrument sales, rentals, repairs, accessories, music and lessons.

Call/text: 336.274.4636
www.mooremusiccompany.com

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director of Theatre.....	Corey Gilliam
Technical Director.....	Thomas Williams
Costume Shop Manager.....	Alice Burton Barsony
Costume & Wardrobe Technician.....	Jacquelyn "Jax" Loy
Audience Services Coordinator.....	Leslie Spencer
Academic Coordinators.....	Lara Ianni, Lu Anne Simpson
Technical Director for <i>Back Story</i>	Drew Skilton*
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Abby Parr*, Ananya Rajgaria
Properties Head.....	Michael Votto*
Assistant Scenic Designer.....	Riley Shanaghan*‡
Head Electrician.....	Zachary Atala*§
Scene Shop Assistants.....	Evan Daane*, Sophie Thomas*§ Drew Skilton*, Sarah Cadena* Riley Shanaghan*‡, Thomas Bauserman Zewen Ma*, Yue Yu Gabby Miller*‡, Ruisi Nicole Liu*
Additional Costume Shop Assistance.....	Alice Burton Barsony, Jacquelyn Loy Tatiana Bicalho, Isabelle Merrifield Nicole Namath, Emily Patten, Hannah Riley
Wardrobe Crew.....	Gabby Miller*‡
Light Board Operator.....	Michael Votto*§
Sound Board Operator.....	Nathaniel Avery*
Marketing Artwork Designer.....	Sean Jones*§
Photographers.....	Lyndsie Schlink, Bill Ray III, Katie Fox*
Social Media Assistant.....	Zac Anderson*§
House Managers.....	Hope Peterson ('17, MS '18), Chris Cates ('22) Devin Collins, Sarah Goncalves, Evan Lipetz
Box Office Staff.....	Zac Anderson*§, Joey Crane Evan Lipetz, James Oparinde Frances Gray Riggs*, Noah Stoycos
Ushers.....	Anthony Aston Players WFU Dance Company Theatre & Dance students

*Anthony Aston Players member

‡Presidential Scholar in Dance

§Presidential Scholar in Theatre

SPECIAL THANKS

Lu Anne Simpson
Moore Music Company

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January 1, 2022-December 31, 2022

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Estate of John Arthur Collins III
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J.K. Curry & Dan Bradley
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Dr. James & Patricia Toole[‡]
Edwin & Emily Wilson[‡]
Don & Nancy Wolfe
Estate of Robert Parker Wilson

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Michele Gillespie & Kevin Pittard[‡]

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[‡] Wake Forest alumni



SILENT SKY

by Lauren Gunderson

directed by Cindy Gendrich

March 31-April 1, 5-8 at 7:30 PM
April 2 at 2:00 PM

Harold C. Tedford Stage

Tickets:

\$15 adults,
\$12 senior citizens,
\$7 students

336.758.5295 theatre.wfu.edu

STUDENT SPRING CHOREOGRAPHIC CONCERT

directed by Chris Martin

April 20-21 at 7:30 PM
April 23 at 2:00 PM

Harold C. Tedford Stage

Tickets:

\$15 adults,
\$12 senior citizens,
\$7 students

336.758.5295 theatre.wfu.edu

