

A MESSAGE FROM INCLUSIVE THEATER OF WNY (ITOWNY)

Inclusive Theater of WNY (ITOWNY) began with a vision: to create a safe place for people of all abilities and backgrounds to grow in experience and understanding in the arts, while exploring their undiscovered abilities and talents. We believe that any time people of varied backgrounds are working together, the world gets a little bit friendlier and dare we say, better!

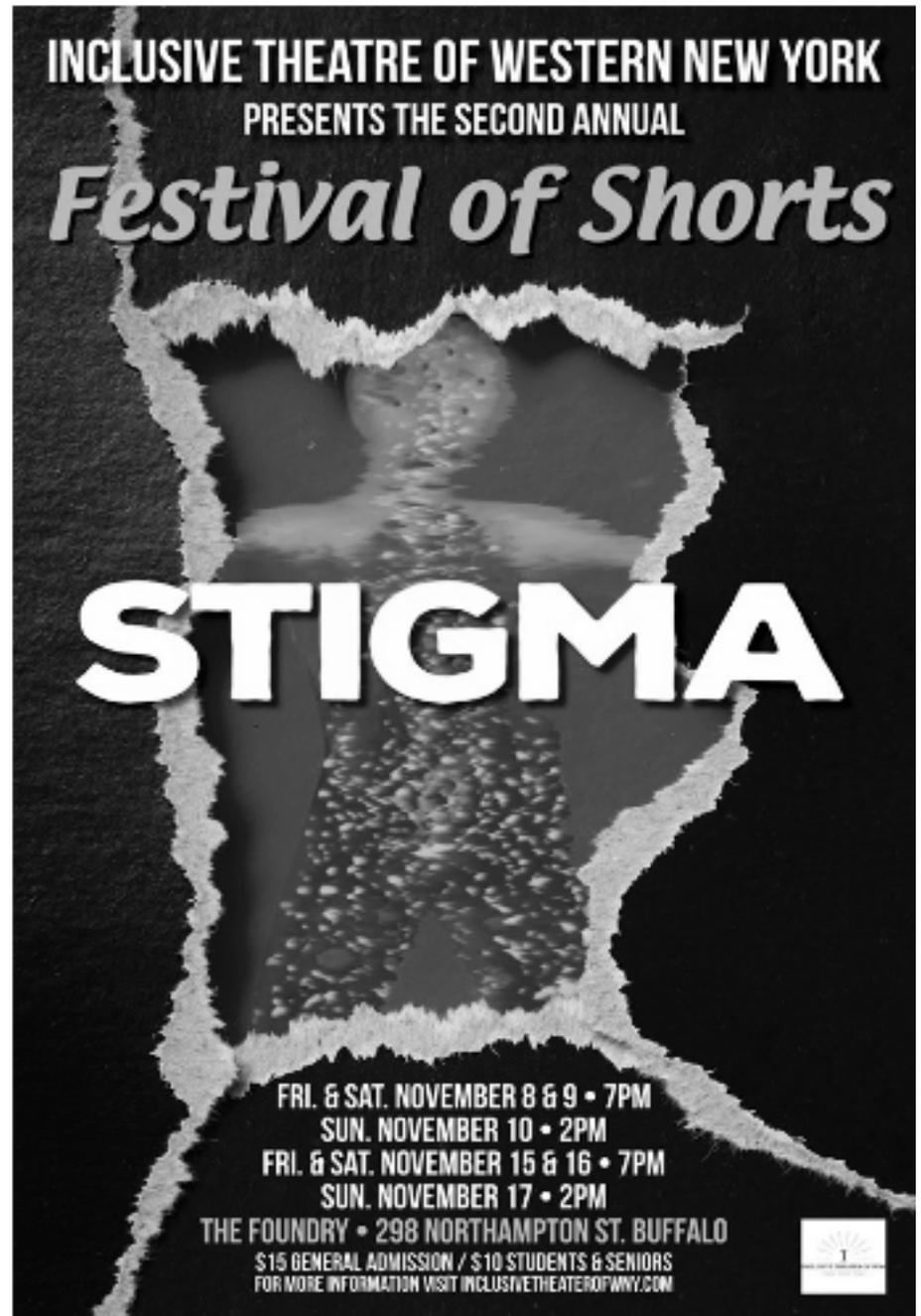
Five years later, we realized that vision in second Festival of Shorts - this time focusing on the topic of "Stigma." Our cast and crew members are people from various backgrounds and levels of experience who didn't know each other prior to their participation with ITOWNY. They continue to encourage and support each other; all the while, establishing their roles as artists.

ITOWNY would like to take this moment to thank all of our participants, donors, and volunteers who are helping us to make change; here in Western New York and beyond! In particular, we would like to thank The Foundry, who we are so proud to be in collaboration with. We look forward to all of the great things to come! Also major gratitude goes out to all of the folks at The Foundry for their encouragement and support. Also, thank you to our families and friends. Without you, we could not do this. We appreciate your love and encouragement.

Thanks to all of the folks above and the generous and thoughtful support of our other donors and volunteers, ITOWNY will continue to demonstrate what true inclusion looks like and prove to those who doubt its value, that when given the opportunity, training, and appropriate support in an inclusive setting, people will accomplish things they never thought possible!

With much love and gratitude,

Aimee, Dallas, Jennifer and Mario
Directors, *Festival of Shorts - Stigma*
www.inclusivetheaterofwny.com

A black and white poster for the 'Festival of Shorts' featuring the film 'Stigma'. The background is dark with a large, jagged, white tear in the center, revealing a grainy, high-contrast image of a person's face. The text is white and bold. At the top, it reads 'INCLUSIVE THEATRE OF WESTERN NEW YORK PRESENTS THE SECOND ANNUAL Festival of Shorts'. The word 'STIGMA' is written in large, bold, white letters across the middle. At the bottom, it lists the dates and times for the screenings: 'FRI. & SAT. NOVEMBER 8 & 9 • 7PM', 'SUN. NOVEMBER 10 • 2PM', 'FRI. & SAT. NOVEMBER 15 & 16 • 7PM', and 'SUN. NOVEMBER 17 • 2PM'. Below this, it says 'THE FOUNDRY • 298 NORTHAMPTON ST. BUFFALO' and '\$15 GENERAL ADMISSION / \$10 STUDENTS & SENIORS'. At the very bottom, it says 'FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT INCLUSIVE THEATER OF WNY.COM'. There is a small logo in the bottom right corner.

Cast Biographies

Erin Bellavia

Erin made her stage debut at the age of 12 as an orphan in *Annie*. After many years away from the theater, she became involved with the Springville Center for the Arts in 2018's production of *Annie* (ensemble). This year, she appeared as Carol Wyman in SCA's production of *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* and in the ensemble of Niagara Regional Theater Guild production of *Me and My Girl*. She works at D'Youville College, in the office of the Dean of Arts, Sciences, & Education. Erin and her husband Rand began performing as *Via Bella* in 2017, and their first album, *The Way of Beauty*, was released in April 2018. Erin is an educator, writer, editor, calligrapher, and cosplayer and lives in Williamsville with her husband and their cat, Reba.

Dave Goddard

Dave says he worked for 40 years primarily as a musician, guitar player, and songwriter, before being bitten by the *dreaded* theatre bug early in 2019. He played Leo the One-Eyed Lute Player in Subversive Theatre's "Tales of the Driven," and as various eccentric characters in Inclusive Theatre's "Spring Festival of Shorts." Dave's short "The Trash-edy of Slackbeth" opened ITOWNY's "Shakespeare in the Parking Lot" at The Foundry in July. This Halloween, Dave had another short, "The Ghost of Avon" staged by Green Buffalo Productions

Quentin Gray

Quentin has been in Films such as *Marshall*, *Crown Vic*, *Bashira*, and *The First Purge*. He has also been in numerous stage production such as *Curtains*, *The Curious Savage*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the *Festival of Shorts* for ITOWNY.

Cat Kwiatkowski

We are thrilled to have Cat playing multiple roles in ITOWNY's Festival of Shorts! She was previously seen in the role of Hermia in ITOWNY's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and in Lancaster Regional Players' "Stas & Stella's Mostly Traditional Polish Wedding", at ACTS in Alden in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", and "Miracle on 34th Street"; at Neumann University in "Faculty Follies,"; in Keuka College's "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum"; and in the Franciscan Mystery Players at St. Bonaventure University. Next up, Cat can be seen in the radio version of "It's a Wonderful Life!"

Cast Biographies (Continued)

Jessica Levesque

Jessica sure has been busy! Since graduating high school she has appeared in several plays and films and even had a spot in a TV series! She appeared in a play at Theatre Loft in 2014 which won kudos from critics, and also appeared on stage at Alleyway Theatre as Alex, a young woman with Autism who wants to play Roller Derby. In her spare time, Jessica makes jewelry and other crafts. She adores modge podge! This time around, Jessica is performing in *Page Two*, *The Gun in the Room*, and *Opioid Zodiac*.

Nigel Nige

After getting caught in an Amish Drive By on his Wedding Day, Nigel has returned to Western New York in high step fashion. Yeee Hawww! Nigel Nige, is a songwriter/singer, story teller. Currently is working on recording his 3rd CD, featuring original songs. As an actor has performed Off Broadway, NYC Actors Playhouse production of *Talk Show*. Also several Independent Films playing bit parts and secondary characters. Currently is working on producing a self written play entitled, *YOUR FATHER*. Set in the 80-90's. The play tells the story of a Polish American Family dealing with their aging fathers Alzheimer's Disease. Also another self written play/ musical about Dreams, Romance, Aspiration and Tragedy. *NO HEAT On a 10 Degree NIGHT*, NYC.

Kim "Queenie" Robinson

As a child, Queenie was always told she had a "flair for the dramatic." During high school and college, she discovered her love of acting and theatre and played in several productions. Fast forward to 2018 where Queenie was inspired to reinvent herself and revisit her love for theater. She took the leap and joined the amazing group at Inclusive Theatre and rediscovered the stage in *Shakespeare in the Parking Lot*. She looks forward to her second act and future stage adventures on stage.

Imani Sky Messiah-Skinner

Sky was involved in theatre for four years at her high school, in which she stage managed for two of those years. Sky staged managed for ITOWNY's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Now she is happily acting in with Inclusive Theater, performing in *Food for Thought*!

Cast Biographies (Continued)

Penny Striker

Penny joined ITOWNY this past summer and reprised the role of Puck which she last ECC in the early 90's! She is also played Lady Slackbeth in Dave Goddard's hilarious rendition of Macbeth. Some of her previous performances include: Tales of the Drive, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Mousetrap, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Steel Magnolias, as well as many others. By day, she is the mother of two magnificent young boys. By night, she is thankful to be sharing her passions with the unending support and love of Bill Baldwin.

Heather Benson

This is Heather Benson's first appearance with Inclusive Theatre. Heather has appeared in numerous theatre productions and films including The Best Christmas Pageant Ever with the Lancaster Regional Players, the feature film Give & Take, and the web series Alone Together. Heather enjoys baking in her extra time. Heather thanks Inclusive Theatre for this opportunity to be working with them.

Stacy Kowal

Stacy appreciates the opportunity to be in a show with ITOWNY. She has performed with various theater groups in the area for almost 13 years and has done some film and commercial work. Some of her past shows include "And Then There Were None", "Miracle On 34th Street", "Night Watch", "The Hound Of The Baskervilles", "One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest", "You Can't Take It With You", "The Odd Couple" (Female Version), "The Cemetery Club", "Bad Seed", "It's A Wonderful Life", "Mousetrap", and "Picnic".

ACT II

Page Two

Written by Dave Goddard

Directed by Aimee Levesque

Performances by Erin Bellavia, Dave Goddard, Quentin Gray, Kim Queenie Robinson and Nigel Nige.

Food for Thought

Written by Cameron Markott

Directed by Mario Brown

Performances by Quentin Gray, Stacy Kowal and Imani Sky
Mesiah-Skinner

The Gun in the Room

Written by Katherine Parker

Directed by Aimee Levesque

Performances by Erin Bellavia, Heather Benson, Cat Kwiatkowski,
Jessica Levesque and Penny Striker

The Opioid Zodiac

Written by Justin Karcher

Directed by Aimee Levesque

Performances by entire cast



Trigger Warning

The plays in "ITOWNY's Festival of Shorts - Stigma" are intense; they involve suicide, PTSD, drug addiction, gun violence, eating disorders, mental illness, & physical disabilities. It is possible that something you see during this performance may trigger an emotional response, whether or not you have experienced trauma yourself.

For Decades mental health and drug addiction has been stigmatized to be something that we shouldn't talk about. At ITOWNY we want to change that by sparking conversation and awareness of these issues that everyday people face. No one going through these issues should feel alone or ashamed to seek help. Below are numbers for services that can aid you if you are in need of help and support.

Crisis services: [\(716\) 834-3131](tel:7168343131)

Substance abuse and mental health hotline: 1-800-662-4357

Act I

Headspace

Written by Quentin Gray & Chris Sposito

Directed by Dallas Taylor

Performances by Erin Bellavia, Quentin Gray, Stacy Kowal, Cat Kwiatkowski and Kim Queenie Robinson

Anything is Probable (When you make up the rules)

Written by Michael Fanelli

Directed by Aimee Levesque and Dallas Taylor

Performances by Dallas Taylor and Nigel Nige

The Only Easy Day was Yesterday

Written by Matt Boyle

Directed by Jennifer L.S. Weber

Performances by Dave Goddard and Cat Kwiatkowski

There will be a 10 minute intermission.

Director Biographies

Mario Brown

Mario is very new to this incredulous artform, we call "acting"! He has had a love for the theater most of his adult life, be it, attending, supporting or just researching theater. He even has a screenplay story that he has been birthing for, ummmm, nearly 10 yrs, but He is certain now, more than ever that'll He will see it through! This group of illustrious actors and actresses inspires him with their dedication, gifts and individuality!

Aimee Levesque

Aimee is the Founder, Executive and Artistic Director of ITOWNY. She has served on the Boards of Buffalo Theatre Alliance (TAB) and Ujima Theatre. She holds Masters Degrees in English Literature and Library Science and is an professor at Buffalo State College. In December 2018, Aimée received her PhD in Curriculum Design and the Science of Learning from University at Buffalo. She also recently received (5/2019) the Arts Services Initiative's (ASI) Rising Star Award! Aimee's daughter Jessica, is one of the inspirations for Inclusive Theater of WNY.

Dallas Taylor

Dallas is no stranger to Inclusive Theater of WNY. He was a participant in ITOWNY's "My Story" and "A Festival of Shorts," and a crew member for the production "And Where Will You Put The Things You Save." Taylor is a content associate for WNED | WBFO and a youth coach-mentor for Algonquin Sports for Kids. When not working, you may randomly find him taking pictures.

Jennifer L. S. Weber

Jennifer has expanded her lifelong love of theater into performing, producing and directing the last three years with Inclusive Theater of WNY and the Springville Center for the Arts. She sends a special thank you to Cat and Dave for the emotionally challenging work to bring this performance to life. Next on the agenda, Jennifer will be on stage as Auntie Millie in "It's a Wonderful Life - Radio Show!" with the Arcade Area Community.Theater in December.