

# GOD'S EAR

By Jenny Schwartz  
Directed by Sandy Shinner

**FEBRUARY 21-23, 26-28  
& MARCH 1-2 AT 8PM**

Helms Theatre

 UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA  
**DRAMA**  
<http://www.virginia.edu/drama>

**2012-2013**

DEPARTMENT OF  
**DRAMA**

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

**GOD'S  
EAR**

By **Jenny Schwartz**

Songs by **Michael Friedman**, with additional lyrics by **Jenny Schwartz**

Directed by **Sandy Shinner**

Scenic Design by **Jason Randolph**

Costume Design by **Sarah Bryan**

Lighting Design by **Jake Kvanbeck**

Sound Design by **Joe Crittenden & C.J. Whitaker**

Technical Direction by **Lauren Shell**

Production Stage Management by **Christian Greenwood**



The Director is a member of the  
**STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS  
SOCIETY**, a national theatrical labor union.

This production uses the Contract Management Program of the University/  
Resident Theatre Association, Inc. (212) 221-1130.

*God's Ear* is presented through special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

*God's Ear* had its world premiere in a New Georges  
(Susan Bernfield, Artistic Director) production in New York City, 2007.  
*God's Ear* was developed at the Vineyard Theatre (Douglas Aibel, Artistic Director)  
and produced by the Vineyard Theatre, in association with New Georges,  
in New York City, 2008.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Mel .....	Sandi Carroll
Ted.....	Brad Fraizer
Lanie.....	Emily Via
Tooth Fairy .....	Amy Barrick
Lenora.....	Claire McKercher
G.I. Joe/Flight Attendant .....	Mitch Voss
Guy.....	Daniel Prillaman

Prologue: A Hospital

### Act I

Scene 1: Late at night. Mel and Ted are home. Ted comes and goes.

Scene 2: Very late at night.

Scene 3: An airplane. At home.

Scene 4: A bar.

Scene 5: Outside in the snow.

Scene 6: A Lounge.

### Act 2

*There will be no intermission.*



## The Kennedy Center

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival™ 45,  
part of the *Rubenstein Arts Access Program*,  
is generously funded by David and Alice Rubenstein.

Additional support is provided by  
the Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols Foundation,  
The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein, and  
the National Committee for the Performing Arts.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

## WHO'S WHO IN GOD'S EAR

**Amy Barrick** (2nd Year, MFA Acting): *Spring Awakening, Romeo and Juliet, Vinegar Tom* (U.Va. Drama); *Distracted* (PCPA Theaterfest); *Spinning Into Butter, Gypsy* (SLO Little Theatre)

**Sarah Bryan** (2nd Year, MFA Costume Design & Technology): *Rhinoceros, Vinegar Tom* (U.Va. Drama); *Pillowman* (UNCW)

**Sandi Carroll** (2nd Year, MFA Acting): *Rhinoceros*, (U.Va. Drama); *Irena's Vow* (Broadway); *Rabbit Hole* (w/ Nicole Kidman); *TiVo La Resistance!* (Logic Limited Ltd.)

**Joe Crittenden** (3rd Year, Drama/English)

**Brad Fraizer** (2nd Year, MFA Acting): *Vinegar Tom, Romeo and Juliet, Rhinoceros* (U.Va. Drama); *Three on a Couch* (Off Broadway); *Alice!* (Kennedy Center Nat'l Tour); *The Matchmaker* (Ford's Theatre)

**Christian Greenwood** (4th Year, Drama): *The Imaginary Invalid, Parade* (U.Va. Drama)

**Jake Kvanbeck** (2nd Year, MFA Lighting Design): *Spring Awakening, Romeo and Juliet* (U.Va. Drama); *Clybourne Park, Live Arts Gala* (LiveArts)

**Claire McKercher** (4th Year, Drama/English): *Elephant's Graveyard, Parade, Evita* (U.Va. Drama); *My Fair Lady, She Loves Me* (Heritage Theatre Festival); *Urinetown, West Side Story* (FYP)

**Daniel Prillaman** (4th Year, Drama): *Spring Awakening, Rhinoceros, Elephant's Graveyard, Troy is Burning, Parade, The Beaux' Stratagem* (U.Va. Drama); *1776, My Fair Lady* (HTF); *Urinetown, West Side Story* (FYP)

**Lauren Melody Shell** (2nd Year, MFA Technical Direction): *Romeo and Juliet* (ATD, U.Va. Drama)

**Sandy Shinner** (Guest Director): *Trying, Bluff, Flyovers* (Off Broadway); Regional: Victory Gardens Theater: over fifty productions; Steppenwolf Theatre's First Look; Actors Theater of Louisville Humana Festival; Rivendell Theatre Ensemble; American Blues Theater; Remy Bumpo Theatre.

**Emily Via** (4th Year, Drama/American Studies): *A Chorus Line* (Live Arts); *Parade* (U.Va. Drama); *West Side Story, Urinetown* (FYP)

**Mitch Voss** (2nd Year, MFA Acting) *Spring Awakening, Romeo & Juliet* (U.Va. Drama); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Kentucky Shakespeare); *Escanaba in da Moonlight* (Farmer's Alley Theatre).

**C.J. Whitaker** (4th Year, Physics) *Spring Awakening, Romeo and Juliet, Fall and Spring Dance Concerts '12, '11* (U.Va. Drama), *Carousel* (FYP)

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Dramaturge.....	Ian Wendell
Assistant Director.....	Anne Donnelly
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Adam J. Santalla, Gracie Terzian
Department Chair.....	Tom Bloom
Department Technical Director.....	Steven Warner
Assistant Technical Director.....	Austin Manning
Scenic Charge Artist.....	Katie Springmann
Scene Shop Foreman.....	Mark Molchany
Scene Shop Manager.....	David Hale
Carpenters.....	Vicente Arroyo, Alix Barnicle, Students of DRAM 2210
Run Crew.....	Claire Banta
Paint Shop.....	Students of Scenic Painting Class
Props Master.....	Jason Randolph
Properties Shop.....	Thell Campbell, Lauren Chilton
Costume Design Faculty Advisor.....	Gweneth West
Costume Technology Faculty Advisor.....	Marcy Linton
Assistant Costume Designer.....	Kristina McCloskey
Costume Shop Manager.....	Dorothy Smith
Costume Shop Assistants.....	Matthew Kluge, Anna McQuitty
Drapers.....	Lindsay Hinz, Allison Jordan
Stitchers.....	Students of DRAM 2310
Wardrobe Supervisor.....	Allison Jordan
Dresser.....	Courtney Steuber
Lighting Design Faculty Advisor.....	Lee Kennedy
Master Electrician.....	Jonathon Hunter
Electricians.....	Kelly Crowell, Ahmad Helmy, Josh Persheid, Daniel Prillaman, Kim Schwaner, C.J. Whitaker
Sound Design Faculty Advisor.....	Michael Rasbury
Sound Shop Manager.....	C.J. Whitaker
Sound Board Operator.....	Jeff Hall
Assistant Sound Designer.....	Joe Crittenden
Assistant Sound Engineer.....	Mark Gartzman
Vocal Coaches.....	Kate Burke, Ali Stoner
Fight Consultant.....	Marianne Kubik
Business Manager.....	James Scales
Assistant Business Manager.....	Judy McPeak
Arts Box Office Manager.....	Andrew Burnett
Arts Box Office Staff.....	Nalini Agrawal, Brady Blouin, Anna Ferrara, Stephanie Harvey, Sophie Kaemmerle, Timothy Morris, Katherine Ripley, Adam J. Santalla, Milika Robbins, Emily Vrissis
House Manager.....	Zaneta Romero
Front of House Staff.....	Yasmine Di Giulio, Kate Woff
Publicity Manager.....	Lori Mullins
Publicity Assistant.....	Kelly Crowell
Production Coordinator.....	Caitlin McLeod

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

When Jenny Schwartz premiered *God's Ear* off off Broadway at the adventurous New Georges in 2007, and later at the Vineyard Theatre, she was hailed as a “playwright to reckon with”. (*Time Out, NY*) *The New York Times* wrote, “Ms. Schwartz has surely been inspired by various canonical playwrights of the absurd (particularly Ionesco), [and] by later innovators like Caryl Churchill... But her witty linguistic collages have their own rhythms and rules, reflecting the attitude of a generation that takes for granted the cosmic banality of everyday discourse and the disjunction between emotion and expression that is the hallmark of the post-ironic age—the youth whose response to the confusions of the world is a cosmic ‘whatever.’” As many have commented, *God's Ear* is a play “from and for our time”. (S. Stern, Vineyard interview) How interesting then for the U.Va. Department of Drama to juxtapose this past fall's show, Ionesco's 1959 masterpiece *Rhinoceros*, with Schwartz's *God's Ear*. And what better place than the college campus to present an original new voice, a “major new playwright” who is obsessed with today's language; a writer who uses clichés, misremembered idioms, and fragments of dialogue to hilarious effect while telling a story of an unbearable personal tragedy.

It may be easy to talk, but it is hard to say what we mean. And even more difficult to find the words that can express the “truth” of grief, or adequately convey sympathy, or articulate exactly what we need. Language can and does fail us. Repeatedly. In *God's Ear*, the characters keep crashing against the limits of language. Mel and Ted try to stop their marriage from unraveling after the accidental death of their son. They cope by using torrents of words to avoid pain, or to try to be heard, or to escape. And they must navigate their way through a highly original world in which the Tooth Fairy and GI Joe dispense words of wisdom.

The language requires us to listen. As the Flight Attendant instructs Ted, “There's no need to panic, but you certainly shouldn't relax.” As Anne Kaufman, the play's original director notes, “While the language can feel alienating, I feel that it's actually closer to our speech patterns than we first recognize.” Schwartz's precise rhythms carry the “emotional DNA of the play”, says Kaufman. In a very unusual creative process, Schwartz rewrites each new draft from scratch. “My process of typing the play from the beginning over and over again helps me to figure out a formal structure that supports the emotional language” said Schwartz. “It also helps me to get the language into my body, and to make writing more of a physical act—it takes a lot of energy to get it down on the page. I think my plays have their own logic, so retyping helps me follow the logic and see what I am missing.”

It is important to the playwright that the grief the characters are experiencing is emotionally grounded and honest. But sometimes in trying to speak the truth, all Mel and Ted can grab are slivers of mismatched quotes or tired clichés. Yet it is in the rhythm and the precision of this “shared language” that we find the tragedy, the beauty, and the banality of life.

—Sandy Shinner

***Special Thanks: Betsy Tucker***