

DRAMA AT BENNINGTON PRESENTS

# When You're Here

 BY SAMUEL D. HUNTER  
DIRECTED BY JEAN RANDICH



## CAST

<i>Eddie</i>	Nicholas DiLeonardi
<i>Max</i>	James Overton
<i>Isabella</i>	Caitlin Overington
<i>Troy</i>	Santino Torretti
<i>Doris, Eddie &amp; Nick's mother</i>	Sarah Matusek
<i>Nick, Eddie's older brother</i>	Dominik Eisenschmidt
<i>Kelly, Nick's wife</i>	Maria Jacobson
<i>Cole, Troy's father</i>	Chris Platika
<i>Tammy, Troy's wife</i>	Laurel Johnson
<i>Becky, Troy &amp; Tammy's daughter</i>	Meg Rumsey-Lasersohn

## CREW

<i>Director</i>	Jean Randich
<i>Set Designer</i>	Hye-Young Choi
<i>Costume Designer</i>	Nicola Derse
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Rick Martin
<i>Sound Designer</i>	Amanda Buckley Benjamin Zucker Molly Griffin-McKenna
<i>Technical Director</i>	Michael Rancourt
<i>Costume Shop Manager</i>	Richard MacPike
<i>Master Electrician</i>	Robert Post
<i>Sound Technician</i>	Daniel Roninson
<i>Assistant Directors</i>	Abby Beggs Ashley Connell
<i>Playwright's Assistant</i>	Margot Connolly
<i>Assistant Costume Designer</i>	Anna Ekhardt-Kramer
<i>Dramaturg</i>	Meg Osborn
<i>Stage Manager</i>	Krista Thorp
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	Dania Clarke
<i>Lighting Programmer</i>	David Brinkman
<i>Lighting Board Operator</i>	Seth Katz
<i>Sound Board Operator</i>	Amanda Buckley
<i>Wardrobe</i>	Matthew Hoeffel Neneh Mackenzie
<i>Make-Up</i>	Sara Green
<i>Stage Crew</i>	Julie Cushing Nathan Liu Gregory Noel
<i>Projectionist</i>	Andrew Fridae

\**When You're Here* was commissioned and first presented by the Williamstown Theatre Festival as a workshop production in August, 2011; Portia Krieger, Director; Jenny Gersten, Artistic Director.



**Scene Shop Staff**

Caitlin Brzezinski  
Christina Cooper  
Liam Dailey  
Corina Dalzell  
Amanda Haggerty  
Julia Haskell  
Brandon LaDue  
Katelyn Nelson  
Ana-Miren San Millan

**Scene Shop Lab Crew**

Liam Dailey  
Christopher DeFilipp  
Jessie King  
John Lawson  
Jonah Lipsky  
Joshua Max  
Catherine Murley  
Finn Murphy  
Brooke O'Donnell  
Catherine Weingarten

**Electrics Staff**

David Brinkmann  
Andrew Fridae  
Amanda Haggerty  
Erin Jones  
Jordan Kaplan  
Bronwyn Maloney  
Kenny Olguin  
Ranleigh Starling  
Ethan Woods

**Electrics Lab Crew**

Paul Fey  
Benjamin Margetic  
Evangeline Neuhart  
Zoe Olivier  
Cody Sullivan

**Prop Shop Staff**

Abby Beggs  
Natalie Osborne

**Costume Shop Staff**

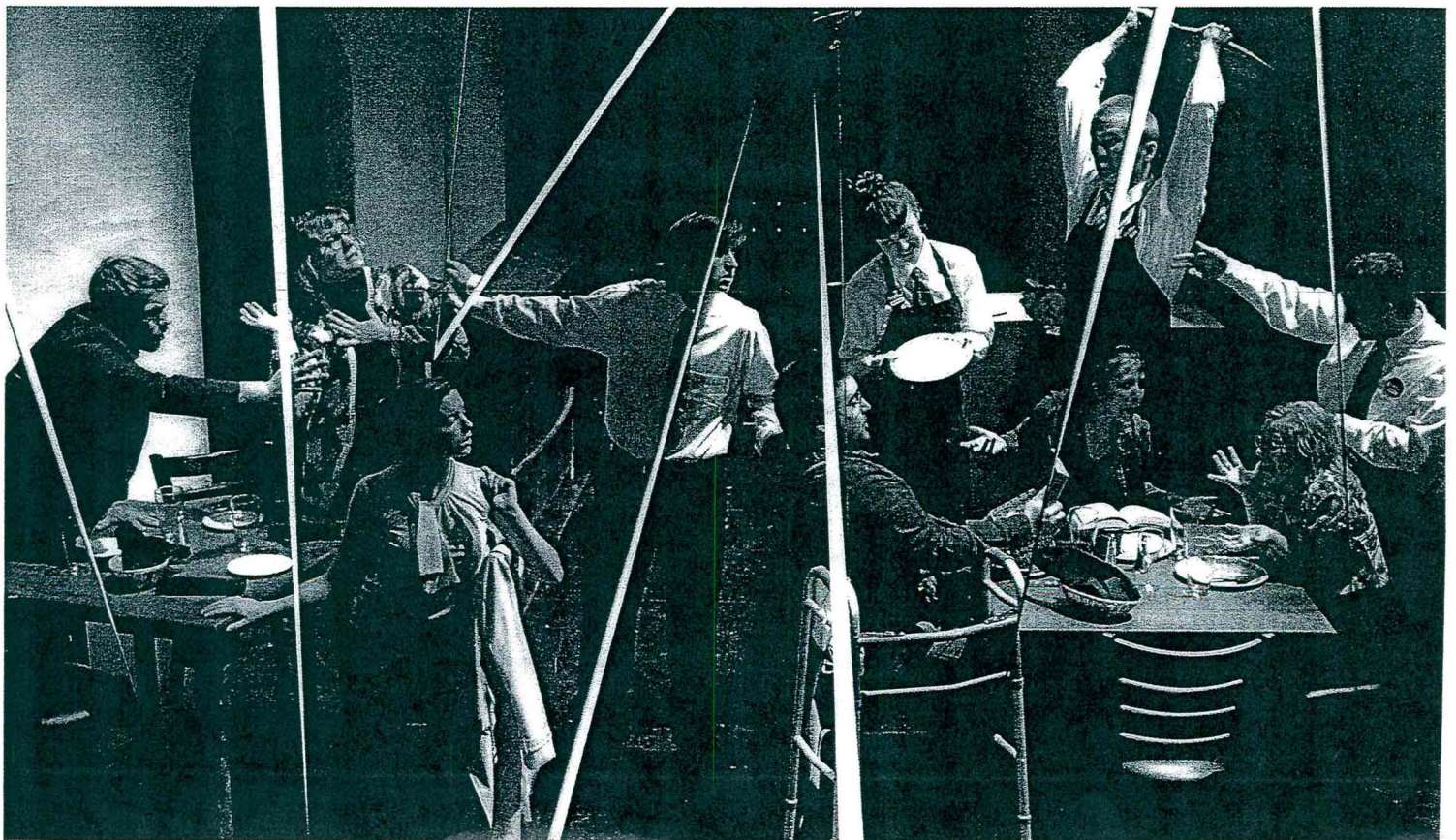
Bahar Baharloo  
Sheridan Baker  
Madison Best  
Corina Dalzell  
Nicola Derse  
Anna Eckert-Kramer  
Sonja Einem  
Kione Kochi  
Sierra Marcum

**Costume Shop Lab Crew**

Phoebe Blanding  
Mira Guttoff  
Ezra Lowrey  
Natalie Osborne  
Andrew Plimpton  
Stephanie Zimmerman

**Posters & Programs**

Eissa Saeed







## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

BY SAMUEL D. HUNTER

Last summer, Williamstown Theater Festival commissioned me to write a play for their non-equity acting company, with the following parameters: I wasn't to write anything before arriving at the festival, and I needed to write ten roles—for five men and five women. This was a pretty big departure from my normal process of sitting alone in my apartment or crouching over a laptop at a coffee shop. Not only that, but writing a play for ten characters was something altogether foreign to me—almost every play I've ever written has two to five characters.

Arriving at Williamstown, I had no dialogue, no characters, nothing on paper. All I had were two ideas: setting and atmosphere. I knew the play was going to be set in a chain restaurant. Someplace that was reproduced ad infinitum across the country. Someplace on the brink of extinction. And I knew the play's atmosphere would involve what we began to refer to as "places without history": the strip-malls, big-box stores, and chain what-have-you's that have quickly become the new America. Starting with these two ideas, I went into a rehearsal room with ten actors, a director, and a design team. Two months later, "When You're Here" was produced in a bare-bones workshop.

Coming out of Williamstown, I had many thoughts about potential rewrites. In many ways, the script still feels like an infant. Over the course of these past few months, seeing the students at Bennington take the script and breathe new life into it has allowed me to reconnect with the idea I started with: How do people find home and connection in a place without history? What you will see tonight is a snapshot of the play at a certain point in its evolution, a play that will continue to grow and change thanks to these dedicated artists that have given me the gift of embodying these characters with such compassion and clarity.





# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

BY JEAN RANDICH

*"I choose to identify with the underprivileged, I choose to identify with the poor, I choose to give my life for the hungry, I choose to give my life for those who have been left out of the sunlight of opportunity."*

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Perhaps you've seen the haunting photos of trees growing out of roofless silos on abandoned farms on the Great Plains. With the Occupy Wall Street movement spreading like wildfire, the ranks of the homeless rising with the numbers of foreclosed houses, and the blight of shuttered businesses, Samuel D. Hunter's poignant meditation on downsized dreams, *When You're Here*, resonates in our precarious time.

Mr. Hunter speaks for the inarticulate and in his plays the inarticulate speak. They don't always find the right words to say what they are feeling, and often they don't even know what they need or how to get it. But this playwright's gift is to craft dialogue and events so masterfully, that the unspoken is painfully loud and clear. You find yourself rooting for the tongue-tied even in their most sadly comic ploys to get by.

Dr. Cornel West and Tavis Smiley's manifesto on poverty, *The Rich and the Rest of Us*, makes a stirring contribution to the discussion of the silencing of the poor and disadvantaged. Their manifesto propels the consideration of our systemic income inequality back into our political discourse. The facts they muster regarding the "perennially poor," the "new poor," and the "near poor," should alarm us. 150 million Americans are living in or on the verge of poverty.

Which brings me back to Sam Hunter's wonderfully empathic, wildly anarchic, and hugely compassionate, funny play. Sam is deeply attracted to what defines humanity in each of his characters, including their flaws. He sets the action in a Pocatello, Idaho Olive Garden restaurant, one of a chain whose appeal stems from substituting Tuscan fantasy for American reality. The corporate logo declares: *When You're Here, You're Family*.

What kind of families do we meet in this play? Two dysfunctional nuclear families coming apart at the seams, and one random family of misfits, the restaurant workers, two of whom are also related to the customers, and two of whom are extremely young and woefully at sea. With bold strokes Mr. Hunter etches in the obstacles his characters face in understanding themselves and being able to communicate with each other: drug addiction, unemployment, alcoholism, dementia, emotional growth stunted by unresolved trauma, food phobias, guilt-tinged anxiety, fear of being different, loneliness, etc. But whereas in an issue-based play the characters expound upon their problems, here they don't. In fact, they rarely acknowledge their problems exist. Either they tough it out, use substances to cope, harangue each other, or keep knocking on old doors that refuse to budge.

Eddie, the owner of this restaurant on the brink of extinction, may be no Martin Luther King, Jr., but he does have his heart set on accountability and helping everyone out. But in spite of his making every effort to keep the restaurant afloat, he eventually must face his own fear:

*I feel like I don't exist. I don't know how anyone can feel like they exist anymore.*

What does it mean to exist? Why does work matter? And what is family? How can the advertising slogan of the Olive Garden, "*When You're Here*," be transformed into a meaningful expression of a life shared with others in which no one, no matter how marginalized, is left behind?

## DRAMATURG'S NOTE

BY MEG OSBORN

*"It seems to me that our three basic needs, for food and security and love, are so mixed and mingled and entwined that we cannot straightly think of one without the others. So it happens that when I write of hunger, I am really writing about love and the hunger for it..."*

—M.F.K. Fisher

Food has always been a perfect vehicle for social interaction. When we sit down at a table with others, we acknowledge that we have come not just for the meal itself, but for the company and conversation that accompany it. Food can serve as a gift, an offering, a sacrifice, an invitation. To accept it from someone is to accept that person; to reject it is to push that person away. With all that in mind, what better setting than a restaurant to explore the complexities of food and family, serving and being served, love and guilt, hunger and gratitude?

In *When You're Here*, Sam Hunter has created a cast of characters whose relationships with food and consumption reflect their relationships with each other, and who struggle to satisfy their hungers, both literal and metaphorical. Some indulge these hungers to the point of excess, while others attempt to deny they even exist. Our actors have worked hard to express the truth, sadness, and humor in Sam's script, and to use both its moments of chaos and of stillness to emphasize the difficulty—and the importance—of connecting with others. Thank you for choosing to sit down and share what we have prepared for you tonight. *Abbondanza!*



12.6 million Americans have used methamphetamines. 63% of Idaho felony drug court participants indicated that meth was their drug of choice.

Up to 24 million Americans suffer from some type of eating disorder.

Pocatello's town motto: "Proud to be Pocatello." It's also nicknamed the "U.S. Smile Capital" due to a tongue-in-cheek ordinance passed in 1948 that made it illegal not to smile.

70% of the food in a modern supermarket has at least one genetically modified ingredient.

According to the National Alzheimer's Association, an estimated 5.4 million people have Alzheimer's disease. 15.2 million of their friends and family members provide 17.4 billion hours of unpaid care, and total treatment costs for patients with dementia will cost the United States about \$200 billion this year.

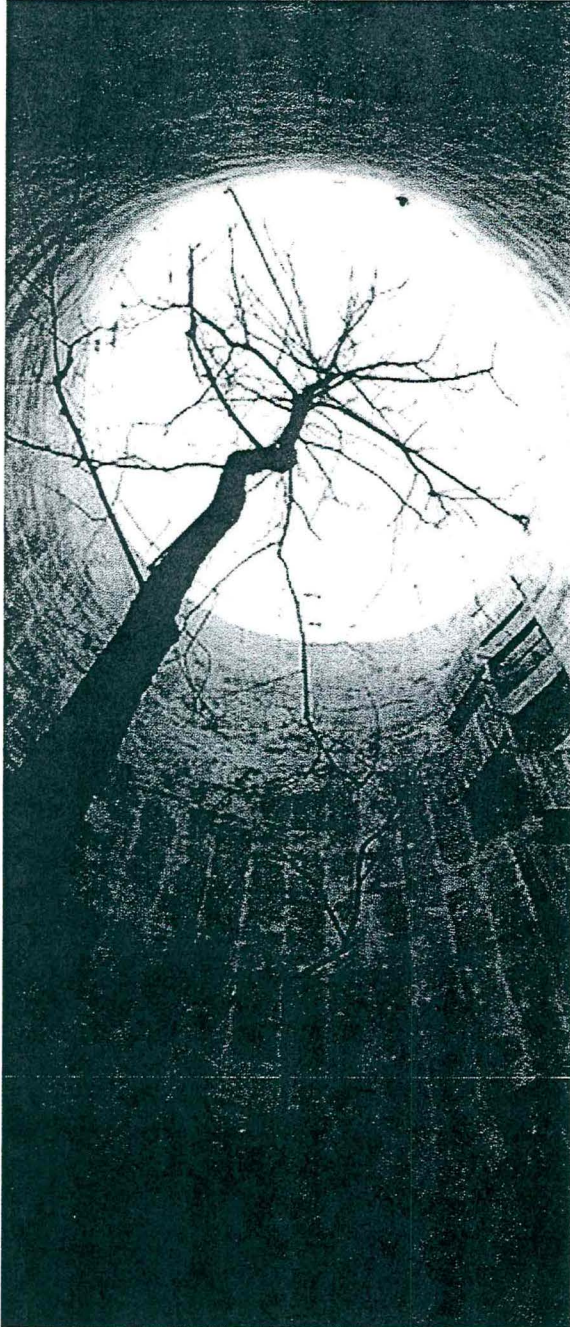
In 2011, 23.5 million people aged 12 or older needed treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol use problem (9.3 percent of persons aged 12 or older).

There are still 12.8 million U.S. workers who are currently unemployed, and nearly as many who can only find part-time employment or who have stopped looking for work altogether.



## WHAT WORK IS

BY PHILIP LEVINE



© Steve Hebert

We stand in the rain in a long line waiting at Ford Highland Park. For work. You know what work is—if you're old enough to read this you know what work is, although you may not do it. Forget you. This is about waiting, shifting from one foot to another. Feeling the light rain falling like mist into your hair, blurring your vision until you think you see your own brother ahead of you, maybe ten places. You rub your glasses with your fingers, and of course it's someone else's brother, narrower across the shoulders than yours but with the same sad slouch, the grin that does not hide the stubbornness, the sad refusal to give in to rain, to the hours of wasted waiting, to the knowledge that somewhere ahead a man is waiting who will say, "No, we're not hiring today," for any reason he wants. You love your brother, now suddenly you can hardly stand the love flooding you for your brother, who's not beside you or behind or ahead because he's home trying to sleep off a miserable night shift at Cadillac so he can get up before noon to study his German. Works eight hours a night so he can sing Wagner, the opera you hate most, the worst music ever invented. How long has it been since you told him you loved him, held his wide shoulders, opened your eyes wide and said those words, and maybe kissed his cheek? You've never done something so simple, so obvious, not because you're too young or too dumb, not because you're jealous or even mean or incapable of crying in the presence of another man, no, just because you don't know what work is.





### **Drama Faculty & Staff**

Matthew Adelson

Michael Giannitti

Sam Hunter

Linda Hurley

Kirk Jackson

Dina Janis

Robert Post

Richard MacPike

Rick Martin

Michael Rancourt

Jean Randich

Sue Rees

Jenny Rohn

Dan Roninson

Charles Schoonmaker

### **Special Thanks**

Helene Bertazzo

Linda Dirkey

Kevin's

Allegro

Pangea