

PHOENIX PLAYERS THEATRE GROUP

(PPTG)

PRESENTS

AN INDETERMINATE

LIFE

A Theatre Performance piece based
on original writings by the members
of PPTG

MAY 15, 2014

PPTG MOTTO:

WE ARE A COMMUNITY OF TRANSFORMATION.

THROUGH THE POWER OF SELF-DISCOVERY,

WE CREATE THE OPPORTUNITY

TO KNOW AND GROW

INTO OURSELVES.

DAVID BENDEZU: SOMETIMES SOMETHING SPECIAL HAPPENS WHEN ONE GETS TOLD BY THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE THAT YOU ARE DONE FOR: GRIT HAPPENS, HEART HAPPENS, CRYING HAPPENS, DEDICATION HAPPENS, LAUGHING HAPPENS, PAIN HAPPENS, BUT MOST OF ALL WE HAPPEN.

DEMETRIUUS (MEAT) MOLINA: IS A SOPHOMORE IN CPEP. PPTG IS HIS VERY FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH THEATRE. DEMETRIUS DEDICATES HIS PERFORMANCE TO HIS SECOND CHANCE--HIS SIX YEAR OLD SON!

NATHAN (NATE) POWELL: DURING HIS INCARCERATION NATHAN BECAME A FACILITATOR FOR AVP (ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROGRAM) YAP (THE YOUTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM) AND EARNED A DOCCS MENTORING CERTIFICATE. HE WAS ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT AND TREASURER FOR THE LOGAN JAY CEES. HE IS A PROUD MEMBER OF THE CORNELL PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAM WHERE HE HAS EARNED A DEGREE AS WELL AS CERTIFICATE IN JOURNALISM. A LIVING EXAMPLE OF THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PPTG, NATE FIRMLY BELIEVES IN PUTTING COMPASSION FIRST.

MICHAEL RHYNES: HOW DOES ONE EXIST IN A PLACE WHERE ONE IS LOVED, REVERED, CHERISHED, AND NEEDED WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY EXISTING IN A PLACE WHERE ONE IS HATED, DEGRADED, REPRESSED AND OPPRESSED? HOW DOES ONE KEEP THE TWO REALITIES SEPARATE WHEN TRYING TO RECONCILE THE ONE REALITY THAT LOVE AND HATE ARE THE RIGHT AND LEFT CHAMBERS OF THE HEART?

LEROY TAYLOR: I AM A FATHER EVERY DAY. EVEN FROM A DISTANCE MY LOVE TRANSCENDS THE WALLS, THE ENERGY IS EXPRESSED IN PRACTICES THAT MAY NOT REACH MY SON AND DAUGHTERS RIGHT AWAY. MY OPTIMISM AND FAITH MAKE ME CONTINUE TO ENDEAVOR, AND THAT IS WHY YOU SEE ME HERE TONIGHT, PARCTICING MY LOVE. MAY IT REACH NOT ONLY MY CHILDREN, BUT ALSO OTHER PARENTS, TO SPREAD INSPIRATION THAT FAITH MUST DRIVE US ON.

Additional PPTG Founding Members no longer in residence at Auburn: Kenneth Brown, Jason Calkins, Efraim Diaz, Michael Shane Hale, and Clifton “Skye” Williamson.

SPECIAL THANKS:

HAROLD GRAHAM, SUPERINTENDENT

JUSTIN THOMAS, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF PROGRAMS

DAVID ROTH, DIRECTOR OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES

LYNN ODRZYWOLSKI, KEYBOARD SPECIALIST/VOLUNTEER SERVICES CONTACT

ANTHONY LOWE, EDUCATION DIRECTOR

THE STAFF OF AUBURN CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WITHOUT WHOM THIS PRESENTATION WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE

**“AN INDETERMINATE LIFE” ORDER OF
PERFORMANCE**

***BECAUSE WE HAVE WOVEN THE PIECE
TOGETHER, PLEASE HOLD YOUR
RESPONSE TO THE END.***

**SURVIVING PRISON 101: WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY DAVID**

**CALLS AND RESPONSES: WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY NICK**

**MY TIMELY COMPANION: WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY LEROY**

A PLACE OF TIME: WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY DEMETRIUS

THE ZOO: WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY
MICHAEL

WINDOW ONTO PAIN: WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY NATE

A STEPDA? NO WAY!: WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY LEROY WITH SANDRA

HOME SCHOOL: WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY BLAIZE

Intercut with:

LIFE, LOVE, LOSS: WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY DEMETRIUS

NA'CIR'S GOOGLE SEARCH: WRITTEN
AND PERFORMED BY LEROY WITH SANDRA

WHY I HATE DOGS: LEROY'S STORY AS
WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY NATE

PEDAGOGY FROM A PRISONER-

ENGLISH 102: BY MICHAEL, PERFORMED BY
LEROY AND DEMETRIUS

MY FIRST "B": WRITTEN AND PERFORMED
BY MICHAEL WITH NATE

PEDAGOGY FROM A PRISONER-LAW

103: WRITTEN BY MICHAEL, PERFORMED BY
NATE AND DAVID

SISTER SANDRA: WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY SANDRA WITH LEROY

NAME: TRAYVON MARTIN: WRITTEN BY
MICHAEL SHANE HALE AND PERFORMED BY
NICK

**AZDAK FROM "THE CAUCASIAN CHALK
CIRCLE" BY BERTOLT BRECHT:**
PERFORMED BY NATE

MY NEW I.D.: WRITTEN AND PERFORMED
BY DEMETRIUS

THE SMELL OF POPCORN: WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY MICHAEL

EXCERPT FROM "RANDOM FAMILY" BY

ADRIAN NICOLE LEBLANC: PERFORMED

BY LEROY

WALLS (A BROKEN POEM) BY LUCAS

WHALEY: PERFORMED BY NATE AND JUDY

THE THINGS WE CARRY: WRITTEN AND

PERFORMED BY MICHAEL

TO MY DAUGHTER . . . TEANA: WRITTEN

AND PERFORMED BY LEROY

EXCERPT FROM "GHOST ON FIRE" BY

MICHAEL WELLER: ADAPTED AND

PERFORMED BY NATE

STORY OF WORDS: WRITTEN AND

PERFORMED BY DEMETRIUS (INSPIRED BY

JONATHAN NELSON)

GHOST BUS: WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY

DAVID

EXCERPT FROM "THE POWER OF

KINDNESS" BY PIERO FERRUCCI:

SELECTED BY MICHAEL SHANE HALE AND

PERFORMED BY THE ENSEMBLE

PPTG INTRODUCTION

PPTG is *a grassroots program* developed *by* and *for* incarcerated persons and communities in a *maximum-security prison*. It is *a transformative theatre community, which* utilizes theater to reconnect incarcerated people to their *full humanity*. Experiences gained through PPTG significantly increase incarcerated peoples' chances of transcending the negative labels and histories of criminality that define them within the greater society.

The group was started in 2009 by a small group of incarcerated men dedicated to the idea that theatre work, combined with group inner healing work, is a true opportunity for all of us to connect and to become more fully human.

INVITED FACILITATORS AND PERFORMANCE HISTORY:

Stephen Cole, a retired theatre professor from Cornell who has worked with many Hollywood actors and has taught at the IM School of Healing Arts, began working with PPTG in October of 2009. Cole's emphasis was on transformative characterology as an experienced act. At the request of the men of PPTG, this work focused on the healing process of transformative experience. The work is rooted in bioenergetic categories of psychological defenses. This allowed the men to examine their own defenses while attempting to inhabit these defense systems. This work is equally applicable to the redemptive goals of the men of PPTG as well as to actor training.

After some months Cole invited **Paula Murray Cole**, a theatre professor at Ithaca College, to join as a facilitator to expand the modalities of expression available to the members of the group. Ms. Cole led workshops in Laban training, a well-known system of movement dynamics, which explores the psychological dimensions of movement in space and time.

From Laban, Ms. Cole led the group in explorations of psychological emotions through training in rasaboxes -- a psychophysical technique that trains actors and others to work with the body-mind imagination, emotional sensation and its physical expression.

In an effort to bring all the work forward into a performance mode, Cole discussed the PPTG group with **Bruce Levitt**, theatre professor, professional director and former chair of the Theater Department at Cornell University who specializes in Shakespeare and Solo Performance. Levitt joined the workshop in October of 2010 and led the members of PPTG in the creation of autobiographical performance pieces that called upon their own experiences as well as the techniques practiced since October 2009.

The solo performance work resulted in the creation of a script entitled ***INSIDE/OUT***, which was performed at Auburn Correctional Facility in April of 2011. Participants included Juliana Kleist-Mendez and Jeremy Flynn, two students from Cornell, who collaborated in the creation of the piece and joined the men

of PPTG in performance. Some seventy people from outside the facility attended the performance. Excerpts from ***INSIDE/OUT*** were published in the Fall 2011 and Winter/Spring 2012 editions of Aaduna Press (www.aaduna.org). This performance was followed in April of 2012 with the performance of ***MAXIMUM WILL***, which combined soliloquys from Shakespeare with original reflective writings by the men of PPTG.

Judy Levitt, acting instructor and theatre faculty member at Ithaca College, joined as a facilitator in the fall of 2011. **Alison Van Dyke**, Senior Lecturer and acting, speech and dialects teacher at Cornell joined the group as a facilitator at the beginning of 2012. Both Alison and Judy, along with **Stephen Cole**, assisted in the preparation of ***MAXIMUM WILL***.

Judy Levitt and Danielle Frimer joined David, Shane and Michael, along with Efraim Diaz and Kenneth Brown in that performance.

A documentary of the work of PPTG, which includes ***MAXIMUM WILL*** was filmed March

through June of 2012. The film crew included Producer, Bruce Levitt, Director, Andy Watts, Cornell Student filmmakers,, Jamie Lewis and Joey Triska as well as Ithaca College Student filmmakers, Nathan Breton, Andrew Inglin, and Amy Obarski. Cornell theatre and psychology major, Ilana Gilovich, assisted the crew.

NEW FACILITATORS AND PERFORMERS FOR: *AN INDETERMINATE LIFE*

Nick Fesette is a theatre-maker and Ph.D. student at Cornell University. He is honored to be joining PPTG on the stage and to have assisted with the presentation of ***An Indeterminate Life.***

Blaize Hall is a Television-Radio student at Ithaca College. She first saw PPTG's performance two years ago and knew she wanted to be involved in what the group was doing at Auburn Correctional Facility. She thanks the team for allowing her to participate this semester.

Sandra Oyeneyin is a Performing and Media Arts major at Cornell University. This

is her first time performing with PPTG and she is extremely grateful to the members of PPTG for allowing her to be a part of their family.

Chris Seeds is a composer, performer, and theater enthusiast. It has been his privilege to work with the playwrights and poets of PPTG since the fall of 2013.

Coaching and staging for tonight's performance of **AN INDETERMINATE LIFE** is by Bruce Levitt, Nick Fessette, Judy Levitt, Sandra Oyenevin, Chris Seeds, and Alison Van Dyke and the men of PPTG.

Film crew for Tonight's presentation:

Andy Watts: Director

CREW: Nate Breton, Wyatt Eldridge, Patrick Mc Mahon, Jesse Turk, Brendyn Weiss

SPECIAL THANKS TO LINDA FOGLIA, Assistant Public Information Officer, Department of Corrections and Community Services.