

**SUMMER,**

**1976**

**STUDIO**

# FRIENDS,



I write this note two weeks before the elections that are gripping our national attention. You're reading it after. Regardless of their outcome, I hope you'll find it as refreshing as I do to exhale and watch a gracefully written play that isn't especially political. It's a play about friendship. More specifically: female friendship, friendship that develops during adulthood, friendship formed through one's children, unlikely friendship. It's also a portrait in time, of an era when second-wave feminism was running into gendered expectations about child rearing and ambition. The writer, acclaimed but new to Studio, is David Auburn, best known for his play *Proof*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and Tony Award for Best Play.

The play offers choice roles for two area treasures: actors Kate Eastwood Norris and Holly Twyford. They are two of those special theatre creatures who have devoted themselves to the stage, have performed year after year in innumerable productions, and have become seasoned through decades of performance. Area theatregoers have a special affection for and long familiarity with Kate and Holly. I myself saw each of them on stage for the first time in the late '90s—Kate at Washington Shakespeare Company (now Avant Bard) and Holly right here, in one of the 14 productions she has worked on at Studio! In typical Studio fashion, this production showcases their work up-close, in the especially intimate Milton Theatre.

I'm pleased that you're here to experience two more of Kate and Holly's unforgettable performances and the work of the creative team supporting them: a group of absurdly talented designers and their director Vivienne Benesch (another seasoned actor). I'm excited to share their work with you.

Yours,

David Muse  
Artistic Director

For a note from the dramaturg and more background information on *Summer, 1976* please visit



[studiotheatre.org/  
summer-1976](http://studiotheatre.org/summer-1976)

# STUDIO THEATRE

**DAVID MUSE**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## PRESENTS

# SUMMER, 1976

BY  
**DAVID AUBURN**

DIRECTED BY  
**VIVIENNE BENESCH**

*Summer, 1976* is presented by  
arrangement with Concord Theatricals  
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**HELEN Q. HUANG**

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UNDERWRITTEN BY  
**SHERYL AND  
RICK DONALDSON &  
DR. MARK EPSTEIN AND  
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# CAST



DIANA  
**KATE EASTWOOD NORRIS\***



ALICE  
**HOLLY TWYFORD\***

## UNDERSTUDY

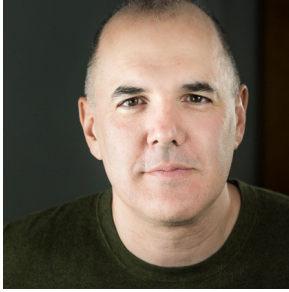
DIANA AND ALICE  
**TONYA BECKMAN\***



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# PLAYWRIGHT



**DAVID AUBURN's** plays include *Summer, 1976*; *The Columnist*; *The New York Idea*; *Proof* (2001 Pulitzer Prize, Tony Award); *An Upset and Amateurs*; and *The Journals of Mihail Sebastian*. Films include *The Girl in the Park* (writer/director) and *The Lake House* (writer). Recent stage directing credits include Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* at Court Theatre, Tennessee Williams' *Period of Adjustment* at the Berkshire Theatre Group, and the world premiere of Michael Weller's *Side Effects* at the Lucille Lortel Theatre. His short plays have been collected in the volume *Fifth Planet and Other Plays*. His work has been published in *Harper's*, *New England Review*, and *Guilt & Pleasure*, and he was a contributing editor to the *Oxford American Writer's Thesaurus*. Recently, David directed Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance* at Berkshire Theater Festival. He is a former Guggenheim Fellow.

# DIRECTOR



**VIVIENNE BENESCH** is thrilled to make her Studio Theatre debut, returning to DC after directing *Love's Labor's Lost* for the Folger Theatre in 2019 (Helen Hayes nomination) and acting at Shakespeare Theatre Company in *Major Barbara* and *Henry V* many moons ago. A director, actor, educator, and producer, Vivienne is currently in her ninth season as Producing Artistic Director of PlayMakers Repertory Company in North Carolina. From 2005 to 2016 Vivienne served as Artistic Director of the renowned Chautauqua Theater Company and Conservatory in western New York. Most recent directing credits include the world premiere of Bekah Brunstetter's *The Game* at PlayMakers and the premiere of Noah Haidle's *Birthday Candles* on Broadway for the Roundabout Theatre Company starring Debra Messing and at the Detroit Public Theatre. She is a proud recipient of the prestigious 2017 Zelda Fichandler Award, an OBIE Award, and a graduate of Brown University and NYU's Graduate Acting Program.

2024-2025

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WORLD PREMIERES SINCE  
2011**, including Kimberly Belflower's *John Proctor is the Villain* (currently headed to Broadway) and James Ijames' *Good Bones* (recently produced by The Public Theater)

Jordan Slattery, Miranda Rizzolo, Deidre Staples in  
*John Proctor is the Villain*. Photo by Margot Schulman

**KATE EASTWOOD NORRIS** (Diana) is an actor as well as a director and educator at university and graduate levels. Her acting credits include *The Father* and *Animal* at Studio Theatre, and numerous productions at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company (where she is also a company member), Folger Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Arena Stage, Round House Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Santa Cruz Shakespeare, Portland Center Stage, Wilma Theater, Arden Theatre Company, Florida Stage, Gulfshore Playhouse, Two River Theater, Syracuse Stage, PICT (Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre), the Humana Festival of New American Plays, Delaware Theatre Company and the American Shakespeare Center. Kate has also made guest appearances with the Baltimore and the Alaskan Symphonies as an actor/narrator. She received two Helen Hayes Awards, Philadelphia's Barrymore Award, and The Anderson-Hopkins award for her acting. She holds an MFA in Shakespeare and Performance from Mary Baldwin University and an M.A. in Humanities and Creativity from Pacifica Graduate Institute.

**HOLLY TWYFORD** (Alice) returns for her fourteenth show at Studio Theatre, and her ninth collaboration with Kate Eastwood Norris. She was most recently seen at Studio in *At the Wedding*. Other Studio productions include *The Steward of Christendom*, *The Desk Set*, *The Road to Mecca*, *Contractions*, and *Cloud 9*, all of which earned her Helen Hayes Awards nominations, and *The Shape of Things*, for which she received a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Lead Actress. Holly has performed in over eighty productions in theaters in the Washington, DC area including Arena Stage, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and Signature Theatre. She was honored with Shakespeare Theatre Company's Emery Battis Award for Acting Excellence for her portrayal of Anna in Harold Pinter's *Old Times*. Holly is proud to be a charter member of Studio Theatre's Cabinet, a Ford's Theatre Associate Artist, and a Lunt-Fontanne Fellow.

## PRODUCTION

**LEE SAVAGE** (Set Designer) has previously worked at Studio on *Between Riverside and Crazy*. DC area credits include work with Folger Theatre, Ford's Theatre, The Kennedy Center, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Signature Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, and Washington National Opera. NYC credits include work with Second Stage, LAByrinth Theater Company, Primary Stages, LCT3, Roundabout Theatre Company, Atlantic Theater Company, Clubbed Thumb, and Mabou Mines. Regional credits include work with Alliance Theatre, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Group, Chautauqua Theater Company, Cleveland Play House, Dallas Theater Center, Glimmerglass, Goodman Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Long Wharf Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, The Old Globe, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Trinity Rep, Two River Theater, Westport Country Playhouse, The Wilma Theater, and Yale Rep among others. Lee's awards include a Helen Hayes Award, and Connecticut Critics Circle. Wingspace Theatrical Design. He holds

a BFA from RISD and an MFA from Yale School of Drama. Lee serves as the head of Scenic Design at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

**HELEN Q. HUANG** (Costume Designer) is an award-winning costume designer with a long history designing at Studio Theatre. Her other credits include *Quixote Nuevo* at Denver Center Center for the Performing Arts (Henry Award), *South Coast Repertory*, *Seattle Rep*, and *Portland Center Stage*; *Soft Power* at Signature Theatre (Helen Hayes Award nomination); *The Chosen* at Milwaukee Repertory Theater; *Next to Normal* at Round House Theatre; *The Far Country* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *The Janeiad* at The Alley Theatre; and *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Helen is a professor of Costume Design at the University of Maryland, College Park. [helenqhuang.com](http://helenqhuang.com).

**JESSE BELSKY** (Lighting Designer) previously designed *The Colored Museum*, *John Proctor*

# PRODUCTION

is the *Villain*, *Pipeline*, *Until The Flood*, *P.Y.G.* or *The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle*, *The Remains*, *The Effect*, *Three Sisters*, *No Sisters*, and *Animal* and co-designed *White Noise* at Studio. Regional credits include *Lydia* and *Rough Crossing* at Yale Rep and *The Year of Magical Thinking* at PlayMakers Repertory Company. Other DC designs include *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at Ford's Theatre; *JQA* and *The Year of Magical Thinking* at Arena Stage; *Oslo* and *The Book of Will* at Round House Theatre; *Penelope*, *The Bridges of Madison County*, and *Sweeney Todd* at Signature Theatre; *Henry IV, Part 1*; *The Winter's Tale*; and *Sense and Sensibility* at Folger Theatre; and *The Music Man*, *Labour of Love*, and *The Magic Play* at Olney Theatre Center. Jesse holds a B.A. from Duke University and an MFA from the Yale School of Drama. He has taught lighting design at Connecticut College and UNC Greensboro. [jessebelsky.com](http://jessebelsky.com)

**KATE MARVIN** (Sound Designer) is a sound designer and composer based in Brooklyn, NY. Recent works include David Henry Hwang's *Yellow Face* at the Todd Haimes Theatre, *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* at the Lucille Lortel Theatre, *Merry Me* at New York Theatre Workshop, *Wolf Play* at Manhattan Class Company and Soho Rep in collaboration with Ma-Yi Theater (Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Sound Design), *Jonah* with Roundabout Theatre Company, *the best we could [a family tragedy]* with Manhattan Theatre Club, Dmitri Krymov's *Eugene Onegin* at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, Bekah Brunstetter's *The Game* at Playmakers Repertory Theater, *The Scarlet Letter* at Two River Theatre, *Bulrushers* at McCarter Theatre and Berkeley Rep, *Fidelio* with Heartbeat Opera, and *Chimpanzee* at HERE Arts Center, the Festival Mondial Théâtres de Marionnettes, and Barbican Centre. Kate is an Associate Artist with Target Margin Theater. She holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama. [katemarvinsound.com](http://katemarvinsound.com)

**STEFANIA BULBARELLA** (Projection Designer) is a projections designer from Buenos Aires, Argentina based in New York. On Broadway she worked on *Jaja's African Hair Braiding* at the Manhattan Theatre Club

(2024 Tony Nomination), which is now making its regional tour. Other theater credits include *Space Dogs* at MCC Theater (Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nomination), *Travels* at Ars Nova, *A Bright New Boise* and *The Watering Hole* at Signature Theatre Company (New York), and *Semblance* at New York Theatre Workshop, among others. She received the HOLA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatrical Design for *Vamonos!*. [stefaniabulbarella.com](http://stefaniabulbarella.com)

**ADRIEN-ALICE HANSEL** (Dramaturg) is the Literary Director at Studio, where she has dramaturged the world premieres of *Problems Between Sisters*, *Good Bones*, *John Proctor is the Villain*, *I Hate it Here*, *Queen of Basel*, *Red Speedo*, and *Lungs*, among others, as well as productions of *Exception to the Rule*, *The Colored Museum*, *Fat Ham*, *Fun Home*, *English*, *Curve of Departure*, *Wig Out!*, and *New Electric Ballroom*, among many others. Prior to joining Studio, she spent eight seasons as a member of and then running the Literary Department at the Actors Theatre of Louisville and its Humana Festival of New American Plays. She is the co-editor of eight anthologies of plays from Actors Theatre and editor of 12 editions of plays through Studio. Adrien-Alice holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama.

**JOHN KEITH HALL** (Production Stage Manager) has stage managed many productions at Studio including *Exception to the Rule*, *The Colored Museum*, *At the Wedding*, *Espejos: Clean*, *Fun Home*, *English*, *Bad Jews*, *Choir Boy*, *Cock*, *Water by the Spoonful*, *Tribes*, *The Habit of Art*, *Torch Song Trilogy*, *4000 Miles*, *In the Red and Brown Water*, *The History Boys*, and *The Road to Mecca*. Other DC area credits include *Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company*, *Olney Theatre Center*, *Signature Theatre*, and *The Kennedy Center*. His regional credits include over 40 productions as Resident Stage Manager at the Barter Theatre as well as *Shadowlands Stage*, *Virginia Musical Theatre*, and *Contemporary American Theatre Festival*.

**LEIGH ROBINETTE** (Takeover Production Stage Manager) previously worked at Studio Theatre on *Exception to the Rule*; *Love, Love, Love*; and *English*. Off Broadway: *Dear Evan*



Hansen. DC credits include *The Winter's Tale* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Folger Theatre; *Incendiary*, *There's Always the Hudson*, *Describe the Night*, *Gloria*, *Botticelli in the Fire*, *Familiar*, *The Arsonists*, and *An Octoroon* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company; *Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches*, *Holiday*, *Change Agent*, *The Originalist*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Mother Courage and Her Children* at Arena Stage; *Love Sick* and *The Jewish Queen Lear* with Theater J; and *The Second City's Love*, *Factually* at The Kennedy Center. She has also worked with Capital Concerts, Live Nation, the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston, and the Hangar Theatre in Ithaca, NY. She is a graduate of Boston University.

**STUDIO THEATRE** is a national leader in the production of contemporary plays. Over 46 years and more than 425 productions, Studio has grown from a company that produced in a single rented theatre to one that owns

a multi-venue complex stretching half a city block, but has remained committed to core distinguishing characteristics: deliberately intimate spaces; excellence in acting and design; and seasons that feature many of the most significant playwrights of our time. Studio's seasons are intentionally diverse and eclectic, featuring buzzworthy plays from today's hot writers, groundbreaking world premieres, and reinvigorated contemporary classics, produced and performed by leading local, national, and international artists. Studio also incubates and develops new work, nurtures the next generation of arts leaders, and proactively engages with its community through a wide array of initiatives. Studio is committed to inclusion and access, and makes a concentrated effort to proactively dismantle barriers that have excluded people from joyful participation in our art form. Studio's location, rich history, unique venues, and commitment to artistry have made it a regional landmark, where audiences find the best that contemporary theatre has to offer.

For additional bios and more information visit: [studiotheatre.org/summer-1976](http://studiotheatre.org/summer-1976)

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Meg Gibson, Kevin Kilner, and Ephraim Birney in *Admissions*. Photo credit: Astrid Riecken.

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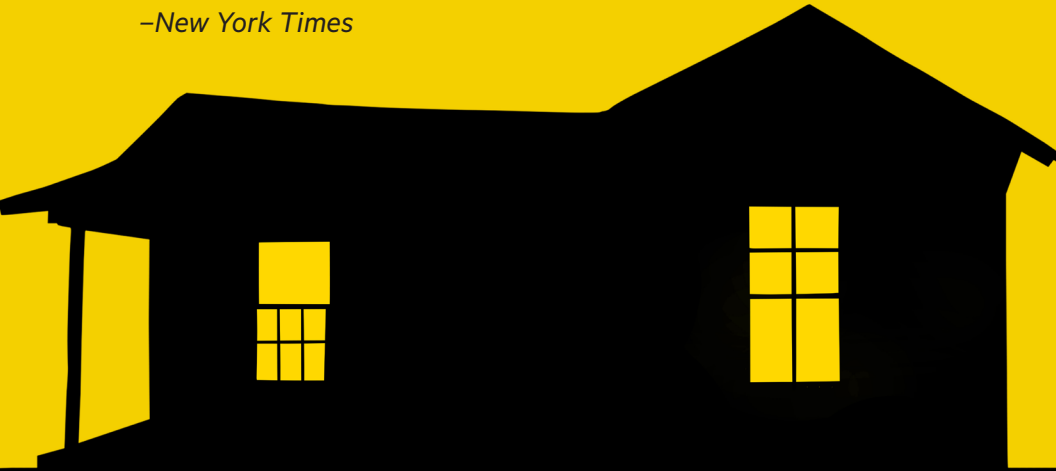
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