



The Jewish Theatre of Bloomington
Presents

Blessings from the Pandemic

a poetry cycle for performance
by Rich Orloff

Virtual Staged Reading

Directed by Darrell Ann Stone

January 16 & 17, 2021 via Zoom

www.jewishtheatrebloomington.com



Blessings from the Pandemic By Rich Orloff

Movements

first movement:

absorbing

second movement:

adjusting

third movement:

admitting

fourth movement:

accepting

fifth movement:

ascending

Cast

Adrienne D. Embry

Paula Gordon

Ray Hedin

Dion D. Kimbrough

Richard Perez

Shana Ritter

Francesca Sobrer



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Talkbacks

Immediately following both performances.

Facilitated by Darrell Ann Stone

Company Staff

Producing Artistic Director.....Audrey Heller
Managing Director.....Cassie Hakken
Administrative Assistant.....Kathleen McConahay
Stage Manager.....Corey Hollinger

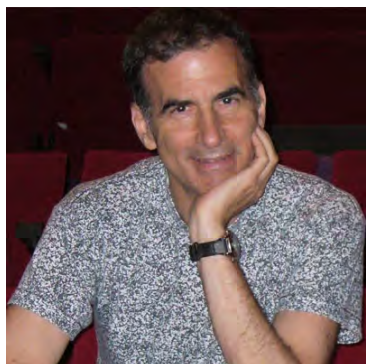
Board of Directors

President.....Iris Kiesling
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Playwright Biography



Rich Orloff is the author of eighteen full-length plays, mostly comedies and mostly award-winning. The New York Times called his play *Big Boys* "rip-roaringly funny" and named *Funny as a Crutch* a Critic's Pick. His comedy *Romantic Fools* has had over 100 productions around the world. The play was just produced in

American Sign Language by New York Deaf Theatre.

His comedy *Oy!* premiered Off-Broadway at Melting Pot Theatre Company and has since been produced at Theatre Ariel in Philadelphia, Jewish Ensemble Theatre in Detroit, Chicago Jewish Theatre, Sarasota Jewish Theatre, and at over two dozen other theaters in the United States (and one in Bulgaria). His full-length plays have won, among other awards, the Festival of Emerging American Theatre Prize, the Playwrights First Award, the Goody Fellowship, and the Pickering Award for Playwriting Excellence.

His short plays have had over 2000 productions on six continents - and a staged reading in Antarctica. Seven of his short plays have been included in the annual Best American Short Plays anthology, more than any other contemporary playwright. His newest theater piece, *Blessings from the Pandemic*, "a poetry cycle in five movements," has had Zoom performances created by theaters in Detroit, Dayton, and New York City. Poems from the collection have been performed at theaters, synagogues and churches around the country.



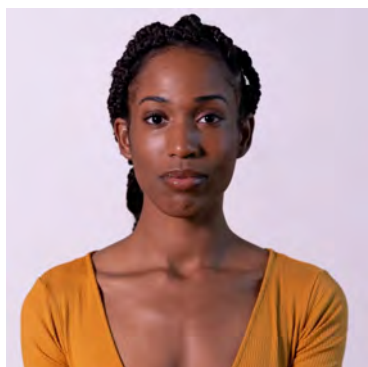
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Artist Biographies



Darrell Ann Stone (Director) is the Artistic Advisor, talk back facilitator and former Co-Artistic Director for JTB. Ms. Stone is originally from Boston and has an undergraduate degree in Theatre & Drama from Northeastern University, as well as a Master of Social Work from Indiana University. She works full time as

the Director of the Student Advocates Office in the Division of Student Affairs at Indiana University, and is adjunct faculty in the School of Social Work. Darrell is also a free-lance actor and director who has worked in productions at BPP, Cardinal Stage and JTB. Ms. Stone's foundation of JTB productions include *The Grandkid*, *Collected Stories*, *Hiding in the Spotlight*, *The Bespoke Overcoat*, *The Yichud Room*, *Sonia Flew*, and *Chaim's Love Song*.



Adrienne D. Embry (Cast) is a senior pursuing her B.A. in Theatre. Adrienne is an alumna from Warren Central High School and a founder/president of IU's Black, Brown, and Beige Theatre Troupe. Her previous works include IU mainstage productions: *Haus of Mirth* (Edie) and *Barbecue* (Adlean). She is also an award-

winning slam poet. Adrienne left the far eastside of Indianapolis to attend Western Kentucky University then returned to attend IUPUI before she found her home here at IU.



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Artist Biographies



Paula Gordon (Cast) is a graduate of the Indiana University School of Law. After retiring as Director of Student Legal Services at IU, she returned to her first love, the theatre. She has played Ruth Steiner in *Collected Stories* and Zhanna Arshanskaya Dawson in *Hiding in the Spotlight* for JTB, was a long-time

puppeteer with Puck Puppet Theatre and performs with Audrey Heller as the Chicken Soup Players. Favorite roles include Maria in *Twelfth Night*, Raina in *Arms and the Man*, Ann in *Man and Superman*, and Beline in *The Imaginary Invalid*. She is indebted to Zoom for visits with her family.



Ray Hedin (Cast): Until he retired two years ago, Ray Hedin taught American literature at IU. For the last twenty-five years he has conducted workshops on the power of stories and how to tell a good story. Nine years ago, he returned to acting after a forty-five-year hiatus, beginning with the role of the mayor in

the IU Summer Theatre production of *The Music Man*, his favorite musical. He has been hooked ever since, with roles in Bloomington and Indianapolis in *You Can't Take It with You*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, *Outside Mullingar*, *Endgame*, and other plays. He has performed in three short films and has hosted a podcast series of short stories, *A Walk in the Dark*.



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Artist Biographies



Dion D. Kimbrough (Cast) is an actor who began his career in the Emergent Theatre group while being a student at Indiana University. In the Theatre group, Darrell Stone was one of the first directors that Dion worked with and he credits a lot of his success to her mentorship. Since graduating from Indiana University, he has

been a part of several short films and looks to take his career to Atlanta, GA in the near future.



Richard Perez (Cast) works nationally as an actor, director and educator with an emphasis on new play development. He is the former Artistic Director of The Bloomington Playwrights Project, Associate Artistic Director of Chicago Dramatists and Co-Artistic Director of Exit Left Theatre in Michigan. Directing credits

include: *All My Sons*, *True West*, *Hurly Burly*, *The Mercy Swing* (New York Fringe Festival) and *Nocturnal* (Kennedy Center's New Visions/New Voices Festival). On television he has appeared as Councilman Ortiz on *Boss*, with Kelsey Grammer, *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med* and *Electric Dreams*. He proudly serves on the faculty of the Hope College Theatre Department.



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Artist Biographies



Shana Ritter's (Cast) poetry and short stories have appeared in various journals and magazines including *Lilith*, *Fifth Wednesday* and *Georgetown Review*. Her chapbook, *Stairs of Separation* was published by Finishing Line Press. *In the Time of Leaving*, a novel of exile and resilience, is set in late 15th century Spain and was

published in 2019. Shana has been awarded the Indiana Individual Artist Grant on multiple occasions. Learn more at <https://www.shana-ritter.com>



Francesca Sobrer (Cast): Actor, writer, story-teller, Francesca is busy in the Bloomington theatre scene including most recently Cardinal Stage's fabulous Walkabout Radio Plays. Prior productions have included *The Glass Menagerie*, *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. BPP productions include *Home*, *Three Views*

of the Same Object and *Sans Merci*. Chicago credits: *John Gabriel Borkman*, *Masterclass*, *Everybody*, and *Women Laughing Alone with Salad*. She is also very much involved in the Chicago storytelling scene, a recent MothStory SLAM winner, she has also presented stories for *First Person Live*, *Story Lab*, *Do Not Submit*, and *This Much is True*.



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Thank You!

Rich Orloff

Richard Balaban

Congregation Beth Shalom

The Ryder Magazine

Bloom Magazine

Connie Shakalis

**A special thanks to the Arts and Culture
Committee at Congregation Beth Shalom
for sponsoring this production.**

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