

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE
COLLEGE OF ARTS + ARCHITECTURE

The Department of Theatre presents

SWEAT

by Lynn Nottage

DIRECTOR

Ron McClelland

COSTUME DESIGN

Margarette Joyner

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

& DRAMATURG

Rayden Leeder

LIGHTING DESIGN

David Fillmore

SOUND DESIGN

Benjamin G. Stickels

SCENIC DESIGN

Tom Burch

STAGE MANAGER

Rexy Brundige

Co-commissioned by
Oregon Shakespeare Festival's
American Revolutions: The United States History Cycle
And Arena Stage

World premiere produced by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival

This production of SWEAT was first presented in New York by
The Public Theater
(Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director)

Originally produced on Broadway by Stuart Thompson and Louise L. Gund.

Anne R. Belk Theater
Robinson Hall for the Performing Arts
Thu Mar 16- Sat Mar 18, 2023 | 7:30 pm
Sat Mar 18 & Sun Mar 19, 2023 | 2 pm
coaa.charlotte.edu

SWEAT

by Lynn Nottage

CAST

EVAN	Miles Thompson
JASON	Elijah Hensley
CHRIS	Eljae Roe
OSCAR	Julio Hernandez
TRACEY	Marina Faillace
CYNTHIA	Jada Dozier
JESSIE	Kiana Vazquetelles
BRUCIE	Kobi Selby
STAN	Rayden Leeder

UNDERSTUDIES

JASON	Zack Mahon
TRACEY	Carly Helms
JESSIE	Chandler Pelliciotta
STAN	Maxwell Martin

Content Advisory

This production contains violence, blood, and explicit language that includes racial slurs.

Director's Note

Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize winning play alternates between the years 2000 and 2008, and portrays with fearless artistry what happens to a group of close friends- Reading mill workers- when their jobs are outsourced during the early years of NAFTA.

In 2011, Reading, PA. was the poorest city of its size in America, and *Sweat* shows how the working middle class became part of the "Invisible Class". Nottage spent two years interviewing the people in Reading for her research, and when she would ask them how they would describe Reading, she noticed that they would answer in the past-tense: "Reading Was...", and she wondered "How'd a city that was once an industrial powerhouse become a city without a narrative?" These characters' stories on a micro level, is our nation's narrative being played out on the world's stage.

The inspiration for *Sweat* was born out of the stories of these hard-working factory workers, but their perspective was not Nottage's own, and in her own words, "It was then that I decided to replace judgment with curiosity and allowed myself to really listen and hear what they had to say." It is my desire that this production would help make "The Invisible" seen. I also want the audience to see themselves in the characters; to listen to them, and not judge them, and having listened well, to leave the theater with a greater understanding that, "This story is not about those people but our people" - Nottage

- Ron McClelland, Director

Dramaturg's Note

Bars are a place to retreat from the harsh realities of our day-to-day lives, and alcohol is the tool that releases the truest thoughts of the average person, allowing them to share the stories and the innermost feelings they never have the courage to say when sober. This idea is what inspired Lynn Nottage to place her story where she did. *Sweat* tells the stories of those who go unheard in the loud commotion of political corruption, financial collapse, and societal breakdown, finding their only respite from the chaos at the bottom of a glass - and in the company of those who understand the pain.

Sweat revolves around a diverse group of friends and the fallout that ensues when their livelihoods are threatened by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA, enacted in 1994, was meant to aid the U.S in trade, foreign relations, and financial saving. While NAFTA did lead to these effects, it came at the cost of nearly 400,000 jobs across the states. The mass exodus of jobs in the year 2000 hit hard for many Americans, and nowhere was that felt stronger than in Reading, PA. At the time, Reading ranked as the 32nd poorest city in America, with the median income for families at around 26k per year, and a whopping 19% of families making less than 10k per year. Reading suffered insurmountable damage from the mass job loss in 2000, as many citizens worked in manufacturing, a field heavily targeted by NAFTA. By the start of 2008, right before the worst financial crisis to face America since the Great Depression, Reading had made its way into the top 10 poorest cities. It took well over a decade for Reading to begin showing improvement, seeing a decrease in poverty and increase in education in 2020, right before the Covid-19 pandemic hit the states.

The trend of U.S job loss and economic inequality continues to infect the lives of American people, catching the attention of Lynn Nottage circa 2011. Nottage attended a rally in support of her friend for the Occupy Wall Street movement (OWS). OWS is a movement geared towards fighting money politics and governmental abuse of workers for profit. The determination and drive of these people to fight for their rights against a powerhouse such as Wall Street influenced the story Nottage began to write for her commission to The Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The stories spoken in this show come from the mouths of real people, the honest truths spoken by real steel workers

in Reading who had been interviewed by Nottage. Each character portrayed in this show was crafted from the real words and stories of folks just trying to find their own slice of the American dream.

While the regulars at this bar span a variety of age groups, races, and histories, they are all connected through the bond of sweat; the hard labor they dedicated their lives to before they all met the same fate at the hands of employers wanting to save a few dollars. At its core, *Sweat* is not just a story about the tragedy of the 2000's. *Sweat* is a story about the community we build, the ties we share, and just how quickly those ties can snap when well-meaning people are pushed too far. Lynn Nottage states her intent in writing *Sweat* was to create a collective narrative that replaces judgment with curiosity and empathy. Each character in some way is responsible for the outcome of the story, some more than others. While we see these characters reach levels of inexcusable rage and despair that motivate the actions they inflict upon each other, Nottage never lets her audience forget where these characters come from. Nottage has infused each character with incredible layers of history and a passion-filled past that fuels them through the story, and gives this world true depth as the audience sees the images of real people on the stage.

That is the most important takeaway Nottage has for audiences; these characters are human. They are raw and real, flesh and blood people with complex views of justice and morality and what it means to put sweat into what you do. In creating *Sweat*, Nottage hopes to tell stories that go unheard, and have their voices boom through the theatre and be met with empathy before cruelty. Just as Nottage intended when she put pen to paper and brought the stories of thousands of disenfranchised Americans to light, we hope you can leave this performance with empathy and understanding toward those who may have walked paths far different from yours. We hope you will be able to view these characters, this story, and the world on the stage beyond a one dimensional lens, and find a new sense of compassion and a curiosity to engage with others from a place of nuanced understanding. In this world, we are all uniquely different, yet we all manage to find connection and comfort in one another - because all of us are bound together in devotion, in passion, in labor, in sweat.

- Rayden Leeder, Dramaturg

About the Department of Theatre

OUR MISSION:

The Department of Theatre provides a student-focused liberal arts education that develops theatre artists, scholars and teachers to investigate current best practices and emerging entrepreneurial methods in theatre and other kinds of professional performance. Aligning with the university's commitment to open-access education, we integrate the values of equity and inclusion to drive vibrant intellectual inquiry, ethical and informed community engagement, and innovative creative research practices.

OUR VISION AND VALUES:

We see theatre education as a path to a career in the professional and educational theatre industries as well as any profession that requires innovation, creative thinking, strategic collaboration and communication skills. Our vision for the future aligns with our commitment to the following actions and values:

Community and Collective Action

- We embrace our institution's commitment to an open access education and welcome students from across the state and beyond regardless of their prior level of preparation in the theatre field.
- We serve the rich cultural life of our urban region and facilitate partnership-oriented projects with the Charlotte metro area and its diverse communities.
- We foster an inclusive student community of citizen artists engaged in theatre practices that facilitate community change and social justice through partnerships and collective action.

Anti-racism

- We recognize this is a complex process, a journey, and we are committed to taking that journey as colleagues, teachers and mentors.
- We offer culturally responsive pedagogies and production practices in service of equity, inclusion, diversity and anti-racism.
- We open space for anti-racism work that addresses current inequities in our community and region.
- We commit to participating in conversations with other communities and regions as they aim to take on their own anti-racism work.
- We examine robust global historical perspectives for theatre-making that interrogate past practices and pedagogies in service of a more equitable and inclusive curriculum.

Inclusivity and Collaboration

- We embrace a wide and inclusive range of approaches to the study and practice of theatre with respect to race, nationality, gender, age, sexuality, ability, economic status, and disciplinary focus.
- We seek the voices and perspectives of all students, faculty, and staff and strive to create an equitable environment that includes room for thoughtful discussion and the active practice of compassion and inclusion.
- We engage in collaborative processes while celebrating the individual voice, the synthesis of multiple perspectives and the acknowledgement of all contributions.

Investigation and Discovery

- We center the role of creativity in all of our research modalities.
- We examine the impact of theatre beyond our stages and interrogate how theatre challenges and/or reflects the current state of society.
- We engage in research that fosters innovative theory and practice.
- We emphasize a process over product approach to the study and practice of theatre.
- We create opportunities for students to develop critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving skills and to apply them to theatre-making and theatre studies with an ultimate goal of shaping the next generation of creatives/scholars/citizens.

Department of Theatre Faculty and Staff

Delia Neil, Interim Chair

Tyisha Stafford, Administrative Coordinator

Bruce Auerbach, Professor of Scenic and Lighting Design

Tom Burch, Associate Professor of Scenic Design, Associate Chair

Lynne Conner, Professor of Theatre

CarlosAlexis Cruz, Associate Professor of Physical Theatre

David Fillmore, Jr., Professor of Lighting Design

Andrew Hartley, Robinson Distinguished Professor of Shakespeare

Margarette Joyner, Visiting Assistant Professor of Costume Design

Ron McClelland, Visiting Assistant Professor of Acting

Jay Morong, Senior Lecturer in Theatre (LBST and Film Studies)

Beth Murray, Associate Professor of Theatre Education

Mark Pizzato, Professor of Theatre and Film

Laura Waringer, Assistant Professor of Directing

Robin Witt, Professor of Directing

Jessica Bilgrad, Adjust Professor of Theatre

Jill Bloede, Part-time Lecturer in Theatre (Acting, LBST Studies)

Marla Brown, Part-time Lecturer in Theatre (Acting, Dramaturgy)

Megan DeLaura, Part-time Instructor (Musical Theatre)

Bernadette Macleod, Part-time Instructor (Theatre Education)

CoA+A Performing Arts Services

Dean Adams, Associate Dean for Performing Arts Services

Liz Paradis, Audience Services Manager

Beth Rucker, Business Services Coordinator

Liz Wooley, Performing Arts Operations Manager

Meena Carr, Assistant Technical Director

Rachel Engstrom, Lecturer, Costume Lab Supervisor / Designer

Matthew B. Fraiser, Lecturer, Technical Director

Hali Hutchison-Houk, Costume Lab Manager

Rick Moll, Senior Lecturer, Master Electrician

Gordon W. Olson, Senior Lecturer, Lighting Designer

Benjamin G. Stickels, Senior Lecturer, Audio Engineer and Interim Production Manager

Rachel Swenson Watkins, Senior Lecturer, Stage Management

Hazel Doherty, Music Stage Manager

Wendy Van Rees, Performing Arts House Management Supervisor

Alex Gomes, Performing Arts House Manager

Sam Pomerantz, Performing Arts House Manager

Production Team

INTERIM PRODUCTION MANAGER	Benjamin G. Stickels
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	Matthew B. Fraiser
ASST. TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	Meena Carr
MASTER ELECTRICIAN	Rick Moll
COSTUME LAB MANAGER	Hali Hutchison-Houk
COSTUME LAB SUPERVISOR	Rachel Engstrom
STAGE MANAGEMENT MENTOR	Rachel Swenson Watkins
ASSISTANT SOUND DESIGNER	Pavlo Smith
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS	Emily Parker, Amari Rice
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER	Allison Collins
LIGHT BOARD OPERATORS	Alex Bissette, Kat Fletcher
SOUND BOARD OPERATOR	Alyssa Davis
DECK CREW	Sophia Bradley, Logan Pavia
WARDROBE CREW	Maria Borrowman, Tia Brown, Taylor Wachowicz, Briahna Waters
COSTUME LAB TECHNICIANS	Sophia Bradley, Ellie McCutchen, Adriana Tavira-Garibay, Mandy Worley
COSTUME LAB CREW	Micah Contee, Jeanine Diaz, Adrian Ewens, Maxwell Martin, Irene Nash, Antimony Neal, Liz Posnanski, Janise Rodriguez
LIGHTING LAB TECHNICIANS	Sophia Bradley, DJ Cook, Tasha Kay, M Lupino
LIGHTING LAB CREW	Calvin Colman, Ava Drexel, Braden Kneeshaw, Julia Peterson, Aiyana Shelton
SCENIC CARPENTERS	Kayla Lowndes, Nick Petrillo
SCENIC PRACTICUM	Braden Kneeshaw, Jordan Tatem, Nyla Young
PAS AUDIO TECHNICIAN	Emily Parker
ROBINSON HALL TECHNICIANS	Caleb Basham, Lucy Burch, Mary Groff, Nick Mendlik, Christian Souza, Renee Szeghy
PATRON SERVICES REPRESENTATIVES	Will Loyd, Avery Pack, Naomi Perakis, Justin Spencer

College of Arts + Architecture

Upcoming Events

MARCH

Jazz Ensemble & Combos Thu Mar 23 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

Wind Ensemble & Symphonic Band Fri Mar 24 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

Orchestra Tue Mar 28 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

APRIL

Gospel Choir Mon Apr 3 | 7:30 pm
Rowe Recital Hall

Sequina DuBose Tue Apr 4 | 7:30 pm
Faculty & Friends Concert Series Rowe Recital Hall

Spring Dance Concert Thu Apr 20- Sat Apr 22 | 7:30 pm
Sun Apr 23 | 2:00 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

Orchestra Tue Apr 25 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

University Chorale Wed Apr 26 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

Jazz Ensemble & Combos Thu Apr 27 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

Wind Ensemble & Symphonic Band Fri Apr 28 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

