



RELEASE

**Original Theater Inspired By the Stories of
Formerly Incarcerated Women From Berkshire County**
Directed & Facilitated by Amy Brentano and Sara Katzoff

The Performance Contains Mature Language and Themes

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 7PM
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 7PM
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2PM

**Berkshire
Community
College**

Robert Boland Theatre
Koussevitzky Arts Center
1350 West Street
Pittsfield, MA

MADE POSSIBLE WITH SUPPORT BY

Berkshire Community College • The Foundry, West Stockbridge, MA
Berkshire County Sheriff's Office • Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation's
Arts Build Community initiative with funding from the Barr Foundation
Berkshire United Way • First Avenue Fund, a fund of Berkshire Taconic Community
Foundation • St. John's Episcopal Church of Williamstown • Williams College

PRESENTED BY



2ND STREET

CONNECTING WITH A BETTER TOMORROW

Made possible by the financial and in-kind support of



RELEASE

Inspired by the words, stories and dreams of Kristin Accetta,
Tiffany Broulette, Katelynn Goodwin, Kapaula (Mimi)
Nicholson, Gabby Leon and Vivian Singh

PERFORMED AND DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH
**Zurie Adams, Noh Bailey, Joan Coombs,
Laura Standley & Brittany Nicholson**

CREATED & DIRECTED BY
Amy Brentano and Sara Katzoff

STAGE MANAGER
Georgia Dedolph

LIGHTING AND PRODUCTION SUPPORT
Alzie Mercado

DOCUMENTARIANS
Beam Maskati, Mihr Mehrzad and Edris Yawar

2nd Street and the creative team of *RELEASE* would love to hear your reactions to the performance tonight. Please feel free to share your feelings and thoughts by email to ReleaseFeedback@gmail.com.

Thank you!

A NOTE FROM THE COMPANY

The original piece of theater you are about to see was woven together from the words, dreams and stories gathered through several weeks of interviews and listening sessions that took place here in Pittsfield. As theater artists who have been invited into the community served by Second Street Second Chances, we have been continually humbled by the tenacity and resilience of the women in the aftercare group who stepped forward to share their stories with humor, courage and generosity. It has been a privilege to be invited in to listen, to learn and to be part of the process of activating the transformative power of theater to tell these stories. We often left the sessions, elated with a renewed faith in humankind and awe of the 2nd Street communities ability to trust two complete strangers who have never lived in their world.

The stories shared during our sessions were documented on film by three International Williams College students. This served as an invaluable resource for us as co-creators.

After reviewing and transcribing the hours of footage that had been gathered, a plethora of questions arose. This led to more research and an examination of race and gender equity within systems of incarceration. We are left with the desire to humanize the overwhelming statistics by lifting up specific stories, finding the common experiences among them and stacking lenses upon each other to offer a clearer picture of the truth for those of us who have never been “behind the wall.” The final phase of our process has been welcoming a group of professional, local actors to continue to workshop and develop *Release* through a very short rehearsal process of bringing these words and stories to life.

Release in its current incarnation is just a beginning. We are merely scratching the surface of a much larger system. Hundreds of thousands of stories of incarceration, addiction and rehabilitation are not represented here.

In joining us, we invite you into our process to actively hear and witness, to see each other differently. Healing and recovery are not linear journeys, not always tied up in a neat bow. “Success” looks different for all of us. The women whose stories are shared here are on remarkable journeys of self exploration, studying cooking, social work or ministry. These women are mothers, some providing for and raising their children alone, some who’ve lost their children to the system. They are singers, writers, dancers, chefs, employees, all reentering a world most of them were never felt part of to begin with. The claim “I feel like I’ve just started to live” was said over and over in our conversations. *Release* is a collaboration aimed at centering the voices of these multidimensional humans to touch upon what resonates, reflects, and brings us together.

— Amy Brentano & Sara Katzoff (on behalf of *Release*)

CREATIVE TEAM

AMY BRENTANO – CO-DIRECTOR/PROJECT FACILITATOR



Amy Brentano is the Producing Artistic Director for The Foundry, a multidisciplinary performing arts venue in West Stockbridge, MA. She has directed for Berkshire Theater Group, worked as a playwright with the Playwright Mentoring Project at Barrington Stage, and as a teaching artist at WAM Theatre and co-artistic director for Bazaar Productions in the Berkshires. In New York City she was the Artistic Director of Red Earth Ensemble, a member of Teatron Theater Company where she performed at La MaMa ETC, performed at Theater for a New City under Moises Kaufman's direction and studied with Anne Bogart, Mary Overlie and Spalding Gray at NYU Tisch School of the Arts. She also served as a dramaturg with New York's Dramatic Question Theater's American Woman Playwriting fellowship. Most recently she directed Talya Kingston's *Port of Entry* for Wam Theater's Fresh Takes Play Reading Series and Tom Truss in his solo piece *Tell Me What You Learned Tuesday* at The Foundry.

SARA KATZOFF (she/her) CO-DIRECTOR/PROJECT FACILITATOR



Sara Katzoff is a Pittsfield based theater maker, director and educator who is passionate about new work and amplifying voices that are underrepresented in the Berkshires and beyond. Recent directing/devising projects include: *And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi* (Booth Theater); *Laughs In Spanish* (Boston Playwright's Theater); *Particularly in the Heartland* (Artist in Residence, The Foundry); *PASSAGE* (Kickwheel Ensemble Theater); *Facing Our Truth* (WAM/Colonial Theatre); *The Motherf**ker With the Hat, Intimate Apparel* (Guest Artist, MCLA); *The Waypoint* (MASS MoCA, artist in residence) *This Generation/My Generation* (PMP/Barrington Stage); *The Decade Project, Fractured Dreams* (WAM Theater/Intergenerational Ensemble) and *The Exonerated* (Guest Artist, University at Albany.) Sara served for 10 years as co-artistic director of Bazaar Productions and The Berkshire Fringe, holds an MFA in directing from Boston University and is a graduate of Dell'Arte International. She currently serves as a professor of theater at Bard College at Simon's Rock. More at sarakatzoff.com

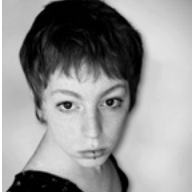
ZURIE ADAMS - PERFORMER/COLLABORATOR



Zurie Adams is an Afro-Caribbean American performing artist, born in California and raised in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts. From a young age, Zurie has been involved in the performing arts, from tap dancing as a toddler, to playing violin and acting in middle school. After joining and performing with her high school's drama club, Zurie went on to study visual art at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College (SVGCC). Then, she studied Theatre at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA). Previous shows include, *What the Constitution Means to Me* (WAM Theatre), *Urinetown* (MCLA Theatre), *The Tempest*

(MCLA Theatre), *Intimate Apparel* (MCLA Theatre), *Mr. Burns: A post-electric play* (MCLA Theatre), *Cinderella Syndrome* (St. Vincent Girls' High School). In addition to theatre, Zurie has a passion for music, visual art, dance and film and loves engaging in various art forms in her free time.

NOH BAILEY (she/they) - PERFORMER/COLLABORATOR



Noh Bailey is a multi-faceted performance artist and writer based in Western MA. After taking a few years' departure from the stage, she is honored to be making her way back through this consequential piece. She has trained and appeared in works at various regional companies including Shakespeare & Company, Barrington Stage, Berkshire Theatre Group, The Foundry, and others. Recent credits, *Particularly in the Heartland* - Todd Springer (Sara Katzoff; Bazaar Productions); *The Pastrana Project - Divisor/ Collaborator* (Bazaar Productions); *Peter and The Starcatcher* - Smee (Caitlin Teeley; Ghostlit Repertory Theatre); *What of The Night?* - Charlie (Vishnupad Barve; UMass Amherst). Noh has also appeared as an actor in the films *Waking The Wild Colonial* (Shannon McMahon Lichte; McMahon Lichte Media); *Dirty Books* (Zachary Lapierre; Fitch Fort Films). Noh's performance is dedicated to all of the women within her family who are/have been incarcerated, and for all of those who are continually searching for their release. For more, visit @itsjustnoh on all platforms.

JOAN COOMBS (she/her) - PERFORMER/COLLABORATOR



Joan Coombs is a Berkshire based actor with a long career history in Planned Parenthood, reproductive health, rights, and justice. Actor favorites: Shakespeare & Company: *Tartuffe* (Mme. Pernelle); *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife* (Frieda); *Sense and Sensibility* (Mrs. Jennings); Dorset Theatre Festival: *Pride and Prejudice* (Mrs. Bennet); WAM Theatre: *Emilie: la Marquise du Chatelet Defends Her Life Tonight* (Madam), *Escaped Alone* (Vi); Franklin Stage Company: *Tartuffe* (Mme. Pernelle); Hubbard Hall: *All My Sons* (Kate); Curtain Call Theatre: *Death of a Salesman* (Linda); *The Last Romance* (Rose); The Theater Barn: *Don't Talk to the Actors* (Bea); *Moon Over Buffalo* (Ethel); *The Hollow* (Lady Angkatell); many staged readings with Aglet Theatre Company); New York: *The Kiss* (Winner, Marjorie Dean Theatre Short Play Festival); Film: *Like Lambs* (Nurse); Digital Platform: *Unspoken* (Regina); Recordings: *A Thousand Years to Wait*; *Kingdom of Hamelot*. Training: Shakespeare & Company; Michael Chekhov School.

GEORGIA DEDOLPH - COLLABORATOR/STAGE MANAGER



Georgia Dedolph is a theater artist with a focus on acting, directing, and writing. Recently, their focus has been on new work, using and playing with new methods of theater making, grounded in exploration. They have studied Moment Work with Tectonic Theater Project and have been working as a teaching artist with New Genesis Productions Youth Shakespeare company. Currently studying Theater and Arts Management at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, they adapted, co-directed, and acted in an adaptation of Ursula K. Le Guin's science fiction novel, *Left Hand of Darkness*. They recently completed a research grant, exploring the way theatre fosters interdependent communities.

BRITTANY NICHOLSON - PERFORMER/COLLABORATOR



Brittany Nicholson has participated in various plays throughout the Berkshire community; she began her theatrical career, in her junior year at Taconic High school. Then went on to attend Berkshire Community College before transferring to Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts where she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Fine and Performing Arts. Productions that she has been involved in were as follows: *The Wizard of Oz* and *Facing our Truth* with Berkshire Theater Group; *Rossum Universal Robots*, *The Producers*, *Cartoon*, *Love and Greed*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Hot L Baltimore*, *Too Much Light*, *Rabbit Hole* with the BCC players; *The Liar*, *Catch Me if You Can*, *Romeo and Juliet* at MCLA; *Win/Lose/Draw* with the Town Players; *The Tempest* and *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing* with Pittsfield's Shakespeare in the Park; *You are Not Alone* with the Emergent Ensemble Theatre; *Fuddy Meers* (co-production with the Emergent Ensemble Theatre) and the *Ten Shorts*, *Vagina Monologues*, *Until the Flood* at the Whitney Center of the Arts. Brittany's thrilled to act in *Release* and collaborate with a talented team, a piece she holds dear.

LAURA STANDLEY PERFORMER/COLLABORATOR



Laura Standley is Associate Professor of Theatre at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA). An actor, director, choreographer, vocalist, and sound designer, she holds a BA in Theatre from University of Central Oklahoma and an MFA in Acting from University of California, Irvine. She created lift and fight choreography for *Particularly in the Heartland* with Sara and Amy for Bazaar Productions/Kickwheel Ensemble Theater at The Foundry and is thrilled to be working with these fantastic artists again! Laura teaches a wide variety of courses, including all levels of acting and directing. She is a trained intimacy choreographer and advocates for new, safer methods of staging intimate scenes. As a director, her production of Kate Hamill's *Sense and Sensibility* for Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park won Broadway World's honor for Best Ensemble. As an actor, she has been fortunate to perform with many companies including HERE Arts Center, Shakespeare Theatre New Jersey, and Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park. Favorite roles include Electra in *Electra*, Gertrude in *Hamlet*, and The Witch in *Into the Woods*. Laura is fascinated with the theatre experience. Her goal is to create dynamic, movement-based performance for the stage that impacts the common good.

SPECIAL THANKS

Bard College at Simon's Rock, Berkshire Community College, Carrie Burke, Jason Cuyler, Paula Consolini, David Edwards, Ariel Erichetto, The Foundry, Mark Gold, Sharron Killackey, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Lindsay Maynard, Alzie Mercado, Celia Norcross, Shawn Rosenheim, and Williams College.



2ND STREET

CONNECTING WITH A BETTER TOMORROW

The mission of 2nd Street is to provide a central point of access where formerly incarcerated people of Berkshire County connect with the tools, programs, and support to encourage a successful reentry into a more welcoming community with dignity and sustainable opportunities to thrive.

Art can heal. Artistic expression can open pathways to self-discovery and a sense of freedom. Through exploring insights, hurdles, and triumphs, creative projects by 2nd Street introduce a platform for healing for incarcerated people as a way to support reconciliation in the Berkshire community.



2ND-street.org