

STUDY GUIDE

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE
**EDWARD ALBEE'S
WHO'S AFRAID
OF VIRGINIA
WOOLF?**



60TH ANNIVERSARY
**EDWARD ALBEE'S
WHO'S AFRAID OF
VIRGINIA WOOLF?**

04.19–05.29.2022

GIL CATES THEATER

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Amy Levinson, Brian Dunning, Sarah Rose Leonard, Isaac Katzanek,
Rudy King, Paloma Nozicka, and Gil Cates, Jr.

STUDY GUIDE WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY

Brian Allman

This publication is to be used for educational purposes only.

COVER PHOTO BY JUSTIN BETTMAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION & CAST CREDITS.....	4
PLAY SYNOPSIS.....	5
ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHIES.....	5

THEMES & TOPICS

WHO'S AFRAID OF EDWARD ALBEE?.....	6
WHY FEAR VIRGINIA WOOLF?.....	8
THE HIP & THE SQUARE: SLANG OF THE TIMES.....	9

ARTIST INTERVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR GORDON GREENBERG	10
---	----

PERSONNEL PROFILE

AN INTERVIEW WITH RUDY KING, MANAGER OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	12
---	----

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE	13
--------------------------	----

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.....	14
-------------------------------------	----

RESOURCES.....	15
----------------	----

ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION

EDWARD ALBEE'S WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?

DIRECTED BY
GORDON GREENBERG

SCENIC DESIGNER
WILSON CHIN

COSTUME DESIGNER
ALEJO VIETTI

LIGHTING DESIGNER
ELIZABETH HARPER

ORIGINAL MUSIC & SOUND DESIGN BY
LINDSAY JONES

DRAMATURG
SARAH ROSE LEONARD

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
J. JASON DAUNTER

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER (THRU 5/15)
KYRSTEN GOODRICH

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER (AFTER 5/15)
KESIA ROSS

CASTING DIRECTOR
PHYLLIS SCHURINGA, CSA

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? IS PRESENTED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH CONCORD THEATRICALS
ON BEHALF OF SAMUEL FRENCH, INC. WWW.CONCORDTHEATRICALS.COM

CAST



**AIMEE
CARRERO**
HONEY



**CALISTA
FLOCKHART**
MARTHA



**GRAHAM
PHILLIPS**
NICK



**ZACHARY
QUINTO**
GEORGE

SYNOPSIS

George, a broken and resentful college professor at an insignificant East Coast school, and his boisterous and oft-inebriated wife Martha return home defeated and drunk from a WASP-y social gathering related to George's work. The long-time married couple prepares their living room for the arrival of a young, newly married couple, whom they met earlier in the evening. Nick, a cocky, privileged, and up-and-coming college professor at George's school, and his plain, repressed, and traumatized wife Honey, find their hosts engaged in riddles and mind games upon their arrival. Over the course of the late-night, the four partygoers, each in need of therapy and counseling, binge drink, swap stories of lost dreams, and trade passive-aggressive insults, in the hopes of trying to understand their fractured lives and broken relationships. Edward Albee shows us an unsettling and darkly comedic view of modern American suburban society in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*.

SETTING/TIME The living room of a house on the campus of a small New England college. Fall, 1962.

RUNNING TIME 3 hours, including two 10 minute intermissions.

PRODUCTION NOTES Contains adult subject matter, profanity, and the smoking of herbal cigarettes.

ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHIES



EDWARD ALBEE *Playwright*

Edward Albee was born on March 12, 1928 and began writing plays 30 years later. His plays include *The Zoo Story* (1958), *The Death of Bessie Smith* (1959), *The Sandbox* (1959), *The American Dream* (1960), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1961-62, Tony Award), *Tiny Alice* (1964), *A Delicate Balance* (1966, Pulitzer Prize; 1996, Tony Award), *All Over* (1971), *Seascape* (1974, Pulitzer Prize), *Listening* (1975), *Counting the Ways* (1975), *The Lady from Dubuque* (1977-78), *The Man Who Had Three Arms* (1981), *Finding the Sun* (1982), *Marriage Play* (1986-87), *Three Tall Women* (1991, Pulitzer Prize), *Fragments* (1993), *The Play About The Baby* (1997), *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* (2000, 2002 Tony Award), *Occupant* (2001), *At Home at the Zoo* (Act 1, *Homelife*; Act 2, *The Zoo Story*) (2004), and *Me, Myself and I* (2008). He is a member of the

Dramatists Guild Council, and President of The Edward F. Albee Foundation. Mr. Albee was awarded the Gold Medal in Drama from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in 1980. In 1996 he received the Kennedy Center Honors and the National Medal of Arts. In 2005, he was awarded a special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement.

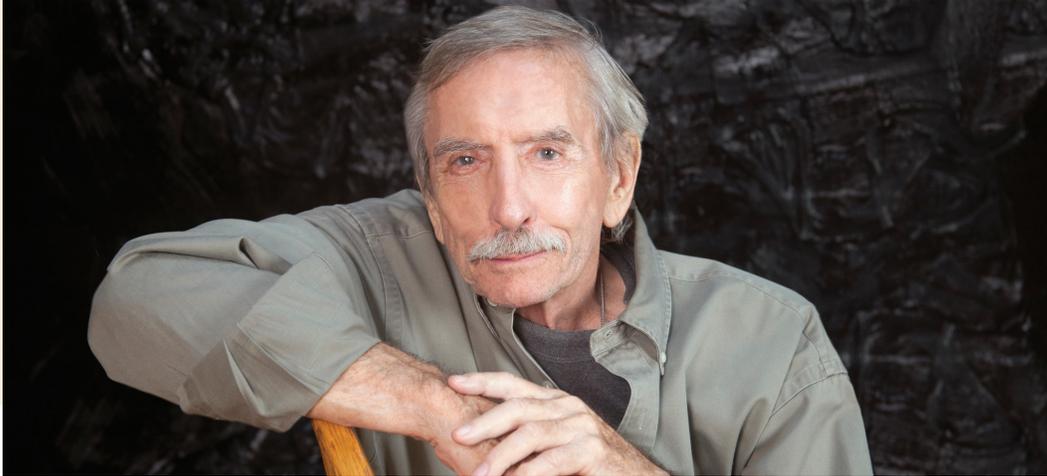


GORDON GREENBERG *Director*

Directing work includes the acclaimed West End revival of *Guys and Dolls*, which received six Olivier Award nominations (Savoy Theatre, Chichester Festival Theatre, Phoenix Theatre starring Rebel Wilson), the Broadway premiere of *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn* (also co-writer, Roundabout Theatre Company, Universal, PBS's *Great Performances*), *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* (Zipper Theatre, Drama Desk, Drama League, Outer Critics nominations), *Working* (adapted with Lin-Manuel Miranda, Drama Desk Award, 59E59, The Old Globe, Broadway in Chicago), *Johnny Baseball* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *Piaf/Dietrich* (Mirvish, Toronto, Dora Award), *Barnum* (Menier Chocolate Factory, London), *Floyd Collins* (Signature Theatre), *Yentl* (Asolo Rep), *The Secret of My Success* (Universal, Paramount Theatre, Chicago), *Ebenezer*

Scrooge's BIG Christmas Show (The Old Globe, Bucks County Playhouse), *Crime and Punishment* (upcoming The Old Globe), *Port-Au-Prince* by Kirsten Childs (upcoming, The New Group), *Dracula, A Comedy of Terrors* (upcoming Chicago Shakes, NYC), *Blue Sky Boys* by Deborah Brevoort (premiere, Capital Repertory Theatre), *Pirates! (Or, Gilbert and Sullivan Plunder'd)* (Huntington Theatre). TV writing includes original movies for: Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, ABC, Warner Brothers. He is a Founding Curator at Ars Nova, an Associate Artist at The New Group and Co-Director of the Broadway Teachers Workshop. As an actor, he has appeared on Broadway, Off-Broadway and on television. Teaching: Michigan, Columbia, U. Oklahoma, N.Y.U., Arts Ed (London), Broadway Moscow (Russia). Education: Stanford University, NYU, RADA.

WHO'S AFRAID OF EDWARD ALBEE?



Playwright Edward Albee

"What could be worse than getting to the end of your life realizing you hadn't lived it." —Edward Albee

Edward Harvey was abandoned by his biological father and given up for adoption by his birth mother two weeks after his birth, in March of 1929, in Washington D.C. Reed Albee (*short and dapper*) and Frances Albee (*tall and imposing, though 12 years younger than Reed*), became Edward's foster parents when he was only 18 days old, officially adopting him on February 1, 1929, officially changing his name to *Edward Franklin Albee III*, and moving to Larchmont, New York.

The Albee's were an old American family, having immigrated to Maine in the seventeenth century; and an ancestor was one of the original minutemen in the Revolutionary War. Edward's grandfather, Edward Franklin Albee II was co-founder of a chain of vaudeville theaters located through the U.S. Consisting of over 400 theaters, which later merged with other theaters to form RKO Corporation, made the family millions, subsequently inherited by his son.

In his own estimation, Albee did not have the kind of carefree, nurtured childhood one hopes for every child growing up. His mother Francis was emotionally cold and domineering; his father was distant and uninvolved in his son's rearing. Albee's closest adult relationships were to his nanny, Anita Church, and to his grandmother. The affluence of his family did expose him to culture: his nanny introduced him to opera and classical music; the library in the Albee's large Tudor house contained the classics of world literature (though Edward was scolded for removing the volumes which were intended for show and not actual reading); he was driven in a limousine to see Broadway productions deemed appropriate for his age; and famous actors and other entertainers such as Ed Wynn were frequent guests in his parents' home.

The Reeds were nouveau riche in an upper-class neighborhood in Larchmont, which is in Westchester County, New York; they were members of the country club and the yacht club, and they had servants. Albee has said that he was in rebellion against their snobbery and prejudice early on and would later satirize these traits in characters that resembled his adoptive parents socioeconomically as well as psychologically.

SOURCE

Lincoln Konkle, edwardalbeesociety.org

THEMES & TOPICS

His unhappiness as a child was evidenced by his expulsion from three private preparatory schools. However, he found his niche at Choate in Wallingford, Connecticut where he wrote a play, a novel, poems, and short stories. Albee has said that he decided he was a writer as a young child; his teachers at Choate encouraged him in that pursuit. Upon graduation, he matriculated to Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, where he published in the literary magazine and acted in a couple of plays but was expelled in his second year for not attending required courses and chapel. In that same year he left home (or was thrown out) after a fight over his late-night drinking, which ceased all contact between him and his adoptive parents for twenty years.

Albee spent the 1950s living in Greenwich Village in a number of apartments and working a variety of odd jobs (for example, a telegram delivery person) to supplement his monthly stipend from a trust fund left for him by his paternal grandmother. He met and became involved with William Flanagan, who had come east from Detroit to study music and was the music critic for the *Herald Tribune* and other publications. In 1952 Albee moved in with Flanagan, his first long-term gay relationship. Although he had had a few heterosexual experiences, had even been unofficially engaged to a socialite whose parents were friends of his parents, Albee had also had gay experiences as early as age 13, and frequented gay bars while he was in college. Flanagan was, however, more than a lover to the young Albee; he was also an artistic and intellectual mentor. He was the leader of a group of young composers and musicians who socialized together and sometimes with painters, sculptors, and other artistic persons in the Village who were part of the various avant-garde movements.

In his early adulthood, Albee was still bent on becoming a writer, though not making much progress. *The Zoo Story* was initially staged in 1959 in Berlin with German actors speaking a German translation of Albee's dialogue. *The Zoo Story* was a critical and commercial success and launched Albee's career as a professional playwright in spectacular fashion: it won him the Obie (the Off-Broadway equivalent of the Tony award) and other awards; got him an agent at William Morris; partnered him with his longtime producer Richard Barr; and earned him fame if not fortune, the latter coming with the enormous commercial success of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

1960 was a watershed year for Albee, having three plays performed in New York: *The Zoo Story*, *The Sandbox*, and *Fam and Yam*; a fourth, *The American Dream*, would be mounted in the first month of 1961, and a fifth, *The Death of Bessie Smith*, by March.

Although *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is now canonized as one of the greatest American plays ever written, the critics' reviews were mixed; that is, they were generally either all praise or all pan, with few in between. It won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for best play and five of the six Tony awards for which it was nominated: best play, production, director (Alan Schneider), actor (Arthur Hill), and actress (Uta Hagen). It was denied the Pulitzer Prize, however, because the board of directors did not want to give the award to a "dirty" play. John Gassner and John Mason Brown, the widely respected drama critics who recommended *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* for the prize, resigned from the Pulitzer committee in protest, and no award in drama was given that year. However, the play was commercially successful beyond anyone's wildest imagination, running for 664 performances.

FUN FACT

The title *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is a pun on the song "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" from Walt Disney's *Three Little Pigs* (1933), substituting the name of the celebrated English author Virginia Woolf. No one can use the original tune because Disney holds the rights, which are too expensive, so everyone uses "Here we go round the mulberry bush" because it's in the public domain.

WHY FEAR VIRGINIA WOOLF?

"I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman."

—Virginia Woolf

Born into a privileged English household in 1882, author Virginia Woolf was raised by free-thinking parents. She began writing as a young girl and published her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, in 1915. In 1925, Woolf received rave reviews for *Mrs. Dalloway*, her fourth novel. The mesmerizing story interweaved interior monologues and raised issues of feminism, mental illness and homosexuality in post-World War I England. Her 1928 novel, *To the Lighthouse*, was another critical success and considered revolutionary for its stream of consciousness storytelling. The modernist classic examines the subtext of human relationships.

In 1929, Woolf published *A Room of One's Own*, a feminist essay based on lectures she had given at women's colleges, in which she examines women's role in literature. In the work, she sets forth the idea that "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." Woolf pushed narrative boundaries in her next work, *The Waves* (1931), which she described as "a play-poem" written in the voices of six different characters.

By her mid-forties, she had established herself as an intellectual, an innovative and influential writer and pioneering feminist. Her ability to balance dream-like scenes with deeply tense plot lines earned her incredible respect from peers and the public alike. Despite her outward success, she continued to regularly suffer from debilitating bouts of depression and dramatic mood swings. She committed suicide in 1941, at the age of 59.

"Lord, how unutterably disgusting life is! What dirty tricks it plays us, one moment free; the next, this. Here we are among the breadcrumbs and the stained napkins again. That knife is already congealing with grease. Disorder, sordidity and corruption surrounds us. We have been taking into our mouths the bodies of dead birds. It is with these greasy crumbs, slobbering over napkins, and little corpses that we have to build. Always it begins again; always there is the enemy; eyes meeting ours; fingers twitching ours; the effort waiting. Call the waiter. Pay the bill. We must pull ourselves up out of the chairs. We must find our coats. We must go. Must, must, must — detestable word. Once more, I who had thought myself immune, who had said, "Now I am rid of all that", find that the wave has tumbled me over, head over heels, scattering my possessions, leaving me to collect, to assemble, to head together, to summon my forces, rise and confront the enemy."

—Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*



Virginia Woolf. Photo by George Charles Beresford.

MODERNIST (noun)

A style or movement in the arts that aims to break with classical and traditional forms.

SOURCE

Virginia Woolf Biography
tinyurl.com/2p8c2bu4

FUN FACT

Virginia Woolf is considered to be one of the more important 20th century novelists. A modernist, she was one of the pioneers of using stream of consciousness as a narrative device.

THE HIP & THE SQUARE: SLANG OF THE TIMES

Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* is peppered with *groovy* slang and specific Modern America pop-culture references. Albee understood that language reflects culture—while simultaneously creating it, always nudging individuals to address their own relationship to their cultural identity, and to the greater world around them. Consider how newsworthy events eventually become cultural references, metaphors, and even inside jokes between friends. Over time, new slang is developed, meanings of words evolve and get replaced, and culture continues to expand in new ways.

Think about how the subtext of the slang term “LOL” has changed, even in recent history. TikTok influencer @Dangerbean55 points out that the term “LOL” (Laughing Ot Loud) initially indicated that someone was taking a literal moment from their activity to acknowledge something funny or amusing, causing them to laugh. Less than a generation later, “LOL” has become a passive-aggressive reflection and bitter acknowledgement of an ironic or troubling circumstance that one has found themselves the recipient of.

The late 1950s/early 1960s was crucial era in the formation of modern American culture. Innovative Author, Playwright, and Journalist Norman Mailer began fleshing out his definition of “hip” and “square” in 1956, terms which are still prevalent today.

Excerpts From Norman Mailer's “The Hip and the Square: 1. The List” in *Advertisements for Myself* (New York: Putnam's, 1959)

THE HIP AND THE SQUARE 1. THE LIST

Hip	Square
wild	practical
romantic	classic
instinct	logic
spontaneous	orderly
perverse	pious
midnight	noon
nihilistic	authoritarian
a question	an answer
self	society
crooks	cops
free will	determinism
sex	religion
the body	the mind
rebel	regulator
Thelonious Monk	Dave Brubeck
hipster	beatnik
the present	the past and/or the planned future
sex for orgasm	sex for ego
sin	salvation
manners	morals
doubt	faith
grace	force
orgy	onanist
marijuana	liquor
nuance	fact
to listen to the sound of the voice and take one's meaning from there	to listen to the meaning of the words and obey no other meaning

ACTIVITY

Based on Mailer's lists above, which characters from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* would you consider “HIP” and which would you consider “SQUARE”? Give reason why you feel such terms would apply to each character.

FUNHOUSE MIRROR GROTESQUE



PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH

Calista Flockhart with director Gordon Greenberg during rehearsals.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR GORDON GREENBERG ON HOW MARTHA AND GEORGE DRAW US IN

SARAH ROSE LEONARD: This is a play we return to a lot as a society. What made you want to direct it now?

GORDON GREENBERG: I have always loved the play, although my relationship with it changes over the years. I first saw the movie in my teens. I was living in a household that wasn't as drastically dangerous as this household, but it resonated. I certainly recognized the decaying relationship, codependence and violence, the disappointment and mourning that all these people are experiencing. I was also drawn to the exposing of the underbelly of an ostensibly perfect, orderly, suburban existence. I loved that the couple you thought had it all together and had everything going for them—the golden couple, if you will—is actually more dysfunctional than the couple who look like they're a mess and should be separated, probably. I think George and Martha have a brighter future than Honey and Nick. And that was fascinating to me.

As I've gotten older, I've understood what it means to love someone through darkness at times. The way you think about life is not quite as neat and tidy and finite. If you look at the lifespan of a relationship, it's like traversing the Pacific Ocean. There are going to be storms, and there are going to be challenges and waves. But if you learn how to sail through them, you get a great reward at the end, which is mileage and longevity.

SRL: What's been a delight to discover in the rehearsal room? What's been a challenge?

GG: It's fun to see who wins each battle. That friction between George and Martha keeps them alive. There's an admiration for swordsmanship, for wit, and even for vulgarity. For sheer strength! The fine line between love and violence keeps the play dangerous and fascinating. That's something we talk about a lot, too. That there's both a terror of being the loser of any single battle, but also a reward because the person you love has won.

ARTIST INTERVIEW

The other thing we've been talking about is the notion of about how frightening women's lib was to the male establishment at the time. Many women were entering the workplace for the first time when the play was first staged in 1962. That fear seems absurd and corny to me now. But all of these people assumed the workforce was going to essentially be what it was, which is half of what it could have been. And people were scared. That's what Albee was sending up. And then Albee underscores that between the men—Nick and George—it's always a battle of testosterone. We're embracing these themes in our production. There's a beauty in Honey and Martha's interactions. But it is a challenge to sneak that beauty in there when their moments together are so seldom, and when the men are always present.

SRL: Many people who encounter the play wonder why Nick and Honey don't leave. Why do you think they stay?

GG: This is Nick's whole world. He's at the President's daughter's house. If he leaves, he has to face it in the morning. I think, like all humans, he is protecting the possibility of a happy ending for himself, which might be some career advancement. He wants to keep his wife happy, maybe make a friend for her. Then, of course, he is forced to stay when Honey continues to get sick. They're stuck there, but with each incident there is a little nudge keeping them in the room. Nick is constantly assessing which is going to be the greater loss: leaving right now and making a huge thing of it or suffering through this a little more. It's the ultimate work dinner that you have to sit through that goes funhouse mirror grotesque.

SRL: I appreciate how you're framing it as Nick's decision, given what we just talked about with gender. Honey doesn't get to make the choice about staying or leaving.

GG: She mentions right when they arrive that they should probably leave, but we also learn that she was the one who encouraged them to come over. She was thinking of her husband's career advancement, and probably wanted to make some friends. She specifically mentions how difficult it was at Nick's last job location to walk up to people and say hello. Isn't that awful!

SRL: Martha's father, the president of the college, is a big unseen force in the play. How does his presence manifest for these characters?

GG: Her father holds power over everyone in the room. His New England college is isolated and is its own little microcosm of the world. They all rely on his beneficence for their future. The cast and I were just talking about the fact that Martha, who is 52 years old, still calls her father "daddy." I've realized that I sometimes call my own parents "mommy" and "daddy"—and my in-laws have noted it. It just happens, and it doesn't feel absurd, but it definitely indicates a closeness and a sense of being protected by them—or that you think you should be. When Martha does it, we don't know if she's wielding it as a power play, or if she's actually connected to the little girl version of herself, who sees him as the most important man in her life.

And George hates him! Martha's "daddy" has a different ethos than George and clearly isn't buying into George as his successor, or even as the head of his own department. Martha's father reminds George of his failures. She talks about her father being more physical, George being less confident in his body. He's a constant reminder of George's own second-class status in his own house.

SRL: What makes this ensemble's take on these characters special to you?

GG: Interestingly, everyone is about the age of the characters as written. I don't usually see that. As written, George is six years younger than Martha. We have a George who is six years younger than her, and it resonates. Because we had cast a George and Martha who were essentially the ages of the characters, we then had to make sure our Nick and Honey were 28. That casting feels authentic, like Nick and Honey are trying on their parents' clothing.

Everyone in this play is in deep mourning for something. They are also in a rage about the lives that they are not living. This cast has a true understanding and fearlessness in how they make those connections on a personal level.

Despite all of that, I believe that this is a play with hope. When you've got adversity, the only way around it is through. We're watching these characters go through the storm probably in the worst way they ever have. I believe they come to a higher, hopefully more connected understanding of each other. There's a reason Albee ends the show with dawn breaking. It's almost too on the nose, but he's telling us something. My feeling is that there is hope for a future for Martha and George.

AN INTERVIEW WITH RUDY KING



PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH

What is your position and how long have you been at the Geffen?

My position at the Geffen Playhouse is Manager of Community Engagement, and I have been working here for about 3 months.

What educational, artistic, and professional experiences led to you working at the Geffen?

I have been inspired by the non-profit world after I graduated with my bachelor's degree in the Arts. Developing programs and community outreach are two big components that I have learned to master while working for museums and art institutions in Memphis and Mississippi. My desire to work for the Geffen was influenced by the programs they have, which focus on youth development through the arts and through literacy.

What are your primary responsibilities as Manager of Community Engagement?

My primary responsibilities are to lead different programs like Lights Up and Access, which focus on having a healthy partnership with various community organizations. Other programs that I lead are our Cultivation & Community Workshops and the Art Lives Here program.

How important is Community Engagement to a theater company?

I like to describe community engagement as the "bones" of a theater company. It is a tool that keeps

the theater strong and relevant to everyone in a specific region. Without this component, there would be no relationship building, no fun programs, nor a sense of whom we are serving.

Tell us about the Geffen's new "Art Lives Here" program.

Art Lives Here is such an important program because as an audience member you get to experience a visual component of the arts. The artist that is commissioned to do work for the season has the opportunity to create a piece that is relative to the play that is being shown during that time. This is an important aspect to community engagement because our patrons and staff can interact with a different medium of art, that can also connect with what they already do. For instance, I am a painter and a curator, so this wholeheartedly connects with me.

What do you find most challenging about your work?

Since I am still new to this position, it is hard to say what I find challenging. I am still learning about some of our programs. I am now spearheading new initiatives, and that can be slightly challenging at times.

What do you find most rewarding?

I find working with the youth is the most rewarding.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE



PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH

Going to the theater is a unique experience, and we all need to be mindful of “audience etiquette.”

THE AUDIENCE’S ROLE The audience plays an essential role during the performance of a play. Without an audience, the actors are only rehearsing. Audience members’ concentrated silence and responses, such as laughing and applauding, provide energy to the actors as they bring their performance to life.

BEHAVIORS TO AVOID Since the actors can hear the audience so clearly, it is important not to engage in behaviors that might disturb or distract them—and fellow audience members. These actions include:

- Talking
- Texting
- Allowing cell phones to ring
- Taking photographs or video
- Getting up to leave before intermission or the end of the show (unless it is a true emergency)
- Eating or drinking
- Unwrapping candy or cough drops.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA We appreciate you sharing your Geffen Playhouse experience via social media, but ask that you **do not do so inside the theater, where the use of electronic devices is prohibited.**

We recommend that you post your status in the lobby after the performance, and invite you to tag @GeffenPlayhouse and use #GeffenPlayhouse to share your experience and continue the conversation with us online.

AUDIENCE AWARENESS ACTIVITY Before going to the Geffen Playhouse for the first time, compare and contrast the experience of seeing a live play with:

- going to the movies
- attending a live sporting event
- watching television

DISCUSSION POINT

- If you were onstage performing in a play, how would you want to experience the audience?

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH

Depending on the time available and your participants' interests, guide them to respond to questions selected from those suggested below. Encourage everyone to participate, while having respect for differing opinions. Individuals can share their thoughts with a partner or in a small group. Ask for several volunteers to share their groups' answers with the larger group.

- Overall, how did you feel while watching *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf??* Engaged? Conflicted? Amused? Inspired? Provoked? Put off? What made you feel this way?
- What did you enjoy most about the play? What did you find difficult to enjoy? Why? (Provide evidence from the production.)
- How would you describe the inner life of each character in the play? Are they conflicted? If so, how and why?
- Did you identify or empathize with any of the characters? If so, which character(s) and why? If not, why not?
- How do you think each couple spent the next day after the party? What from the show leads you to this conclusion?
- How did Albee reveal the impact of alcohol on everyone in the play, through their dialogue and behavior?
- How does the title *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* reflect the relationship between George and Martha?
- Have you ever been the butt of someone's joke, or embarrassed in public? How did you handle it?
- What did you find most moving about the play?
- The parts of George and Martha were played by two very recognizable film and television artists. How was the experience of watching them perform live on stage?
- What did you appreciate most about the performances by the actors?
- How did the set, props, costumes, and music contribute to the impact of the show?
- Would you recommend this production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf??* to other theatergoers? Why or why not?
- What was it like to experience a live theatrical production with two, 10-minute intermissions?

RESOURCES

JOIN The Edward Albee Society. There are two ways to join the Edward Albee Society, by mail or online. Feel free to use either method; the Society is grateful for your support. Go to www.edwardalbeesociety.org/membership to join.

WATCH Mike Nichol's classic film *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton free on YouTube. www.tinyurl.com/3d2mhxwv

WATCH *Saturday Night Live* host Jake Gyllenhaal and cast member Cecily Strong put their best spin on the classic play and film *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* in the sketch "Dinner with the Dean," which was cut for time from Saturday night's broadcast. Go to www.tinyurl.com/2wjhuerw to watch.

TEST your knowledge of Edward Albee. www.tinyurl.com/yc8898t6

BENEFIT from therapy. One in five American adults has a mental health condition. Research has shown that these mental health conditions can be treated effectively. As scientists have disproven the stigmas surrounding mental health, more people have acknowledged the value of modern therapy. Insurance companies are now required to cover and treat mental health conditions. www.tinyurl.com/53zcthjj

CALL 1-800-273-8255 for The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. It provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. Or go to www.cdc.gov/suicide for more information.

RESEARCH the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)—the lead federal agency supporting scientific research on drug use and its consequences at nida.nih.gov.

LEARN about the causes of addiction and treatment for addicts and family members at ncadd.org and drugabuse.gov.

THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS ARE MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF:

The Hilaria and Alec Baldwin Foundation
Lear Family Foundation
Anonymous (3)
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Audi of America
Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture
California Arts Council
Mara W. Breech Foundation
Capital Group Companies Foundation
Marilyn & Jeffrey Katzenberg Fund for Arts Education at the Geffen Playhouse
City National Bank
The Moss Foundation
City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
MOCA Foundation
Comcast NBCUniversal
Netflix
Dwight Stuart Youth Fund
Olympus Theatricals
Edgerton Foundation
Paramount Pictures
Ben B. and Joyce E. Eisenberg Foundation
Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation
Thomas Safran & Associates
Lisa Field, Field Family Foundation
Shay Family Foundation
Fox Entertainment Group
Shekels Charitable Fund
Gagosian Gallery
Sidley Austin LLP
Gang, Tyre, Ramer & Brown, Inc.
The Simms/Mann Family Foundation
The David Geffen Foundation
Sondheimer Foundation
The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation
Sony Pictures Entertainment
Goldman Sachs
Steve Tisch Family Foundation
The Adi & Jerry Greenberg Foundation
Stone Family Foundation
Greenberg Glusker Fields Claman & Machtinger, LLP
UCLA
The Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation
UCLA Health
ICM Community Partners Foundation
US Bank
Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation
The Walt Disney Company
Keyes Automotive Group
Ziff Family Foundation

And many more!

