Steerman New Play Series

Bodice

April 24 and 25.
by Emma Lawrence ’25.
Directed by Peter Gil-Sheridan.
Senior Thesis in Drama: Molly Stern ’25.

Hello, my name is

April 23 and 26.
by Thomas Rombach ’25.
Directed by Ella Talerico ’25.
Senior Thesis in Drama: Thomas Rombach ’25.

Synopsis of BODICE by Emma Lawrence ‘25

A state school. A college house. A birthday. Weaving through the tangled web of femininity, Bodice follows the journey three girls take before and after midnight. What happens when we see what lies beneath the lipgloss and perfectly manicured toes?

(Please note: This play contains references to eating disorders and frank discussions of sex and sexual assault.)

Synopsis of HELLO my name is by Thomas Rombach ‘25

A play about work, forgiveness, and the lives we choose to live—but above all, it is a story about a son as he struggles to make peace with the relationship he and his father never had.

Special thanks

Karen Albrecht, Spiro Gouras, Poughkeepsie Day School.
BODICE: Erin & Chadwick Lawrence, Maggie Young, The Fall ’24 Drama 310 Playwrights, Mady Ockner & Sophia Ryder.

HELLO, MY NAME IS: Samantha Bernstein-Naples, Nitrous Oxide, Hannah Gaff, Diet Dr. Pepper, The Davi basement, ping-pong tables, Richard Rombach, Carrie Rombach, Daniel Rombach, Anna Talerico, Justin Talerico, Rylan Talerico, Arthur Beaugeard, Wendy Diplock, John Srebalus. Our fathers.

Drama Department Work Study Students

Costume Shop

Interns: Jazmine Williams ’26, Athena Randall ’25, and Foster Schrader ’25.
Costume History & Design Research: W. Ashton Scott ’26.
Costume Collection Research Assistant: Hannah Weintraub ’25.
Costume Shop Technicians: Lordina Ampere ‘28, Avery Berg ‘27, Grace Fure ‘27, Majka Kiely-Miller ‘27, Juliette Langer ‘28, August Pointer Mace ‘26, Eden Radifera ‘26, Emma Raff ‘26, Ava Sclafani ‘25, Abigail Straus ‘25, and Beatrice Weisfeld ’28.

Electrics Shop

Electrics/ Sound Intern: Ki’tsai Zangpo ’25.
Electrics Crew: Alex Berman ‘28, Jackson Bernreuter ‘25, Willow Eaton ‘27, Devin Gearty ‘25, Zoe Kroff ’28, Ren Nicolau ‘28, Avery Turnbull ‘26, and Alex Walpin ’28.

Scenic Shop:

Scenic Intern: Jamie Walsh ’25.
Scenic Crew: Becca Bogstad ‘26, Jada Duggins ’28, Matthew Dyksen ‘28, Pebble Eckhaus ‘27, Jonathan Eccher-Mullally ‘27, Zoe Korff ‘28, Ren Nicolau ‘28, Jasper Smith ‘25, Eamon Smithsimon ‘26, Levi Srebalus ‘26, Gavin Toscano ‘28, Avery Turnbull ’26, and Frances Walker Fox ‘26.

Drama Department Faculty and Staff

Director of Theater: Christopher Grabowski.
Costume Design: Kenisha Kelly.
Scenic Design: Tania Barrenechea Barreda.
Production Manager: Patience Haskell.
Technical Director: James Hunting.
Costume Shop Manager: Leigh Davis.
Fight Coordinator: Conrad Schott.

Publicity/Box Office/Front of House: Joan Gerardi.

Drama Department Interns

Production Management: Maggie Young ’25.
Production Management Assistant: Ananya Agrawal ’26.
Stage Management: Yining Shang ’25.

Drama Box Office Staff

Assistants: Miriam Barker ’27, Benjamin Sayres ’28, and Natalia Vélez-Ríos ’25.
Drama Department Photographer: Jove Leonard ’27.

Ensemble Dramaturgy Note for HELLO, my name is…

“People talking without speaking
People hearing without listening
People writing songs that voices never shared
And no one dared
Disturb the sound of silence
“Fools” said I, “You do not know
Silence like a cancer grows
Hear my words that I might teach you
Take my arms that I might reach you”
But my words, like silent raindrops fell
And echoed in the wells of silence... “ - Simon & Garfunkel
————————————————————
something is -
suspended - in - citric acid - in - a piece of printer paper - I am - walking grids, talking grids - this bitter - rigid - sterile - air - echoes noiselessly - in the vast space - between - you and me.
something is -
bittersweet - bitter, bitter - muffled sounds - pound, pound - tick, tick - in the vast space - between -
inside and outside.
something is -
a heartbeat - it lingers - like a light - after staring at it for a very long time and closing your eyes - I - I - this lingering feeling sits - in the vast space - between -
grief
and

body.
something is -
the click of an unused pen -
I say -
everything
and
nothing.
something is -
stinging - ringing - bright light untouched by day - untouched by air - it follows me -
haunts me - terrifies me - tumbles over and around me until I am spinning and I am caught
between -
suffering
and
survival.
something is -
missing.
something is missing.
these words mean nothing
everything.
BREAK IT OPEN!
BREAK IT OPEN!
I am tired. Free me.

Hello, My Name Is

Cast

Matt: Levi Srebalus ’26.
Doug: Jackson Bernreuter ’25.
Sam: Theodore Burstyn-Paul ’27.

Production

Faculty Advisor: Peter Gil-Sheridan.
Director: Ella Talerico ’25.
Playwright: Thomas Rombach ’25.
Dramaturg: Laurel Obermueller ’26.
Assistant Director: Noa Gafni ’27.
Stage Manager: Yining Shang ’25.
Scenic Designer: Anna Diamond ’25..
Costume Designer: Athena Randall ‘25

Light Designer: Ren Nicolau ’28.
Sound Designers: Ella Talerico ’25 and Thomas Rombach ’25.

Crew

Light Board Operator
Sound Board Operator: Oliver Hollmann ’27.
Set Build Crew: Roman Shaheen ’27.
Run Crew: Ursula Davis ’28.

Ushers

Ines Rozzo ’28 and Lucy Strandquist ’28.

Bodice

Cast

Aelin: Molly Stern* ’25.
Ivy: Grace Fure ’27.
Bridget: Mia Salopek ’28.
Voiceover for Love Island: Maria Shansonga ’27.

Production

Faculty Advisor: Tania Barrenechea Barreda.
Senior Thesis / Dramaturg: Molly Stern ’25.
Director: Peter Gil-Sheridan.
Playwright: Emma Lawrence ’25.
Assistant Director: Tess Foley-Cox ’26.
Assistant Director: Esmé Nix ’27.
Stage Manager: Jonathan Eccher-Mullally ’27.
Scenic Designer: Jay Young Sihm ’27.
Light Designer: Willow Eaton ’27.
Sound Designer: Peter Gil-Sheridan.
Sound Technician: Ki’tsai Zangpo ’25.
Costume Designer: Athena Randall ’25.
Make up Designer: Masha Malshchukova..
Properties Coordinator: Kathleen Lynch ‘28

Crew

Light Board Operator: Mariah Jones ’25.

Sound Board Operator: Oliver Hollmann ’27.
Set Build Crew: Roman Shaheen ’27.
Run Crew: Ursula Davis ’28.
Costume Run Crew: Clementine Gnoto ’27.

Ushers

Zivah Bizer ‘28, Juliette Langer ‘28, and Ray Sun ’28.

Ensemble Dramaturgy Note for Bodice

Cinched. Constricting. Seductive. Designed to shape a woman’s body into idyllic proportions, bodices have long embodied the paradox of fashion—simultaneously inviting sexualization while enforcing control. When your lady’s maid ties you into such a garment, your waist disappears, and your breasts instantly perk. However, the bodice doesn’t simply reshape the body—it offers it up, shining a light on your curves with theatrical precision, turning the torso into a stage for desire.

The girls don the same “Uniform” (jeans, a little top, sneakers) and dance to the same music at sticky-floored frat houses, constrained by the expectations of women at big state schools who are pressured to dress for the male gaze, not themselves. Bodice highlights the fact that despite the three women dressing almost identically, conforming to the uniform, they are each unique, complex, distinct, layered young women under their tiny tops and jeans. Women like Ivy, Bridget, and Aelin are often overlooked, stereotyped, and made fun of in the media because of their appearance and style, but this play makes a concerted effort to share their stories.

This is a work of fiction. Unless otherwise indicated, all the names, characters, businesses, places, events, and incidents in this play are either the product of the author’s imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

STEERMAN WORKSHOP READINGS

Informal workshops of new plays in the Streep Studio unless otherwise noted
(Not open to the open, campus only/limited seating/first come first serve):

Exposure Time by Ivy Schenk ‘25, February 19.

Exposure time follows Debbie as she identifies what it means to be an Artist, all while navigating artistic relationships with two male artists who will definitely respect her artistic agency...also pens are involved.

Stranger Stars by Molly Stern ‘25, February 23.
The stars aligned when Cassiopeia met Orion, but stars are fickle, as are men. Rachel, Cassie’s best friend, should be happy for her, right? Joanne, Rachel’s (first) girlfriend, sure thinks so. But when tensions rise between best friends and lovers, jealousy threatens loyalty and complicates love. “Stranger Stars” lies between intertwined and unaligned. Revel in the mess.

Sudanese Play by Amal Elsiddig ‘25, April 11.
Sudanese Play is a comedy about prom dresses, role-playing games, and marriage. But more than that, it’s all about love, guilt, and grief. We follow as two generations of sisters, mothers, and daughters navigate their relationships with each other across two different worlds, and all the rifts and cycles that come with it.

Serpent’s Tongue by Abby Bettencourt ‘25, April 16.
Stheno is controlling, Euryale is exhausted, and Medusa just wants to get the hell out of here. Serpent’s Tongue spins the original myth of Medusa on its head, asking us to look at who are the real villains of our stories.

Dark Red and Strange Overtones by Mareme Fall ‘25, April 30 5:00 p.m.
As the sun begins to set on the vanishing world around them, a family with much distance between them are brought back together once more.

Lucky Strike by Foster Schrader ‘25, May 1, 2, 4 7:00 p.m. (The Mug).
Lucky Strike is about in betweens- childhood and adolescence, the left and the alt-right. It’s about gaps, and trying to bridge them, and failing.

About the STEERMAN New Play Series by Peter Gil-Sheridan, Steerman Festival Coordinator

The series is named for Emeritas James Steerman to honor his work as the longtime chair of the Drama and Film Department. Welcome to the 5th Annual Steerman New Play Festival! We are so grateful you’re here to experience an evening of original work by one of our incredible writers. When I started teaching at Vassar in 2020, I had this idea for a new play festival that featured the brilliant work our students are creating. When I say that the Steerman Festival is only a very small portion of the creative work that our students generate, I do not exaggerate. For

all the perils we are facing in this world and in this country, I am inspired daily by the ferocious hearts and original minds of our playwrights.

Every week, I watch our students as they present new work for the first time. I see this profound joy in their faces as they watch their imaginings and longings come to life. It is that joy that gets me out of bed every day. To see young people discover their power as artists week in and week out makes clear to me the power of art. This weekend, we are presenting Emma Lawrence's Bodice and Thomas Rombach's Hello My Name Is. These two plays are 12th and 13th plays we have produced since I joined the faculty in 2020. Emma's play starts off feeling like an ordinary night, three best friends celebrating like college girls do. But as the play progresses, we get a glimpse inside the dangers that so many young women face on college campuses.
What I love about Emma's play is that it is a warning to write these women off at our peril. To assume that any woman, regardless of the clothes they wear, the makeup they love, is deserving of what befalls her characters reminds us misogyny, even amongst women, runs deep.

Thomas's play, in many ways an inverse of Bodice, explores the struggles that men have reaching one another. The story centers a father, lost in years of loneliness unable to express emotions to his son or his colleagues. Thomas's meditative and spare play explores these issues with humor, sensitivity, and care. The play is asking us to consider men, to remember that men are expected to be stoic and independent, to never ask for help. I see it as a cultural crisis, one that drives our current political landscape, one that likely im- pacts the off-stage men that visit such harm upon Emma's women.

For the first time this year, we have also presented six new play workshops, an exciting addition that provides writers with the opportunity to refine their work over the course of 3 weeks in a collaborative, developmental setting. These workshops further our commitment to fostering new voices and ensuring that emerging playwrights have the support they need to bring their visions to life, here and beyond their time at Vassar. These plays, written by Abby Bettencourt, Amal Elsiddig, Mareme Fall, Ivy Schenk, Foster Schrader, and Molly Stern are capstone pieces that examine the world we live in as dynamically as the plays you'll see this weekend. Ella Talerico, is the winner of this year's Swartz Seven Prize, for her play Alien(e) and will feature faculty members Hannah Gaff and Conrad Schott alongside Associate Director of Leadership Gifts Molly Katz.

There are very few colleges or universities in this country that offer full productions of full-length plays to young playwrights. For the last five years, the Drama Department has coalesced around our writers, to give them a chance to showcase their original work to the community. But this Festival is not just a benefit our writers, but a crucial part of the training we offer to our student stage managers, technicians, directors, actors, designers, and dramaturgs alike. Working on a living, breathing, evolving text is a unique part of learning how to make

theatre. Through the new play process, through rewriting, cutting, expanding, contracting, artists have to learn to think quickly on their feet. The scene you rehearsed yesterday might not be in the play tomorrow. New ideas emerge in collaboration. Moments get strength tested. The play is not a staid piece of work collecting dust on a library shelf but brand new, striving for articulation, alive.

Upcoming Productions and Events

26th Annual Marilyn Swartz Seven ‘69 Playwriting Award Reading

April 26, 2025.
The Martel Theatre.
2:00 p.m.

Steerman Reading Workshops

(First come/first serve).
Dark Red and Strange Overtones by Mareme Fall ’25.
4/30 5:30pm (Streep).

Lucky Strike by Foster Schrader ’25.
TH, F, S - 5/1, 5/2, & 5/4 at 7:00pm (The Mug).

Upcoming 2025-2026 Drama Department Production Season

Please note listing is in no particular order: Dates, Times and locations are forthcoming:
POTUS by Selina Fillinger.
Dance Like a Man by Mahesh Mattani.
Intimate Apparel by Lynn Nottage.
Measure for Measure by William Shakespeare.
The 6th Annual Steerman New Play Festival.
The 27th Annual Marilyn Swartz Seven ‘69 Playwriting award.

Contact Information:

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