



AN AMERICAN DAUGHTER
ILLINOIS THEATRE

By Wendy Wasserstein

Tom Mitchell, director

Thursday-Saturday, October 4-6, 2018, at 7:30pm

Tuesday-Saturday, October 9-13, 2018, at 7:30pm

Sunday, October 14, 2018, at 3pm

Studio Theatre



POWER + PLEASURE

I think a lot about the enormous privilege I have as Head of Illinois Theatre. I have the very great pleasure of working with incredibly talented and committed faculty, students, and staff in the Department of Theatre, the College of Fine and Applied Arts, and Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. I have the power to shape what we show you on our stages through collaboration with those colleagues.

I've spent this past year meeting many of you. I am very grateful to those of you who've taken the time to talk to me in the lobby, to send an email or make a phone call, to connect with me at other events. We have an audience who is passionate about our productions, our students, and our role as a university theatre. Please continue to make those connections.

Those conversations are opportunities to talk about my understanding of the relationship between our production season and the world around us. I believe we serve

three overlapping audiences, and that our departmental mission of inclusion is enacted on and behind our stages.

We have to serve our own students, the people who've come to receive an education to make a career as professional theatre makers. We have an obligation to train them to become working designers, actors, technicians, playwrights, stage managers, directors, scholars and teachers. We also serve the other 44,000+ students on the campus, many of whom take our classes and enjoy our productions.

We have to serve the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As part of a Research I university, we are obligated to create new knowledge and to pass it on. Our productions must take part in broad conversations and reflect the goals and strategic plan of the university as a whole. We must make connections across disciplines and across campus.

We have to serve the community. We are a part of this vibrant, micro-urban, Midwestern space and place. We must return the passion, time, and money you offer with a balanced season that reflects our shared values and interests. We have a responsibility to question power and authority as well as an equal responsibility to entertain and please you.

You—our audiences from the community, Theatre 101 classes, campus partners, or our own classrooms and shops—are our privilege to serve. Thank you for being here.

Dr. Kirsten Pullen

Professor and Head, Department of Theatre



PROGRAM

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PLACE: A Georgetown living room, Washington, DC

ACT I: THE PRESENT

20-minute intermission

ACT II: ONE WEEK LATER

This production includes the simulated smoking of tobacco products, adult language, and is intended for mature audiences only.

An American Daughter is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Fifteen years ago (or thereabouts) I directed an early play by Tennessee Williams called *Spring Storm* in this Studio Theatre. The play featured an imposing portrait of the Confederate general whose ancestral presence influenced the young woman growing up in that Southern home.

Williams, of course, also used the portrait of an absent father in his famous *The Glass Menagerie*. Playwrights before featured patriarchal portraits looming over their plays. General Gabler looks down on Hedda. Hamlet forces the portrait of his father upon his mother. And the presence of another father, another general, looms over Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. It is significant, I think, that Wendy Wasserstein places the portrait of an ancestral mother on the wall overlooking this play. In her plays, Wasserstein chronicled the experiences of women through the last quarter of the 20th century. She died of cancer at age 55 in 2006. In *An American Daughter* she helps us consider a woman, Dr. Lyssa Dent Hughes, whose living room is graced by a portrait of Julia Dent Grant, the wife of President and General Ulysses S. Grant. Lyssa proudly bears the family name and identifies with her fifth generation grandmother, who lived in the shadow of a powerful political man. Lyssa is the daughter of a senator, but is poised to take her seat at the table

of national leadership. Wendy Wasserstein uses the character to raise timely questions: What is the experience of a woman eager to contribute to political life? What frustrations will she face? With what attacks must she contend? How does she bear the history passed down to her from the women who have gone before her? Through much of western drama the influence of men has been emphasized with gold-framed visages of glowering fathers and grandfathers. Wendy Wasserstein re-frames our history and examines the life of an American daughter to help us move forward into the 21st century.

This play was originally developed in 1996 at the Seattle Repertory Theatre and directed by Daniel Sullivan who is now a member of the Illinois Theatre faculty as a Swanlund Chair. Sullivan shared a fruitful artistic collaboration with playwright Wendy Wasserstein. He was nominated for Broadway's Tony Award for direction of her plays *The Heidi Chronicles* (1989) and *The Sisters Rosenzweig* (1993). We are proud to celebrate their important collaboration with this Illinois Theatre production of *An American Daughter*.

—Tom Mitchell, director

AN AMERICAN DAUGHTER

PLAYWRIGHT

Wendy Wasserstein

DIRECTOR

Tom Mitchell

SCENIC DESIGNER

Yvonne Tessman

COSTUME DESIGNER

Edith Moreno

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Kiana Schalk

SOUND DESIGNER

Matt Powell

MEDIA DESIGNER

John Boesche

PROPERTIES MASTER

Megan Dietrich

HAIR/MAKEUP MASTER

Melissa Hall

STAGE MANAGER

Grace Chariya

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Ryan Schultz

DRAMATURG

Katie Odom

CAST

LYSSA DENT HUGHES

Anika Vogen

QUINCY QUINCE

Madison Freeland

JUDITH B. KAUFMAN

Alexis Walker

WALTER ABRAHMSON

Yvon Streacker

MORROW MCCARTHY

Bryce Lunsky

TIMBER TUCKER

Adam Berg

SENATOR ALAN HUGHES

Gary Ambler

CHARLOTTE "CHUBBY" HUGHES

Joi Hoffsommer

JIMMY

Ryan Yapp

BILLIE ROBBINS

Ilana Weiner

TV CREW

Chloe Cosgrove

VOICE OVERS

Thom Miller

Allison Moody

Genesee Spridco

Zev Steinrock

DRAMATURG'S NOTE

American history repeating itself—the continued fight for women's rights.

Wendy Wasserstein, born to Lola and Morris Wasserstein in Brooklyn, New York, 1950, was a Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright whose plays represented the struggles of US women and the challenges of feminism. From her first play, *Uncommon Women and Others* (1977), to the well-known *The Heidi Chronicles* (1988), Wasserstein's work resonates with the US women's rights movements. *An American Daughter* (1997), though written 20 years after her first play and 20 years before our production, continues to strike close to home for many women.

While Wasserstein was never credited with being especially good in school, she had a talent for observing the world around her. Going so far as to include her siblings for character inspiration and drawing on the eccentric nature of her mother, the world was her muse. Growing up, Wasserstein bore witness to the changing tides of American society, especially the growing support for women's rights and equality. She would go on to tell the stories of these changes, but not without her signature wry humor. Wasserstein explained that being the youngest of four children, you had to be funny to avoid ridicule; this would serve her throughout her career.

An American Daughter was written partly in response to 1993's "Nannygate." Then-President Bill Clinton was committed to increasing the number of women in his cabinet, however, both of his female nominees for Attorney General were discovered to have hired undocumented workers. After media backlash, both candidates ultimately had to withdraw from consideration. Of course, then-First Lady Hillary Clinton, was a polarizing

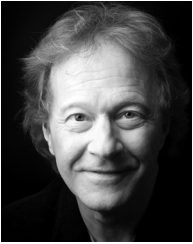
figure herself – referring to stay-at-home mothers as "cookie bakers." Wasserstein said that if Nannygate hadn't actually happened, it would've been a great story to make up. In all her plays, she questioned conventional wisdom about women's abilities and choices: What prevents women from pursuing jobs in male dominated fields? Why can't mothers also have careers? Why are women continuing to be viewed as less than their male counterparts—in both the media and in the workforce? Can these ideas change?

When this play first premiered in 1997, Wasserstein was credited for her ability to give a voice to her generation. By writing stories about women who faced the stereotypes of American society, she found a connection to the pulse of America. Her plays incorporated strong family relationships as well as the growing wave of feminism as it swept across the country. She sought to challenge the women of America to do better than those who came before them and create a more equal future. Twenty years after this play's premiere, this story continues to demand a better tomorrow.

While some still grade women on a scale from one to 10 in regard to their appearance and not their intellect, and where women are often seen as possessions and not people, *An American Daughter* demands that we reconsider our history and change our future. Wasserstein's play tells the story of not only Zoe Baird, Kimba Wood, Hillary Clinton, and Lyssa Dent Hughes, but of "ordinary Indiana housewives" and "cookie bakers." Through a bit of humor and a bit of heartache, Wasserstein holds a mirror up to the audience, asking us all to shatter the glass ceilings in our lives.

—Katie Odom, Dramaturg

PROFILES



Gary Ambler (Senator Alan Hughes) Gary Ambler's previous roles on Krannert Center stages include Richard Feynman in *QED* and Morrie Schwartz in *Tuesdays with Morrie*. He is an actor and director and has a long collaboration with the

Celebration Company at the Station Theatre in Urbana. Recent projects there include *Small Mouth Sounds* and *August, Osage County*. This past summer he traveled to Louisville to participate in a staged reading of a new adaptation of Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, by Sarah Rose Kearns, on the Actors Theatre stage.



Adam Berg (Timber Tucker) is currently a senior pursuing his BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. Past credits at Krannert Center include Gregory in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and The Sea Captain in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. He also played

King Midas in the Armory Free Theatre production of *Metamorphoses*.



Chloe Cosgrove (TV Crew) is a sophomore acting major at the University of Illinois making her Illinois theatre debut. Chloe's most recent credits include Stella in a student-directed scene of *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams, as well as

Princess Katherine in Shakespeare's *Henry V*. She is on the University of Illinois Dean's List and a member of the all-female sketch comedy troupe, OkNow Ladies.



Madison Freeland (Quincy Quince) is a senior in acting at the University of Illinois. She recently has been seen in *All The King's Men*; *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea*; and *Romeo and Juliet* with Illinois Theatre. She was also in *Call Me Woman, We Are Proud to Present . . .*,

and *Hate Mail* in the Armory Free Theatre.



Bryce Lunskey (Morrow McCarthy) is a senior from Chicago pursuing his BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. Previous Illinois Theatre credits include John N. in *Failure: A Love Story* and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*.



Joi Hoffsommer (Charlotte “Chubby” Hughes) is retired as the Artistic and Program Director of Theatre at Parkland College. She has been a long-time company member at The Station Theatre and has served on the theatre’s board. Her latest Station production

was as Violet in *August, Osage County*. Other area theatre credits include *Hay Fever*, *Other Desert Cities*, *Love Song*, *Iron Kisses*, *Three Sisters*, *Orpheus Descending*, *Buried Child*, *Copenhagen*, and *Blithe Spirit*. Directing credits include *My Antonia* with Gary Ambler, *Absurd Person Singular*, *The Velvet Rut*, *Pride And Prejudice*, and *Miss Bennet: Christmas At Pemberley*. Joi is also an AmSat certified instructor of the Alexander Technique.



Yvon Streacker (Walter Abrahamson) is a senior acting major with a love of writing. His past Illinois Theatre credits include Giuseppe Zangara in *Assassins*, directed by J.W. Morrisette; Young Man/Neat Young Man in *St. Louis Stories*, directed by Tom Mitchell;

December in *Failure: A Love Story*, directed by J.W. Morrisette; and Malachi in *Master Wilder and the Cabala*, directed by Marti Lyons.



Anika Vogen (Lyssa Dent Hughes) is a junior at the University of Illinois pursuing a BFA in acting. She is a home-grown local of the Champaign-Urbana area and has most recently appeared in the Station Theatre’s spring production of *Silent Sky*. This

is her first performance on a Krannert Center

main stage though she has been an active participant behind the scenes.



Alexis Walker (Judith B. Kaufman) was born in Atlanta, Georgia. She is currently attending U of I to pursue a BFA in acting. She is an active James Scholar, Fine and Applied Arts Ambassador, and member of the LENS Diversity program on campus. She has

recently been awarded scholarships from the Walt Disney Corporation and the Northbrook Women’s Club. She has performed in productions including *All The King’s Men* and *Romeo and Juliet* at the University of Illinois, and *In Plain Sight* at Northwestern University.



Ilana Weiner (Billie Robbins) is in her third year at the University of Illinois as an acting major. This is her first Krannert Center show. She has been in *The Yellow Wallpaper* in the Armory Theatre, as well as *The Princess Play*. Ilana is also affiliated with Alpha Chi

Omega Fraternity and enjoys volunteering for Courage Connection.



Ryan Yapp (Jimmy) is a junior entering his first full year in the acting program at U of I. He is making his Krannert Center debut in *An American Daughter*. Previously he has appeared in *Heathers the Musical*, and *The Wedding Singer* at Stage 773 in

Chicago. On campus he appeared in the New Revel Players production of *Dracula* and is a member of Debono Musical Improv.



Tom Mitchell (Director) is Associate Professor of Acting in the Department of Theatre. Last season he directed *All the King's Men* for Illinois Theatre and *Hansel and Gretel* for Lyric Theatre @ Illinois. A specialist in the early plays of American playwright Tennessee

Williams, Mitchell has spoken about the playwright at festivals in St. Louis, New Orleans, and Provincetown. Mitchell also presented on Williams in Beijing and Shanghai and is an honorary faculty member at Inner Mongolia University Arts College where he staged scenes from *Glass Menagerie* with Chinese and American student actors. In recent years, he has been working on adaptations of unpublished short stories and plays by Williams. Professionally, Tom directed lost plays by the 20th-century Spanish playwright Jose Lopez Rubio, and the premiere and national tour of James Still's play *Meet Me Incognito* for the Metro Theatre Circus of St. Louis. At Krannert Center he has staged plays of Moliere, adaptations of Charles Dickens, and musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein. Locally, he directed productions of *Hay Fever*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, and *Freud's Last Session*. Mitchell served on the national selection committee of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, travelling the nation to review 56 university productions. For several years Tom Mitchell directed, taught, and chaired the Summer Theatre Program at the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Northwest Michigan.

Grace Chariya (Stage Manager) is a junior in the stage management program and an Urbana native. Champaign-Urbana credits include stage manager for *The Syringa Tree*, *Seussical*, and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. Krannert Center credits include assistant stage manager for

Jessica Lang Dance's *us/we*; *Don Giovanni*; *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*; and *February Dance: Designed Environments*.

Megan Dietrich (Properties Master) is the Krannert Center Interim Properties Assistant and Rentals Manager as well as a member of the properties design and management faculty. She graduated in 2016 from the University of Illinois with an MFA in properties design and management. Megan has also worked for Parkland College, the Chautauqua Theatre Company, The Kitchen Theatre, and the Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts. She received her Bachelor of Liberal Arts in 2010 from Whittier College with a dual emphasis in performance and theatre technology.

Edith G. Moreno (Costume Designer) is an alumna from the University of Missouri—Kansas City with a BA in theatre. She is the first in her family to go to college and earn a degree. She has been actively designing shows since 2014. She has entered local art shows in her hometown of Kansas City and has received honorable recognition for her creative work in the arts as well as photography. She is a third-year MFA candidate in theatre with an emphasis in costume design. In the spring of 2019, she will be designing *The Rape of Lucretia* for Lyric Theatre @ Illinois.

Matt Powell (Sound Design) is a second-year audio graduate student. His previous sound designs include *Don Giovanni* at the University of Illinois and *Rehearsal for Death*, *Der Fledermaus*, *Vintage*, *Lady from the Sea*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Movie Game*, *Two x Tenn*, and *The Illusion* at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He has additionally done audio engineer work at the University of Illinois for *The Other Shore*, *All the King's Men*, and *Assassins*.

Christina Rainwater (Scenic Charge Artist) is a member of United Scenic Artists Local 829, and has been a professional Scenic Artist for 16 years. She received a BFA in theatre from Missouri State University and an MFA in scenic art from University of North Carolina School of the Arts. There, she developed the workshop “A Distressing Subject” on distressing techniques for scenery, properties, and costumes. She was the Scenic Charge Artist at the Flat Rock Playhouse in Flat Rock, North Carolina for two years. She has an ongoing working relationship at Goodspeed Musicals, where she had the pleasure of working on the musicals *Camelot*, *Carnival*, *Carousel*, *Hello, Dolly!*, and *La Cage aux Folles*. She also worked for Feld Entertainment in Palmetto, Florida, including Disney’s *Princesses on Ice* and Disney’s *Playhouse Tour II*. This summer, she worked for six weeks at The Muny, St. Louis, as a journeyman scenic artist.

Kiana Schalk (Lighting Designer) is a senior lighting design student with Level 21 at the University of Illinois. Her recent design credits include *Studio Dance 1 (2018)* at Krannert Center, *The Aliens* and *An Iliad* at the Armory Free Theatre, *The Addams Family Musical* at Oak Park and River Forest High School, and *Orchesis Spring Showcase* with OPRF Orchesis. She has also recently been a part of the lighting team for several other productions at Krannert Center.

Ryan Schultz (Technical Director) is the technical director as well as the Chair of the Scenic Technology Program for the Department of Theatre at the U of I. Prior to joining Krannert Center in August 2017, Ryan was the technical director at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago.

There, his credits include the annual production of *A Christmas Carol*, Disney’s *The Jungle Book* adapted by Mary Zimmerman, *The Iceman Cometh* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music starring Nathan Lane and Brian Dennehy, Robert Fall’s and Seth Bockley’s massive interpretation of Roberto Bolaño’s *2666*, and the Broadway production of *War Paint* starring Patti LuPone and Christine Ebersol. Ryan received his education from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Yvonne Tessman (Scenic Designer) is a second-year MFA student in scenic design. This is her first show at the University of Illinois. Yvonne earned a BA in theatre arts from Lawrence University of Wisconsin, where she was the scenic designer for *First Night* and *Gint*.

Lyric excerpts of “Love Me Tender” by Elvis Presley and Vera Matson

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PRODUCTION STAFF

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Elisabeth Schapmann

ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER

Vivian Krishnan

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER

Adam Major

SCENIC ARTIST

Christina Rainwater

MASTER ELECTRICIAN

Kyle Condon

AUDIO ENGINEER

Brandon Reed

DECK CREW

Chloe Bassett

Humberto Giles-Sanchez

PROPS CREW

Drew Brady

Brianna Kazinski

WARDROBE CREW HEAD

Vivian Krishnan

WARDROBE RUNNING CREW

Maria Buffo

Caitlin Chrasta

MAKEUP RUNNING CREW

Raiya Browning

Colleen Bruton

LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR

Elliot Hubiak

SOUND BOARD OPERATOR

Kayle Lee