

INDECENT

By Paula Vogel

DESCRIPTION

Indecent is inspired by the true events surrounding the controversial 1923 Broadway debut of Yiddish playwright Sholem Asch's "God of Vengeance" – a play seen by some as a seminal work of Jewish culture and by others as an act of traitorous libel. Written by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paula Vogel, *Indecent* charts the history of an incendiary drama and the path of the artists who risked their careers and lives to perform it.

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

To me, *Indecent* is a story about the power theatre has in creating community for those who have been "othered." Paula Vogel has written a rich and beautifully complex play in which many "othered stories" are present. A story of an artist. A story of a queer person. A story of an immigrant. And, most especially, a story of the Jewish people and culture. This is a play with many entry points for people of various experiences and identities.

Through conversations, I've learned that at this institution there has been an historic lack of care for Jewish stories. I acknowledge and empathize with the disappointment in not having your stories told respectfully. Although no one can turn back time to undo that harm, I hope you will allow me and my team the opportunity to repair some of that harm with this production. I am not careless with the things that I love and I *love* this play. I advocated for this play to be part of the Wirtz season because I see myself in this story. Much like the characters in this play, it is through storytelling that I am revived. It is through theatre that I find salvation. It is through theatre that I truly know myself. And like these characters, theatre is where I find community, love, and a home.

Great care has been taken to assemble a creative team that reflects the diverse identities represented in this play, and as I enter this audition process, it is important to me to have that representation on stage as well. I aim to assemble a cast of actors who represent an inclusive array of experiences, particularly those listed above. If you see yourself in this play, then I hope you'll consider being a part of it. I look forward to seeing your work at auditions!

- Kelsey Leigh Ervi, Director

REHEARSAL, TECH, and PERFORMANCE DATES

First Rehearsal: Thursday, February 23, 2023

Rehearsals resume after Spring Break: Monday, March 27, 2023

Tech: Wednesday, April 12, 2023 - Thursday, April 20, 2023

Performances: Friday, April 21 - Sunday, April 30, 2023

CALLBACK DATES

Wednesday, January 18 (6pm-10pm) - Movement Call

Thursday, January 19 (6pm-10pm) - Readings

Friday, January 20 (12pm-4pm) - Readings
Saturday, January 21 (6pm-10pm) - Readings
Tuesday, January 24 (6pm-10pm) - Music Call

**We will do our best to accommodate those who are unavailable during the above times.*

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

The characters in *Indecent* make up THE DEAD TROUPE:

LEMMML, 30's, *The Stage Manager*

- A kind-hearted country tailor whose life is forever changed upon reading Asch's "The God of Vengeance". Lemml exemplifies the belief that theatre can transform our lives and the lives of those around us. Singing and movement required. Vocal range: F#2 to E3

CHANA, 20's, *The Ingénue*

- Passionate, adventurous, and smart. Singing and movement required. Vocal range: G2 to E3
- *Also plays: Rifkele, Madje, Elsa, Immigrant, Ruth/Reina, Virginia McFadden, Bagelman Sister*

AVRAM, 20's, *The Ingénue*

- Rebellious, ambitious, and passionate. Singing and movement required. Vocal range: F#2 to E3
- *Also plays: Sholem Asch, Immigrant, Morris Carnovsky, Eugene O'Neill, John Rosen*

HALINA, 30's, *The Middle*

- Sophisticated, frank, and unconcerned with politics. Singing and movement required. Vocal range: D2 to E3
- *Also plays: Manke, Immigrant, Freida, Dorothee Nelson/Dine, Dr. Hornig, Bagelman Sister*

MENDEL, 40's, *The Middle*

- Traditional and conservative. Singing and movement required. Vocal range: F#2 to E3
- *Also plays: Nakhmen, Immigrant, Harry Weinberger, Officer Benjamin Bailie, Rabbi Joseph Silverman*
- *Additional languages spoken: short lines of French, Spanish, and Chinese*

VERA, 50's, *The Elder*

- Protective, witty, with a strong bite. Singing and movement required. Vocal range: G2 to E3
- *Also plays: Sarah, Mrs. Peretz, Immigrant, Esther Stockton, Madje*

OTTO, 50's, *The Elder*

- Cultured, educated, traditional, and cynical. Singing and movement required. Vocal range: F#2 to E3
 - *Also plays: Yekel, Peretz, Schildkraut, Immigrant, Bartender, Judge McIntyre, Sholem Asch*
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NOTES

- When speaking their native language, all characters speak in perfect English. When not speaking in their native language, they speak English with an accent.
- All characters speak and sing in English, Yiddish, and German.

VIOLENCE/INTIMACY

- Violence: Sarah tries to pull Rifkele away from Yekel, but he strikes Sarah. Yekel drags Rifkele by the hair. Pg 23.
- Violence: Sarah tries again to pull Rifkele away from Yekel, who hits her away. Pg 23.
- Intimacy: Dorothee kisses Virginia gently. Virginia takes a breath and kisses Dorothee back with a bit more conviction. They settle into each other. Pg 30.
- Intimacy: Dorothee kisses Virginia ardently. Pg 33.
- Intimacy: Virginia, shaking, throws herself on Dorothee, nuzzling her neck. Pg 34.
- Intimacy: The rain scene. Pg 57-58.

UNDERSTUDY GUIDELINES

This production will cast understudies.

Required Attendances

- 1st Rehearsal: Thursday, February 23
- Stumble-through & Designer Run: TBD
- All Technical Rehearsals: Wednesday, April 12 thru Thursday, April 20
- Any rehearsals when the intimacy director is present, unless the specified role is not included in the rehearsing scene
- Additional put-in rehearsals, as needed

Off-Book Date: Friday, March 31

On-Call Guidelines

- For performances, understudies must be available by phone two hours before curtain until the show begins and be within 20 minutes travel time from the theater. Understudies will not be put in after a performance begins.
- Understudies are invited to all rehearsals, design/dramaturgy presentations, and meet and greets. Understudies are encouraged and able to attend as many rehearsals as possible. In the professional world, understudies attend as many rehearsals as necessary to prepare.

Understudy Rehearsals

- Understudy rehearsals will be led by the choreographer/assistant director, Tal Schatsky.
- During rehearsals or tech, understudies may be called to step into their role as an understudy due to illness or emergency.
- A put-in rehearsal will be arranged in the event that an understudy must step in during the show run.

CONTACT INFO

For questions or to request a copy of the script, email Kelsey Leigh Ervi at kelseyervi2022@u.northwestern.edu.