

APRIL
2023

STILLPOINTE THEATRE

Area
405



NEVERMORE

Preview April 6th, 7th, and 13th - Opening April 14th and 15th
Weekends of the 20th, 21st, 22nd, 27th, 28th, and May 4th, 5th, and 6th

MUSIC BY MATT CONNER LYRICS ADAPTED FROM THE WRITINGS OF EDGAR ALLEN POE
BOOK BY GRACE BARNES ORCHESTRATIONS BY JONATHAN TUNICK

STILLPOINTE THEATRE

Presents:

Nevermore

Music by Matt Conner

Book by Grace Barnes

Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

Source material by Edgar Allan Poe

Directed by Ryan Haase

Musical Direction by Ben Shaver

Movement Direction by Amanda Rife

**NEVERMORE FEATURES ADULT CONTENT INCLUDING DRUG/ALCOHOL
USE, SIMULATED SEX, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO SIMULATED SEX
WITH A MINOR.**

ALL ACTORS ARE ADULTS.

"All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream" -Poe

Production Roles

Ryan Haase*	Director
Ben Shaver	Music Director
Amanda Rife*	Movement Coordinator/Stage Manager
Katie Hileman	Intimacy Choreographer
Ryan Haase*	Set/Props/Lighting
Danielle Robinette*	Hair and Makeup
Kitt Crescenzo*	Costumes
Christine Demuth*	Dramaturg
Kateri*	Program
Sarah Burton*	Public Relations
Meghan Taylor *	Social Media

*denotes Stillpointe Company Member

Cast and Band

Bobby Libby	Edgar
Caitlin Weaver	Virginia
Kay-Megan Washington	Muddy
Rachel Blank*	The Whore
Kristen Zwobot	Mother
Christine Demuth*	Elmira
Ben Shaver	Conductor/ Keyboard
Naomi Schneller Zajic	Violin
Allen Hicks	Viola
Billy Georg	Keyboard/Percussion
Laura Stokes	Harp (4.14, 4.20, 4.21, 4.22, 5.4)
Kara Welch	Harp (4.13, 4.15, 4.27, 4.28, 5.5, 5.6)
David Zajic	Viola (4.20, 5.4)
Stacey Antoine*	Keyboard/Percussion (5.4, 5.5, 5.6)
Jae Anthonee	Conductor/Keyboard (4.20)

This production of *Nevermore* is performed based off an former iteration, please be advised that updates have been made to the script since.

Acknowledgments

Stillpointe Theatre would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the following people. Thank you for being a part of the magic, and for ensuring that Baltimore can continue to experience cutting edge performance!

Central Baltimore Partnership

Loane Brothers

Schola

AREA 405

Station North Tool Library

Charm City Meadworks

Greyhound Tavern

Douglas Johnson and Peter Dayton

Want to be a part of the magic yourself?
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A note from the Composer

While writing Nevermore, I remember taking a trip to Baltimore in hopes to learn more about Edgar Allan Poe, and his Baltimore home. I visited the Amity Street house and spoke with curator (at that time) Jeff Jerome. I remember a feeling of awe as I wandered through the halls where he lived with his Aunt and had a moment to see his portable writing desk. Later that afternoon I visited his grave at the Westminster Presbyterian Church where my mind tried to imagine the many years of the 'Poe Toaster' that would deliver an unfinished bottle of cognac and three roses. A shroud of mystery has always filled the room where the name of Poe is evoked. It is this same mystery that drew me to his poetry. That poetry was turned into the music you will hear tonight. The show has been produced in many places across the globe from Australia to England and I couldn't be more thrilled that it is finally being produced in the same city that defined so much of Edgar's life and death. Bringing Poe's words back to Baltimore feels poetic beyond further words. An El Dorado at long last. ~Matt Conner, composer

Dramaturgical Background- "A Place Beyond the Dark"

"Quoth the Raven, nevermore." -Poe

The creation of *Nevermore* began when composer Matt Conner sat at his piano and attempted to put Edgar Allan Poe's poetry to music. He then teamed up with playwright Grace Barnes who wrote the book for the musical that would eventually become *Nevermore*. *Nevermore* was commissioned by Signature Theatre in Arlington, VA and had its world premiere on January 15, 2006. Stillpointe Theatre's production is the Baltimore premiere.

Most people in Baltimore are familiar with Edgar Allan Poe, the famous American poet and short story writer, who is best known for his works of the macabre and hailed as the father of the detective story. Poe has been claimed by many of the cities he lived in throughout his life, but perhaps none more fervently than Baltimore, the city of his final resting place. Baltimoreans grow up learning about Poe in school, memorizing his poems, and visiting The Poe House where he lived on Amity Street or his graves (he has two!) in Westminster Hall on Fayette Street. Poe's iconic poem even inspired the name of our football team, The Baltimore Ravens. But who was Poe, the man?

Attempts by his biographers to capture the truth of his life has proved difficult. There is a great deal of information, but very few verifiable facts. Everything about him is controversial, partly due to the fact that his obituary and first biography were written by his arch literary nemesis, Rufus Wilmot Griswold. Immediately after Poe's death, Griswold wrote an obituary under a pseudonym, filled with false information, in an attempt to destroy Poe's reputation. Though modern biographers have tried to uncover the truth of the person behind the prose, Poe remains an elusive, mysterious figure to this day, much like works he penned.

It is therefore well suited to Poe's cryptic nature that the musical *Nevermore* does not seek to be a biographical retelling of Poe's life. Instead, it is a ghostly dreamscape that imagines his relationships with the women that inspired his greatest poems and stories. Under the direction of Ryan Haase, Stillpointe's production of *Nevermore* begins at the end: the end of Poe's life where he finds himself haunted by the ghosts of the most influential women in his life. These women include his mother, Eliza Poe; his cousin and wife, Virginia Clemm, his Aunt, Maria "Muddy" Clemm; his last and first love, Elmira Royster Shelton; and a nameless sex worker who represents Poe's constant longing for the ideal woman.

We hope you will enjoy this ghoulish and often disturbing journey into the darkness of Poe's mind as he yearns to find something "beyond the dark.. a place of light and color and shining with possibilities."

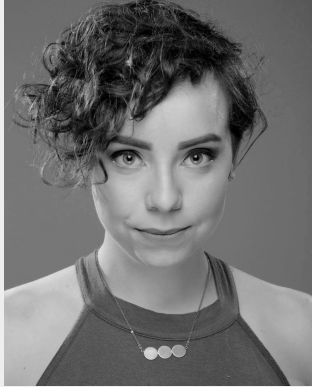
For more information on Poe and the musical *Nevermore*, [please check out this document link](#) to view our production's dramaturgical research.

- Christine Demuth, resident dramaturg for Stillpointe Theatre

"Those who dream by day are cognisant of many things which escape those who dream only by night" -Poe

Meet the cast

Caitlin Weaver



Kay-Megan Washington



Bobby Libby



Rachel Blank



Christine Demuth



Kristen Zwobot



STILL BUILT ON THE
V

“Words have no power to impress the mind without the exquisite horror of their reality” - Poe

Biographies

Grace Barnes (Book) comes from Scotland where her work as a playwright includes: “Auld Lang Syne” Traverse Theatre Company, Edinburgh, “Wave Me Goodbye” and “Another Lovely War” Theatre Workshop, Edinburgh, “Lavender Blue” Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh, “Angels’ Wings” Oran Mor, Glasgow and “Zander’s Boat”, which has been produced in Scotland, Dublin and the USA, and adapted for BBC Radio 4. Novel adaptations include Robert Louis Stevenson’s “Treasure Island” and Jackie Kay’s award winning novel “Trumpet” . For Signature Theatre, Arlington, Grace wrote the script for two musicals, “Nevermore” and “Crossing” which both had music by Matt Conner. Grace has written two books on musical theatre – ‘Her Turn on Stage’ which examines the roles of women in musical theatre, and ‘National Identity and the British Musical’. Last month her creative non-fiction/biography ‘In Search of Mina Wylie’ was published in London.

<https://www.austinmacauley.com/book/search-mina-wylie>

<https://mcfarlandbooks.com/product/her-turn-on-stage/>

<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/national-identity-and-the-british-musical-9781350243538/>

Rachel Blank (The Whore) is a Baltimore native who met the founding members of Stillpointe while at Towson University. After time in NYC and Austin, TX, Rachel established herself as an expert in the world of media sales, data metrics and everything in between. She is an avid film reviewer and hosts the randomly timed travel blog, "Does This Hotel Have Bed Bugs?". In 2018, she was cast in Stillpointe’s production of *Urinetown*, and has never looked back. She became the managing director of Stillpointe in 2019, where she helped secure our previous home on Maryland Avenue. She was featured in the original cabaret, *I’ll Drink to That!* and she was the Show Ghoul in *Macabaret*.

www.rachelblank.com

"Believe nothing you hear, and only one half that you see" - Poe

Biographies

Matt Conner (Music) has been performing, composing, teaching and directing in the DC area for 25 years. He was the recipient of the 2008-2009 AMERICAN MUSICAL VOICES PROJECT: THE NEXT GENERATION. Produced Commissioned Works Include: Signature Theatre in Arlington, VA; *Nevermore* (2006), *Partial Eclipse* (2009), *The Hollow* (2011), *Crossing* (2013) and *Silver Belles* (2016). Matt was also commissioned for a Five Year Initiative, "Bold Works for Intimate Spaces", at Creative Cauldron in Falls Church, VA. They include *The Turn of the Screw* (2015), *Monsters of the Villa Diodati* (2016), *Kaleidoscope* (2017), *W.I.T.C.H.* (2018) and *On Air* (2019). Matt was awarded the Helen Hayes Award for Best Direction for *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* produced at Creative Cauldron (2020). He was just nominated (with his writing partner and husband of 25 years Stephen Gregory Smith) for the Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding Play/Musical (*Ichabod: The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* produced at Creative Cauldron, 2023). Albums include *Snow, Winter, Icicle, Baby Conner* and *Nocturne*. Matt holds a BFA from Shenandoah University & Conservatory and is the Associate Artistic Director at Creative Cauldron in Falls Church, VA. He is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild and AEA .
www.connersmithmusicals.com

Christine Demuth (Elmira) has performed regionally with Folger Theatre, Rep Stage, Baltimore Center Stage, Stillpointe Theatre, Virginia Shakespeare Festival, Adirondack Shakespeare Festival, Single Carrot Theatre, EMP Collective, Baltimore Shakespeare Festival, VSA arts/ The Kennedy Center, Stanislavsky Theatre Studio, Chicago's Promethean Theatre Ensemble, The Rosa Ponselle Winners' Showcase Concert at Carnegie Hall, and NYC's Shakespeare in the Raw. As a Company member at Stillpointe Theatre she serves as the resident dramaturg and has performed in many productions including *Grey Gardens* (Little Edie), *Pop! Who Shot Andy Warhol* (Valerie Solanas) and *I'll Drink to That!* performing "(Not) Getting Married Today," from *Sondheim's Company*.

"I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity. -Poe

Biographies

Ryan Haase (Director) Artistic Director, Stillpointe Theatre. Baltimore Center Stage: *That Face*, *The Container* (scenic designer); *Next to Normal*, *Bus Stop*, *The Rivals* (associate director). Regional—Baltimore Shakespeare Festival, Rhymes With Opera. Other—Co-creator of Stillpointe Theatre and designed and directed—*35Mm A Musical Exhibition*, *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*, *Little Shop Of Horrors*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Vanishing Point: A New Musical*, *Assassins*, *Grey Gardens: The Musical*, *Spring Awakening*, *POP!*. Original compositions for musical theater include—Rep Stage: *Dorian's Closet*; New York Theatre Barn: *Ryan White: The Musical*; *Shovel in the Dirt: A Grave Diggers Musical*, *The Quest of the Ziz Bird*, *Jack and the Beanstalk: The Story of Daisy the Cow*, *Cool: Songs from an Untrained Writer*, *Dorian's Closet*. Awards—Best Scenic Design in a Professional Theater for *Vanishing Point: A New Musical* and *Caroline, Or Change*; Best Direction of a Musical in a Professional Theater for *Vanishing Point: A New Musical*, and *Assassins*. Education—BA: Towson University (Theater Design and Production).

Katie Hileman (Intimacy Choreographer) (she/her/hers) is a DIY theatre-maker based in Baltimore, MD. Her intimacy choreography work has been seen at UMBC, McDaniel College, JHU Barnstormers, Fells Point Corner Theatre, and more. She is a graduate of Towson University's MFA Theatre Arts program, UMBC's BFA Acting Program, and an Assistant Faculty member of Theatrical Intimacy Education. She is the Artistic Director of The Interrobang Theatre Company, where she has produced over a dozen new plays. Katiehileman.com

"Never to suffer would never to have been blessed" -Poe

Biographies

Bobby Libby (Edgar) is thrilled to make his return to Stillpointe, having previously appeared in *Grey Gardens*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Hair*. His most recent credit was in *Ichabod*, an original musical written and directed by Matt Conner and Stephen Gregory Smith at Creative Cauldron, where he also appeared in *Into the Woods*, also directed by Matt Conner. Other DC Area credits: *Nat Turner in Jerusalem*, *Assassins*, *Ordinary Days*, *Godspell*, *City of Angels* (NextStop), *Jumanji*, *Caps for Sale* (Adventure), *Urinetown* (Constellation.) Thank you for supporting live theatre, and enjoy the show!

Amanda Rife (Stage Manager/Movement Coordinator) Amanda Rife is a graduate of Towson University's Theatre Studies program, and much like her degree suggests, she is a jack of all trades. Amanda is one of the founding members of Stillpointe and has been stage managing, directing, and choreographing in Baltimore since 2009, as well as performing on stages across the country. Recent credits include *Macabaret* (Director/choreographer: Stillpointe - 2022), *I'll Drink to That* (Performer: Stillpointe 2022), *Baltimore: In Recovery* (Director: BROS 2022), *Glitterus* (Director/choreographer: BROS - 2022). You can also catch her playing with her ukulele duo, Bandits of the Animal Kingdom or performing with her burlesque troupe, The Charm City Slickers.

"The death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world" - Poe

Biographies

Ben Shaver (Musical Director) (he/him/his) is an award-winning music director, singer, and vocal coach currently based in the DMV area. He holds a BM in Vocal Performance from the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. He has performed on stages in the United States, Italy, Austria, and Georgia, most notably Carnegie Hall under the direction of Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. He has worked with artists such as David Schweitzer (Director: *Trouble in Tahiti*), Joe Barros (Director, Musical Co-writer: NY Theatre Barn), Garnett Bruce (Director: *La Traviata*), Francesca Mondanaro (Voice Studio), W. Stephen Smith (Voice: Juilliard, Northwestern University), Jeannette Lovetri (CCM Somatic Voice Work), Marin Alsop (Conductor: BSO), John Williams (Conductor: Boston Pops), Kelly Glyptis (Accompanist for Concerts and International Competitions: Carlotta in *Phantom of the Opera* on West End) to name a few. Ben is currently a co-writer of *To Whom It May Concern*, a musical about the life of Ryan White, with Joe Barros (NYTheatre Barn) and Ryan Haase (Stillpointe Theatre).
www.benshavermusic.com @barishaver!

Kay-Megan Washington (she/her) has been performing in the Baltimore/DC area for the last decade, returning after a long hiatus earning a doctorate in clinical psychology and playing the role of a family therapist. She is thrilled to return to Stillpointe, having previously played the Washing Machine in their production of *Caroline, or Change*. Favorite stage roles include Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* (Laurel Mill Playhouse, and Heritage Players), Mrs. Peachum in *The Threepenny Opera* (Spotlighters Theatre), Vivian Bearing in *Wit* (Fells Point Corner Theatre), Joanne in *Company* (Just Off Broadway), and The Witch in *Into the Woods* (Memorial Players). Kay-Megan is also an accomplished film and television actor, most recently recurring as Jackie on *Our Kind of People* on FOX.

kay-meganwashington.com;

<https://resumes.actorsaccess.com/kaymeganwashington>

"I was never really insane except upon occasions when my heart was touched" - Poe

Biographies

Caitlin Weaver is thrilled to be working with Stillpointe again! Credits include *Variety Show the Musical Play* (TBA Collective), *Squidbury* (Truepenny Collective), *See Also* (Submersive Theatre), *Love and Information* (FPCT), *Lizzie* (Guerrilla Theatre Front), *Welcome to Shakesville* (BROS), *Urinetown* (Stillpointe Theatre), *Mesmeric Revelations of Edgar Allen Poe* (Submersive Theatre), and *Office Ladies* (Acme Corp.). She has a BFA in Acting from Towson University and is happy to call Baltimore her home now.

Kristen Zwobot has been performing in the Baltimore/DC area for over two decades. Favorite onstage roles include: *bare* (Conejo Productions: Nadia), *Joseph...Dreamcoat* (Chesapeake Music Hall: Narrator), *Great American Trailer Park Musical* (Spotlighters: Pickles), *Shovel in the Dirt* (Stillpointe: Cecile), prog metal version of *Sweeney Todd* (Landless: ensemble – Helen Hayes nomination) and *Kennedy Center's Broadway: A New Generation* (soloist w/Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman). Many thanks to her co-star in life, Brett, and her greatest production so far, son Brooks, for their support.