

PLAYBILL®

The Open Fist Theatre Company
Los Angeles, CA

OPEN FIST THEATRE PRESENTS



BROWNSTONE

JAN 24 - FEB 28

BY CATHERINE BUTTERFIELD
DIRECTED BY RON WEST

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I met Catherine Butterfield at a writers' retreat in Chatham, Massachusetts. On the first night at dinner, I talked incessantly about my brilliant career as a writer/director. Fortunately, Catherine overlooked my egotism and decided she liked me anyway.

It was only later, after I stopped talking, that I learned Catherine was the author of several published plays, including tonight's selection, *Brownstone*.

To me, *Brownstone* is about who you *think* you are, who you want to be, and who you are. If you think it is about something else, that's fine. This is a space which can accommodate different opinions, where I am the loudest.

The story also shows how significant historical events (there's at least four in the play) impact ordinary people and how the ghosts of those people intersect with one another.

In the time we have known one another, Catherine has written five other plays, and I've directed several of them. I did such a good job, we got married.

I am happy to report, Catherine and I have a wonderful creative relationship, and I hope she will approve this copy.

-Ron West

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

When I was an aspiring young actress in New York, I was constantly on the brink of poverty. To make ends meet, I signed up with a temp agency called Lend-a-Hand. (Does anyone in the audience remember Lend-a-Hand? I'll bet you do!) They sent me to some very fancy places where I was supposed to, well, lend a hand when rich people threw huge parties for their three year old's birthday, or held extravagant dinner parties for guests like Truman Capote or William F. Buckley, or needed help organizing their immensely cluttered apartment. Frequently, these assignments took place inside brownstones, and were an eye-opening look at how the other half (read 2%) lived in Manhattan. Living, myself, in a very tiny one bedroom apartment with a kitchenette the size of a broom closet, the culture shock of suddenly being in one of these elegant brownstones was initially dazzling and ultimately depressing when I had to go home, sometimes just a block or two away. How could so much glamour be going on so close to me? What was I missing out on? It seemed like a great deal.

But I loved those buildings. I loved their architecture, and the way you could actually feel the past when you moved from room to room, especially if they hadn't renovated too much. You could see the nicks in the doorframes from a previous family's children, painted over. You could see that paint peeling away in places to reveal a much different color, the taste of a previous generation. Chandeliers sometimes looked like they had been up there for many decades; the bell you could ring for the maid was sometimes still intact, and the ornate crown moldings were works of art in themselves. The more ornate the better, was my opinion.

My love of brownstones continued long past the time I finally left New York, and I started creating stories in my head about the different generations that might have lived in one of them. This play is the result of all that daydreaming. I hope you enjoy it.

-Catherine Butterfield

The Open Fist Theatre Company

Presents

BROWNSTONE

by Catherine Butterfield

Directed by Ron West

Featuring

**Matthew Goodrich
Chelsea Spirito**

**Rosie Byrne
Amber Tiara**

**Isaac W. Jay
Jade Santana**

Scenic Design
Jan Munroe

Lighting Design
Gavan Wyrick

Sound Design
Kermit Frisbee

Co-Producers
Carmella Jenkins &
Beth Robbins

Props
Bruce Dickinson &
Ina Shumaker

Stage Crew
Syanne Green

Costume Design
Myllette Nora

Stage Crew
Millie Keil

Assistant Lighting
Designer
Jacob Carty

Stage Manager
John Dimitri

Graphic Design
LiamCarlDesign

Intimacy Coordinator
Amanda Weier

Public Relations
Lucy Pollak

Fight Choreographer
Tambrie Allsup



The Director is a member of the
**STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS
SOCIETY**, a national theatrical labor union.

Los Angeles
County
**Arts &
Culture**

"This performance is supported, in part,
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Board of Supervisors through
the Los Angeles County
Department of Arts and Culture."

CAST

Cast

Deena	Rosie Byrne
Maureen	Amber Tiara
Stephen/David	Matthew Goodrich
Davia	Chelsea Spirito
Jason	Isaac W. Jay
Jessica	Jade Santana

WHO'S WHO CAST



Rosie Byrne

as Deena

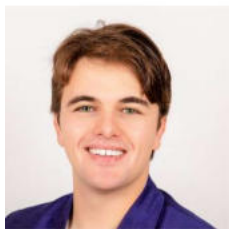
Rosie is an LA-based actor/theatre maker. Favorite Credits include: Four Top (World Premiere), King Lear: The Unraveling, This Week This Week, Much Ado About Nothing, The Seagull, How To Use A Knife, The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window, Three Sisters, Burial at Thebes, The Marriage of Bette and Boo. Web: The King Is Dead. She also performs for American Immersion Theatre and A Faerie Hunt. She holds a BA in Theatre from UC San Diego, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude with Departmental Honors with Distinction and has trained with Steppenwolf West, The Second City Hollywood, and BGB Studios. She currently serves as the membership representative to the Open Fist board.



Amber Tiara

as Maureen

Amber is an actress based in Los Angeles. Originally from New York, Amber has been telling stories on stage and screen for the past 15 years. Last year, Amber wrote, produced, and starred in her first SAG short film, Day 14, and is so happy to be submitting it to festivals. Outside of acting, Amber recently got married, loves working out, trying great food, practicing spanish and spending time with family, friends, and her two kitties. She is so happy to be back on the OFT stage and sharing it with this incredible cast, telling this unique story.

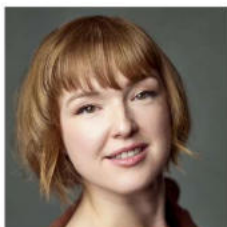


Matthew Goodrich

as Stephen/David

This is Matthew's second production at OpenFist, where he previously played Robinson in Amerika. Matthew trained at California Institute of the Arts and Santa Monica College, where he studied acting and performance. Favorite stage credits include Malvolio in Twelfth Night (California Institute of the Arts), Jean in Rhinoceros (Santa Monica College), and Macbeth in Flamenco Macbeth! at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. His work includes both classical and contemporary theatre, with a focus on exploring physicality and psychological depth. As well as stage work, he has collaborated on experimental performance projects and new play development. Matthew is grateful to his professors, peers, and family for their ongoing encouragement, support, and inspiration.

WHO'S WHO CAST



Chelsea Spirito

as Davia

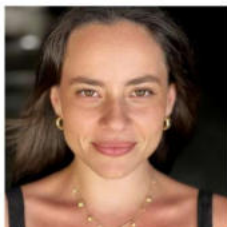
Chelsea is an actress and writer, with multiple self-produced shorts under her belt, including her most recent, *Brain Spotting*. She is a Second City Conservatory grad, UCB interloper, and member of LA's premiere political sketch comedy show *This Week This Week*. You can see Chelsea and hear her voice in an array of commercials and television programs, including but not limited to Chase Bank, Native, Google, Staples, Subway, Carnation, Robot Chicken and (many) more. Web: chelseaspirito.com



Isaac W. Jay

as Jason

Isaac is thrilled to be making his Open Fist debut with such a lovely play and wonderful cast! Other recent theatre credits include *An Inspector Calls* (Theatre 40), *These Shining Lives* (Actor's Co-op), *Downtown Reps' Mask!*, *Fangs!*, and *Witch!*, *Twelfth Night* (Actor's Co-op), *Back Porch* (Bluesteam Productions), *Copenhagen* (INTERACT), *Death of a Salesman* (INTERACT), and *The Bacchae* (World Premiere London). His latest film/TV credits include *Lessons in Chemistry* (Apple TV+), *The Last Thing He Told Me* (Apple TV+), *Fishtank* (Winner SXSW Sydney), *Glue Trap* (Hellzapoppin Pictures), *American Crime Story: Impeachment* (FX), and *Headcount* (Defiant Studios). Isaac is a member of SAG-AFTRA. Instagram: [@isaacwjay](https://www.instagram.com/isaacwjay)



Jade Santana

as Jessica

Jade is excited to be back at the Open Fist Theatre Company! She was previously seen on this stage in *AMERIKA* and also *Anna in the Tropics*, for which she earned a Broadway World Award nomination for Best Featured Actress. Other more recent theatre credits include *Lend Me a Tenor* (International City Theatre). All the way from Brazil, Jade is always grateful to be a part of storytelling that matters. Love to her family across oceans, and to every teacher and friend who's helped shape the path. With a special thank you to Judith Bohannon, whose presence continues to guide.

WHO'S WHO CREATIVE TEAM

Ron West

Director

Ron is grateful to have directed many productions for the Open Fist, including BUDDY JACK, EARLY AND OFTEN, THE KNACKER'S ABC, WE WON'T PAY! WE WON'T PAY!, WELCOME TO YOUR ALTERNATIVE REALITY, FOODSEXWORKSLEEP GOD, THE COMEDY OF ERRORS, and his own musicals deLEARious (starring Brendan Hunt) and NEIL SIMON'S MUSICAL FOOLS. He has directed Ms. Butterfield's plays LIFE EXPECTANCY, THE MIGHTY FOUR (starring Jean Smart), and TOP OF THE WORLD at other venues, such as the Teachers' Club in Dublin, Ireland. He looks forward to the revival of THIS WEEK THIS WEEK, the live news-based sketch show at the Open Fist, of which he is the managing editor. Chicago Shakespeare produced his plays THE PEOPLE VS FRIAR LAURENCE (starring Keegan-Michael Key), THE COMEDY OF ERRORS AT SHEPPERTON, TAMING OF THE SHREW, THE MARCH FOR THE VOTE. He will accept your offer to play Scrooge in your 2026 production of A CHRISTMAS CAROL. He bats right and throws right. Hello to Betsy and Douglas.

Catherine Butterfield

Writer

Catherine Butterfield is the author of ten published plays, the best-known probably being "Joined at the Head," "The Sleeper," "Life in the Trees" and "To the Bone." She is also the author of two novels, "The Serpent and the Rose," and the newly released "Manhattan Triptych." She and Ron West recently returned from Ireland, where Ron directed Catherine's comedy, "Life Expectancy," about the event-filled lead up to the birth of her daughter. Irish actors are a delight to work with; Ron and Catherine hope to return for more. Catherine has written and produced for TV ("The Ghost Whisperer," "Grimm," "FAME LA," "Party of Five,") and has over sixty short films on her YouTube channel. Two of them have won Telly Awards, a gold and a bronze. She has other awards, but you've probably never heard of them. She and Ron have two new kittens, Betsy and Douglas, who make life a riotous joy.

WHO'S WHO CREATIVE TEAM

Jan Munroe

Scenic Designer

Jan has been a member of OPEN FIST for the last decade, during which time he appeared as SHU-FU in *CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE*, a vampire in *MAD FOREST*, and a ghost in John O'Keefe's *GHOSTS*. He also directed and designed O'Keefe's *ALL NIGHT LONG* for OPEN FIST, as well as designing/building *THE VIBRATOR PLAY*, *MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM*, and *TO THE BONE* for Open Fist, Playwrights' Arena's *A HIT DOG WILL HOLLER*, Ron Sossi's *ELEPHANT SHAVINGS* at the Odyssey, and *A GOOD GUY* at Rogue Machine. As an actor, he has appeared numerous times on TV (*This Is Us*, *Criminal Minds*, *Brooklyn 99*, etc.), in movies (*A Few Good Men*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Ford V Ferrari*), and in many stage projects. He is a recipient of eleven L.A. Weekly and Drama-Logue awards, an Ovation award, two NEA Theatre fellowships, a CAC "New Genre" fellowship, and a Rockefeller Playwright's fellowship.

Myllette Nora

Costume Designer

Myllette has a Ovation Award and NAACP Theatre Awards for best costumes, listed in the honors edition of The Cambridge Registry of Who's Who Among Executive and Professional Women, works world wide consists of television, film, video and stage, and was seen nightly on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno and now "You Bet Your Life" with Jay Leno and Kevin Eubanks, and weekly on "Jay Leno's Garage". The famed artist Synthia St. James noted Mylette as being the inspiration for her world-renowned painting "Ensemble" which graced the cover of the best-selling novel "Waiting To Exhale" by Terry McMillan. Mylette's designer lines are doggie wear, www.FromTheHeartDoggieWear.com, Heirloom dolls, "My Mind's Eye", and now face mask by Mylette!

WHO'S WHO CREATIVE TEAM

Gavan Wyrick

Lighting Designer

Gavan Wyrick is a Los Angeles-based lighting designer for plays, musicals, and everything in between. Previous Open Fist credits include *Amerika*, *The Bauhaus Project*, *Blood at the Root*, *Starmites*, *Anatomy of Gray*, *To The Bone*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other credits include: *A Going Away Party Play* (Boston Court); *Accommodation*, *Remembering the Future*, *God of Carnage* (The Odyssey); *Coney Island Land*, *Let Me In*, *Driver's Seat* (Theatre 68); *Shrek: The Musical*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Addams Family: The Musical* (Lewis Family Playhouse); *Hairspray*, *Oliver!*, *Damn Yankees*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *A Funny Thing...Forum* (Desert Theatricals); *Joseph...Dreamcoat*, *Cinderella*, and *Mary Poppins* (Performance Riverside). Instagram: @gavanwyrickdesign; Web: gavanwyrickdesign.com

Bruce Dickinson & Ina Shumaker

Props

Bruce and Ina began designing props and set pieces for the Open Fist Theatre Company over 20 years ago. Specializing in creating realistic fake foods and period set dressings, some of their favorite past shows include: James Joyce's *The Dead*, *Doo Doo Love*, and *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Carpe diem.

Beth Robbins

Producer

A proud member of The Open Fist for over 15 years, Beth is so grateful to have participated as an actress in the shows; *The Dead*, *Everything is Enough*, *Rock 'n Roll*, *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, *Welcome to your Alternative Reality*, *Both*, *Stage Door*, *Political Pop-up #1, 2, 3 and 4*, *Musical Fools*, and *Bat Boy*. As a co-producer, *Under Milkwood* and *Anna in the Tropics*. At other theatres; *Barefoot in the Park*, *Spike Heels*, *Women of Troy*, *Assassins*, *Sweet Charity*, and the National tour of *I'm Getting My Act Together and Taking It On the Road*, to name a few. At the First Look Festival, Open Fist presented a workshop production of Beth's play, *Strained Relations*.

WHO'S WHO CREATIVE TEAM

Carmella Jenkins

Producer

The arts are more important now than ever. The arts play a vital role in our lives, and supporting live theatre is a wonderful way to appreciate and celebrate creativity and expression. Thank you for recognizing the importance of the arts and supporting this production. Last seen at the OpenFist in *Batboy the Musical*, First Look Festival's *A Lion in Winter*, *A Froggy Becomes*, *And If I Don't Behave Then What*, the Rorschach Fest's *This is a Chair & Here We Go*, First Look Festival's *Needs Help*, *The Soldier Dreams*, and various readings. She is a member of OpenFist.

John Dimitri

Stage Manager

John is thrilled to be stage managing this production of *Brownstone*. He has spent a lifetime in the Arts and has worn many hats, including Stage Actor, Screen Actor, Stage Manager, Assistant Stage Manager, Tech Director, Assistant Tech Director, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Set Builder, Photographer, Videographer, and Running Crew. In addition to his work with Open Fist, John is an AMDA graduate, an IATSE Local 33 Stagehand, and has lent his skills to various other LA-based theatre companies and programs, including The Sierra Madre Playhouse, Downtown Rep, The Fountain, Vesper, Children's Theatre Experience, Storytailors, Pasadena City College, and Glendale Community College. He would like to thank his mother and fellow Open Fist member Barbara Schofield, and all of his family and friends for their constant support over the years!

SPECIAL THANKS

Ian Ruskin
June Stoddard
Parker Bennett
Paula Goldman
Cameron Watson

ABOUT THE COMPANY



Founded in 1990, the company chose the name Open Fist to represent its fierce determination to reach out and engage audiences with impactful work. From its inception, the company immediately established its reputation as a cutting-edge ensemble, willing to tackle difficult material. Under the present leadership of Artistic Director Martha Demson, the company has evolved into a self-producing and ever-expanding artistic collective of actors, playwrights, designers, and directors.

The company continues to thrive by telling diverse and intriguing stories. And unlike companies whose vision comes from one singular artist, Open Fist derives its voice from the full collaboration of its entire company. Rather than limit ourselves to one style or point of view, we choose to produce what we feel is most relevant and look to push the boundaries of theatrical experience.

We pride ourselves on doing the things that are never seen in intimate theatre. Edgy, experimental, ambitious, and bold are what you can expect to see in an Open Fist production. And with 35 years behind us, we're just getting started.

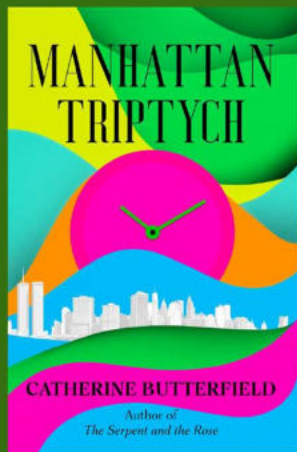
The Open Fist is an ALL VOLUNTEER Membership Company comprised of these wonderful artists:

*Amanda Weier, Amber Tiara, Barbara Bragg, Barbara Schofield,
Beth Robbins, Bethany Koulias, Bruce Dickinson, Bryan Bertone,
Carmella (Mel) Jenkins, Chima Rok, Christine Avila,
Christopher Cappiello, Christian Lezano. Clara York, David Shofner,
Debba Rofheart, Delvin Harrington, Dylan Maddalena,
Ethan Remez-Cott, Grace Soens, Howard Leder, Hutchins Foster,
Ina Schumacher, Isaiah Abell, Jack Sharpe, James Fowler, Jan Munroe,
Jennifer Zorbalas, Judith Scarpone, Jeremy Thompson,
Kelsey Kusnitz, Lane Allison, Liz Kennedy, Maria Mastroiannis,
Martha Demson, Matthew Sullivan, Michael A. Shepperd,
Michaela Miller, Nemma Adeni, Pat Towne, Rosie Byrne, Sarah Zuk,
Schuyler Mastain, Syanne Green, Timothy Brown*

Our Board members:

Malhar Pagay -- President
Ina Shumaker -- Secretary
Richard Knolla -- Treasurer
Charlie Otte
Chris Lore
Elizabeth Gerberg
Martha Demson
Rosie Byrne

If you enjoyed “Brownstone,” consider making this the next novel you read:



“Butterfield’s acerbic prose provides ample humor and social commentary. ”

KIRKUS REVIEWS

“A beautifully poignant story of a friendship born in the theatre and put to test in the stretch of time.” REEDSY DISCOVERY

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