



estlosangeles.org

SHORTS PROGRAM #1

Acknowledgment

Written and initiated by Tony Foster

Valentine's Day

Written and initiated by Leilani Squire

The Apartment

Written by Elisa Manzini, Initiated by Christopher Reiling

Life After Life

Written and initiated by Lisa Bishop

OUR NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

**NEW WEST
PLAYWRIGHTS**

**THE IGNITE
PROJECT**

**Playwrights
Unit**

**EST/LA
DEVELOPMENT LAB**

**Sunday
BEST
LA**

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A tremendous "Thank you!" to ALL of our supporters and volunteers, without whom this festival would not be possible.

EST/LA, located at Atwater Village Theatre, acknowledges our presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded homelands of the Tongva, Chumash, and Kizh people, who resided here and stewarded this land before the city of Los Angeles was formed, and are still living here among



Tracey A. Leigh, Artistic Director

Acknowledgment

Written, initiated and directed by Tony Foster*

CAST

Jack

Patricia

Heather

Stage Directions

Max E. Williams⁺

Genia Michaela⁺⁺

Alena Phelan⁺

Leilani Squire^{*PU}

SETTING

New York City

TIME

Present

- * EST/LA Member or Associate Member EST/LA
- + Proud member of Actors Equity Association
- NW NewWest Member
- IP Ignite Project Member
- PU Playwrights Unit Member



Tracey A. Leigh, Artistic Director



About the Playwright

Tony Foster is a founding member of the Elephant Theatre in Los Angeles and has written several works for the company including: *Underwear for Christmas*, *Elephant Shorts*, *Adventures with Sparky and Poo*, *Greystone*, and the critically acclaimed *Asleep on a Bicycle* (now available through Original Works Online). Other works have been produced at Sacred Fools; Lightning Rod Theatre; Skylight Theatre; Brimmer Street Theatre; Ringwald Theatre; Universal Theatre; Howling Moon Cab Theatre; Makor/Steinhardt Center; New Jersey Rep; the Ashland New Plays Festival; and the Actors Theatre of Louisville. He is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild and the Ensemble Studio Theatre.



Tracey A. Leigh, Artistic Director

Valentine's Day

Written, initiated and directed by Leilani Squire*^{PU}

CAST

Louise

Sharon Freedman*⁺

Walter

Ray Xifo*⁺

Stage Directions

Tony Foster*^{PU}

SETTING

Desolate, barren, flat

TIME

The present

- * EST/LA Member or Associate Member EST/LA
- + Proud member of Actors Equity Association
- NW NewWest Member
- IP Ignite Project Member
- PU Playwrights Unit Member



Tracey A. Leigh, Artistic Director



About the Playwright

Leilani Squire is an award-winning playwright, published writer, certified creativity coach, and member of EST/LA, Playwrights Unit, The Dramatist Guild, alumna of Kennedy Center Playwriting Intensive and EST/LA's The Ignite Project. She has been published in Smith & Krauss' 2023 Best 10-minute Plays and *WE/ US: Monologues for The Gender Minority*. *15 Dead Souls* won Veterans Repertory Theater's inaugural 10-minute play competition and opened their 2023 Parlor Series, and was part of EST/LA's one-act play fundraiser in 2022. *No Ordinary Mother* was a finalist of *The A Chronicles*, first read in New York in Fall 2023, and at Winterfest 2025. Since 2010, she has facilitated writing workshops for veterans with various organizations. She is founder and CEO of *Returning Soldiers Speak*, 501(c)(3), whose mission is to empower veterans and their families to tell their stories to the community through the written word and live theater. She is co-producer and head playwright for *Across Time: Love and Humanity During War*, the full-length play written by ten veterans, and the culmination for The Letters Project, developing and facilitating the playwriting workshops and assisting rehearsals in collaboration with ArtsUP! LA.

Special Thanks

The playwright is grateful to EST/LA, Tracey Leigh and Winterfest 2026 Team for bringing a bit of light into the world, and to her wonderful cast Sharon Freedman, Ray Xifo, and Tony Foster for bringing this play alive on the stage. A very special thanks to her husband and canine best friend for their love and holding hands and paws on this wonderful journey.



Tracey A. Leigh, Artistic Director

The Apartment

Written by Elisa Manzini^{PU}, initiated by Christopher Reiling^{*}

Directed by Ashley Denise Robinson^{**}

CAST

Amber

Ashley Denise Robinson^{**}

Ryan

Christopher Reiling^{*}

Travis

Eric Rudnick^{*PU}

Katie/Stage Directions

Jennifer Cheung

SETTING

An apartment

TIME

Present

- * EST/LA Member or Associate Member EST/LA
- + Proud member of Actors Equity Association
- NW NewWest Member
- IP Ignite Project Member
- PU Playwrights Unit Member



Tracey A. Leigh, Artistic Director



About the Playwright

Originally from Lake Como, Italy, **Elisa Manzini** currently lives in Los Angeles. She specializes in dark dramas, thrillers and horrors about psychologically broken women who find the strength to fight back. Over the years, she hosted her own radio show, sang jingles for commercials, wrote two chick lit novels published by HarperCollins and has been a staff writer for Comedy Central in Italy. Her plays have been produced in Los Angeles, Chicago, Michigan and Berlin, Germany. Her play, IT HITS YOU WHEN YOU KNOW IT, became a movie in 2020. Her other two produced features are available on demand. Elisa was one of the selected artists at The Orchard Project Episode Lab 2024 where she developed her TV show THE END-ALL about a shattered but determined medical director who runs an illegal assisted suicide clinic. Her last short film TEETH won 4 awards in the past year.



Tracey A. Leigh, Artistic Director

Life After Life

Written and initiated by Lisa Bishop*

Directed by Elin Hampton

CAST

Alexis

Nina

Ryan

Stage Directions

Dey Young⁺

Kate Prendergast⁺⁺

Ben Horowitz

Tony Foster^{*PU}

SETTING

New York City - upscale restaurant

TIME

Lunch - the present

- * EST/LA Member or Associate Member EST/LA
- + Proud member of Actors Equity Association
- NW NewWest Member
- IP Ignite Project Member
- PU Playwrights Unit Member



Tracey A. Leigh, Artistic Director



About the Playwright

Lisa Bishop has enjoyed a long and varied career in the entertainment industry. Her film acting credits began as the leader of the Lizzies in Walter Hill's cult classic *The Warriors*. A long-standing member of Ensemble Studio Theater in both NY & LA which she credits as her first artist home. As co-founder and producing director of the Circle West Theater company, she developed & produced dozens of new American plays nurturing emerging voices and original works. From her earliest days as an actor, writer and then producer, storytelling has been at the heart of all of her creative endeavors. For over three decades, Lisa has also been the guiding architect behind the legacy of author Jacqueline Susann, overseeing the re-emergence and continued relevance of Susann's brand while protecting the authenticity of her work. She is currently developing a musical adaptation of *Valley of the Dolls*.

This play is dedicated to Fran Drescher, her dating hero, who made her laugh so hard she had to write this play.



Tracey A. Leigh, Artistic Director



Dey Young (Alexis)

In NYC, Dey has starred in the off-Broadway productions, “*Soup in the Second Act*” and *I Carry Your Heart*. In LA, her theater credits include *Oedipus Machina*, *River Time*, *Good In Bed*, *Strindberg in Love*, *Infidelity In Pieces*, *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove*, and *Sweet Bird of Youth* with Ed Harris. Memorable roles in film are the snobby shopkeeper in *Pretty Woman*, *Rock’n’Roll High School*, *Spaceballs*, *What Just Happened*, *Murder 101*, *Running Man* and *Amsterdam*. She has guest starred in many TV shows: several *Star Trek* series, *This is Us*, *X-Files*, *Melrose Place*, *CSI*. (more at imdb.dey young) Dey is also a professional sculptor and in a number of galleries and museums (www.deyyoungart.com). She is a lifetime member of The Actor’s Studio.



Kate Prendergast (Nina)

Kate is an actor, writer, director, producer and sometime comedian. She is a longtime member of Ensemble Studio Theatre where she has acted in, written and/or produced more than 100 plays. She was a featured and popular comedian at the Comedy Club on the Sunset Strip. She started her career Off B’way in Manhattan where she was raised and went on to perform for years in NYC before she moved to LA. She has numerous television credits and has made her living in commercials. You’ve seen her in everything from Honda, Sears (more than 14 to date), Nabisco, Pillsbury, Citicard, Milk Bone, Wallgreens and TD Ameritrade. She can be seen in “Poor Greg Drowning” and was very happy to work with her old friend and colleague, James DuMont playing his wife in “That Guy”. In her last TV gig, she worked on “Blackish” opposite Tracee Ellis Ross.



Ben Horwitz (Ryan)

Ben Horwitz is a Philadelphia native who moved to Los Angeles after completing the Stella Adler Studio’s Three-Year Day Conservatory in New York City. His recent theatre credits include *Jewish for Dinner* at the Santa Monica Playhouse, *Dry Land* at the Echo Theater Company (remounted at the Kirk Douglas Theatre for Block Party), and *Picnic* at the Antaeus Theatre Company. He has also worked closely with and volunteered for Inner-City Shakespeare Company

Special Thanks

Lisa would like to thank the tireless team of EST’s Winterfest 2026. Bravo to all of our company members and volunteers that you don’t see on stage but that made this evening possible.