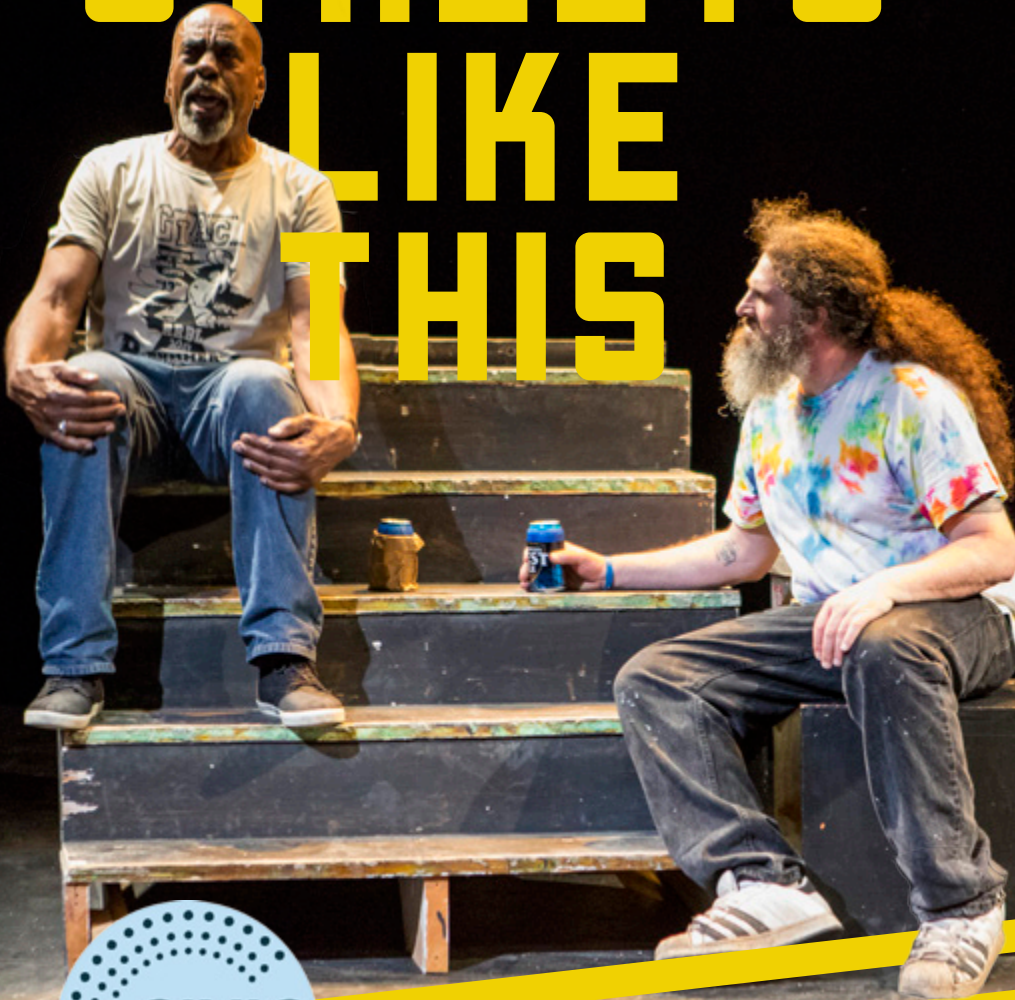


CIVIC ENSEMBLE'S REENTRY THEATRE PROGRAM PRESENTS

STREETS LIKE THIS



By Thom Dunn and A.C. Sidle
in collaboration with
members of the ReEntry Theatre Program

NOTE FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS

Part of being human is to be imperfect and fragile. Once cracks manifest themselves, any pressure is apt to exacerbate them. Tape and glue temporarily solve the issue, but the cracks are still there. What do we do after? As we start over it looks impossible to clean up the trainwrecks of our lives on our own. We all got lost, as many do. Together we found ourselves and a kinship through ReEntry Theater and our family was born.

Thank you for coming. We have put our sweat, blood and tears - our lives! - into this play. By now, this story is sadly common, and most people at least know someone who has lived this life, if not experienced it for themselves. What is so hard about starting over? What is so hard about getting out? Could you, right now - today - change everything you do, think, say, who you love, who you hang out with, who you are? Even the idea of it is overwhelming. We can't walk in anyone else's shoes. All we can do is do our best to make the world a better place and help each other do it. Thank you for witnessing our struggles, thank you for supporting our fight! Enjoy the show. Good night and God Bless.



cast and crew of *Streets Like This*, 2018

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The messages we get about people who have been convicted of crimes, or are addicted to drugs, is that they are not contributing members of the community. They are irredeemable. They are throwaways. You may have lived the experience of being seen this way by your community, or you may knowingly, or unknowingly hold these beliefs. Either way, these messages have impacted all of us, and shaped policies that impact people who are court-involved on a daily basis.

Where do these messages come from? How are they communicated? Who benefits from their spread? Many narratives normalize inequality with stories that ask us only to respond emotionally to a situation. These narratives encourage us to adopt, and even take comfort in, the status quo: this is the way things are and there's not much we can do about it. The perpetuation of these narratives ensures that nothing will change; they serve as tools for domination.

But what if the future is up for grabs? What if the way things are isn't the way they always have to be? What if our story, and the process we took to share it, is a tool for liberation instead of domination? We do not currently see equity in reality, but we can imagine it, and work to create a new reality. We cannot work in leaps but must take each step, progressing deliberately and truthfully from the present moment *as it is* towards the future we collectively want to create.

The stories shared in *Streets Like This* come directly from the experiences of over 100 people in this community who have experienced incarceration. The play challenges us to see the characters, and the real people they represent, as full human beings. It challenges us to see this even when they do or say things that disrupt our deeply held beliefs about the world and "how it is."

The future is up for grabs. I have seen it over and over again with every step this group takes toward what they want for themselves, their families, and our community. I have seen it in the audiences and discussion participants who come to see the world anew through these stories, and in the changing landscape of incarceration and reentry services in our community. I invite you to listen deeply for your place in these stories and find the connections to your own life, the lives of those you know, and those you have yet to meet. Join us for the discussion after the show, and let's talk about how we can take the next step toward the future we want.

Sarah K. Chalmers

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CIVIC ENSEMBLE PRESENTS

STREETS LIKE THIS

A ReEntry Theatre Program Production

by Thom Dunn and A.C. Sidle

in collaboration with the members of the ReEntry Theatre Program

The play is 90 minutes with no intermission
and will be followed by a brief facilitated discussion with the cast.

Directed by Sarah K. Chalmers

Assistant Director: Carley Robinson

Stage Manager: Jackie Scheiner

Assistant Stage Manager: Heather Duke

Assistant Stage Manager: Dan Zannella

ReEntry Mentors: Abdullah Khalil Bey and Amy Heffron

Sound Designer: Rudy Gerson

Lighting Designer: Lea Davis

Costume Designer: Elizabeth Kitney

Scenic Consultant: Norm Johnson, Jr.

With

Leroy Barrett* Jo-Louis Hallback*

Brian Briggs* Casandra Ponton*

Sherron Brown Edwin Santiago*

Suzanne Burnham* Elizabeth Seldin

Melissa Cady* A.C. Sidle*

Terrell M. Dickson* Dan Zanella*

Heather Duke

*ReEntry Theatre Program Member

STREETS LIKE THIS GLOSSARY

The anklet: GPS ankle monitor for people deemed to need extra supervision

Big Pharma: Pharmaceutical companies that run a practical drug monopoly, allowing them to raise prices on essential drugs

Call my colors: You know which specific urine test to attend by an assigned color. Showing up is "calling your colors"

Commissary: the in-jail store where you can buy necessities

County: County Jail

CPS: Child Protective Services

Crackhead soups: Instant ramen noodles

DSS: Department of Social Services: "responsible for providing benefits and services to sustain families and individuals and to assist them in achieving independence."

D.T.'s: Delirium Tremens: a rapid onset of confusion usually caused by withdrawal from alcohol

Global Telecom: A phone company

Inpatient: a therapeutic community

Narcan/ Narcan Dispensers: The overdose reversal drug

Outpatient: come in to appointments weekly or biweekly

PO: Parole Officer

ROR'ed: Released on your Own Recognizance (not required to pay bond

when you're released)

Section 8: A program for single mothers and those in need of financial housing assistance

Shank: A sharpened object to be used as a knife

Shooting gallery/ Safe injection site: A place where people go to shoot up. Not necessarily a building.

SNAP: Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program

Sober Reports: A requirement of drug court, parole, or probation to go to AA/NA a certain number of times per week and write a description of the topic and what you learned and hand it in to your PO

SSI: Social Security Income (sometimes wrongly used instead of SSD (Social Security Disability))

Tompkins County magic Kool-Aid Kick: Prisoners going through withdrawal at the Tompkins County Jail are given only a jug of Kool-Aid

Work Release Program: An early release program designed to ease you back into the community

3/4 House (difference between that and 1/2 House): similar to halfway house, but more structure (less freedom)

ENSEMBLE PROFILES

Leroy D. Barrett (Deon) has been a member of the ReEntry Theatre Program since 2017, when his "better half," Amy Heffron, introduced him to the group. He played many ensemble roles in the 2018 production of *Streets Like This*. Leroy got sober from alcohol in October 2017. He was introduced to ReEntry Theatre in 2017!!! The year he was born is the same year he became a B-Boy Break Dancer. He hopes this show will give a sense of family throughout our communities. He wants to thank Amy Heffron.

Abdullah Khalil Bey (Mentor) is a published artist with tons of volunteer workshops for basic art for young people and adults. He works closely with community reentry and social justice concerns. He has been working with Civic Ensemble since 2012 when Civic Ensemble was founded, and with the ReEntry Theatre Program since it started in 2015. Khalil hopes that this play will open minds that will lend needed support in the lives of our community members that will in turn improve our community. He would like to thank Sarah and the Civic Ensemble crew that showed the group patience, support, and professionalism in our performances.

Brian S. Briggs (Johnny/Narcan Man) has been with ReEntry Theatre for several years. He is reprising his roles from the first *Streets Like This* production. Brian works and volunteers with STAP and Reach Medical. He has been a fierce harm reduction advocate and is the co-president of the Ithaca Drug Users Union. Brian hopes the play will endear the audience to people living a life they might not be familiar with, and help us see we're all just people and we all deserve the best quality of life possible. Brian thanks his parents, sister, and his whole family for hanging in there with him through some....tumultuous times. He thanks REACH and STAP, and his friend Tony.

Sherron Brown (Brian's Mom, Ensemble) acts because she is a teller of stories. Sherron dabbles in short stories and poetry and loves the arts in all its forms. She volunteers in the Ithaca community with a special interest in LGBTQIA+ issues. Sherron is reprising her roles from the 2018 production of *Streets Like This*. With Civic Ensemble she has also appeared in *The Class Divide* (2017), *Bah Humbug!* (2016), and the *Katrina Plays* (2015). She hopes *Streets Like This* gives the community a better understanding about the struggles of the people who deal with these challenges everyday, and that understanding will lead to compassion, action, and support.

Suzanne Burnham (Annabelle) has a background in musical theatre. This is her first production since 1985. She hopes the play will bring community awareness to the very real, present, and persistent judicial, social, and family problems around addiction and alcoholism. Suzanne has been the Academic Outreach and Program Coordinator at College Initiative

Upstate (CIU), a program of O.A.R. of Tompkins County since January 2017. Suzanne has lived in Ithaca, NY since 1992, and is the proud mother of two sons ages 24 and 27.

Melissa Cady (Ensemble) decided to participate in the play for the learning experience. She is excited and nervous! Misi is a recovering addict and knows the struggles of the drug court systems, DSS, Section 8, and so on. She hopes some of those in authority will see the show and maybe see people like her in a different light. Misi would like to thank everyone in the play for welcoming her: "I can't believe the love and support I have received." She'd also like to thank her boyfriend Kurt, and her children David and Matthew for helping her learn her lines.

Sarah K. Chalmers (Director and Civic Ensemble Artistic Director) is a theatre artist, teacher, and facilitator, a founding member of Civic Ensemble, and the mother of a remarkable human being. She has trouble finding the words to express how much being a part of the ReEntry Theatre Program has inspired her growth as an artist, and a human being. Sarah is grateful to the members of the ReEntry Theatre Program, past and present, and the many actors, designers, and technicians from our community who have given their energy, love, and stories to this work.

Sage Alia Clemenco (Civic Ensemble Director of Engagement) is grateful to the passion and talent that the ReEntry Theatre Program has put forward to make this production possible. Sage is a theater artist and administrator who delights in the places where community building and art making intersect. There is no better example of that than this work you are experiencing here today.

Lea Davis (Lighting Designer) is an Ithaca-based LD and theatre technician, and currently works as a freelance designer and as production manager for CSMA Ithaca's historic performance space, Martha Hamblin Hall. They hold a B.S. in Theatre from SUNY Oneonta (2017). Favorite projects include lighting direction for Pat Metheny's 2018 European tour, lighting design for House of Ithaca's *The Skriker*, and lights and projections for Pop'd at the Cherry.

Terrell M. Dickson (Ensemble) has held over 100 jobs in his life ranging from the United States Marine Corps to daycare worker. Terrell has been with the ReEntry Theatre Program since it started in 2015. He keeps participating because it's fun and he loves the people. He hopes the show will bring understanding and togetherness. Terrell would like to thank Jordan Ingram, C.C. Dickson, and Tristan Statson for loving me.

Heather Duke (Ensemble/Assistant Stage Manager) has performed in several Civic Ensemble productions. She is currently on the Civic Ensemble Board of Directors. Heather works with mentally ill inmates in a supermax prison and has seen the struggles they face as they get ready to re-enter the

community. She is thrilled to be performing once again with Civic, but she is also expanding her knowledge by working as an Assistant Stage Manager.

Thom Dunn's plays have been performed or read across the country, from Boston to Hollywood to Valdez, Alaska; he has also written three novels and published short fiction, poetry, and comics in Asimov's, Serial Pulp Magazine, and others. He is currently a staff writer for the New York Times' Wirecutter site and a regular contributor to BoingBoing.net, as well as the guitarist / singer in a rock band called the Roland High Life. A graduate of Emerson College and the Clarion Writer's Workshop at the Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination, Thom enjoys mythophysics, robots and whiskey, and Oxford commas, and firmly believes that Journey's "Don't Stop Believing" is the single greatest atrocity ever committed against mankind. thomdunn.net

Rudy Gerson (Sound Designer) makes time-based mixed work at the intersections of performance, sculpture, and interactive design. He has designed, directed, and performed across various mediums. His work has been presented at MoMA PS1, Abrons Arts Center, and the Lincoln Center. Civic Ensemble credits include: *Civic Origins*, *Antigone* (FLRC), *SAFETY(LACS)*, *ReEntry 2015 (Hangar)*, *Owen's Story* (IYB), *Power to Help* (IYB), *My Children, My Africa* (Kitchen Theatre). Based in Brooklyn.

Jo-Louis Hallback (Brian) hails from Lakeland, Florida. He has served as volunteer coordinator for Juneteenth at Southside Community Center, and has worked with College Initiative Upstate, where he was first introduced to Civic Ensemble. Jo-Louis is a singer, rapper, and songwriter. He has performed with Civic Ensemble once before in the College Initiative Upstate (CIU) graduation celebration in June 2019. He would like to "thank my mom and dad because without them I wouldn't be able to give the audience my god-given talent, lol." He would also like to thank the Southside Community Center for showing him love when he moved here, Benay and Suzanne at CIU, the cast, crew, and staff at Civic Ensemble, and everyone who has helped him on his life's journey.

Amy Heffron (Mentor) has been with the ReEntry Theatre Program since 2017 and played Annabelle in the original production. In 2018 Amy performed with Civic Ensemble while completing college at TC3 through College Initiative Upstate. Since joining the group she has gotten involved with policy change at the county level. She is grateful to Leroy, and her family for supporting her.

Francesca Infante-Meehan (Marketing Associate) is a Work-Study student from Ithaca College double majoring in Theatre Arts Management and Marketing. She loved working on *Streets Like This* marketing and looks forward to her future with Civic Ensemble. This show has exposed her to a side of life she never got to experience, and is extremely thankful for that.

Elizabeth Kitney (Costume Designer) got her start in costuming with Civic Ensemble's *On the Corner* in 2015. She has since worked with Ithaca Shakespeare, House of Ithaca, Opera Ithaca, Cornell Vet Players. She is delighted to be part of the *Streets* reboot.

Casandra Ponton (Abby) is a longtime member of the ReEntry Theatre Program, and helped originate the role of Abby in the 2018 production. She participates because the people in this program are her family. They have helped her get her life on track. This show allows Casandra to be a part of something bigger than herself. *Streets* is something she is passionate about. She hopes the play will show the community that people who are in the streets are still human beings, and may be going through struggles that other folks might not know about, and that despite what any individual has done, it doesn't define who they are. Casandra would like to thank Sarah, the cast and crew, Scott & Sherry Ponton, Violet, Sandy Richardson, and Tony Sidle for supporting her and seeing the best in her.

Carley Robinson (Assistant Director) is a Cornell student who has been involved in Civic Ensemble and the ReEntry Theatre Program since Fall 2018. You might recognize her as Bobbi in *The Next Storm* (Cornell/Civic Ensemble) or as Beneatha in *A Raisin in the Sun* (Hangar Theatre). She is so grateful to work on this phenomenal play with this amazing family of people and hopes you enjoy the show!

Edwin Santiago (Ensemble) is an active member of the Re-Entry Theatre Program. He has been with the program since the spring of 2017 and performed the same roles in the 2018 production of *Streets Like This*. He hopes that this show will raise awareness and enlighten people: they are not alone with issues of mental health and addiction.

Jackie Scheiner (Stage Manager) is incredibly grateful to be involved with this production. This is her first show with Civic Ensemble. She has also stage managed with Ithaca Shakespeare Company, Walking on Water Productions, and Triphammer Arts Inc.

Elizabeth Seldin (Crystal) is honored to join the cast of *Streets Like This*. Past credits include Mary in *What Haunts You* (Clockmaker Arts as part of The Kitchen Theatre Sink), Cecilia/Maeve in *Et Le Lion* Off-Broadway Solo Fest Theatre Row NYC, and Beth in *Beth and Charly* (web series co-starring Jeremy Jordan). Proud graduate of Ithaca College Theater Dept. Artistic Director of ClockmakerArts.com.

A.C. Sidle (Dennis) has been a member of the ReEntry Theatre Program since 2016. He has written pieces for several performances including *Dreams and Nightmares (The Dope Opera)*, and *Streets Like This*. Tony is co-president of the Ithaca Drug Users Union. He also advocates for harm reduction,

decriminalization of drugs, and equal treatment for all. "This is my family, if it wasn't for this, my life would be very different. Thank you for coming."

Julia Taylor (Civic Ensemble Executive Director) is thrilled to be part of the Civic Ensemble team, engaging in theatre-making that explores big questions in our communities. Since joining Civic in 2018, Julia has collaborated on projects such as *Climates of Change*; *Our Stories, Our Solutions*; and *Community Soup*. She's grateful to the members of the ReEntry Theatre Program for generously sharing their gifts with this community, and for the audience members who are listening with open hearts.

Dan Zanella (Ensemble/Assistant Stage Manager) heard great things about the ReEntry Theatre Program from participants and was encouraged to participate himself. In addition to his work with Civic Ensemble, he volunteers at STAP, REACH, and College Initiative Upstate. Dan hopes the show will help stop the stigma attached to addiction and show what the formerly incarcerated and addicts can accomplish when you give them a chance. He thanks the cast and crew.



REENTRY THEATRE PROGRAM HISTORY

Civic Ensemble launched the ReEntry Theatre Program in 2015, gathering a group of individuals from Tompkins County who had experienced incarceration at any time in their lives. In the first two years, participants met with professional theatre artists to build theatre skills, build community, and write original plays based on their experiences. Over an 8-week course each year, participants wrote original plays and presented them to the public. Those first two years the group created *A Setback Ain't Nothing but a Setup for a Comeback* (2015) and *Dreams and Nightmares* (2016).

Throughout 2016, past participants of the program came together to discuss how they wanted the program to grow. They supported establishing weekly theatre sessions where they could make theatre, engage in dialogue, and support each other. Weekly meetings began in March 2017, first at Southside Community Center, then Just Be Cause Center, and now at Day Reporting. From March 2017-March 2018, over 100 people helped create the original, full-length play *Streets Like This* and in May 2018 there were four performances.

Since the program began in 2015, participants have represented ReEntry Theatre Program by invitation in performances and panels at From Cell to Cell: The Prison in Television and Performance Conference at Cornell University (2016), The New Jim Crow Community Read in (2017), Life Sentences: Seeing the Imprisoned, Emancipating the Humanities Symposium at Johns Hopkins University (2017), The Justice Collective Regional Conference on the Impact of Mass Incarceration on Families and Communities (2018), College Initiative Upstate Graduation Ceremony (2019), and the 26th Annual Mental Health Conference (2019).

The ReEntry Theatre Program continues to meet weekly at Tompkins County Day Reporting and is open to anyone who has experienced incarceration

or court involvement. The process of making plays includes sharing stories, writing, improvising, and developing plays to share with the public.

REENTRY THEATRE COUNCIL

The ReEntry Theatre Program is run by a group of people who have experienced incarceration, facilitated by Civic Ensemble artists. This group makes decisions about the direction of the program, recruits new members, assists in the facilitation of the group at Day Reporting each week, and takes part in panels and conferences to share the work we do. Council members are paid a monthly stipend for their work.

Leroy Barrett
Abdullah Khalil Bey
Brian Briggs
Amy Heffron
Casandra Ponton
Edwin Santiago
A.C. Sidle

REENTRY THEATRE MENTORS

Abdullah Khalil Bey and Amy Heffron played Deon and Annabelle in the 2018 production of *Streets Like This*. Though they were not able to perform this year, they have been a big part of making this production successful, advising and supporting the cast. Both members of the ReEntry Theatre Council, Amy and Khalil are an integral part of the program.



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ABOUT CIVIC ENSEMBLE

The Beloved Community refers to a global vision that all people should share in the wealth of the earth. Poverty and homelessness, racism and all forms of discrimination will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency won't allow it.

Civic Ensemble works toward the Beloved Community in all our work, from the ReEntry Theatre Program and Community-Based Plays to our education programs and practitioner productions of new plays. We have engaged with a wide range of community groups and individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences for almost eight years in Tompkins County. Civic Ensemble is committed to bringing people of different backgrounds and experiences together to engage in vibrant conversations about the American experience.

Civic Ensemble was founded in 2012 by Sarah K. Chalmers, Godfrey L. Simmons, Jr., and Jennifer Herzog in response to a growing sense that despite a real theatre-going culture in Ithaca and surrounding areas, many communities were not being served. This includes communities of color, rural communities, college students, people who are poor, people who are LGBTQAI+, and local artists, among others.

CIVIC ENSEMBLE STAFF

Julia Taylor, Executive Director
Sage Alia Clemenco, Community Engagement
Sarah K. Chalmers, Artistic Director
Francesca Infante-Meehan, Marketing Associate

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Norm Johnson, Jr.
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Carrie Chalmers
Eric Clay
CSP Management
Anna Cunningham and the Kitchen
Theatre Company
Joan Friedman
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