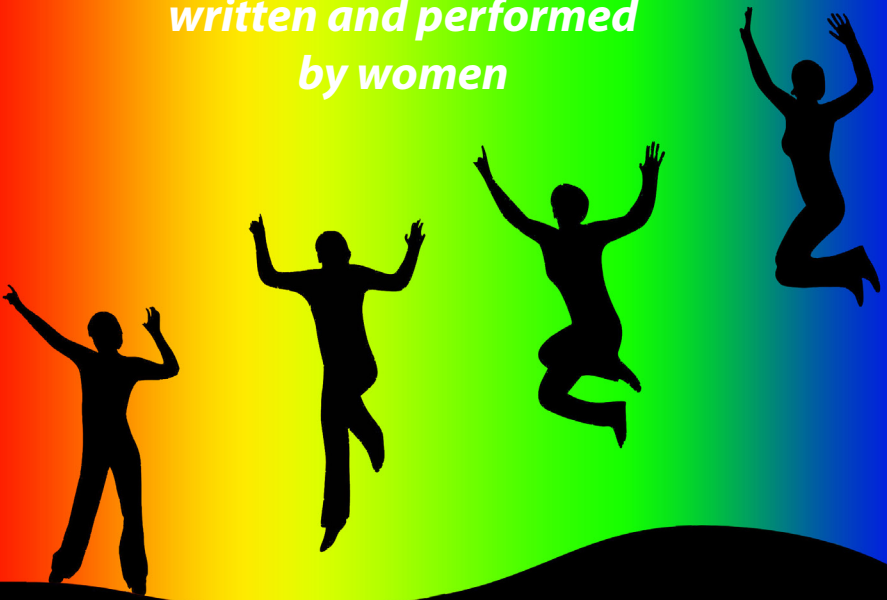


# O Solo Mama Mia!

*a festival of solo works  
written and performed  
by women*



**May 5 - 8**

James L. Meader Theatre  
Russell Sage College  
Troy, NY

**May 12-15**

Storefront Artist Project  
Performance Space  
Pittsfield, MA

*in collaboration with the O Solo Mama Mia Art Exhibit  
running May 1-21 at Storefront Artist Project*



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**COME HELL OR HIGH WATER**

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**Victorian Stroll Concert**

December 4—Troy Music Hall

**VIVALDI GLORIA**

December 11—St. Augustine's Church



**PETER PAN**

December 4—21—Schacht Fine Arts Center

**Much Ado About Nothing**

February 10—March 2 —Schacht Fine Arts Center

**Frog and the Toad**

June 1—15—Schacht Fine Arts Center

WAM Theatre presents

**O Solo Mama Mia!**

a festival of solo works written and performed by women

**May 5–8 • Troy, NY**

James L. Meader Theatre  
Russell Sage College

**May 12–15 • Pittsfield, MA**

Storefront Artist Project  
31 South Street

FEATURING:

***My Salvation Has A First Name: A Wienermobile Journey***

written and performed by Robin Gelfenbien, directed by Rachel Eckerling,  
sound design by Marcelo Añez

***How To Be A Lesbian In 10 Days or Less***

written and performed by Leigh Hendrix, directed by Peter Deffet

***Performing Therapy***

written by Camilla Schade and Kira Lallas, performed by Camilla Schade

***Paris 1890—Unlaced!***

written by Juliane Hiam, directed by Sarah Taylor, performed by Anne Undeland,  
set design by Carl Sprague, costume design by Govane Lohbauer,  
underwear consultant: Lynda Meyer.

***Stories from Hell and High Water***

written Jamuna Yvette Sirker, directed by Lorca Peress, performed by Richarda Abrams

**Production Stage Manager:** Margaret Hall  
**FESTIVAL STAFF:** **Lights:** Nick Webb / **Sound:** Joe Jurchak  
**Producers:** Kristen van Ginhoven and Leigh Strimbeck

**WAM Theatre Mission**

WAM Theatre has a double philanthropic mission. Every time an audience comes together for a theatrical event, a community is formed. WAM Theatre engages that community by 1) producing theatrical events for everyone, with a focus on women theatre artists and/or stories of women and girls; and 2) donating a portion of proceeds from those events to organizations that lift up the lives of women and girls locally and globally. [www.WAMTheatre.com](http://www.WAMTheatre.com)

**Edna's Hospital in Somaliland**

A portion of the Festival proceeds will benefit the training of at least one community midwife at Edna's Hospital in Somaliland. The mission of Edna's Hospital is to improve maternal and infant health care, and fight the practice of female genital mutilation. Visit them on the web at [www.ednahospital.org](http://www.ednahospital.org)



## A Note from the Artistic Directors

So much theater so little time! Welcome to the **O Solo Mama Mia Festival**, featuring theater artists from our region, Providence, Ithaca, and New York City. All of these shows were developed because of a basic human need: to tell a story, to bear witness, to share amazement, to retain perspective through humor. We are grateful to the artists who are sharing their work with WAM as actors, writers, directors, and performers. We think that five shows, in two locations—James Meader Theater in Troy, New York and the Storefront Artist Project in Pittsfield, Massachusetts—is quite an achievement. If you like what you see, come back—and see a different double bill, or tell a friend, or buy a festival pass and see it all! But above all thank you for coming out tonight, and joining us in something new (original solo theater) and something old (hearing a story).

WAM's double philanthropic mission means that a portion of our proceeds from this event will go to an organization that lifts up the lives of women and girls. Tonight, that organization is **Edna's Hospital in Somaliland**. The health of the people of Somaliland is among the worst in Africa, with one of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the world. The goal of the hospital is to train fully qualified health care professionals and to train and dispatch midwives throughout the country. Edna has a dream to train 1,000 community midwives and by being here tonight, you are helping make her dream and our dream for WAM Theatre a reality.

Since launching WAM Theatre in January, 2010 we have produced two successful events and two sold out fundraisers, collaborated with over 100 theatre artists, of which over 70% were female, donated \$2,500 to two beneficiaries and performed for over 750 people! We remain grateful for the support that has made it all possible, which includes you being here today. If you'd like to continue to support our work, we encourage you to **join our 100x100 Campaign**, where we aim to raise 100 donations of \$100 in 2011. We are nearly halfway there and will happily accept donations, of any amount, at the end of the evening. Together, we can use theatre to effect change for women and girls in our local and global communities.

We'll see you again in November for the Berkshire Premiere of **The Attic, The Pearls & Three Fine Girls** by Jennifer Brewin, Leah Cherniak, Ann-Marie Macdonald, Alisa Palmer and Martha Ross. We are thrilled to announce that our beneficiary for that production will be The Berkshire United Way Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative.

We thank our collaborators for this festival, Russell Sage College and Storefront Artist Project, and we thank you for supporting the arts and women and girls,

**Leigh Strimbeck & Kristen van Ginhoven**  
Co-Artistic Directors, WAM Theatre



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## About the Performances

IN TROY AND PITTSFIELD:

### ***My Salvation Has A First Name: A Wienermobile Journey***

Based on the true story of an insecure goody-goody who overcomes years of bullying and finds redemption and her true voice behind the windshield of the Wienermobile. Using music, video and photo footage from her life on the hot dog highway, comedian Robin Gelfenbien tells the story of her transformation from underdog to "one of the most notorious Wienermobile drivers of all time." (Time Out New York). "4 stars" (Time Out New York) "The highlight of next month's Fringe Festival" (New York Magazine). (An excerpt from this show was part of our inaugural event, 'A WAM Welcome')

### ***How To Be A Lesbian In 10 Days or Less***

Not a coming out story, but not not a coming out story, *How To Be A Lesbian in 10 Days or Less* is a dynamic workshop led by teacher and motivational speaker Butchy McDyke that will help you become the "best lesbian you can be!" Writer and performer Leigh Hendrix links unique characters, personal story, and a Reba McEntire song in a mostly funny and sometimes earnest exploration of how you can learn to confidently shout, "I'm a big 'ol dyke!"

### ***Performing Therapy***

This one-woman, group-therapy comedy about depression is a sideways safari through loss, displacement, dementia, depression and the surprise healing nature of upstate New York. A 'depressively experienced' actress turned therapist leads group therapy in an attempt to provide helpful advice and therapeutic modalities to other 'stressfully afflicted'. Art Therapy with Balloon Animals, Affirmations on Post-it Notes and Primal Humming are some of the hopeful remedies.

FROM MAY 5-8 IN TROY, NY ONLY:

### ***Paris 1890—Unlaced!***

Join actress Anne Undeland on a quick and saucy romp through Paris in the Belle Epoque—a glittering world of infamous courtesans, imperious grandes dames, and clueless but ambitious cancan dancers. Costume, accent and character changes keep the pace lively as *Paris 1890—Unlaced!* delivers laughs, heart and, of course, a little *risqué* business. *Paris 1890—Unlaced!* was originally commissioned and produced by Ventfort Hall Mansion and Gilded Age Museum in Lenox, Massachusetts, in collaboration with Shakespeare & Company.

FROM MAY 12-15, IN PITTSFIELD, MA ONLY:

### ***Stories from Hell and High Water***

*Hell and High Water* or *When the Sky Falls* is a fantasia on the theme of security in America. It is a sharply satiric account of playwright Jamuna Yvette Sirker's experience surviving the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The play follows Teacher Alice, a Latina school teacher's struggles through the abyss of an American apocalypse. *Stories from Hell and High Water* is a one-woman, solo version of Ms. Sirker's full-length play. In it, the astonishingly talented Richarda Abrams, embodies Teacher Alice along with six residents from her flooded New Orleans neighborhood: a nurse, a jazz singer, a photographer, an out of work actor and the spirit of a bag lady. This quirky and surprisingly funny work holds resonance for anyone who knows loss, tragedy, or the illusive nature of "security".

# Festival Schedule

**Troy, NY** @ James L. Meader Little Theatre • Russell Sage Campus

**THURSDAY MAY 5**

**7:30PM**

- *A Wiernmobile Journey*
- *Performing Therapy*

**FRIDAY MAY 6**

**7:30PM**

- *A Wiernmobile Journey*
- *How To Be A Lesbian...*

**SATURDAY MAY 6**

**2:00PM**

- *Paris 1890—Unlaced!*
- *How To Be A Lesbian...*

**7:30PM**

- *Performing Therapy*
- *Paris 1890—Unlaced!*

**SUNDAY MAY 7**

**2:00PM**

- *Performing Therapy*
- *Paris 1890—Unlaced!*

**Pittsfield, MA** @ Storefront Artists Project

**THURSDAY MAY 12**

**7:30PM**

- *A Wiernmobile Journey*
- *How To Be A Lesbian...*

**FRIDAY MAY 13**

**7:30PM**

- *Performing Therapy*
- *Stories from Hell/High Water*

**SATURDAY MAY 14**

**2:00PM**

- *How To Be A Lesbian...*
- *Performing Therapy*

**7:30PM**

- *Stories from Hell/High Water*
- *A Wiernmobile Journey*

**SUNDAY MAY 15**

**2:00PM**

- *A Wiernmobile Journey*
- *Performing Therapy*

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# The Creative Team

**RICHARDA ABRAMS\*** (performer, *Stories from Hell or High Water*) B.F.A. (honors) Acting (New York University's Tisch School of the Arts), M.A. Educational Theatre (NYU's Steinhardt School of Education), Performances: Multi Stages, Public Theater, Cherry Lane, 2nd Stage, Crossroads, La Mama, Acting Company, Kennedy Center Festival, CBS, ABC, SHOWTIME, LIFETIME, *Sesame Street*, Muhal Richard Abrams' CD (*Song For All*) and Amina Claudine Myers' Voice Ensemble (FRANCE). AUDELCO Award recipient. Memberships: The Actors Studio, League of Professional Theatre Women, and New York Women In Film and Television. <http://resumes.actorsaccess.com/richardaabrams>

**PETER DEFFET** (director, *How To Be a Lesbian in 10 Days or Less*) is a multi-disciplinary performing artist who resides in Rhode Island. He has studied theater, classical voice and dance at Northwestern University and Rhode Island College. He has worked with Daniel McCusker, Melody Ruffin-Ward, Marsian DeLellis, Nikki Carrara, Michael Bolger, Vanessa Gilbert, David Hanbury and Michael Goldfried at Perishable Theater, Trinity Repertory Company, Redmoon Theater, Great Small Works, Ars Nova, Judson Church, and The Hudson Guild Theater. He is delighted to be directing Leigh in her solo work *How To Be A Lesbian In 10 Days Or Less*.

**RACHEL ECKERLING** (director, *My Salvation has a First Name: A Wiernmobile Journey*) is a New York based director. She worked for several years with Francis Ford Coppola on both theatre and film projects. Mr. Coppola commissioned her film adaptation of the best-selling novel, *The Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing* by Melissa Bank. In 2005, she led a screenplay-writing workshop with writer/director Paul Schrader. Most recently for the FringeNYC 2010 Rachel directed Andrea Caban's *Questions My Mother Can't Answer* at New York Theatre Workshop and Rachel Evans' *JEW WISH* at The Players Theater. Rachel is a graduate of Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and is an affiliated artist of New Georges. Always a lover of the Chicago dogs, the Wiernmobile show feels like coming home.

**ROBIN GELFENBIEN** (playwright/performer, *My Salvation has a First Name: A Wiernmobile Journey*) is a writer, storyteller and comedian whose solo show *My Salvation Has a First Name: A Wiernmobile Journey* premiered at the 2008 NY International Fringe Festival. Robin has written jokes for Rosie O'Donnell who introduced Martha Stewart, Rupert Murdoch and Hillary Rodham Clinton, among others, at the Matrix Awards. Her original comedy songs have played on Sirius Radio, and she starred in a commercial directed by Spike Lee. Robin is currently writing a memoir based on her solo show. [robingelfenbien.com](http://robingelfenbien.com)

**MARGARET HALL\*** (stage manager) is an International Director and Equity Stage Manager. Her most recent work includes directing *Peter Pan and Wendy* and *The Wizard of Oz*, and producing/directing *24 Hours: in a Library*. Her skills and training have taken her to Bali, Scotland, Austria, Russia, England, Romania, and to several U.S. States. Margaret holds a BA in Theatre Arts from SUNY New Paltz, and an MFA in Theatre Directing from the University of Essex in London.

**LEIGH HENDRIX** (playwright/performer, *How To Be a Lesbian in 10 Days or Less*) is a Providence, RI based theatre artist and educator. As an actor, Leigh specializes in playing different kinds of lesbians (*The Golden Lasso*, Perishable Theatre), mythic Greek queens (*The Iphigenia Project*, Emerson College), and Matt Damon (*Matt and Ben*, Theatre of Thought). Her solo performance work *How To Be A Lesbian in 10 Days or Less* was developed at Emerson College and as a resident artist at Providence's Perishable Theatre. [www.leighhendrix.com](http://www.leighhendrix.com)

**JULIANE HIAM** (playwright, *Paris 1890—Unlaced!*) *Paris 1890—Unlaced!* originated at Ventfort Hall in Lenox, MA produced in cooperation with Shakespeare & Company in the summer of 2009. Hiam's *Belle of the Books*, also having been produced at Ventfort Hall, played this past January at the Metropolitan Playhouse in New York City. Also at the Metropolitan was Hiam's *A Tanglewood Tale*, two years ago, having originally been produced at Shakespeare & Company. Other plays have been produced at Mass MoCA, the Norman Rockwell Museum, Hancock Shaker Village and in the Pioneer Valley. Prior to writing plays, Hiam was a screenwriter in Los Angeles. Her feature film, which she also

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directed, starred Danny Aiello, Sally Kirkland and Maureen Stapleton won awards including AMC Theaters Best Screenplay Award and Best New Director in Las Vegas. She was also author of a nationally syndicated newspaper column "The World According to Jacuzzi."

**JOE JURCHAK** (Sound Design) has been designing sound for theatre and doing audio system installations since 1991. His work in regional theatres in this area includes *Suddenly Last Summer* and *Ciao!* at Barrington Stage; *The Swan, Wit, The Mystery of Irma Vep* and *Ten by Ten* at Stageworks; and *The Puppetmaster of Lodz* and *Private Eyes* at The Egg. Outside the Capital Region he has worked on such shows as *Baltimore Waltz, An Empty Plate at the Grand Boeuf, Hippolytus* and *Death of A Salesman*. Television sound design credits include *Voices of East Africa* and *Windows to a View*, produced for PBS and *Vriesland* produced for NPR. Joe has a long-standing collaboration with Leigh Strimbeck which includes their two sons, Jan and Griff.

**KIRA LALLAS** (co-creator, *Performing Therapy*), currently a Bereavement Counselor at Hospicare, grew up in Ithaca theatres and co-founded the Orange Tree Theatre Company. While at Boston University, her studies focused on solo autobiographical writing and performance. She toured her award-winning one-woman show, *Translations of Xhosa*, about being in South Africa, until she lived as a resident at Wisdom's Goldenrod Center for Philosophic Study in Hector.

**LORCA PERESS** (director, *Stories from Hell and High Water*) is a NYC theatre artist, specializing in multicultural and multidisciplinary dance, multimedia, and music theatre works. As founder/artistic director of MultiStages, she has produced/directed and designed numerous premieres including the 2010 production of *Hell and High Water*. She is an LPTW Board member, and directed Kathleen Chalfant in a one-woman show for its New Play Fest. A recipient of numerous awards/grants: La Mama INKY, two LMCC MCAFs, NYCWAM Coalition Award, N.W. Dible Foundation, Jewish Communal Fund, Dramatists Guild Fund, et al. A Bennington College graduate, and teacher at NYU and Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute. [www.eljallartsannex.com](http://www.eljallartsannex.com)

**CAMILLA SCHADE** (creator/performer, *Performing Therapy*) has been gleefully touring this solo show which was first created with a grant from The Arts of the Southern Fingerlakes. She was recently seen in Ithaca as Louise in The Kitchen Theatre's *Private Lives* where she also played Kate in *Old Times* and Myra in *They Lived Happily Ever After*. For Ithaca's Light in Winter Festival she played Einstein in *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, Virginia Woolf in *Vita & Virginia* for Cornell's Johnson Museum among others. She is a freelance teaching artist for the Hangar Theatre and numerous other arts centers, schools and programs throughout the southern Finger Lakes.

**YVETTE "JAMUNA" SIRKER** (playwright, *Stories from Hell and High Water*) is a playwright, producer, director, actress, choreographer and native of New Orleans, LA. Among her many awards and honors are the Louisiana Division of the Arts Fellowship in Playwriting and first prize in MultiStages Theater's 2009 New Works Contest (NYC). *Hell and High Water* premiered to rave reviews at the Hudson Guild Theater (NYC) in the spring of 2010 in a Multistage Theater production under the direction of Lorca Peress. Development support also came from Epic Theater Center (NYC) and The Drilling Company (NYC). Professional affiliations include Actors' Equity Association, Screen Actors Guild and Dramatists Guild of America. The WAM/O Solo Mama Mia presentation marks Ms. Sirker's Berkshire debut as a playwright. This is Ms. Sirker's second WAM endeavor, having previously served as Assistant Director and Choreographer for *Melancholy Play*.

**LEIGH STRIMBECK** (Producer) is an actor, director, writer and acting teacher. Plays directed include: *Fools Rush In, Voice Of The Prairie, Sea Marks, The Nest, Daytrips, The Baltimore Waltz* and *Death Of A Salesman* for the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble (BTE) in Pennsylvania. During her 12 year tenure with BTE Leigh acted in dozens of plays and served as Ensemble Director for 3 years. Other plays directed include *Children Of A Lesser God, On The Verge, Tonight We Improvise, The Mystery Of Irma Vep* and *Private Eyes* for various regional theaters. She was co-writer and director of *Berwick, America* and *This House Built*, both history plays commissioned by their communities. Actor: favorite roles include Martha in *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf*, Grusha in *Caucasian Chalk Circle*,

Petruchio in *Taming Of The Shrew* and Joan in WAM Theatre's *Melancholy Play*. Most recently seen as Clare in Capital Repertory Theatre's *Kingdom Of The Shore*. Leigh is an Associate Member of the BTE, an assistant professor of theater at Russell Sage College in Troy, N.Y. and co-artistic director and founder of WAM Theatre.

**ANNE UNDELAND** (performer, *Paris 1890—Unlaced!*) performs extensively on the East Coast. In addition to *Paris 1890—Unlaced!*, she starred in *The Belle of Amherst* (as Emily Dickinson), the stage adaptation of the Edith Wharton short story, *Xingu*, and in the title role in Fanny Kemble's *Lenox Address*, all produced at Ventfort Hall in Lenox Massachusetts, in collaboration with Shakespeare & Company. Anne has acted with Barrington Stage, StageWorks, Capital Repertory Theatre, Mixed Company, and Castle Hill Theatre Company, as well as with the New Repertory Theatre in Boston and the Metropolitan Playhouse in New York. <http://www.paris1890.com/>

**KRISTEN VAN GINHOVEN** (Producer) Kristen most recently directed *Melancholy Play* for WAM Theatre. Selected directing credits: Capital Repertory Theatre, Cohoes Music Hall, ArtsEmerson, Majestic Theatre, Barrington Stage Company (assistant to Jesse Berger), Huntington Theatre (assistant to Edward Hall), Actor's Shakespeare Project (assistant to Melia Bensussen). Favorite acting roles include Rosalind in *As You Like It* (Shakespeare by the Sea), Gwendolyn in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Sudbury Theatre Center) and Danielle/Dolores the World Premiere of Jason Sherman's *An Acre of Time* (Tarragon Theatre). Kristen is international

theatre artist for ISTA, member of Canadian Actor's Equity Association and proud co-Artistic Director/ Founder of WAM Theatre. [kristenvanginhoven.com](http://kristenvanginhoven.com)

**NICK WEBB** (Lighting Design) Nick has done three other designs for WAM Theatre, including *Melancholy Play* last November. Before moving to the US, Nick served as lighting designer for various theatre companies in the UK, where notable designs included Whelan's *The Herbal Bed*, Pinter's *A Kind of Alaska* (SADATA Stagecraft award winner) and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. In the last five years, Nick has designed a number of shows for theatres across the region, including several productions at SCP (*Our Country's Good*, *Stage Door*, *Triangle Factory Fire*), and SLOC's *The Music Man*, the first ever production at the GE Black Box Theatre at Proctors, in Schenectady, NY.

*\*appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States*

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**WAM Theatre's Fall Production!**

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by Jennifer Brewin, Leah Cherniak, Ann-Marie Macdonald,  
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directed by Kristen van Ginhoven

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