

!INTERROBANG | RARE
RELEVANT
RAW
THEATRE PROJECT

Falling

BY Deanna Jent
DIRECTED BY James Yost



March 16-April 16, 2017
Athenaeum Theatre

TICKETS AT
interrobangtheatre.org

!INTERRO



RARE

Interrobang is committed to finding challenging and rarely produced works that invite discussion and debate after the curtain. That is why we are beyond thrilled to share the Chicago premiere of this daring and important play with our dedicated audience.

RELEVANT

According to the Autism Society of America, more than 3.5 million people in this country live with autism spectrum disorder. It is Interrobang Theatre Project's continued mission to produce works relevant to the American experience today, and we are proud to open our production of *Falling* in time for Autism Awareness Month in April. We have also teamed with Spectrum Toystore, and will hold post-show discussions after select performances, moderated by our Dramaturg, Margaret Knapp.

RAW

It's no coincidence that Deanna Jent's script feels so rooted in reality; it is. Inspired by the playwright's own experience raising her son with autism, *Falling* unflinchingly recreates the moments of pure joy and desperate unease faced by a family on the brink, allowing theatre-goers an authentic and enlightening glimpse into the lives of so many of our fellow Americans.

BANG

RARE RELEVANT RAW

THEATRE PROJECT

Co-Artistic Directors

Georgette Verdin and James Yost

present

- the Chicago premiere -

Falling



By

Deanna Jent

Directed by

James Yost

DRAMATURG

Margaret Knapp

SOUND DESIGN

Morgan Lake

SCENIC ARTIST

Kelsey Melvin

PROPERTY DESIGN

Pauline Oleksy

SET DESIGN

Greg Pinsoneault

LIGHTING DESIGN

Rob Stepek

COSTUME DESIGN

Steph Taylor

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Alan Weustoff

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Joseph Wiens

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHY

Claire Yearman

PRESS RELATIONS

David Rosenberg



The Athenaeum Theatre - Studio 2
2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago, IL, 60657

Cast

Bill Nick Freed
Lisa Tristin Hall
Tami Amy Johnson
Grammy Sue Heidi Katz
Josh Justin Tsatsa

TIME - Now

PLACES - The Martin's House

THERE WILL BE NO INTERMISSION

Cast



NICK FREED (Bill) is very excited to be making his Interrobang debut. He was most recently seen in *Dating & Dragons* at The Factory and *London Wall* at Griffin Theatre. Other Chicago credits include *Season Pass* and *King Ubu* (The Plagiarists), *Motel 666* (WildClaw), *Hesperia* and *Titus Andronicus* (Right Brain Project), *Dracula* (Building Stage), *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (Filament Theatre Ensemble), and *Five Flights* (Immediate Theatre). Nick holds a BA in Theatre from Truman State University, and is proud to be represented by the lovely ladies at Shirley Hamilton. He wants to thank his friends and, most importantly, his family for their undying love and support of his vast dreams.



TRISTIN HALL (Lisa/Fight Captain) is currently a Junior at Columbia College majoring in Musical Theatre and minoring in Stage Combat. Credits include: *The Nerd* (Tansy), *Crimes of the Heart* (Meg) at Matchbook Theatre, *Carrie and Francine* (Carrie) at Haven Theatre. At Columbia: *Bridal Dance* (Deb), *Love and Information* (ensemble).



AMY JOHNSON (Tami) is honored to be working on *Falling* and thrilled to be making her debut with Interrobang Theatre. She received her MFA from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Her most recent stage work was in *Twin Set* with The Side Project, where she is a proud associate member. Other Chicago theatre companies where she has worked include: Historical Perspectives for Children, The Ex-Pats, Pine Box, Steep Theatre, and Victory Gardens. She is looking forward to seeing the upcoming independent film release of *The Year That Changed Us*, in which she has a supporting role. Film clips, history and new projects can be seen at amyjeanjohnson.com. Thank-you Jim for the opportunity, and many thanks to my family for their patience and support.



HEIDI KATZ (Grammy Sue) has appeared in Piven Theatre Workshop's *Ivanov* and *The Good Doctor*, in *The Wild Duck* (Halcyon Theatre). She has also worked with Northlight Theatre, Polarity Ensemble Theatre, and Silk Road Rising. Thanks to Jim Yost and Interrobang for the chance to join the Martin family in *Falling*, and to my own family and everyone here.



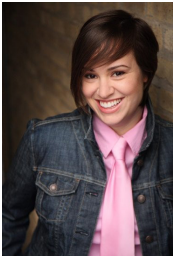
JUSTIN TSATSA (Josh) is thrilled to be working with Interrobang. An Idaho native, Justin moved to Chicago after receiving his BFA from the University of Utah. Previous theatre credits include: *The Irish Curse* (U/S Joseph), *Aero-Plane* (Raul) at The Chicago Fringe Festival, *Metamorphoses* (Midas/Vertumnus), *A Flea in Her Ear* (Dr. Finache), *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (Giovanni), and *A Few Good Men* (Corporal Dunn). Thank you Mom, Pap & Bekah; to you I owe the world.

Creative Team



JAMES YOST (Director/Artistic Director) James Yost is the co-artistic director of Interrobang Theatre Project and previously served as the producing artistic director for BareBones Theatre Group, a company he co-founded in 1998. Selected credits include: *Mr. Marmalade*, *Psycho Beach Party*, *Debbie Does Dallas: The Musical*, *The Graduate*, *The Play About the Baby*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Drift*, *Ugly Art*, *bash; the latter-day plays*, *Squirrels*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Lend Me A Tenor*, *Orson's Shadow*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Pitchfork Disney* and *Noises Off*. For ITP, credits include: *Orange Flower Water* (Jeff nomination for Best Supporting Actor, Joseph Wiens), *Ibsen is Dead*, *The North Pool* and the critically acclaimed *Really Really* (Named one

of the best shows of 2015 by the Chicago Tribune). Yost recently directed *True West* by Sam Shepard for Shattered Globe. This summer he is directing *Boeing Boeing* for Davidson College. He teaches acting, directing, production design and film at the high school and collegiate level. He is published in Teaching Theatre Journal, a publication of Dramatics Magazine.



GEORGETTE VERDIN (Artistic Director) Along with working for Interrobang and being a freelance director, Georgette is also the founding theatre teacher at Polaris Charter Academy, an Expeditionary Learning School in West Humboldt Park. She directed last season's *Katrina: Mother-in-Law of 'em All* and Jeff Recommended *Recent Tragic Events*, as well as this season's production of the 2013 Yale Drama Series Winner *Still*. This spring she'll be directing Donald Margulies' *Time Stands Still* for Aston Rep. Georgette holds a Masters in Directing from Roosevelt University and a B.A. in Theatre Performance from McNeese State University in Lake Charles, LA.



DEANNA JENT (Playwright) is the Artistic Director of Mustard Seed Theatre and a Professor of Theatre at Fontbonne University in St. Louis, where she has been teaching since 1995. She has written stage adaptations of the novels *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, *Till We Have Faces* by C.S. Lewis and *Imaginary Jesus* by Matt Mikalatos. Her play *Falling* won the Kevin Kline award for Best New Play of 2011 and was nominated for a Drama

Desk Best Play Award following its off-Broadway run in 2012. *Falling* was produced in Singapore in 2016 and has been translated into Portuguese for an upcoming production in Brazil. She has directed at professional theaters throughout St. Louis and was named "Best Director of a Musical" by the St. Louis Theatre Circle for Mustard Seed Theatre's production of *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*. Deanna grew up southwest of Chicago in Plano and earned her Ph.D. at Northwestern University in 1989.

CHRISTINA CASANO (Production Stage Manager) is a theatre artist based in Chicago. She earned a BA in Theatre from Miami University and completed the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey Summer Professional Training Program. She has stage managed, acted, and directed around Chicago for the last two years. Selected works include *Milk Like Sugar* (The Yard+Raven Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (Crowded Bookshelf Dramatics), *The Epic of Gilgamesh, etc.*, *Belladonna Luna Sonata*, and *These Saints Will Burn* (The Plagiarists), *Owners* (ITP), *Macbeth* and *Angels in America* (Miami University). Christina is a company member of The Plagiarists, where she serves as the Resident Stage Manager.

SARAH GISE (Casting) has been a proud ITP company member since February 2015. She graduated from the University of Southern California (USC) with a BFA in Acting. She was previously seen in Interrobang's Fifth Season productions, *Owners* and *Really Really*. She is currently a company member with New American Folk Theatre (Chicago) and a member of Ensemble Studio Theatre (Los Angeles), with whom she won the LAWeekly Best Actress award for *The Belle of Belfast* in 2013. She can be seen at many film festivals around the country in the new film *Halfway* starring Quinton Aaron from *The Blindside*, which was awarded Best Feature at the Julian Dubuque International Film Festival. In February 2016, she performed the one-woman show *The Amish Project* with AtticRep in San Antonio, TX, and shortly after was invited to take the show to the Teatro Potlach FLIPT festival in Rome, Italy. She was recently seen performing in the Midwest premiere of *Still* by Jen Silverman followed by the remount of AtticRep's *The Amish Project* by Jessica Dickey, both with Interrobang.

SHEILA KETTERING (ASL Interpreter) is thrilled to be working with Interrobang Theatre Project interpreting this production of *Falling*. Sheila has been interpreting for twenty five years in the Chicagoland area in a variety of settings, such as medical, business, educational, video relay interpreting and is especially passionate about theatrical interpreting. Some recent productions Sheila has interpreted: *Good Friday* (Oracle Theater), *Wonderful Town* and *The Magic Play* (The Goodman Theater), *Hand to God* (Victory Gardens Theater), *The Little Mermaid* (The Paramount Theater), and *The Kid Who Ran for President* (Merle Reskin Theater). Sheila would like to thank Interrobang for this wonderful opportunity, and her wonderful husband Bill for all his love and support.

MARGARET KNAPP (Dramaturg) is new to the Interrobang Theatre Project family and is happy to be working both as the dramaturg for *Falling* and as the Literary Manager for the company. A proud member of Actors' Equity since 1992, Margaret has acted at various theaters in the Midwest such as the Apollo here in Chicago, Drury Lane-Oakbrook, The Unicorn Theater in Kansas City, MO, and The Human Race Theater in Dayton, OH. Her directing credits include: *Uncle Vanya*, *Honey Brown Eyes*, *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow*, *Rhinoceros*, *Museum* by Tina Howe, and *12th Night*. Margaret also teaches Speech, Acting and Comparative Literature at various colleges in Illinois.

CHRISTOPHER AARON KNARR (House Manager) Originally from South Bend, Indiana, and relocated to beautiful Chicago, Christopher graduated from Indiana University with a B.A. in Theatre & Drama, and studied abroad with The Gaiety School of Acting in Dublin, Ireland. Recent credits include Interrobang Theatre Project's Season Seven productions *Still* and *The Amish Project*, and all Season Six productions as House Manager, Marketing, and Social Media. He was House Manager for the fifth season's *Owners* and *Really Really* and contributed to past productions of *Orange Flower Water* as Production Assistant, and *Terminus*, *The Pitchfork Disney*, and *Ibsen is Dead* as Assistant Stage Manager.

MORGAN LAKE (Sound Designer) is a Chicago-based sound designer and engineer and recent graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University. Recent projects include sound design for *The Violet Hour* (Renaissance Theatreworks), *True West* (Shattered Globe Theatre), *The North Pool* and *Recent Tragic Events* (Interrobang Theatre Project),

The Fly Honey Show (The Inconvenience), and *Kin Folk* (The New Colony). She also recently served as the assistant sound designer for *Tall Girls* (Shattered Globe), *The Fundamentals* (Steppenwolf Theatre), and the New Stages Festival at Goodman Theatre.

KELSEY MELVIN (Scenic Artist) is excited to be working with Interrobang again. She last served as an understudy for ITP's spring 2016 show *Recent Tragic Events*. Kelsey is a freelance theatre artist with experience in costumes, sets, graphics, performance, and more. Her last turn as a Scenic Artist was for The Poor Theatre's *Take Me Back* in 2015. She is an Ensemble Member with Shattered Globe Theatre, where she also serves as Marketing Director and Graphic Designer. Kelsey is a graduate of Northwestern University, BADA's Midsummer in Oxford Program, and Shattered Globe's Protégé Program.

PAULINE OLEKSY (Property Designer) is a scenic and properties designer from Illinois. She has recently earned her Masters of Fine Arts in stage design from Northern Illinois University and works designing and detailing exhibits and trades shows. Pauline currently resides in Chicago where she is pursuing opportunities in scenic design for theater and corporate stages, properties design, and scenic painting.

GREG PINSONEAULT (Scenic Designer) is a Chicago based designer who recently received a BFA in Scenic Design from The Theatre School at DePaul University. Select Chicago credits include *In the Heights*, *Dreamgirls* – co design (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Madagascar*, *The Nutcracker*, *The Velveteen Rabbit* (Marriott Theatre); *True West* (Shattered Globe); *Bat Boy* – co design, *The Birds* (Griffin Theatre); *Diary of a...Fly* (Emerald City); *The North Pool*, *Recent Tragic Events*, *Katrina* (Interrobang); *Chagrin Falls*, *Truth in Context*, and *At the Center* (The Agency). He has assisted on productions at The Cort Theatre (NYC), The Broadhurst Theatre, Glimmerglass Opera, The Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, The Old Globe, The Paramount Theatre, and Drury Lane Oakbrook. Greg was the recipient of The 2014 Theatre School Michael Merritt Award and the 2015 USITT W Oren Parker Undergraduate Scene Design Award. Examples of his work can be found at GPScenic.com.

AL RACI (CI/CT - ASL Interpreter) is thrilled to be interpreting *Falling* for Interrobang Theatre Project. Past credits include Goodman Theater shows *The Magic Play*, *The World of Extreme Happiness*, *Animal Crackers*, *The Trinity River Plays*, *Chinglish*, *Red, Race, Stage Kiss*, *Camino Real*, *The Iceman Cometh*, and *Crowns*. Al has also interpreted for many productions at Steppenwolf, The Chicago Shakespeare Theatre at Navy Pier, Chicago Children's Theater, Victory Gardens, the Lyric Opera, the Oil Lamp Theatre, and the Paramount Theater. He works full-time as a freelance interpreter in the Chicago area and brings a rich background of experience to the production of *Falling*. Al would like to thank Interrobang for making accessibility possible here.

ROB STEPEK (Lighting Designer) Born and raised in Chicago, Rob is more than excited to be back working with Interrobang Theatre Project on *Falling*. Recent work includes *The North Pool* with Interrobang, *9 Circles* and *Godspell* with Cardinal Stritch University, and *Legally Blonde the Musical* with the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

STEPH TAYLOR (Costume Designer) makes her Interrobang debut with this inspiring production. She holds a Bachelor's Degree from Illinois State University. Steph is a Chicago based freelance designer. Recent collaborations include shows at Filament Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Piven Theatre Workshop and Side Show Theatre Company. She would like to thank all the supporters of live theatre.

JOSEPH WIENS (Assistant Director) has been a Shattered Globe Theatre company member since 2011. He has been seen in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Orpheus Descending*, *Her Naked Skin*, *Other People's Money*, *The Grown Up*, *The Whaleship Essex*, *Animals Out of Paper*, *In the Heat of the Night* and *True West* with SGT. Other credits around Chicago include *Breaks and Bikes* with Pavement Group, *A Touch*

(Joseph Weins cont.) of *the Poet and Beaten* with The Artistic Home, *The Tennessee Williams Project* with The Hypocrites and *Orange Flower Water* (Brad) for Interrobang Theatre (nominated for a Jeff Award for Supporting Actor in a Play) and *Look Back in Anger* at Redtwist Theatre (nominated for a Jeff Award for Best Actor). TV credits include Chicago PD. He was most recently seen in *The Tall Girls* at Shattered Globe Theatre. Joseph spent 4 years working in an Autism program for Envision Unlimited. He currently teaches a theater group for Thresholds focusing on mental health and the arts. He is very excited to work on *Falling* with James and Interrobang.

ALAN WEUSTHOFF (Technical Director) This is Alan's first show with Interrobang Theatre. As a freelance Technical Director, Alan has most recently built the sets for *The Wiz* with Kokandy Productions, *Venus in Fur* with Circle Theatre and *In The Heights* with Porchlight Theatre. Other Chicago credits include: *Winterset* (Griffin Theatre); *How We Got On* (Haven Theatre); *Sister Cities* (Chimera Theatre); *Caught* (Sideshow Theatre); and *Once In A Lifetime* (Strawdog Theatre). Alan is a graduate of the theater program at Truman State University in Kirksville, MO.

CLAIRE YEARMAN (Fight Choreographer) Claire is a certified teacher with The Society of American Fight Directors, an actor, fight choreographer, and adjunct professor of theatre. She received a Jeff nomination for her fight choreography for Red Tape Theatre's production of *The Love of the Nightingale*. Claire has an MFA in Acting from Western Illinois University and is a company member with Interrobang Theatre Project.

ZOË VERDIN (Graphic Designer) provides creative direction for all ITP print and digital marketing, while working as a freelance graphic designer and practitioner of Thai bodywork and trigger point therapy. Zoë has a BA in Studio Art from Carleton College, with concentrations in ceramics and photography. She is delighted to be collaborating with Social Media Marketing Guru, Christopher Knarr on publicity for Season Seven's *Flesh & Blood* series, and with Ed Anderson on ITP's website.

Staff

Artistic Producer Elana Elyce
 Literary Manager Margaret Knapp
 Marketing & Social Media Christopher Aaron Knarr
 Copy Writer Matthew Nerber
 Co-Artistic Director Georgette Verdin
 Graphic Designer Zoë Verdin
 Co-Artistic Director James Yost

**Interrobang Theatre Project is proud to partner with
 Spectrum Toy Store for this Chicago Premiere of *Falling***



NO TWO PEOPLE WITH AUTISM ARE ALIKE

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?*

Autism Spectrum Disorder (Autism or ASD) is a bio-neurological developmental disability that generally appears before the age of 3.

ASD impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction, communication skills, and cognitive function. Individuals with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.

Individuals with autism often suffer from numerous co-morbid medical conditions which may include: allergies, asthma, epilepsy, digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, feeding disorders, sensory integration dysfunction, sleeping disorders, and more.

Currently there is no cure for autism, though with early intervention and treatment, the diverse symptoms related to autism can be greatly improved and in some cases completely overcome.

Autism Facts & Stats

Autism now affects 1 in 68 children.

Boys are four times more likely to have autism than girls.

About 40% of children with autism do not speak. About 25%–30% of children with autism have some words at 12 to 18 months of age and then lose them. Others might speak, but not until later in childhood.

Autism greatly varies from person to person.

The rate of autism has steadily grown over the last twenty years.

Autism is the fastest growing developmental disorder, yet the most underfunded.

Where can I find out more?

nationalautismassociation.org/
www.autism.com/
www.pent.ca.gov/beh/dis/parentstruggle_DK.pdf

*All facts taken from the National Autism Association

Please join us for talk-backs with a range of autism experts, including playwright, Deanna Jent.

Talk-backs will follow productions listed.

Talk-backs with playwright
Deanna Jent

Friday, March 31 (7:30pm) - w/ Kellie Greene

Saturday, April 1 (2pm)

Saturday, April 1 (7:30pm) - w/ Kathryn Thies

Sunday, April 2* (2pm) - w/ Kellie Greene

Talkbacks with Local Autism Experts,
Falling Cast and Creative Team

Saturday, March 18 (7:30pm) - Joseph Wiens

Sunday, March 26 (2pm) - Kathryn Thies & Kellie Greene

Monday, April 10 (7:30pm) - Kathryn Thies

Sunday, April 16 (2pm) - Jamilah Rahim

Deaf Accessible Performances

Saturday, April 1 (7:30pm)

Sunday, April 2* (2pm)

*Autism Awareness Day

Board of Advisors

John Capaul • Sandra Smycz • Elizabeth Verzo • Jessica Vann • James Yost

Ensemble Members

James Yost • Georgette Verdin • Brynne Barnard • Laura Berner Taylor • Elana Elyce
Shawn Galligan • Sarah Gise • Noël Huntzinger
Christopher Aaron Knarr • Matthew Nerber • Claire Yearman • Zoë Verdin



Special Thanks

The Athenaeum Theatre, Spectrum Toy Store, The Swedish American Museum, North Shore Baptist Church, Loyola Academy, Karin Ambercrombie, Ed Anderson, John Capaul, Allen Chambers, Jeff DeLong, Breena Cope, Kellie Greene, Luz Gutierrez, Deanna Jent, Cathy McCann, Trina McGee, David Moreland, Jamilah Rahim, Jenn Smith Miller and Kathryn Thies.

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Here are 3 ways to help ITP stay Relevant:

1. Sign up on our mailing list

2. Take our Audience Survey >



3. Make a tax-deductible donation through our website at interrobangtheatreproject.com

Interrobang Theatre Project

5315 N. Clark St. #142

Chicago, IL 60647

Box Office: (773) 935-6875

interrobangtheatreproject.org