

STUDIO 570 | 5TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON



Letten.

MARCH - APRIL 2021

BY EMMA JOY HILL

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | JARED WHITFORD

STUDIO 570 | 5TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON
PRESENTS

ASHLEY LARSON AS

helpen.

WRITTEN AND CONCEIVED BY
EMMA JOY HILL

DIRECTED AND DESIGNED BY
JARED WHITFORD

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
REID HINES

STAGE MANAGER
SIERRA AICHNER

WARDROBE SUPERVISOR
NANCY REIFF

helen.



Ashley Larson

Ashley Larson is an actress from the Williamsport area, and is grateful to be reuniting with Studio 570, where she both served as a board member and consistently performed during the years of 2017-2018 in addition to meeting and getting to know some of her dearest friends. Ashley relocated to Los Angeles spring '19 to pursue conservatory training beyond her theatre performance minor from the University of Pittsburgh, and has since studied acting at the Art of Acting studio, Berg studios, and Margie Haber studio. She surprised herself by getting cast in the first film project she sent in a self-taped audition for, which was an indie short called "Breaking a Habit." She looks forward to traveling back to Los Angeles to rejoin the cast of City Garage theatre's *The Penelopiad*, which was in rehearsal before the city's live theatre shutdown. Other select credits include (*The Thugs*, *Alice.*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Big Love*, *Midsummer*, *Almost, Maine*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Noises Off!*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Dangerous Love*) Jeremiah 29:11

JARED WHITFORD *DIRECTOR & DESIGNER*| Jared is Studio 570's founder and Artistic Director. Mr. Whitford studied theater in Pittsburgh. Mr. Whitford has been involved in the Williamsport performing and music community as a guest performer, designer and producer. His works have allowed him to work at nationally and locally include working at theaters such as the historic Pittsburgh Playhouse, the Straz Center, PARK Productions, Penn State cheerleading, and various other companies. Select Credits include (Spring Awakening, Shrek, Romeo and Juliet, Midsummer, One Act Festivals, The Diary of Anne Frank, Proof, Steel Magnolia, Cabaret, Seussical).

EMMA JOY HILL *PLAYWRIGHT*| Emma Joy Hill is a writer, performer, dramaturg, and theatre artist. Her passion for writing plays extends into a deep love for grotesque performance art, devised theatre, and sexual violence activism. She has a BA in Theatre Studies/Playwriting from the University of Connecticut where she has had multiple workshops and staged readings of her plays including *The Fit of the Coastlines*, *In Other Gardens*, *Trudy Tries to Say I Love You But Runs Out of Breath*, *Women Have Teeth*, *Tongue Eyes Too*, *Various Levels of Hell*, and *Those Hollow Bodies* which was awarded a full production at the University. In the past, she has been commissioned by the Natural Resources Conservation Academy to develop work that addresses climate change in communities. She is a recipient of the Dramatists Guild Playwriting Grant, Bushwick Starr's Pet Project Grant, and the Foundation of the Arts Playwriting Grant in 2020. As a professional playwright, she has developed theatre throughout Connecticut, New York City, and Chicago where she has experience working with companies such as The Brick,

Women's Theatre Festival, 59E59 Theatre, Theatre L'Acadie, Cinnamon Summer Series, Bated Breath Theatre, Connecticut Repertory Theatre, and Out of Chaos Theatre in the United Kingdom. In tandem with her work as an artist, she is an advocate and Chief Creative Officer of the organization Brave Embrace, which works to prevent sex trafficking and empower young girls. At the present, she is devising an adaptation of *Antigone* while working on a visual arts series exploring Picasso's misogyny throughout the Blue and Rose periods. She is currently based out of Connecticut. www.emmajoyhill.com

REID HINES *TECHNICAL DIRECTOR*| Reid Hines is a local media creator, and creative director of FSZ.house. Mr. Hines is originally from Oklahoma, and has worked in Dallas Texas creating event spaces for fundraising and fashion. Mr. Hines has been involved with Studio 570 for the past two seasons.

SIERRA AICHNER *STAGE MANAGER*| Sierra is excited to participate in her fourth Studio 570 production! She has been the stage manager for "Diary of Anne Frank", "100 Dresses", and "The Glass Menagerie". Currently Sierra teaches 9th, 11th, and 12th grade English as well as Yearbook at Montgomery Jr./Sr. High School. When she is not reading, coaching cheerleading, taking grad classes, or supporting local theater, she can be found traveling! With a happy heart, Sierra would like to thank the Lord for every opportunity she's been given as well as her teaching staff and students, friends near and far, and her family for always being supportive! "The noblest art is that of making others happy." - P.T. Barnum

"THE EVERY WOMAN"

notes from the playwright

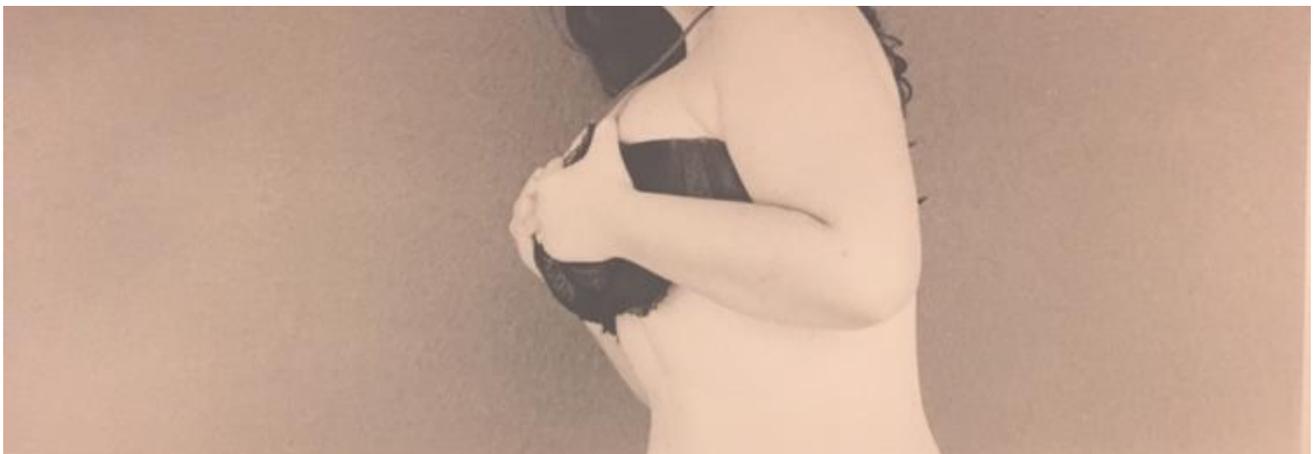
EMMA JOY HILL



"One of the most characteristic and ubiquitous features of the world as experienced by oppressed people is the double bind – situations in which options are reduced to very few and all of them expose one to penalty, censure, or deprivation."

– Marilyn Frye – THE POLITICS OF REALITY

I had read the Greeks before, of course. Growing up as a storyteller, an introvert, and a bit of a deviant by nature, I've always loved mythology. It was lore to me then. Simple stories about bad guys and good guys and the ladies that accompanied them on quests. When I first met Helen of Troy, I was most likely a child who still believed in utopian getaways, everlasting love, and that somehow someday John Wayne would come to my doorstep and instantly dub me a cowboy. I didn't pay Helen of Troy a second thought. She was only allotted an unimportant paragraph in my picture books after all. I only knew that she was pretty, which I had been taught was a good thing, but it was a tad complicated for she had initiated a war all by herself, and that was a very bad thing. I soon forgot about her.



Photos from previous explorations of helen. Provided by E. Hill

I met Helen again my last year at University. I was twenty-one, a survivor of sexual assault, and committed to the idea of arson, red leather boots, changing the face of American theatre, and falling in love with the unattainable. At this crux of time, I was no longer the little girl perplexed by the lady who turned men to stone or the mother who sent her children to sleep in death beds. I no longer needed a dictionary to define "tragedy" or "rape" or "blame". I knew better now. Helen's story was no longer distant or fantastical. I soon became unhinged in the recognition; there was something in Helen's story that was eerily familiar in my own.

When we're introduced to Helen of Troy we learn her as a cause. She caused the death of thousands. She caused a landscape of battles. She caused the heartache of her husband. We also learn that her cause can only be matched by her great physical beauty. Her sexuality. Her body. What defines her becomes limited, ultimate, and inescapable. Aeschylus and Euripides paint a duality. Their lyricism varies, their structure seized, characters complex, and yet, this woman exists singularly and definitively as a thing of fault. I wrote in the corner of my notebook in tiny red letters: "It's not the face that launched a thousand ships, it's the tits that launched a thousand wars". I began writing then.

Helen is the "everywoman". Her experience no more different nor dramatic than the atrocities that foot themselves in female bodies, minds, and hearts today. Trapped in echoes of double binds, she's faulted for the world's catastrophes whether she's painted as an object of weakness or one of sexual deviance. We're taught that it doesn't matter if she willingly went with Paris out of love as an abject adulterer or was taken against her own free will as a victim, for no matter the circumstances, we learn to situate the weight of war on the fault of her shoulders. There are many translations of

her character, many versions of her story, and yet, there is no account in which she's given the agency to live as a woman, as a creature with freedom in her sexuality, as someone deserving of a world in which she's not dubbed disposable. Where she's valued. Where she's more than culpable prey. This is less of a performance and more of a reflection of the current state we're in. I strive for a world where the cycle of violence is broken. Where love is not false hope. Where bedrooms are not war zones. Where women don't become casualties in male legacies. Where we tell our stories and are believed. Not

swept under the rug. Not blamed for our misfortune. But, valued. But, seen. But, heard. I was naive to once think that John Wayne would come to rescue me. That good and bad were recognizable faces. That Helen of Troy was just pretty fiction. This story is regrettably common. Her topography not unique. Not mythology. Not lore nor simple. There is no deus ex machina. No magic turn. No exodus. What we have is that cycle. Forever un-turning, un-wavering, un-willing to be stopped. We have a wheel yearning to be broken. We have an unfortunate responsibility. But, it's ours to act on. For her, whomever she may be.



On the Structure

There are four roles in which Helen exists here. Whore. Wife. Lover. Child. Each encompassing their limitations and tying together remnants of women's collective trauma. These, we are all expected to perform at some point in time, their metamorphosis always forced, and the nature of their performance never at our leisure. The presentation of these roles seeks to unearth bound-up expectations of female bodies. To challenge them, point-blank. It's a call for change. It's a pointed finger at ourselves, at society, at the faults of our inflictions. Its intention is to revolt. To spark chaos. To imagine a world where we, as women, exist complex.

THE WHORE	THE WIFE	THE LOVER	THE CHILD
• sucking milk // I am // "and the boys come"	• meal // good wife's guide	• suitcase // it keeps like hell it ends	• napsoten // pigtailed // mother raped
• fixes makeup // fuck behind	• tearing panties // rape // I fear	• lipstick // can't say name	• smear lips // suitors point
• run in hose // chest pain	• chicken / stub toe	• throwing arms of Andre Paris // waltz	• hums / stops self // shr
• the name of desire	• memory of braiding hair // nauts / knots	• he comes to me // unexpected spit	• Helen pieces with dust
• I called all my names in the phone (man?)	• to clear my name // Helen destroyed name	• cutting self // is he looking // attention	• plays w/ horse
• Helen as nocker // sex + hunger	• my girl reprise?	• longing to be destroyed // when time for you	
• Helen as City of Love (location)	• your knife deep in me / deep in me (now)	• it begins like how it ends // full of love (for who?) self? kiss self?	
• Helen as meal	• Helen as knitter // time I go again	• hurt a home // your hands hot banisters	
• Helen as tits (object / sex)		• playing Paris // resentment + blame	
		• Helen as ill // resentment	

Journal Entry from 2.9.19 // Some examples of various cycles I envisioned possible in Helen performances. My intention was for artists to take a moment in their current climate or community that needed support, addressing, or change. Artists could say, "let's do a pleasure cycle" and devise further language within the Helen roles to explore that topic.

ROLES

2/9/19

WIFE

WHORE

CHILD

LOVER

CYCLES

consumption
believability
violence / sexual
object
voyeurism
devotion
desire
reproduction
vocalization
sexualization
catcalling
harassment
representation
blood / menstruation

dumb
assault
nature
exhibitionism
reserved / shy
weight
obscenity
pleasure
orgasm
aggression
exploitation
victimization
destruction

beauty
shame
aging
reflection
vulnerability
domesticity
role-play
economic
positions
dirty
trafficking
stalking
trolling
pornography

infidelity
stripping
nudity
humiliation
duty
attachment
dislocation
glass ceiling
mutilation
clean
permittance
rape
sex work
intelligent

The final Helen roles. I began mapping out the actions and moments discovered and fitted them with each particular version of Helen. Undated.

JOIN US

WANT TO JOIN THE STUDIO 570 TEAM? WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR THE FOLLOWING VOLUNTEERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MARKETING COMMITTEE

WARDROBE TEAM MEMBERS

SCENIC CREW MEMBERS

GENERAL STAGE CREW

WE ARE ALWAYS ACCEPTING HEADSHOTS AND RESUMES FOR ACTORS AS WELL!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL
INFORMATION@STUDIO570.THEATER**



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