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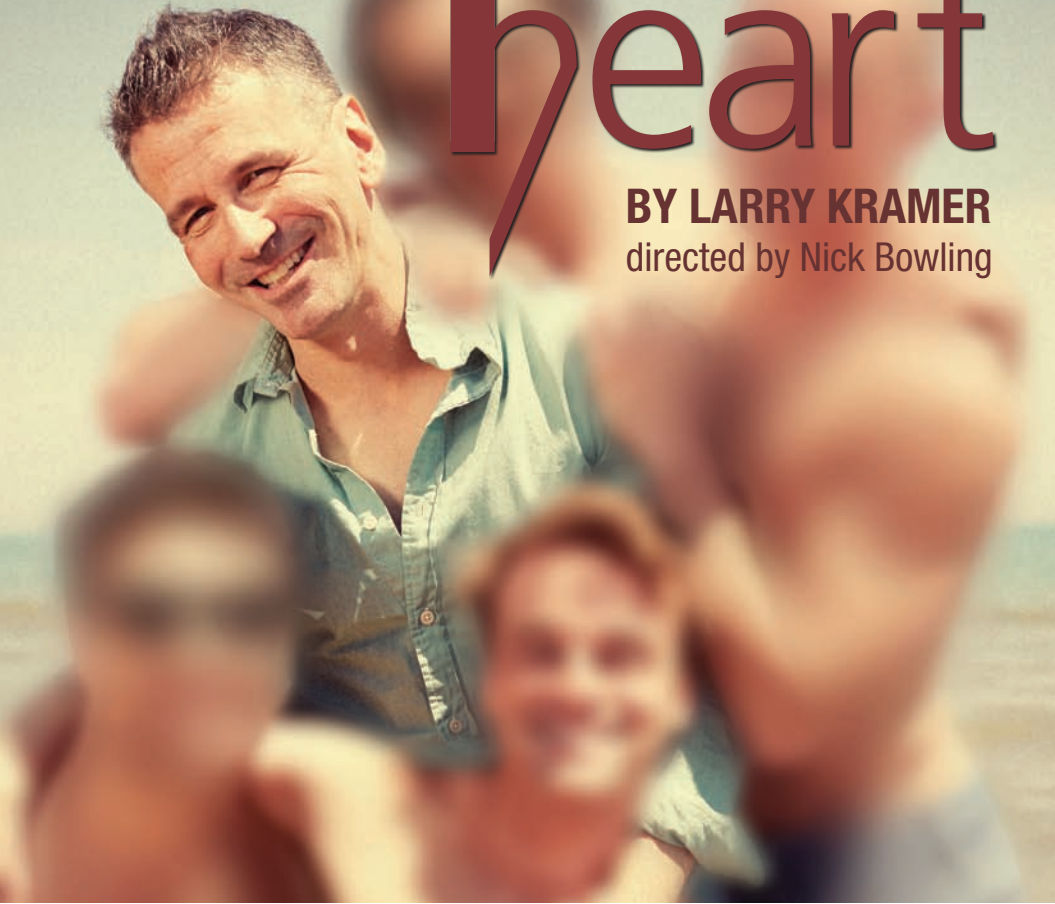
BACKSTORY

YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS

normal heart

BY LARRY KRAMER

directed by Nick Bowling



YESTERDAY'S STORIES.
TODAY'S TOPICS.

Timeline
Theatre Company

PRESENTED AT



a message



In 2010 TimeLine's literary manager, Ben Thiem, encouraged me and my fellow Company Members to read Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart*. Embarrassingly, initially I made the mistake of assuming that it was a dated play. And then I read it, for the first time.

Like my colleagues, I was completely knocked out, and not just by its political vibrancy and call to action. Larry Kramer crafted one of the great historical dramas of the 20th Century, brimming with heart, courage and humor, and aimed a piercing lens at an era that too many mistakenly think of today as dated. It not only retains its potency since its premiere in 1985, but it's evolved with age into a searing reminder of how history takes shape before our eyes due to the actions—or inactions—of people like you and me.

The Normal Heart takes us back to a time when a fast-spreading plague had no name. It was first referred to as a "rare cancer found in homosexuals," then "gay-related immunodeficiency syndrome" (GRID). The Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention named it "acquired immunodeficiency syndrome" (AIDS) in 1982—a full five years before President Ronald Reagan would ever utter the name in a speech.

During that time scores of deaths were attributed to the disease and fear-inducing rumors spread rampantly about how people could acquire it—from drinking fountains, toilet seats, or, in the case of hemophiliac AIDS patient Ryan White, from just sitting beside him in class.

What Kramer's play reminds us in 2013 is that while the play's setting during the 1980s era of misinformation may feel distant in some respects, we mustn't forget the genesis of the AIDS epidemic and what exacerbated its escalation. In a 2006 interview the playwright said: "A very strange thing has happened in the post-AIDS generation. I don't know what to call them; it's not really post-AIDS, but let's call them healthier, younger ones ... They don't want to know the history; they

don't want to acknowledge that the people who died were even part of their history ... These people died so that you could live."

TimeLine's mission is not just about looking backward into history. It's ultimately about how we look forward. It's about igniting dialogue about how the past informs the present. During our Company's 2010 discussion about *The Normal Heart*, it was immediately clear that this was a TimeLine story, urgent to tell even in the midst of an encouraging new era of civil rights advances.

But our ability to do *The Normal Heart* right away was put on hold by the emergence of a star-studded reading of the play in New York, followed by a highly acclaimed Broadway production—which received the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play—and rumors of a national tour that ultimately never materialized in Chicago. So here we are, after patiently waiting, finally getting to bring you a Chicago revival of Kramer's play.

While the play's setting may feel distant in some respects, we mustn't forget the genesis of the AIDS epidemic and what exacerbated its escalation.

Since TimeLine first became interested in producing this play in 2010, there has been much progress for LGBT rights in the United States. But there are still a disturbing number of stories of intolerance, discrimination, fear, shame and death—both in our country and beyond.

And despite medical advances, we are far from being a post-AIDS generation. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as of October 13 there are approximately 1.1 million people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States, and almost one-fifth of them are unaware that they have it. Since the start of the epidemic, 1.7 million Americans have been infected with HIV and more than 650,000 have died of AIDS.

That's just our country.

Worldwide, there were about 2.5 million new cases of HIV in 2011, and about 34.2 million people are living with HIV around the world. In 2010, there were about 1.8 million AIDS deaths. Nearly 30 million people with AIDS have died since the epidemic began.

These are numbers you may have seen countless times, perhaps with numbing effect. Yet strings of facts and figures—breathtakingly large as they may be—often don't

pack the same punch as when the disease's carnage is felt more personally through a human face. And that is what Larry Kramer boldly and unapologetically did in 1985 with *The Normal Heart*. He put a face on not just the devastation, but also on the fight. And the face he put on it was his own, embodied in the play's chief antagonist Ned Weeks.

Kramer has never shied from a fight or debate, nor sugar-coated any blistering criticism—whether it was about others in the gay community or those outside it. He calls it like he sees it, and for decades his crusade has been a relentless indictment of silence, inaction and being closeted. Even during the heralded Broadway run of the play in 2011—26 years after his play's argument began—Kramer was often a fixture on the sidewalk outside the theatre, handing out flyers

as the audience came out, passionately urging them to learn more and do more.

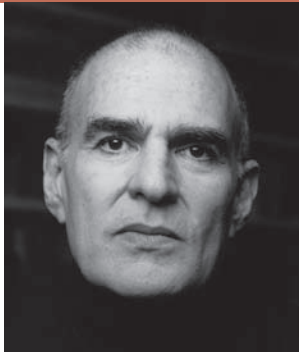
We don't have the benefit of his presence on the Belmont Avenue sidewalk outside Stage 773 each night, but we hope you'll still experience his urging through this play.

I am incredibly proud to welcome an astonishing team of artists to this production, led on stage by one of Chicago's finest provocateurs, David Cromer, embodying Kramer's impassioned agitator, Ned Weeks. And at the helm, we have another of our city's finest provocateurs, TimeLine's Associate Artistic Director Nick Bowling, once again infusing new electricity into a play from the past that is about how we get to tomorrow.

Best,

Playwright Larry Kramer (center) with Joe Mantello (*Ned Weeks* in the 2011 Broadway revival) and David Cromer, at the off-Broadway premiere of *Ike Holter's Hit the Wall* in March 2013. (Photo by Bruce Glikas, Broadway.com)





Activist and playwright Larry Kramer.

Larry Kramer was born June 25, 1935. He is an author, playwright and AIDS activist. The unwanted second child of Jewish parents, an attorney and a social worker, he was in part raised by his elder brother Arthur. He and Arthur both spoke with distaste of their parents, with Kramer writing that he was “instilled with the necessity to achieve.”

In 1953, as a lonely Yale undergraduate and believing he was the only gay on campus, Kramer attempted to overdose on aspirin. He recovered, graduated from Yale in 1957 with a degree in English, and did a stint in the Army.

Finding work in the film industry, Kramer became a producer and writer. He received an Academy Award nomination for his screenplay of *Women in Love*. His 1978 novel, *Faggots*, created a stir in the gay community for its frank treatment of the gay sex and

drug culture and for his satiric assessment that promiscuity made it difficult for gay men to find love. Many in the gay community criticized Kramer and the novel, but it has never been out of print.

Although Kramer had not been very politically active, a *New York Times* article on cancer in 41 gay men and the sudden illness and deaths of friends motivated him to call a meeting in his home. That group would become the Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC). Kramer’s role within the organization was often that of public speaker and gadfly, a role that rubbed many in GMHC and the gay community the wrong way. He ultimately left the organization.

After leaving GMHC, he wrote *The Normal Heart*, loosely based on both the deaths of friends and his founding of and separation from GMHC. He later founded ACT UP, an AIDS organization focused on political action, protests and lobbying, often for access to new AIDS drugs.

Kramer found out he was HIV positive in 1987. On July 24, 2013, he married architect David Webster, his partner since 1995, from his hospital bed while recovering from surgery.

THE NEW YORK TIMES,
FRIDAY, JULY 3, 1981

A20 L

RARE CANCER SEEN IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS

Outbreak Occurs Among Men
in New York and California
—8 Died Inside 2 Years

By LAWRENCE K. ALTMAN

Doctors in New York and California have diagnosed among homosexual men 41 cases of a rare and often rapidly fatal form of cancer. Eight of the victims died less than 24 months after the diagnosis was made.

The cause of the outbreak is unknown, and there is as yet no evidence of contagion. But the doctors who have made the diagnoses, mostly in New York City and the San Francisco Bay area, are alerting other physicians who treat large numbers of homosexual men to the problem in an effort to help identify more cases and to reduce the delay in offering chemotherapy treatment.

The sudden appearance of the cancer, called Kaposi’s Sarcoma, has prompted a medical investigation that experts say could have as much scientific as public health importance because of what it may teach about determining the causes of more common types of cancer.

First Appears in Spots

Doctors have been taught in the past that the cancer usually appeared first in spots on the legs and that the disease took a slow course of up to 10 years. But these recent cases have shown that it appears in one or more violet-colored spots anywhere on the body. The spots generally do not itch or cause other symptoms, often can be mistaken for bruises, sometimes appear as lumps and can turn brown after a period of time. The cancer often causes swollen lymph glands, and then kills by spreading throughout the body.

Doctors investigating the outbreak believe that many cases have gone undetected because of the rarity of the condition and the difficulty even dermatologists may have in diagnosing it.

In a letter alerting other physicians to the problem, Dr. Alvin E. Friedman-Kien of New York University Medical Center, one of the investigators, described the appearance of the outbreak as “rather devastating.”

The *New York Times* article that inspired Larry Kramer’s activism in the fight against AIDS.

“After the main productions, I found it increasingly difficult to sit through the play any more. It contains too many unhappy memories. ... I wrote it to make people cry: AIDS is the saddest thing I’ll ever have to know. I also wrote it to be a love story, in honor of a man I loved who died. I wanted people to see on stage two men who loved each other. I wanted people to see them kiss. I wanted people to see that gay men in love and gay men suffering and gay men dying are just like everyone else.”

—Larry Kramer reflecting on *The Normal Heart* in *Reports from the Holocaust*, 1994

The Normal Heart was first produced off Broadway at The Public Theater in 1985. Produced by Joseph Papp and directed by Michael Lindsey Hock, it was a hit and ran for almost a year. It starred Brad Davis as Ned Weeks, followed by Joel Grey. In Los Angeles, it starred Richard Dreyfuss and at the Royal Court in London, Martin Sheen, transferring to the West End with Tom Hulce. Four of the original cast members died from AIDS.

It also had productions at major regional theaters. By 1995, there had been more than 600 productions of *The Normal Heart* worldwide.

Stephen Trovillion (from left), Steve Drukman, Thomas Groenwald, Ross Lehman and Ann Dowd in *Next Theatre’s* 1987 Chicago premiere of *The Normal Heart*. (Photo courtesy Next Theatre)



The play premiered in Chicago in 1987 with an acclaimed production at the Next Theatre, which was remounted later that year at the Ivanhoe Theater. Kramer was surprised at the positive press, though one gay critic accused him of writing a “self-serving revenge play.”

Many of the characters in *The Normal Heart* are based on real people. Ned Weeks stands in for Larry Kramer, Ben Weeks for Kramer’s brother Arthur. Dr. Emma Brookner is based on Dr. Linda Laubenstein, who used a wheelchair because of childhood polio.

GMHC co-founder Paul Popham was the inspiration for Bruce. Tommy is based on former GMHC Executive Director Rodger McFarlane; Mickey is based on Dr. Lawrence Mass, another co-founder of GMHC. Hiram Keebler is based on Mayor Ed Koch’s liaison to the gay community, Herb Rickman.

Other characters are a composite or fiction.

A Timeline of the Early Years of the AIDS Epidemic

July 3, 1981 An article headlined “Rare Cancer Found in 41 Homosexuals” is published in *The New York Times*. Larry Kramer reads the article and soon holds a meeting in his New York apartment; within a year the Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC) will be formed.

1982 GMHC is officially founded.

Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) holds hearings on what is being called gay-related immunodeficiency syndrome (GRID).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) convenes and gives the illness a name—acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

1983 The first AIDS discrimination case is brought to court, in New York, by prominent AIDS doctor Dr. Joseph Sonnabend, after his landlord refuses to renew his office lease.

Kramer writes an article for the gay newspaper the *New York Native* called “1,112 and Counting,” calling on the gay community to act to make themselves safer.

AIDS cases have now been reported in 33 countries.

April 23, 1984 Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret Heckler announces that Dr. Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has isolated the virus that causes AIDS. The virus will later be found to be similar to a sample isolated by French researchers that is sent to Gallo. A dispute between the researchers will

“A very strange thing has happened in the post-AIDS generation. I don’t know what to call them; it’s not really post-AIDS, but let’s call them the healthier, younger ones. They don’t want to know. They don’t want to know the old people; they don’t want to know the history; they don’t want to acknowledge that the people who died were even part of their history. I talk about this a lot. How can you dare to ignore everything that happened? These people died so that you could live. Those drugs are out there because people died for them. [It’s] shocking what’s going on now in the gay population. I have lost a great deal of pride in being gay.” – *Larry Kramer, in an interview with PBS’ Frontline*

Attitudes have changed so much that it can be difficult to recall the fear and uncertainty of the early years of the AIDS epidemic. Healthy young men wasted and died from illnesses they should not have gotten. The high mortality rate, lack of information, lack of successful treatment and the indifference and delay of the government and health organizations led to desperation. Many hospitals were unwilling, uncertain or unable to respond to the illnesses they were seeing. Some turned patients away or imposed strict quarantines, which were humiliating and demoralizing.

Because the first cases of what would come to be known as AIDS were among gay men, Haitian refugees, intravenous drug users and hemophiliacs, the press and the general public were slow to respond to the growing number of mysterious deaths from the

disease. Many in the religious right claimed AIDS was God’s punishment.

President Ronald Reagan did not answer questions about AIDS until 1985 and did not say the word until it was mentioned in a speech 1987.

As the disease spread, anxiety and fear spread, particularly when it was unclear how the disease was transferring from person to person. Rumors about getting AIDS from toilet seats and drinking fountains abounded, and the government did little to calm public fears or offer clear information.

Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, an evangelical Christian, angered many when he treated AIDS as the illness it is and tried to disseminate clear scientific information, including the effect of the use of condoms to protect against the virus.

While early fears about AIDS focused primarily on



An early vigil staged to draw attention to the growing AIDS crisis.

the homosexual population, hemophiliac AIDS patient Ryan White was forced out of one school and had a shot fired at his home.

When the first HIV test became available, new fears emerged about the human rights violations that could occur if testing became mandatory. Congress banned people who were HIV positive from entering the United States.

It was not until a “cocktail” of three drugs was developed during the 1990s that proved able to treat the disease that there was a turnaround in the number of deaths from AIDS.

This article courtesy of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

AIDS isn’t over.

It can be tempting—and perhaps easy—to look at this disease and say that it’s under control in the U.S., that it’s an overseas issue that affects people in the developing world. But that’s simply not true.

Let’s focus on Chicago: More than 35,000 people in and around the city are living with HIV/AIDS, and only half have access to care. Half. That means that 50 percent of this population is living with a life-threatening disease and is at risk of transmitting it. What’s more, studies estimate that more than 6,000 people don’t even know they’re infected.

If we broaden our perspective to include all of the United States, one person receives a positive diagnosis every nine-and-a-half minutes. That’s 15 people during the course of this play. Once somebody tests positive, connecting them

Members of the TimeLine/Normal Heart team at the 2013 AIDS Run & Walk Chicago, on their way to raising more than \$3,500 to support the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.



with care is paramount for the individual’s health and cost effective for the community.

Early HIV treatment can significantly reduce HIV spending. Medical costs more than double from an estimated \$13,885 per year for someone with HIV who is healthy to \$36,352 per year for someone who has advanced HIV.

You can change the story.

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) encourages everybody to know their HIV status. Testing is vital to linking people to care and suppressing viral loads. This in turn reduces infection rates and creates a healthier, more knowledgeable society.

We also urge people to join AFC’s statewide advocacy network, IL ASAP, which educates public officials on sound HIV policy. Work in this field changes laws that discriminate against people with HIV and creates a more just society.

Finally, donate. AIDS service organizations need money to function, but just as important, they need time. Volunteering to fight HIV/AIDS is meaningful. It destigmatizes the disease and helps to create a culture of change because someday, we believe, this disease will be over.

be settled out of court and joint credit for the discovery will be given to both teams.

1984 Gallo develops a blood test, known as ELISA, to determine the presence of the virus. However, the test raises concerns about confidentiality and civil rights for patients.

San Francisco’s Director of Public Health, Dr. Merv Silverman, orders the city’s bathhouses to close. 14 bathhouses sue to reopen.

February 1985 A Congressional report, “Review of the Public Health Service’s Response to AIDS,” is highly critical of the lack of federal funding for research.

April 1985 The first international AIDS conference is held in Atlanta, Ga.

Larry Kramer’s *The Normal Heart* opens at The Public Theater in New York.

June 1985 Hemophiliac teenager Ryan White is denied entry to his school in Kokomo, Ind. After a long court battle, he will be allowed to return, but his family moves after a bullet is fired into their house.

September 1985 President Ronald Reagan responds to a question about AIDS at a press conference. He gives an ambiguous answer to a question about sending a child to school with another child with AIDS, despite having been briefed that there is no risk. White House lawyer (and future U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice) John Roberts had sent him a memo saying, “I would not like to see the president reassuring the public on this point.”

the organizations

Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC)

In 1981, Larry Kramer, Nathan Fain, Dr. Lawrence Mass, Paul Popham, Paul Rappaport, Edmund White and their friends gathered in writer Larry's New York living room to address concerns about a rare cancer that was appearing in gay men and to raise money for research. This informal meeting would lead to the founding of Gay Men's Health Crisis one year later. In 1982, an answering machine in the home of volunteer Rodger McFarlane acted as the first AIDS hotline—receiving more than 100 calls the first night.

During the organization's early years, Kramer's inflammatory approach often rubbed more diplomatic members of the group the wrong way. When the board prevented him from attending a meeting with Mayor Ed Koch, which had been two years in the making,—reportedly because they were afraid of what Kramer might say or do—he quit.

Tensions about the aims of the organization had been building for some time. For instance,

Kramer was frustrated that focus shifted to providing services and information to people with AIDS (which he felt the city should be providing) rather than to putting pressure on government and news organizations to increase funding for research. Today, Kramer is on friendlier footing with GMHC leadership.

GMHC's current mission is "to end the AIDS epidemic and uplift the lives of all affected."

AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP)

Larry Kramer spoke at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in New York City on March 10, 1987 (after Nora Ephron had to cancel). After his galvanizing speech, there was much discussion among the large number of attendees and a meeting was set for two days later. Those who met pledged to be a direct action protest group, concentrating in particular on fighting for the release of experimental drugs.

On numerous occasions over the ensuing years, the group organized protests on Wall



One of the most iconic signs used by AIDS activists to draw attention to the epidemic and to call for action.

Street, at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Institutes for Health (NIH), drug companies and elsewhere to advocate for speedier drug testing and lower prices for existing treatments. Their protests garnered national and international media attention and resulted in the cost of the AIDS drug AZT being reduced, among other successes.

Today there are ACT UP chapters around the United States and beyond, "united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis."

AmFAR (the American Federation for AIDS Research) is founded by Dr. Mathilde Krim and Dr. Michael Gottlieb. It unifies AIDS research organizations on the East and West coasts. Elizabeth Taylor is the national chair and Rock Hudson donates \$250,000 to the organization.

October 2, 1985 Hudson dies of AIDS. He had been the first public figure to acknowledge he was suffering from the disease.

1986 U. S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop calls for a comprehensive program of AIDS and sex education and urges the use of condoms.

Dr. Mathilde Krim and Elizabeth Taylor testify before Congress on the need for clinical research and accelerated access to experimental HIV/AIDS drugs.

1987 Kramer founds ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) to agitate politically for attention to the AIDS crisis.

Zidovudine (AZT) becomes the first anti-HIV drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). At \$10,000 for a

one-year supply, AZT is the most expensive drug in history.

The AIDS Quilt is displayed at the National Mall for the first time.

The U.S. government bars HIV-infected travelers and immigrants from entering the country.

1988 ACT UP demonstrates at FDA headquarters to protest the slow pace of AIDS drug approval.

The federal government mails an educational pamphlet, "Understanding AIDS," to 107 million homes nationwide.

The World Health Organization (WHO) designates December 1 as World AIDS Day.

1989 The NIH funds 17 community-based AIDS clinical research units as part of a federally sponsored research program.

The FDA approves treatments for AZT-induced anemia and Mycobacterium avium complex and a new method of preventing pneumonia.

April 8, 1990 Ryan White dies; his funeral is attended by Michael Jackson, Elton John and First Lady Barbara Bush and is broadcast on national television.

Congress passes the Americans with Disabilities Act, which protects individuals with disabilities, including people with HIV/AIDS and those suspected of being infected, from discrimination.

To date, nearly twice as many Americans have died of AIDS as died in the Vietnam War.

Elizabeth Taylor and Jeanne White testify before Congress in support of the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act of 1990.

1991 The CDC reports that one million Americans are infected with HIV.

Congress enacts the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) Act of 1991 to provide housing assistance to people with HIV/AIDS.

Earvin "Magic" Johnson reveals that he is infected with HIV.

The red ribbon is introduced as a symbol of hope and compassion in the face of AIDS.

WHO estimates that nearly 10 million people are infected with HIV worldwide.

HIV vs. AIDS

the disease

Many people refer to HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) as though they are the same thing. They are not. HIV is a virus that can cause the weakening of the immune system, which leads to the cluster of opportunistic infections—such as pneumocystis pneumonia, Kaposi's sarcoma and other symptoms—known as AIDS. These definitions have become even more complicated as successful drug treatments may keep a patient from developing AIDS for a prolonged period of time.

There is no cure for AIDS. The "triple cocktail" of drugs is a numbers game in which three drugs work to attack the virus in different ways so that not enough of the virus can survive to mutate and become resistant to the drugs.

"The only thing that makes people fight is fear. That's what we discovered about AIDS activism."

— Larry Kramer, *The Daily Beast*, May 14, 2006

During rehearsals, Artistic Director PJ Powers (PJP) talked with director Nick Bowling (NB) and actor David Cromer (DC) about *The Normal Heart*. This is an edited version of their conversation. To read much more, visit timelinetheatre.com/normal_heart/resources.htm.

PJP: What was your first experience with *The Normal Heart*?

DC: I saw the Next Theatre production. It's one of the few occasions I legitimately without any doubt leapt to my feet at the end. Just the raw power of it was really shattering.

NB: My first time was the Broadway revival two years ago. I was taken by that production, in particular the idea of looking back at AIDS from the perspective that we have today. That AIDS had such an impact on the gay community, in of course terrible awful ways, but also the positive impact it had on bringing a community together and giving it a point.

DC: I had forgotten how little we knew. What it was like to have no information, how terrifying that is and how in an emergency, it's just chaos afterwards.

NB: I'm interested in how this gay community that I'm a part

of dealt with each other and with this perfect storm. We'd just been liberated in many ways—in the post-Stonewall era of gay liberation and gay sexual liberation. Then we were thrown back into fear and in some ways back into the closet. How did that shape us? How has it shaped where we are today? The focus now is gay marriage, and that's why I think many people connect the themes of this play to the fight over gay marriage.

PJP: David, you got to spend some time with Larry Kramer.

DC: I did. I asked if he had ever been involved in anything politically before this, and he said, "Never." Basically he was saying, "I never had a mission before." That's what I took. And the other thing is that he said he's actually very shy.

I think about how many conflicts, how many situations, how many arguments, I walk away from, that all of us do all the time, just because we're not willing to be disliked.

He didn't like to talk to people he didn't like or be confrontational with people. Learning to be unpopular, for a shy and needy person, would be harrowing. It would have taken a great deal of courage.

PJP: Nick, how have you approached the canvas of Stage 773, which is bigger than, if not as flexible as, the canvas at our home on Wellington?

NB: We've used as inspiration Larry Kramer's apartment itself. There are some beautiful pictures of Larry in his house in front of his bookshelf that became very inspiring to us.

The play needs so many locations, and there's an inherent coldness that comes with that many space changes because of how spare you need to be. So we've tried to find the balance in this very heated play of not putting it in an incredibly cold world. This bookshelf is one way we've found to bring this layer of personal and mess and human to the play.

DC: It's like all these people, all these lives, all these people we've lost.

NB: Right. These little bits of all these peoples' lives and in some ways it stands as a memorial. We're looking at this play from such distance now, and it's not that this crisis of this plague is over, it surely isn't. But in some ways there needs to be this sort of living memorial along with the actual play itself. That was the idea.

David Cromer views a photo of Larry Kramer in front of his apartment bookcases during designer presentations at the first rehearsal of The Normal Heart.



Save the Date: Step Into Time 2014

Mark your calendar for TimeLine's biggest party of the year—our Step Into Time Gala benefit—scheduled for Friday, March 14, 2014 at the Ritz Carlton Chicago—A Four Seasons Hotel. The evening includes cocktails, a formal dinner, silent auction, exclusive entertainment and more! All proceeds benefit TimeLine's mission and programs. For updates about Step Into Time, visit timelinetheatre.com/step_into_time.

Accessibility News: Wheelchair Lifts

Thank you to all who "pardoned our dust" these past few months! Construction is completed and we're thrilled to announce that new wheelchair lifts are now enhancing the accessibility of TimeLine's theatre on Wellington Avenue.



One of the new wheelchair lifts providing greater accessibility to TimeLine's Wellington Avenue theatre space.

TimeLine partnered with our landlord, the Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ (WAUCC), on the project that makes it possible for wheelchair users and others with physical disabilities to use two separate wheelchair lifts to travel from street level to the theatre and to access restrooms on the lower level.

TimeLine's investment in this major improvement to our 103-year-old building totaled \$41,000, with the overall project spearheaded by WAUCC surpassing \$100,000.

We are able to undertake significant investments like this and to continually expand our work on stage because

of the ongoing support of our community. For information about how you can support TimeLine's Annual Fund, please visit timelinetheatre.com/donate.

If you have questions about how to support projects like this, please feel free to reach out to Lydia Swift, Development Manager, at lydia@timelinetheatre.com or 773.281.8463 x26.

BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

Dramaturgy & Historical Research by Maren Robinson

Written by Maren Robinson, PJ Powers and Lara Goetsch, with contribution from the AIDS Foundation of Chicago

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Graphic Design by Lara Goetsch

The Normal Heart photo illustration and photography by t. HARRISON HILLMAN

Backstory is published four times each season.

Pictured on front cover (from left): Director Nick Bowling; actor Alex Weisman; actors David Cromer and Patrick Andrews; actor Marc Grapey; actor Mary Beth Fisher; actor Joel Gross; and actor Stephen Rader.

Our Mission:

TimeLine Theatre presents stories inspired by history that connect with today's social and political issues.

Our collaborative artistic team produces provocative theatre and educational programs that engage, entertain and enlighten.

FLEXIBILITY. CONVENIENCE. PRICE.

FlexPasses still available!



[TimeLine] is known for **taking care of its patrons**.
It is a theater that **audiences trust**.

— Chris Jones, *Chicago Tribune*

WHAT IS THE FLEXPASS?

Each FlexPass gives you a specific number of admissions to reserve general admission seats to performances. Use your admissions in any combination and select dates that work best for you!

FlexPasses are still available so you can save on the other plays this season:



A RAISIN IN THE SUN

BY LORRAINE HANSBERRY directed by Ron OJ Parson

Now Playing through December 7, 2013 at *TimeLine Theatre*

TimeLine's production of this award-winning American classic received more than a dozen "Highly Recommended" notices from critics and has extended due to popular demand, but must close on December 7.



THE HOW AND THE WHY

BY SARAH TREEM directed by Keira Fromm

January 28 - April 6, 2014 at *TimeLine Theatre*

Two brilliant evolutionary biologists on opposite sides of a timely argument spar over evolution, feminism, women's health and generational divides in modern America in this smart and compelling new play.



JUNO BY JOSEPH STEIN AND MARC BLITZSTEIN

BASED ON *JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK* BY SEAN O'CASEY

directed by Nick Bowling, music direction by Doug Peck & Elizabeth Doran

April 23 - July 27, 2014 at *TimeLine Theatre*

The fearless matriarch of a destitute household holds her family together in the face of personal, political and social unrest during the Irish Civil War. Don't miss the Chicago premiere of this epic, humorous and heartbreaking musical!

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