



U.S. PREMIERE

# THE LAST WIFE

BY **KATE HENNIG**  
DIRECTED BY **NICK BOWLING**

**Timeline** **20**  
Theatre Company

20 YEARS OF HISTORY

**BACKSTORY** YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the second production in TimeLine's 20th Anniversary Season, the United States premiere of *The Last Wife* by Kate Hennig.

This extraordinary play debuted at the Stratford Festival in Canada in 2015 to rave reviews, three extensions and a totally sold-out run. TimeLine Board Member Debbie Siegel had nabbed a lucky ticket and reached out to me immediately to say it was the play that everyone at Stratford was talking about and a perfect fit for TimeLine's mission of connecting history with current social and political issues.

Playwright Kate Hennig hails from Ontario, and her remarkable career extends well beyond writing. She has been a performer for more than 30 years, appearing on Broadway, with the Royal Shakespeare Company, and with both the Shaw and Stratford Festivals in a range of classics, musicals and contemporary plays.

After playing the great leading ladies of Shakespeare, Shaw, Ibsen, Coward, Stoppard, and Albee (yes, a lot of male playwrights), Kate has now brought to life a new dynamic heroine—Katherine Parr—in a thrilling, timely and searing play. This contemporary look at the relationship between Henry VIII and his sixth bride shatters any notion of the silent woman behind the man, putting Katherine in command of their relationship, their home and, ultimately, their kingdom.

*The Last Wife* has the uncanny ability to feel like both a classic script and a bold, fresh play written in the 21st century. Its context is rooted in Tudor England, yet it sounds and looks unmistakably like our diverse and ever-evolving world today. It asks a question that is playing out in our electorate as I write this: "What if a woman ruled the country?" Or, put another way by my 9-year-old daughter recently: "Why has it taken so long? How boring that it's always been men." Touché.

To lead the production, we're delighted to welcome back the riveting AnJi White as Katherine, fresh off her star turn in TimeLine's *Sunset Baby* last season. She's joined by one of Chicago's finest classical actors, Steve Pickering, as Henry VIII, as well as a group of dynamic young performers all making their TimeLine debuts, under the always inspiring direction of Associate Artistic Director Nick Bowling.

We are overjoyed to be able to introduce Kate's play to the United States in this intimate, immersive TimeLine production, and we look forward to the work that lies ahead for the deservedly in-demand playwright. In fact, *The Last Wife* is just the first play in what will ultimately be Kate's "The Queenmaker Trilogy," exploring the relationship between women and power. We can't wait to see what the next two installments have in store, including *The Virgin Trial* featuring Elizabeth I and *Father's Daughter* examining Mary I.

I invite you to explore this *Backstory* publication for a fascinating interview with Kate, as well as a dive into the world of Tudor England and the ill fates of the five women who preceded Henry's last wife. Katherine Parr certainly made history, and hers is a story worthy of the type of fresh and insightful dramatization that *The Last Wife* provides. May it raise a host of interesting questions, and put some of them ultimately to bed.

I'm grateful that you've joined us to help celebrate Season 20 and thank you for helping TimeLine continue to forge ahead.

Best,

## THE PLAYWRIGHT

KATE HENNIG AND *THE LAST WIFE*

**"Because history is such a male-based and male-dominated inheritance, we as women have so little understanding of [the place of] women in history. As a woman, I need to imagine my own history. So, as a playwright, that is what I'm drawn to, the imagining of history, and the imagining of feminine and feminist history."** — *Kate Hennig*

Born in England and raised in Alberta, Canada, playwright Kate Hennig is an award-winning theatre artist and educator best known for her 30 years of professional work as an actress, including multiple seasons performing on Broadway and with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

As a playwright, Hennig has been a member of the Groundswell Playwrights' Unit, Tarragon Playwrights' Unit, and the Banff Playwrights' Colony. Her writing has been funded by the Canada Council, the Toronto Arts Council, and the Ontario Arts Council, and supported by The Banff Centre, the Shaw Festival and the Stratford Festival, among others.



Promotional artwork from the Stratford Festival world premiere of *The Last Wife* in 2015.

*The Last Wife* received its world premiere at the Stratford Festival in 2015, Hennig's first work to be produced by a major theater. That sold-out run was heralded as a tough, vulnerable and unapologetic new production that "blows the doors off the way we see women in history" (*The London Free Press*). TimeLine's production is the play's U.S. premiere.

Hennig was inspired to write *The Last Wife* in 2011 while watching the events of the Arab Spring unfold. She recalls, "I watched all those autocratic despots in their Middle Eastern regimes exercising their military might, always surrounded by men. I wondered where the women were, what was happening to the wives and daughters." Katherine Parr became an avenue for Hennig to explore the role of women in (and near) positions of great power.

## THE TIMELINE: THE TUDOR DYNASTY

**1457** Henry VII (the father of Henry VIII) is born.

**1485** Henry VII defeats King Richard III and the Yorkist forces at the Battle of Bosworth Field, bringing an end to the War of the Roses. Henry VII is crowned King of England, signaling the start of the House of Tudor.

**1486** Henry VII marries Elizabeth of York. The marriage binds the warring houses of York and Lancaster.

**1486** Prince Arthur (the elder brother of Henry VIII) is born to King Henry VII and Elizabeth of York.

**1489** Prince Arthur is betrothed to Princess Catherine of Aragon.

**1491** Henry VIII is born.

**November 14, 1501** Catherine of Aragon marries Prince Arthur.

**April 2, 1502** Prince Arthur dies. Henry VIII becomes heir apparent.

**1503** Henry VIII is betrothed to Princess Catherine of Aragon.

**April 21, 1509** Henry VII dies. Henry VIII succeeds him as King at the age of 17.

**June 11, 1509** Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon marry.

**1512** Katherine Parr is born to Sir Thomas Parr, of Kendal, and Maud, daughter of Sir Thomas Green.

**1513** Catherine of Aragon rules as regent for six months while Henry is away on a military campaign in France.

**1516** Mary I, the only child of King Henry and Queen Catherine, is born.

**1517** Martin Luther nails his *Ninety-Five Theses* on a church door at Wittenberg, signaling the start of The Protestant Reformation.

**1521** King Henry VIII receives the title "Defender of the Faith" from Pope Leo X for his opposition to Martin Luther and the Reformation.

One of the most well-known English monarchies, the Tudors ruled England for 118 years, from 1485 to 1603.

Kate Hennig's *The Last Wife* is an imagining of this history, one that, in Hennig's own words, "must always favor the dramatic" over pure historical accuracy. However, at the foundation of all of the convoluted personal relationships and complicated political maneuverings that comprise this play, there exist actual historical figures, each of whom lived and led incredibly influential lives. Here we explore the historical icons at the center of this story.

## HENRY VIII



*King Henry VIII, Old Coppernose.*

The second son of King Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, Henry Tudor was born on June 28, 1491. After his older brother, Arthur, died in 1502, 10-year-old Henry became heir to the English throne. When his father died in 1509, the 17-year-old prince became King Henry VIII of England and, with permission from the Pope, married his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon.

After a number of miscarriages, Catherine gave birth to their sole surviving child, Princess Mary. Frustrated with the lack of a male heir, Henry began appealing to the Pope, citing Catherine's previous marriage to Arthur as grounds for an annulment. The Pope denied Henry's request, and so, in 1533, Henry VIII broke with the Catholic Church, divorced Catherine and married Anne Boleyn.

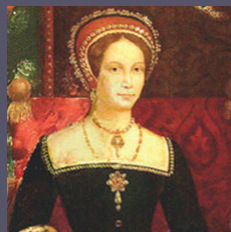
**"We are, by the sufferance of God, King of England; and the Kings of England in times past never had any superior but God." – Henry VIII**

Anne gave birth to a daughter, Princess Elizabeth, in 1533, but was unable to give Henry the son he desired. After a number of miscarriages, including one just hours after Henry suffered a terrible jousting accident in 1535, severely injuring his left leg (the consequences of which Henry would battle the rest of his life), Anne was arrested on charges of adultery and treason and publicly executed in 1536.

Henry's third marriage to Jane Seymour finally resulted in a male heir, but Jane died shortly after the birth of Prince Edward in 1537.

Henry's marriage to his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, was his shortest, lasting only a few months before being annulled. Henry married his fifth wife, Catherine Howard, in 1540, but the marriage only lasted 16 months before she was stripped of her titles and executed for adultery and treason in 1542. Henry's final marriage to Katherine Parr was mostly positive, and Katherine served as a nurse to her ailing husband.

Henry died on January 28, 1547, after ruling for nearly 38 years.



*Queen Mary I, Bloody Mary*

## MARY I

The first queen to rule England in her own right, Mary Tudor was born to Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon on February 18, 1516. As a young girl, Mary was baptized and raised in the Catholic

faith. When Henry divorced Mary's mother in 1533, he removed Mary from the line of succession. She was sent to live away from court, stripped of her title of Princess and labeled a bastard.

Jane Seymour, Henry's third wife, sought to reconcile Mary and her father. Mary was able to re-join life at court, regain her order in the line of succession and even stand in as Edward's godmother at the young Prince's christening. However, due to

Mary's firmly held religious beliefs, she was frustrated by the King's push for a fully Protestant country and remained at odds with her father and his reforms.

Mary became Queen in 1553 despite an attempt by Edward's council of advisers to appoint Lady Jane Grey to the throne. During her reign, she attempted to reverse many of the reforms her father and brother had put into place. Queen Mary gained the nickname "Bloody Mary" due to her violent persecution of English Protestants and revival of English heresy laws. During her five-year reign, nearly 300 convicted heretics were burned at the stake, while many more died in prisons or fled to other countries.

Despite Mary's marriage to Prince Phillip of Spain, and her attempts to produce an heir to the crown, Mary died in 1558 without a child.

## ELIZABETH I



*Queen Elizabeth I, The Virgin Queen*

Considered by many to be one of the greatest English monarchs in history, Queen Elizabeth ruled for nearly 45 years. Born on September 7, 1533 to King Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth was just 2 years and 8 months old when her mother was beheaded by the King. Declared a bastard and stripped of her right to the throne, the Lady Elizabeth was sent to live at Hatfield Palace.

Elizabeth was neglected and ignored by her father until Katherine Parr, Henry's sixth wife, sent for her to rejoin the family. Elizabeth grew enamored with her stepmother, and when Henry died in 1547, Elizabeth went to live with Katherine and her new husband Thomas Seymour. But she was sent back to Hatfield in 1548, after rumors arose regarding inappropriate behavior between the Princess and Seymour.

After the ascension of Mary to the throne, Elizabeth outwardly adhered to her sister's strict Catholic observances despite her Protestant upbringing. However,

**January 25, 1533** Henry marries Anne Boleyn (even though he is still technically married to Catherine of Aragon) and is excommunicated by Pope Clement VII.

**September 7, 1533** Elizabeth I, the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, is born.

**1534** Parliament passes the First Succession Act, which grants legitimate succession to the throne to the children of Henry and Anne Boleyn and denies the same to any children of Henry and Catherine of Aragon.

**1534** Katherine Parr marries John Neville, 3rd Baron Latimer, moves to her husband's household at Snape Castle in Yorkshire and becomes stepmother to Lord Latimer's two children from a previous marriage.

**November 3, 1534** Parliament passes the Act of Supremacy, separating from the Church of Rome and confirming Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church of England.

**1535** Henry VIII seriously injures his left leg in a jousting accident. Shortly after this accident, Queen Anne Boleyn miscarries a baby boy.

**January 7, 1536** Catherine of Aragon dies at Kimbolton Castle.

**1536** On May 2, Anne Boleyn is arrested and taken to the Tower of London. She is tried for treason, adultery and incest in the Great Hall on May 15. On May 19, she is executed on Tower Hill. Her body and head are buried in an unmarked grave in the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula.

**1536** Within 24 hours of Boleyn's execution, Jane Seymour and Henry VIII are formally betrothed. The two are married on May 30.

**1536** Parliament passes the Second Succession Act, which grants legitimate succession to the throne to the children of Henry and Jane Seymour and denies the same to any of Henry's children with his previous wives.

to many who hoped for a return to a Protestant England, Elizabeth remained a figurehead, and therefore, remained under her sister's constant suspicion.

When Mary passed away in 1558, Elizabeth was crowned Queen. She reinstated the Church of England and oversaw a Golden Age for England.

While Elizabeth had many suitors (including a very close relationship with Robert Dudley, one of her most trusted advisers), she chose never to marry or have children. Elizabeth died on March 24, 1603 at age 69. Without an heir, her death signaled the end of the Tudor dynasty.

## EDWARD VI



King Edward VI, The Boy King

The only male heir of Henry VIII, Edward was born on October 12, 1537 to Henry and his third wife Jane Seymour, who died just 12 days after Edward's birth.

When his father died in 1547, the 9-year-old prince became King Edward VI of England. Because of his age, a Council of Regency was created to rule on the young King's behalf. This Council was led by Edward's uncle, Edward Seymour, who was named Lord Protector of the realm.

During his reign, Edward and his Council were intent on making England a fully Protestant state. However, by 1552, Edward's health began to fail. In an effort to ensure that his religious reforms would not be undone, Edward approved a new order of succession proposed by his council that would declare both Mary and Elizabeth illegitimate and would hand the throne to Lady Jane Grey, Edward's cousin and a descendant of Henry VII.

Edward died on July 6, 1553, and the throne was passed to Lady Jane Grey. However, Jane was only queen for a few days until, with overwhelming popular support, Mary took the throne.

## THOMAS SEYMOUR

The brother of Henry VIII's third wife and a member of the powerful Seymour family, Thomas Seymour was born somewhere around 1508. With the marriage of his younger sister, Jane Seymour, to King Henry VIII, and the subsequent birth of Prince Edward, Thomas' standing in court quickly began to rise. Seymour won the favor of the King who granted him numerous gifts of land and political appointments. In February 1547, after Henry's death, Thomas was named Baron Seymour of Sudeley and appointed Lord High Admiral of the entire English fleet.

Thomas first met Katherine Parr circa 1543 and the two developed a very deep personal friendship that was put on hold when Henry set his sights on Katherine. After the King's death in 1547, the two renewed their relationship and were married by April of that year. However, prior to his marriage to Katherine, Thomas had asked for (and been denied) both Princess Elizabeth's and Princess Mary's hands in marriage.

Thomas moved in with his new bride at her home at Chelsea Manor. In September of 1548, Katherine Parr gave birth to a daughter named Mary, but she died shortly after from complications due to childbirth. In her will she left all her possessions to Thomas, leaving him one of the richest men in England.

After his wife's death, Thomas continued to try and gain power and favor under his nephew King Edward VI, and was often regarded with suspicion by the Regency Council. On January 16, 1549, he was arrested trying to break into the King's residence with a loaded gun. On February 22, 1549, the Regency Council accused him of 33 charges of treason. He was found guilty, and was executed on March 20, 1549.



Thomas Seymour,  
Lord High Admiral  
of England



Katherine Parr, The Last Wife

The final wife of Henry VIII, Katherine Parr was born in 1512, three years into the reign of her future husband. Katherine's mother was a lady-in-waiting to Queen Catherine of Aragon, and Katherine was raised in Henry's court, where she was educated alongside Henry's daughter, Princess Mary.

Katherine married her first husband in 1527, but he passed away six years later. In 1534, she married John Neville, 3rd Baron Latimer. He died in 1543.

Katherine moved back to court in London, where she caught the attention of Thomas Seymour. The two expressed a mutual attraction, but after Henry requested her hand in marriage, Katherine felt it her duty to accept. The two were married on July 12, 1543 at a small ceremony attended by 20 guests.

Katherine was a beloved Queen, worked to reunite Henry with his children and was a major advocate in reinstating Mary and Elizabeth to the line of succession. Katherine served as a nurse to Henry in his final years, and was both a teacher and mother figure to Henry's three children. In 1544, when Henry left for France to lead a military campaign, he appointed Katherine Queen Regent to rule in his absence.

Katherine was deeply interested in the reformist religion. These views brought her into conflict with the more conservative members of Henry's court, who conspired to have her killed in 1546. While Henry did sign Katherine's arrest warrant, she was ultimately able to talk her way out of it.

Just a few months after Henry's death in 1547, Katherine secretly married Thomas Seymour.

Katherine passed away on September 7, 1548, just a week after giving birth to her first, and only, biological child, a daughter she named Mary.

**“To be useful in all I do”**

– Katherine Parr's motto

**1536** The Dissolution of the Monasteries in England begins.

**October 24, 1537** Jane Seymour dies after the premature birth of Edward VI, Henry VIII's first and only male heir.

**1540** Henry VIII and Anne of Cleves are married. The marriage is annulled just a few months later.

**1540** In July, 49-year-old Henry marries a teenaged Catherine Howard. She is beheaded less than two years later on grounds of treason and adultery.

**1543** The events of *The Last Wife* begin.

**February 1543** King Henry VIII begins courting Katherine Parr and sends her a gift of expensive clothing, which is considered an inappropriate gift for a married woman.

**March 2, 1543** Lord Latimer passes away, leaving a great inheritance for Katherine. This bequest, along with what had been left to her in her mother's will, leaves Katherine one of the wealthiest women in England. Katherine returns to court, where she begins a passionate friendship with Thomas Seymour.

**May 1543** Henry VIII sends Thomas Seymour to Brussels on a permanent embassy.

**July 12, 1543** Henry VIII marries Katherine Parr.

**July 1543** Parliament passes the Third Succession Act, which overrides the First and the Second succession acts and reinstates Mary and Elizabeth in the line of succession to the throne.

**July 1544** Henry VIII sets off to France to lead the First Siege of Boulogne. In his absence, he appoints Katherine Parr regent. During her tenure, Katherine passes four major pieces of legislation regarding domestic and military matters.

**September 1544** Henry VIII returns from France and relieves Katherine from her position as regent.

**November 1545** With the King's permission, Katherine publishes her first book, *Prayers and Meditations*.

**“Be it enacted by authority of this present Parliament that the King our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England.”** – *The Act of Supremacy (1534)*

The Protestant Reformation marked a major shift in the religious, political and social makeup of 16th-century Europe. Troubled by what they saw as a corrupt institution plagued by internal power struggles, reformers challenged the authority of the Pope and questioned the Catholic Church's ability to dictate Christian practices.

The start of the Reformation can be traced back to Martin Luther's 1517 publication of his *Ninety-Five Theses* (criticizing the Church for profiteering off of religious practices). But in England, the Reformation is linked with Henry VIII's quest for a male heir.

Although Henry was raised in the Catholic faith, when Pope Clement VII refused to annul the King's marriage to Catherine of Aragon in 1534, Henry declared that he alone should have the final say in all matters relating to the English church. Henry divorced Catherine and married Anne Boleyn. He was excommunicated by the Pope, but the English Reformation had begun.

The Act of Supremacy, passed by Parliament in 1534, formalized this break from the Catholic Church, and declared King Henry VIII the Supreme Head of the Church of England. In 1536, Henry began the dissolution of English monasteries, confiscating the land and wealth that had previously belonged to the Church, and selling it back to the people of England. The Dissolution of the Monasteries served a dual

purpose. First, this liquidated wealth supplied a great source of income and was used to fund wars abroad with France. Second, the new land owners now had a vested interest in the Reformation and were less likely to return to Catholicism for fear of having to surrender their land.

Henry continued to push Protestant reforms for the rest of his life, including requiring each parish to have a copy of the Bible available. Upon Henry's death, Edward VI attempted to make England a fully Protestant nation. During his brief reign a number of reforms were put into place, including the suspension of Latin Mass, the introduction of a Book of Common Prayer (written in English), priests being allowed to marry, and the continued removal and purification of ornate religious traditions.

Mary I attempted to overturn these reforms during her reign, but she was ultimately unsuccessful. Elizabeth I, daughter of the marriage that, in many ways, sparked the English Reformation, recognized that religion had caused a lot of problems for England and attempted to find a “middle way” that both Catholics and Protestants could accept. By the end of Elizabeth's reign, England had been established as a firmly Protestant country, but many of the strict, nationwide religious observances had been loosened.

*“Edward VI and the Pope: An Allegory of the Reformation,” an Elizabethan piece of propaganda depicting the ascension of King Edward VI.*



**During rehearsals, Associate Artistic Director (and director of *The Last Wife*) Nick Bowling (NB) caught up with playwright Kate Hennig (KH).**

**(NB)** I believe your inspiration for this play came from news events. What specifically inspired you?

**(KH)** In February 2011 when the Arab Spring began in a series of tumultuous political events, I was in Toronto playing the dance teacher in *Billy Elliot*. As I watched the unfolding uprising against authoritarian leadership, imperialism, and political corruption, I wondered: where are the women? Something historic is happening here, and where are the women? Surely these dictators have wives? Daughters? What becomes of them in the ensuing chaos? What does the conversation look like when the autocrat comes home and says, “pack up the children, the dog, and the station wagon, you're gonna love the beaches in Argentina”?

However, the Arab Spring was not a story for me to write. So I looked for my own cultural ties with absolute authority and patriarchy to find the women behind the men. It didn't take long to see that the second Tudor king, with the six wives he ploughed through in search of a male heir, fell very close to that tree. So that's where I began.

**(NB)** Every one of Henry VIII's wives has an interesting story. Did you feel drawn to Katherine Parr?

**(KH)** Oh yes. She's the last wife: divorced, executed, died, divorced, executed, SURVIVED. Who was the woman who survived this obese, gout-ridden, misogynistic prize of his dynastic breeding? As soon as I began to research it became clear to me that much of the story we have been passed down about this remarkable woman was distorted.

I don't know about you, but I was taught that she was a matronly nursemaid; in television dramas I

## THE INTERVIEW

PLAYWRIGHT KATE HENNIG

**Summer 1546** Influenced by conservative advisers, Henry signs a warrant for Katherine's arrest on charges of heresy, citing her possession of religious texts. Made aware of the warrant by a servant, Katherine is able to appeal to her husband and escape imprisonment and execution.

**December 1546** Henry VIII dictates his will. The crown would pass to Edward, while Katherine would receive a generous allowance and the title “Dowager Queen.”

**January 28, 1547** Henry VIII dies and is buried in St. George's Chapel next to his third wife, Jane Seymour. Edward VI ascends to the throne, but as he is only 9 years old, he is supervised by a Council of 16 appointed executors led by Edward Seymour (the older brother of Thomas Seymour).

**April 1547** Katherine Parr marries Thomas Seymour.

**August 30, 1548** Katherine gives birth to a daughter, Lady Mary Seymour.

**September 5, 1548** Katherine Parr dies, most likely from complications due to childbirth. She is buried in St. Mary's Church at Sudeley Castle.

**July 6, 1553** Edward VI dies of tuberculosis. Prior to his death, Edward and his advisers had rewritten the order of succession, and the throne is passed to Lady Jane Grey. Her reign will last only a matter of days.

**July 19, 1553** Lady Jane Grey is deposed and Mary I, daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, becomes queen.

**1558** Mary I dies and Elizabeth I, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, ascends to the throne.

**1603** Elizabeth I dies, marking the end of the Tudor monarchy.

## “I wondered: where are the women? Something historic is happening here, and where are the women?”

remember from childhood she was depicted as a white-haired, sexually retired woman. Imagine my surprise when I found out she was beautiful, fashionable, and 31; that she was the first woman to have her own writing published in the English language under her own name; that she had a huge influence on the first and second reigning queens of England.

**(NB)** *The Last Wife* is a Tudor drama using modern costumes and language, but you don't use specific modern cultural references, or even telephone calls and emails. Why did you want to update it, and why did you avoid some of those specific trappings?

**(KH)** I prefer to think of the play as a contemporary drama with a historic context, rather than a Tudor drama with modern accoutrements. That gives me room to really write a play about feminism and its recurring place in our history.

I wanted our play-going public to have clear access to empathy for these people and their situations—to be familiar with them. I think ... I hope, that my play allows them a fresh perspective on their own lives as well as the lives of these historic characters.

**(NB)** This play is about three powerful women leaders in early Western history. The U.S. has never had a woman president (at the time of this interview at least!). Canada and many other countries have beat us on that front. Are you trying to tell us something?

**(KH)** I'm very curious about women and political leadership. Do women really see power—specifically political power—as a position from which

things actually get done? Is part of the reason that women are not taking more leadership roles because the patriarchal structure upon which our political systems are based is ineffectual and more can be done by taking the reigns of NGOs and not-for-profit charities? It's a question I grapple with. Is the grass-roots in fact a more powerful platform for change?

**(NB)** Was there any part of the Tudor history that you had to leave out or later wished you had added?

**(KH)** I'll say no, although there is so much fascinating material to comb through. My purpose though, was to write a contemporary story about feminism and feminine influence on young women. So I really stuck to the historic material that helped me tell that story.

**(NB)** I know that *The Last Wife* is just a beginning. There are other plays to follow!

**(KH)** I didn't know when I began writing *The Last Wife* that I would continue to write about the women of this period, but I just seemed to loop around in the Tudor landscape.

The second play picks up Elizabeth's story after Henry's death. It is the little-known story of her relationship with Thomas Seymour, Katherine Parr's last husband. It's juicy. It is called *The Virgin Trial*, and will receive its world premiere at the Stratford Festival in June 2017.

I began the third play in residency at The Banff Centre last February. It is in very early stages, but picks up Mary's story as she becomes the first queen of England. I hope to finish a first draft of this play, *Father's Daughter* (working title), this fall/winter.

Then I start to think about a separate play for Lady Jane Grey ... maybe one for Mary Stuart murdering her husband so that she can marry another man ... maybe the Empress Maude who was the first woman to be the legal heir to the English throne ... ah, I smell a history cycle!

*This is an edited version of our interview with Kate Hennig. To read it all, visit [timelinetheatre.com/explore-the-last-wife](http://timelinetheatre.com/explore-the-last-wife).*

## BACKSTAGE WOMEN OF TIMELINE

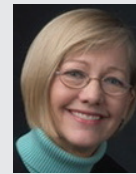
TimeLine is thrilled to be the first U.S. theatre to produce this Stratford-debuted sensation, and it inspired us to highlight some of TimeLine's strong and powerful women—members of the Board of Directors—and their thoughts about why they are involved with TimeLine Theatre.



**KAREN CASE** “Regardless of the era highlighted in a play or the essence of the storyline, the production itself is always first rate—casting, acting, sets, dramaturgy never disappoint.”



**EILEEN LACARIO** “I am honored to support TimeLine as one of the premiere theatres in Chicago. The passion, choice and quality of every production is what attracted me. And its fiscal responsibility along with commitment to Chicago audience continues to inspire me as a Board Member.”



**LIBBET RICHTER** “Given today's challenges for women in the workplace, I love the idea of seeing Kate Parr through Kate Hennig's contemporary lens, so typical of what TimeLine offers in its choice of plays. Entertainment plus historical perspective—the TimeLine difference and why I joined the Board!”



**RENÉE ZIPPRICH** “It has been my privilege to work with and support TimeLine and its evolution from a small group of talented young artists to one of the most important, innovative theatre companies in Chicago.”



**SUSAN PAYNE** “The intimacy of the space coupled with uniquely interesting and thoughtfully selected performances stimulates conversations about important topics, and reminds us of a deep history that we all have in common.”



**DEBBIE SIEGEL** “The TimeLine team has consistently demonstrated artistic leadership, vision and sound business

acumen, a winning combination. And I am so proud of our investment in our community and outreach through our Living History Program. Our productions always inspire me to learn, think and feel about a range of compelling issues.”

## BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

*Dramaturgy & Historical Research by Jared Bellot*

*Written by Jared Bellot, PJ Powers and Lara Goetsch*

*Edited by Lara Goetsch*

*Graphic Design by Lara Goetsch*

*Backstory is published four times each season.*

**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.

# WHAT IS THE FLEXPASS?

The best way to enjoy the plays in TimeLine's landmark 2016-17 season! Use admissions in any combination and select the plays & dates that work for you.

Premium, Anytime, Weekday and Preview FlexPasses in 4-Admission, 3-Admission and 2-Admission packages are available. Pay as little as \$40 up to just \$204 to see all that our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season has to offer!

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**A theatre that audiences trust.**

”

– *Chicago Tribune*

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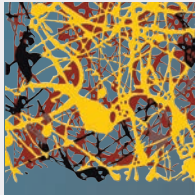
**Priority**

access to shows

**PLUS MANY OTHER PERKS!**

## ALSO PLAYING THIS SEASON:

Performances of *Bakersfield Mist* at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont  
*A Disappearing Number* and *Paradise Blue* at TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington



**CHICAGO PREMIERE**

### BAKERSFIELD MIST

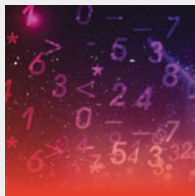
by Stephen Sachs

directed by Kevin Christopher Fox

NOW PLAYING through October 15, 2016

This provocative and hilarious look at what makes art—and people—authentic is “the perfect evening of theatre” (*Chicago Theatre Review*).

“Miracles happen. Don’t they? Sometimes?”



**CHICAGO PREMIERE**

### A DISAPPEARING NUMBER

by Complicité, originally conceived and directed by Simon McBurney and devised by the original company

directed by Nick Bowling

January 11 - April 9, 2017

A new and rare staging of this exquisite, internationally acclaimed play about love, math, and how the past and future connect.

“A mathematician, like a painter, or a poet, is a maker of patterns ... and beauty is the first test.”



**MIDWEST PREMIERE**

### PARADISE BLUE

by Dominique Morisseau

directed by Ron OJ Parson

April 26 – July 23, 2017

Set in Detroit’s Black Bottom neighborhood in 1949, this dynamic and jazz-infused drama is about what’s at stake when building a better future.

“We all got sadness. But I like to turn mine into fire, baby. What you do with yours?”

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