

Providing quality local community theatre since 1984, the all-volunteer Prince William Little Theatre is partly funded by grants from the Prince William County Park Authority, the City of Manassas, and private contributions. PWLT has won NVRTA One Act Festival Awards, Virginia Theatre Association awards, and Washington Area Theatre Community Honors (WATCH) awards.

## Moriah Groff, 2021 PWLT Scholarship Recipient



Susy Moorstein presents the scholarship check to Moriah Groff, left, in front of Colgan High School Center for the Fine and Performing Arts stage door.

When Moriah Groff was 6, she was in the ensemble of a community theatre production of *The Wizard of Oz*. That was her start of what will be a lifelong passion for the arts. Since that show, she has been in 19 productions, both on stage and behind the scenes. For the last ten years she has been taking private lessons in music, singing and theatre arts. Her music and drama coach, Alanna Mensing said, "Watching her on stage is a true privilege. Moriah is one of those rare long term students who has stuck with her craft, even when the work got difficult." She is currently a senior at Colgan High School in their Center for the Fine and Performing Arts and will be attending Fordham University in the Fall. Moriah plans to major in psychology and minor in theatre.

The following words are taken directly from Moriah's essay she submitted for scholarship consideration. "During high school, I played two extraordinary Black women. In a student-written play called *The Courageous Four*, I portrayed Mary G. Porter, one of the teachers who integrated Prince William County Schools. The second role I played was Esther Mills in Lynn Nottage's *Intimate Apparel*. My role in

*Intimate Apparel* was especially influential because playwright Lynn Nottage was the first (and second) African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Telling the story of a strong Black woman in a show written by a trailblazer for Black playwrights impacted me on stage as well as off. Both roles inspired me to think about the power I hold and how I, too, can someday be on the timeline of African American achievement and have my story told.

"Art is best when fueled by passion; therefore, I will use my love for theatre and psychology to create a show about the relationship between racial trauma and time perception.

"This topic, I believe, will translate very well to musical theatre. Playing with tempo and musical themes will be a creative way to musically represent skewed timelines and why Black people can't simply 'get over it.' Taking psychology courses and completing guided research in college would provide me with the knowledge to craft a plot that effectively conveys the concept. Musical theatre courses and experiences would provide the skills to build song structure and learn effective storytelling methods. Combined, these fields of study could make something that moves and connects people for years to come."

Prince William Little Theatre is honored to award a one thousand dollar scholarship to this fine woman. She embodies our goal to cultivate a lifelong love of theatre and we feel confident she will use her talents and passion to spread this throughout society. Her motto is from Henri Matisse, "Creativity takes courage." Obviously, she has both traits in abundance.

## Master Class/June 10

## Happy from the Inside Out



By Janie Applegate

After such a challenging year of ups and downs and unknowns, people are finding it difficult to find their "new normal." There has never been a better time to rethink what makes you happy. True happiness comes from the inside out--no matter what is going on in your life or the world around you. I became one of the first certified trainers (of ~120 worldwide) in a program started by a woman who swears she was born depressed and made it her life's mission to study happiness.

Did you know creating more happiness within yourself is as important as going to the gym and putting money in your savings account? Did you know that we each have a happiness set-point? Similar to the weight set-point, scientists have found that no matter the highs and lows we go through in life, we tend to go back to that set point. They have cracked the code and can actually measure happiness. Research shows how vital happiness is: happy people live longer, are healthier, and have better relationships. In fact, it leads to more success in every area of

# Chrissy's Corner



Photo by Mark Moorstein

May flowers have begun to bloom and nice weather is finally here! We're excited for the upcoming months. As the Covid

restrictions are slowly beginning to be lifted and Broadway has set opening dates, it looks like there is finally a light at the end of the aisle.

Our 21-22 season announcement has been posted. Check out our website and Facebook pages. There are also details in this newsletter issue. Our Virtual Original Works Festival will kick off the season. We've chosen some wonderful pieces. We'll have one-acts, monologues, spoken word and a full length play. This is a first for PWLT and we're looking forward to presenting these great works.

We also have information on our next master class. Don't forget to check it out! Details are also following in this issue.

Let us know if you have any ideas. What would you like to see? We'd love to hear from you. Reach out to us at [info@pwlt.org](mailto:info@pwlt.org).

Thank you for keeping up with PWLT.

Stay safe, take care, and keep performing.

See you at the theatre! (soon)

Chrissy Mastrangelo, PWLT President

# Prince William Little Theatre 21-22 Season Announced

<p>July 2021</p>  <p>PRINCE WILLIAM LITTLE THEATRE'S ORIGINAL WORKS FESTIVAL</p>	<p>October 2021</p>  <p>dial M for MURDER</p>
<p>DECEMBER 2021</p>  <p>A CHRISTMAS CAROL</p>   	<p>MARCH 2022</p>  <p>Sister Act</p>

July 22-29, 2021 (Virtual): *Original Works Festival*

December 10-19, 2021: *A Christmas Carol*

October 8-17, 2021: *Dial M for Murder*

March 11-20, 2022: *Sister Act*

## Prince William Little Theatre Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: Terri Ritchey

### PWLT Board of Directors:

- President** - Chrissy Mastrangelo
- Vice President** - Becky Gould-Levine
- Treasurer** - Nicholas Mastrangelo
- Secretary** - Katie Morris

### Members at Large:

- Becca Harney
- Nick MacFarlane
- Pat McInerney
- Susy Moorstein
- Terri Ritchey
- Justin Streletz



## Upcoming Board Elections

For the 2020-2021 Season, PWLT will be seeking to fill 6 total positions, 4 officers and 2 Board Members at Large positions. The term of office for officers of the Executive Board shall be one year, July 1 to June 30. Term of office for "Board Members at Large" shall be two years.

Check your email for your official ballot which will be sent to all members soon..

## Member Spotlight: Peter Ponzini



Photo by Thor Matthews

Peter Ponzini did not get involved in theater until in his late thirties. He graduated from the University of Texas with a major in history and later transitioned into security services. However, fate intervened and Peter ended up taking a theatre class for fun at NVCC and admits "got bit by the bug, and ended up taking every theater course they offered." At first, Peter did mostly technical theater and lighting but when he saw auditions for a local production of *Monty Python's Spamalot* he had to audition. Peter was a huge fan and was cast as Sir Lancelot and Tim the Enchanter. Laughingly he says, "It was all downhill from there!" He has worked with

different theatres in the area, but has done over 12 shows with Prince William Little Theatre. Peter mentioned he really likes the people involved and feels the production values are excellent. "From a technical and lighting standpoint the space PWLT performs in is amazing, Kevin and the other tech folks at the Hylton Center have done a great job setting up a wonderful lighting system that is a real pleasure to design with."

Peter's favorite PWLT show, in terms of lighting, was *Anne of Green Gables*, directed by Michelle Matthews. "That show was a huge technical challenge for me, due to the many rapid and varied lighting cues needed. I was cursing it at the time, but I was very proud of how it turned out!" In another show with Zemfira Stage, he designed the lighting and programmed an 8 minute scene that had more than 100 lighting cues. As he says, it was "super challenging, but it looked amazing when it worked (actors, say your lines in the right order or you'll make the LD cry)." Overall, he commented that hats (especially ones with large brims) create difficulties for lighting designers. Keep that in mind costume designers ☺

I asked Peter which he liked better, being on stage or designing lights, and he said, "As lighting designer, my role is literally in the shadows. But lighting can profoundly affect the mood and perception of

an audience. I like having that kind of invisible but powerful effect. It's like painting directly into people's minds."

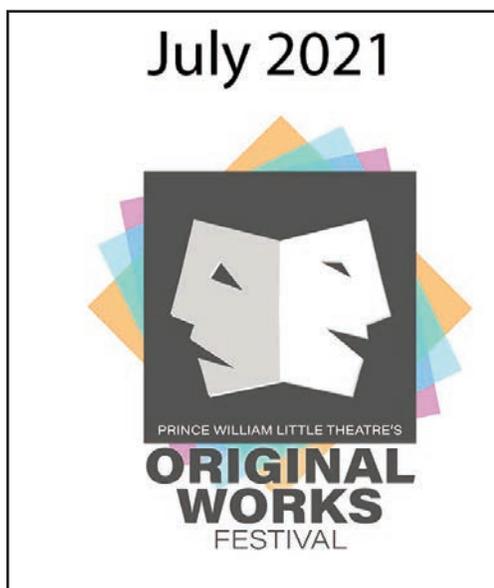
On the other hand, acting is completely different because its front and center, "I love the process of creating and becoming a character, and I'm always trying to improve from one performance to the next. When I'm acting, I live for the feedback, the energy that develops between the actor, his cast mates, and the audience. It's a real charge! I only act rarely, due to the enormous time commitment for rehearsals. It has to be a show or role that's so interesting to me that I can't resist being a part of it." The last role Peter was in at PWLT was *Judgment at Nuremberg*. That show gave him the opportunity to share his love of history while telling a powerful story.

Like all of us, Peter misses live theatre. He can't wait to get back to interacting with everyone. "I'll see you all on the stage, even if you don't see me (because I'm hiding in the shadows, a lighting designer's natural habitat!)" Peter's philosophy is summed up by Walt Whitman's, *Song of Myself 20*, "I exist as I am, that is enough, If no other in the world be aware I sit content, And if each and all be aware I sit content." We don't intend to let him hide in the shadows, Peter is far too important to all of us at PWLT.

## Original Works Festival in July

PWLT will present 11 original plays from 52 works submitted as part of its Original Works Festival in July. Performances will be online July 27, 28, and 29. Auditions will be in May – more information can be found on the PWLT website. Performances will be recorded and streamed via Facebook and YouTube. Presentations include:

1. *Beautiful Burden – I Am Black* – Jacqueline Youm (Monologue)
2. *Strong – A Spoken Word* – Tyierra Henderson (Spoken Word)



3. *A God Day* – Nicole Lust (One Act Play)
4. *Rosa Leo* – Adam Szudrich (One Act Play)
5. *Lost in Place* – Craig Houk (One Act Play)
6. *Ruth* – Tom Piccin (One Act Play)
7. *Superstition and Espionage* – Bonny Lee Hardgrove (Full Length Play)
8. *Aunt Eleanore* – Marilyn Bennett (One Act Play)
9. *Oh, Susanna* – Jasmine Michelle (One Act Play)
10. *Cupid Strikes* – Shayne Gardner (One Act Play)
11. *The Offering* – Andrea Carey (One Act Play)

## From the Inside Out

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your life.

Marci Shimoff is a NY Times Bestselling author (*Love for No Reason*, *Happy for No Reason*, and the *Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul* series). She is a featured teacher in the film, *The Secret*. Marci started her certified training program based on *Happy for No Reason: 7 Steps to Being Happy from the Inside Out* in 2018 when she realized people wanted the information to improve the quality of their lives.

The Zoom program (an hour to an hour and a half), incorporating surprising findings in positive psychology, powerful tools and techniques and real-life stories, will briefly review the seven step program that will raise your "happiness set-point." You don't have to have "happy" genes, win the lottery, or lose twenty pounds. The program will provide an overview for you to experience more unconditional happiness in your life--starting right away. Join us June 10 at 7:00 p.m. for this important Master Class. Look for additional information on PWLT's website.