

ARLINGTON

BOOK AND LYRICS BY

VICTOR LODATO

MUSIC BY

POLLY PEN



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

ARLINGTON
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ARLINGTON was presented by Vineyard Theatre (Douglas Aibel, Artistic Director; Sarah Stern, Co-Artistic Director; Jennifer Garvey-Blackwell, Executive Producer) in New York City, opening on March 2, 2014. It was directed by Carolyn Cantor; the set design was by Dane Laffrey; the costume design was by Jess Goldstein; the lighting design was by Tyler Micoleau; the sound design was by Dan Moses Schreier; the music supervisor was Dan Lipton; the music director was Ben Moss; and the production stage manager was Megan Smith. The cast was as follows:

SARA JANE Alexandra Silber
PIANIST / JERRY / FATHER Ben Moss

The world premiere of ARLINGTON was presented by Magic Theatre (Loretta Greco, Artistic Director, Artistic Director; Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock, Corky and Donna LaVallee, and Jaimie Mayer Phinney, Producers) in San Francisco, California, opening on November 13, 2013. It was directed by Jackson Gay; the set design was by Erik Flatmo; the costume design was by Antonia Gunnarson; the lighting design was by Jeff Rowlings; the sound design was by Sara Huddleston; the props design was by Jacquelyn Scott; the musical director was Jeff Pew; the technical director was Dave Gardner; and the stage manager was Julie Haber. The cast was as follows:

SARA JANE Analisa Leaming
PIANIST / JERRY / FATHER Jeff Pew

A 25-minute inaugural version of ARLINGTON was commissioned and presented by PREMIERES (Paulette Haupt, Artistic Director) at Urban Stages in New York City in 2012. It was directed by Jack Cummings III; the music direction was by Kenneth Gartman; the set and costume design was by Dane Laffrey; the lighting design was by Jen Schriever; the sound design was by Sean Hagerty; and the production stage manager was Robert Bennett. The cast was as follows:

SARA JANE Alexandra Silber
PIANIST / JERRY / FATHER Kenneth Gartman

CHARACTERS

SARA JANE

PIANIST / JERRY / FATHER

NOTES

All text is sung, unless otherwise noted.

The action of the play spans a period of just over twenty-four hours, from late afternoon to the evening of the following day.

Sara Jane speaks directly to the audience. As a rule, she does not look at the pianist. When such contact is necessary, it is indicated in the text. The pianist and the other characters exist, essentially, only in Sara Jane's mind.

The audience should have no sense that the pianist is anything but an accompanist until he first speaks as Jerry at the end of Part One.

Parts Four through Six are more continuous than the first three sections, and they should flow into each other seamlessly, without blackouts.

ARLINGTON

Prelude

A pleasant and comfortable living room. Spotless, everything just-so. Against one wall, an upright piano. Late afternoon. The day is quickly darkening as a storm approaches.

There is no music yet, only sounds of the natural world.

A young woman naps on the couch. Wind disturbs the curtains of a partially-open window. Flicker of far-away lightning. A few seconds later, the rumble of distant thunder. A change in atmosphere — though the storm is not yet upon the house.

The wind increases.

Lightning, closer. Thunder soon follows.

It begins to rain, lightly.

Lights up slowly on a second piano, upstage. A man sits before it. He plays simply, steadily, mirroring the sound of the rain.

Plink, plink, plink — fat drops landing on the street, the roof. The wind grows more intense. Thrashing trees visible outside the house.

Plink, plink, plink — faster now, more drops, more notes. It's pouring.

A bright flash of lighting, simultaneous with a loud crack of thunder — the sound underscored by a few ferocious chords on the piano.

The woman jolts awake. The day has darkened into something that feels like night. She clicks on a lamp beside the couch.

As she moves toward the open window, there's another flash of lighting and crack of thunder — underscored again by the pianist. The woman, startled, stops in her tracks. There's something slightly zany, almost vaudevillian, about all of this.

She continues upstage and closes the window.

The lamplight flickers and then goes out.

She returns to the couch and grabs her coverlet. Another crash of thunder with piano. It's almost as if the pianist is purposely trying to frighten the woman. She scurries upstage and flees off.

Several more catastrophic chords — after which the piano and the player, the entire world, go dark.

Blackness. Silence.

Part One

Darkness and silence linger for longer than we might expect.

And then, slowly, the sun returns. A new morning.

The light enters the room innocently, with no memory of the storm.

The light reaches the man at the piano.

He begins to play.

Sweetness, optimism.

Sara Jane enters with a bunch of yellow daisies.

She begins to arrange the flowers in a vase.

She sings directly to the audience.

She smiles easily, if a bit nervously.

She is lovely.

SARA JANE.

It's a sunny day — thank God.

It's a sunny day — thank heavens.

Hasn't the rain been awful?

I just ...

(A little shudder.)

I'm not a rain person,

I'm a sun person.

Well, I mean, I don't like to go *out* in the sun

Too often,

Because I burn

Easily.

But I like it around.

If I lived — in a cloudy place

I'd prob-ly shoot myself.

(Ha.)

Well, I wouldn't shoot myself.

I'm not a gun person.

(Fusses with flowers.)

Mother is coming to lunch, so ...
I just want everything to be ...
Perfect.

(Adjusts a flower.)

Perfect.
She won't like the daisies.
But I think they're pretty.
Simple, you know — innocent.
I mean roses are nice
But they're not
Innocent.

(Suddenly, with enthusiasm.)

I just don't think
We give the sun enough credit.
The warmth, you know.
And just light in general.
And from *that* far away.
It's — well, it's a miracle.

Oh my gosh.
We're just so lucky
Not to be stuck in the dark.

(Turns to look out a window.)

Plus the rain was giving me
These horrible dreams.

I used to keep a dream journal but
Jerry made fun of me, so ...

I just think dreams are
Interesting.

Like one time I dreamed
I was sitting in a tree and I was
Eating a leaf.
Just chewing on a leaf.

I mean, okay, that's kinda boring.
But then I thought about it and I thought
Maybe, maybe ... I was a caterpillar once.
In a past life or whatever.
Because the taste of the leaf was
Very familiar.

It was like a memory.
Far away but ...
I mean, I can totally see myself
As a caterpillar.
I'm practically a vegetarian
As it is —

(Sudden shift to speech, emphatic.)

Oh — you know what I love?!
Chard.
Oh my God I just love it.

And what is it?

It's basically a big *leaf*, right?

(Takes a chocolate from a bowl and eats it.)

I'm big on chocolate too.
But I'm skinny, right?
Jerry says I'm a stick.
"I could break you in two
Pieces — *snap!*"

He's so funny.
He probably could.
He's got these big big hands.
Strong, you know.

(She eats another piece of chocolate, closes her eyes, and savors it — half Jerry, half candy.)

Mmmm. So good.

(Opens her eyes.)

Where was I...?
Oh, the dreams, right!

ARLINGTON

book and lyrics by Victor Lodato
music by Polly Pen

1M, 1W

It's a sunny day and Sara Jane is trying valiantly to keep it that way. Her young husband, Jerry, is away at war, and though Sara Jane believes in the cause, nothing has seemed quite right lately — especially the last few messages from Jerry. At least she has her piano — and Jerry's bourbon — to keep her company as she tries to figure things out. But how far will she go to keep the impending storm at bay? *ARLINGTON* is a stirring, funny, and powerful new work from playwright/novelist Victor Lodato and award-winning composer Polly Pen.

"Ms. Pen's carefully written but unobtrusive music, and Mr. Lodato's well-sketched portrait of a young woman beginning to question the beliefs she's been raised with, are certainly nicely integrated; the music and lyrics mirror each other in mood perfectly. Ms. Pen's music follows the wanderings of Sara Jane's mind dutifully and with agility." —**The New York Times**

"It's hard to believe that this musical monologue . . . was written by a man, so accurately drawn is the inner life of Sara Jane, a young housewife whose husband is away at war." —**The New Yorker**

"There's much to enjoy in Lodato's often witty, poetically spare lyrics and in Pen's complex interweaving and reuse of melodies." —**San Francisco Chronicle**

"The music, by composer Polly Pen, which so beautifully dovetails Sara Jane's feelings, is utterly captivating: alternately lilting, moody, playful, buoyantly melodious." —**The San Francisco Examiner**

"The music, by Polly Pen, is melodic and lovely." —**New York Observer**

"This is a handsomely pressed, polished, and affecting work. Gorgeous, full-weight legit music." —**TalkinBroadway.com**

*"Lodato's text creates a poetic exploration of a woman caught in a crisis of thought. *ARLINGTON* provides a worthwhile example of how seriously thoughtful and adventurous dramatic writing can be incorporated into the realm of musical theatre."* —**NYTheatreNow.com**

"A tightly-packed little firecracker." —**The Village Voice**

Also by Polly Pen

BED AND SOFA (Klavan)
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