

**THE
UNDENIABLE
SOUND OF
RIGHT NOW**

BY LAURA EASON



**DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.**

THE UNDENIABLE SOUND OF RIGHT NOW
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The world premiere of THE UNDENIABLE SOUND OF RIGHT NOW opened at Rattlestick Theater in New York City (David Van Asselt, Artistic Director) in a co-production with Women's Project Theater (Lisa McNulty, Artistic Director) on April 2nd, 2015. The production was directed by Kirsten Kelly; the set design was by John McDermott; the costume design was by Sarah J. Holden; the lighting design was by Joel Moritz; the sound design was by Lindsay Jones; and the production stage manager was Michal Mendelson. The cast, in alphabetical order, was as follows:

NASH Daniel Abeles
HANK Jeb Brown
JOEY Chris Kipiniak
TOBY Brian Miskell
LENA Margo Seibert
BETTE Lusia Strus

An early version of THE UNDENIABLE SOUND OF RIGHT NOW was presented in a workshop production as part of the Cino Nights Series by Rising Phoenix Rep (Daniel Talbott, Artistic Director) at the Seventh Street Small Stage at Jimmy's #43 on September 7th, 2011. The show was directed by Kirsten Kelly and assistant directed by Chinasa Ogbuagu. The cast, in alphabetical order, was as follows:

NASH Daniel Abeles
LENA Estelle Bajou
TOBY James Patrick Davis
HANK Jeff Still
BETTE Lusia Strus

CHARACTERS

HANK — A rock club owner. Late 40s/50s. A talker, a storyteller with a big presence and a great sense of humor, even when he's complaining. A guy people love to be around. He also plays guitar.

BETTE — Hank's ex-wife. About the same age as Hank, maybe a few years younger. A tough, funny broad who can go toe-to-toe with Hank and anyone, really. (Pronounced "Bet.")

LENA — Hank's daughter. Tough, business-smart, a bit cryptic, cards kept close to the chest. Has an air of disinterest that makes her irresistible to men. Early 20s.

NASH — A DJ. A looker. A charmer. Driven and ambitious but has a heart, not too slick. 20s.

TOBY — Hank's bookkeeper, booker, guy who watches the door. A sweet, friendly rock nerd, in awe of Hank. 20s.

JOEY — The landlord's son. First-generation and anxious to stake his claim. Is constantly trying to prove himself but pretends he's not. 30s.

PLACE

Hank's Bar, Chicago, where rock bands play.

TIME

The fall of 1992.

TEXT NOTES

[...] a suspended thought.

[—] line being cut off by following line of dialogue.

[//] overlapping dialogue, where the following line should begin.

THE UNDENIABLE SOUND OF RIGHT NOW

Scene 1

It's 1992. The interior of Hank's Bar, a rock club. Long ago, the space was a small-time butcher shop. It has a high, worn tin ceiling, perhaps an exposed brick wall. Along one wall is a large, functioning rolling metal door that separates the bar from a larger unseen warehouse. The space is well-worn, covered with band posters and stickers. There are beer bottles and cups littering the floor — the bar has just emptied out. Loud recorded music plays.

Hank is behind the bar, finishing counting the take from the night. Toby is winding mic cable. Bette sits in the "VIP" section.

TOBY. Man, that was a good show, huh? Such a good show!

HANK. Great show!

TOBY. People *really* liked them.

HANK. I knew they would.

TOBY. And a good turnout tonight! *(Hank waves some of the cash he's counting around.)*

HANK. Very good! *(To Bette.)* Hey, Bette! What'd you think of them?

BETTE. They were loud.

HANK. Of course they were loud. Loud is part of the point.

BETTE. And usually I don't mind. But they were pushing it.

TOBY. A lot of that's on me, running the board.

HANK. No. The mix was good, Toby. They sounded great, no matter what the peanut gallery over there thinks.

BETTE. I'm not saying they didn't play well. I think they probably

did. It was just hard to tell with all that blood running out of my ears.

HANK. You've only been gone from upstairs five months. How has Forest Park already turned you into such a delicate flower?

BETTE. I've always been a delicate flower. (*Holding up a cigarette to her mouth.*) Light me.

HANK. I thought you were quitting.

BETTE. I am. Right after this one.

HANK. Have a beer instead.

BETTE. Twist my arm. Then I gotta go home. (*Hank pops open a beer for her, then one for himself, and grabs his electric guitar down from behind the bar.*)

TOBY. Honestly, I'm a little surprised. I thought their demo was *fine*. But I didn't expect *that*.

HANK. Fine? Their demo was *terrible*.

TOBY. (*With a smile.*) It was. It was *terrible*.

HANK. A truly terrible, seriously shitty demo. (*Hank crosses around to a bar stool. He sits, unplugged, playing in time to the music in the background.*)

TOBY. So, why did you book them?

HANK. That first guitar riff. (*He sings a little of the riff.*)

TOBY. On the demo? Yeah, I guess that was good.

HANK. They seemed worth taking the risk.

TOBY. Clearly.

HANK. Trust your gut. I had a feeling.

TOBY. Well, you were right. And they were cool, too.

HANK. Tell them they're welcome whenever they come back through.

TOBY. I will! They were so excited to play here. I mean, obviously. But, still. When I tell them you liked them so much? They're going to go insane.

HANK. But tell them they gotta make a new demo. Making anyone else listen to that is a crime against humanity. (*Lena enters.*)

LENA. Hey.

HANK. You're home early.

LENA. It's after four, Dad.

HANK. I didn't think we'd see you until seven.

LENA. Please. I'm not rolling. I told you. I'm not doing that.

HANK. Thanks for that, sweetie.

LENA. (*Excited.*) Hey — the article is out! (*She holds up the paper of a local weekly, a big picture of Hank on the cover.*)

TOBY and BETTE. (*Overlapping.*) You got it?! / How is it?

BETTE. (*Reaching for the paper.*) Gimme. (*Lena hands Bette the paper.*)

LENA. As a promo for the anniversary *show*, it's just OK. But about the 25th anniversary *in general*, it's good.

HANK. Does he talk about the line up?

LENA. Not much. He doesn't mention they're all unsigned bands you're trying to get // some attention.

HANK. So, what is it?

LENA. It's more a profile of you, the bar, talks about the history, all the bands that've broken here —

HANK. I knew it. When he started asking all those questions about “*the early years*” — please, please tell me it's not too ... (*With disdain.*) ... *nostalgic*.

LENA. It's pretty nostalgic.

BETTE. (*Looking up from article.*) It's not. It's a retrospective!

HANK. A *retrospective*? Who am I? Vincent van Gogh?

BETTE. He talks about how you curated the place ...

HANK. (*With a disdainful laugh.*) He says I said “*curate*”?! Have you ever heard me use the word “*curate*” in my life?

LENA. He's nice about what a good player you are — that you could've made it as a musician and how that helped you spot talent.

BETTE. He says you're Chicago's “*Ultimate Indie Rock Tastemaker*.”

HANK. “*Tastemaker*?” Holy hell! Well, congratulations to me!

TOBY. (*Looking at the article now.*) The picture is cool. You look like a bad ass. Can I? (*Bette gives Toby the article.*)

LENA. He does say the club is basically a shit-hole.

HANK. (*Mocking the writer.*) It's a bar where rock bands play, *Agnes*, what do you want!? It's 1992, not 1952, and this is not the Walnut Room!

TOBY. He makes it sound like a lot of people just come here to *relive* something —

HANK. And that's bullshit.

BETTE. He's just saying you're an institution now.

HANK. An institution?! Well ... fuck me.

BETTE. I think it's a long time coming and well-deserved.

TOBY. Me, too!

LENA. Me, too!

TOBY. Where were you tonight, Lena?

LENA. Oh. Warehouse party. That DJ you've been talking about was there.

TOBY. Nash? Did he spin?

THE UNDENIABLE SOUND OF RIGHT NOW

by Laura Eason

4M, 2W

1992. Chicago. Hank is struggling to keep his legendary rock club going amid changing times and changing tastes. But when his beloved daughter, Lena, starts dating a rising-star DJ, Hank must contend with the destructive power of the Next Big Thing. Like a blast of feedback from a Fender amp, THE UNDENIABLE SOUND OF RIGHT NOW brings to hilarious and heartbreaking life the moment in popular culture when Kurt and Courtney ruled, but Moby was just around the corner ...

“... engaging ... Ms. Eason ... draws an affectionate but unsentimental portrait of this makeshift family as it undergoes a period of sudden stress.”

—The New York Times

“The vividness with which Eason brings Hank’s [Bar] to life ... transports viewers to a different era, one where there was an actual element of danger to the music we listened to and the places where we listened. ... In an era where all of the old music venues, bars, and diners are closing down, it’s undeniable how timely and contemplative Eason’s play truly is.”

—TheaterMania.com

“... funny, wrenching and right on the money. ... Eason wisely gives each character their moment, their riff. ... THE UNDENIABLE SOUND OF RIGHT NOW rocks!”

—NYTheatreGuide.com

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