



# THE TREASURER

BY MAX POSNER



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



THE TREASURER  
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THE TREASURER was commissioned by Playwrights Horizons (Tim Sanford, Artistic Director; Leslie Marcus, Managing Director) with funds provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation/ Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Leading Theatres Program, and premiered there on September 26, 2017. It was directed by David Cromer, the scenic design was by Laura Jellinek, the costume design was by David Hyman, the lighting design was by Bradley King, the sound design was by Mikhail Fiksel, the projection design was by Lucy Mackinnon, and the production stage manager was Brett Anders. The cast was as follows:

THE SON ..... Peter Friedman  
IDA ARMSTRONG ..... Deanna Dunagan  
MALE ACTOR ..... Pun Bandhu  
FEMALE ACTOR ..... Marinda Anderson

THE TREASURER was developed, in part, at the 2016 Sundance Institute Lab in MENA.

THE TREASURER was written, in part, in residence at SPACE on Ryder Farm.

THE TREASURER is the recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award.

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Special thanks to the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust for supporting new plays and musicals at Playwrights Horizons.

## Characters.

THE SON	Bikes to work Lives in Denver Vaguely Jewish In his sixties
IDA	His mother Lives in Albany In her eighties
MALE ACTOR	Any ethnicity, early forties JEREMY, the Son's brother LUKE from the Albany Symphony Orchestra STRANGER KENNY from the Verizon store Bedding SALESMAN WAITER GUY
FEMALE ACTOR	African-American, late twenties ALLEN, the Son's brother RONETTE from Talbots INTERNET BANKING VOICE WOMAN on airplane

## **Place.**

Around Denver, CO  
Around Albany, NY  
On the telephone  
And just beyond

## **Time.**

Recently

## **Notes.**

/// marks the end of a segment, but does not necessitate drastic changes to the space—the flow must not be interrupted. Often, the /// is imperceptible. Scenes interrupt scenes, phone conversations bleed together. The production should be in a constant state of transition.

Words in [brackets] are never spoken aloud.

/ indicates the point at which dialogue should interrupt and overlap.

Most importantly, line breaks are not meant to encourage lyricism. They suggest naturalistic patterns in which these people search for words, and the syncopated movement of their thoughts.

*Why does tragedy exist? Because you are full of rage. Why are you full of rage? Because you are full of grief. Ask a headhunter why he cuts off human heads. He'll say that rage impels him and rage is born of grief. The act of severing and tossing away the victim's head enables him to throw away the anger of all his bereavements. Perhaps you think this does not apply to you. Yet you recall the day your wife, driving you to your mother's funeral, turned left instead of right at the intersection and you had to scream at her so loud other drivers turned to look. When you tore off her head and threw it out the window they nodded, changed gears, drove away.*

—Anne Carson  
“Tragedy: A Curious Art Form”

# THE TREASURER

*The Son approaches.  
The house lights are still on.*

THE SON.

Okay, so

In a week,

or a decade,

or a day,

Sometime in the future here:

I will be in Hell

I will have been killed or

Died

I will have died by

Bike accident

or

Cancer or

Heart attack or

Suicide although I'm not the sort of guy to kill myself

(which is information you should keep in mind for the next 90 minutes)

I'm very rational and

I love my wife

I mean life

I mean both and

People spend the money I make

They would die without the money I make

If I didn't make it they would be

Really really sad

They would wear Sad clothes

They would have to eat Grass

They would have to live Differently

Without expenses  
But they would still have expenses  
Increasing exponentially without me  
And, money aside, I'm not the suicide type  
More of a bike accident  
I ride my bike to work every day  
I'm riding Right Now  
It's seven A.M. and there are Great Bike Lanes in Denver  
Perfect temperatures, so  
That's more likely

Also just  
Regarding suicide  
I actually just don't have  
Sad Emotions  
Don't have them and  
I am a morning person, which  
As you probably know means  
I am *much less* likely to commit suicide  
Than all of You  
Than all of you who Hate the morning  
Than all of you whose first thought each day is:  
"No" or "Stop"  
My first thought:  
"more"  
"More!"  
"MORE!!!!!"  
ha ha Ha HA

*He stops laughing.*

I'm very happy  
I'm turning Right  
Nora, my wife, she's a therapist  
And a great listener and  
She noticed that we are the happiest people  
On the 300 block of Dahlia Street  
Nora gets everyone talking  
That's how we know this



There isn't a person she doesn't talk to  
Strangers muttering  
*"that's the first time I've ever said that to anyone"*  
thru their tears to Nora  
Neighbors, Friends, Mailmen, her hair stylist oh my god  
HER HAIR STYLIST  
Ricky!

He keeps getting fired so  
Now she goes to his depressing kitchen to get her hair cut  
Which *he* should be paying *her* for  
But she pays him More, out of sympathy and  
She comes home and her back hurts  
Because Ricky doesn't have a chair and Nora has Scoliosis and  
She's sitting on some stool listening to Ricky talk while he snips and  
Ricky's partner is suicidal and  
Ricky  
Is on new medication and they  
can't get out of bed and  
Ricky  
Keeps finding his partner barely alive on some  
tile surface after some terrible  
Attempt

And we talk about Ricky for a month  
Until her hairs are gray and she needs them turned back to brown  
And then  
We talk about Ricky for another month  
Poor Ricky

I am at a Red light  
What was I saying?

Oh  
Hell  
Me  
There  
Soon  
Yes

Something heavy will fall on me  
Or  
I will fall off something tall  
Or  
I won't look before I turn and  
It won't really matter that I didn't  
*believe* in hell

Green light

My son called this morning and asked if he could write a play about  
My mom  
Who is  
Impossible  
Who is beyond selfish who is  
The Definition of "Delusional"  
Who abandoned my father and me when I was thirteen

*By now, the house lights have gone dark.*

My Dad was broken  
My brothers were in college  
And I raised myself  
She left and  
Poof went our family  
(Although was she ever really there?)  
She left for *Ron Armstrong*  
Who was "The Most Exciting Man in Albany"

He was the editor of the *Albany Times Union*  
He became a Congressman for *one* term  
Then they moved to Manhattan for a very expensive decade  
They moved back to Albany and  
He became an Armchair

*An armchair becomes visible in the distance.*

And  
I left The East Coast as soon as possible  
I can't talk to her for longer than  
Two three minutes

She and Ron Armstrong spent and they spent and they spent  
And then: they had nothing left to spend  
But they *kept* spending  
(This begins with the invention of the credit card)

I suppose she's an interesting topic because  
She's great at the first interaction?  
Gets an "A" for Energy but  
There isn't much depth so  
I'm not sure how good of a character she would make in a play but

I am at a Red light

And then my son said it's about *your* relationship to her and  
I said write anything under the sun, do *anything*, do *absolutely any-*  
*thing*

I'll be there on Opening Night

But he told me

It'll probably be many years before that happens,

I'll probably be elderly and she'll probably be dead

We chuckled, identically and

I made a joke, I don't remember it right now

Something about how

I don't normally talk much in groups so

"good luck making me a character"

Talking in front of people is my idea of  
well

I'm taking a left turn

Last night

Nora came home from Ricky's

Windowless kitchen

And her back was killing her (of course)

And her hair was brown again and

I pressed an ice pack into her

Sacrum and asked

How's Ricky and

# THE TREASURER

by Max Posner

2 men, 2 women

Ida Armstrong is broke, lonely, and fading fast. And she's spending all of her children's money, forcing her son to assume the unwanted role of The Treasurer: an arrangement that becomes untenable the more he questions his devotion to her. This darkly funny, sharply intimate portrait chronicles the strained ties between a son and his aging mother, and the hell of a guilty conscience.

*"...tender and unforgiving... [an] emotionally dense play... Posner's writing is often effectively double-edged, an amalgam of 21st-century casualness and cadenced lyricism. ...the play adroitly balances the everyday and the extreme—while suggesting how crisis pushes reality into the realm of nightmares... [Posner] has a sharp and original ear for the tension between what is spoken and what is not."*

—**The New York Times**

*"[THE TREASURER] is a quiet revelation. ...It makes boundaries porous, creates a space that blends the mundane and the mystic, that slips between the life of the moment and the life of the mind, even obscures the border between life and whatever comes after. ...Posner's play is a ravishing slow burn, with layers that quietly unpeel as the piece goes on. ...quite simply, a marvel."*

—**New York Magazine**

*"...something of a Glass Menagerie forty years on, with an unlikely but welcome touch of Neil Simon. ...[Posner] displays a brightly contemporary point of view with a keen comic sense."*

—**The Huffington Post**

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