

Andrew

Hello everyone. This is Andrew Pond, Artistic director of Eclectic Full Contact Theatre. Welcome to Season 4 of The Half Hour Audio Hour. Every month, we'll be featuring a different playwright, allowing you to not only hear their work, but to find out a little more about them and their process. If you enjoy what you hear, please remember to like, follow, and subscribe to our podcast. And feel free to leave a review! You can help us out in continuing this work by heading over to tinyurl.com/EFCTHHAH, where you can sponsor us through a onetime or recurring donation and become our partner in highlighting the voices and stories of women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ artists.

This month's production is "Finding Mother Courage", written by Pamela Kingsley, directed by Monica Villalba and starring Samantha Garcia and Julian Serna. Before we start, we'd like to briefly introduce you to Pamela Kingsley. After the production, stay tuned for an interview with Pamela for more insight into the play and this process.

Pam Kingsley is an actress, director and playwright. Her plays have been produced by theatres throughout the United States including in Boston, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Louisville, Minneapolis, New York City, Rochester (NY), San Francisco, Santa Fe, Seattle and Spokane, among others. Pam's play, Mother's Day was a finalist for the James Stevenson Prize for Short Comedic Plays (2019). Mother's Day received the "Audience Choice" award at the 31st Playwrights' Forum Festival (2019) in Spokane WA. Her short play Boxes received the "Audience Choice" award at the 32nd Playwrights' Forum Festival (2022). Minister of Sorrow won the Appalachian Playwriting Festival in North Carolina and opened Parkway Playhouse's 2024 Season. Minister of Sorrow will run throughout December 2024, at Stage Left Theater, Spokane. Pam holds a BFA (Theatre Performance) and a MA (Theatre Education) and splits her time between Seattle and Spokane, WA. She has taught throughout the Pacific Northwest.

And now, Finding Mother Courage

SFX: Sound of Red Bull can opening, then AD guzzling it down and crushing the can

AD
Katherine Waulk.

SFX: Door in distance opening, footsteps approaching on a stage, door closes

AD
Do you go by Kate? Kat?

KATHERINE
Just Katherine.

AD
No nickname? Mind if I call you Katie? You remind me of a Katie. I have an Aunt Katie. You kind of look like her. Okay, Katie, I'm going to be reading with you. Don't worry about looking at me; just place your dialogue out front. We'll be videotaping your audition.

KATHERINE
Videotape? Is the director here?

AD

That doesn't matter, does it? We'll have your video segment to refer to.

KATHERINE

I prepared a monologue.

AD

Nah. We don't need to bother with that. We're running a little behind and we just want to hear you read. Did you get the sides?

KATHERINE

I was told to prepare a monologue. My agent didn't say it was a cold reading.

AD

Nope. Just sides.

SFX: AD writes something down on his notepad.

AD

Okay, Kat, let's take it from the top.

KATHERINE

Do you have sides I could use?

SFX: Paper rustling as he hands sides to KATHERINE

AD

Not very prepared today, are you, Kate? Here use mine. I must have said these lines a couple hundred times today, anyway.

KATHERINE

Thanks so much. My rep goofed up and...

AD

(interrupting)

Okay, so, let's take it from the top.

KATHERINE

These sides are for the Importance of Being Earnest.

AD

Shit. I must have given the other set to someone. We're casting a couple of things right now. Oh, well, we just need to take a look at you and get an idea.

KATHERINE

I'm here to audition for Mother Courage. This is Lady Bracknell.

AD

So?

KATHERINE

One is Victorian England and an Oscar Wilde comedy and the other is Brecht! It's set in the 17th century--eastern Europe...during the Thirty Years War!

AD

So? They're both old broads with attitude. Same dif.

KATHERINE

Look, how about I do my Mother Courage monologue and you use that as my audition?

AD (as Algernon)

//I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.//

SFX: As Katherine reads, the AD eats and drinks Red Bull through her lines

KATHERINE (as Lady Bracknell)

//I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately, he is accustomed to...//

AD

(interrupting)

By the way how are you at climbing stairs?

SFX: Silence as Katherine doesn't understand

AD

Can you climb?

KATHERINE

Me?

AD

No, the guy behind you.

KATHERINE

Climb what?

AD

We're thinking of having Mother Courage pull her cart up a series of cobblestone steps and you're one of the older actresses we've seen so far. I just need to know if you do stairs?

KATHERINE

Uh, sure.

AD (as Algernon)

//It is a great bore and I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. They seem to think I should be with him.//

KATHERINE (as Lady Bracknell)

//It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.//

AD (as Algernon)

//Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.//

KATHERINE (as Lady Bracknell)

//Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die.//

SFX: The AD eats and drinks through her lines

KATHERINE

Just to clarify. Are you expecting Mother Courage to pull her cart up a flight of stairs?

AD

We're thinking two levels of stone steps--still fleshing that out. But the director and designer are wedded to lots of levels. So, maybe when you finish reading, we'll do a little climbing in the stairwell.

KATHERINE

Are you serious?

AD

We've set up a small cargo sled to see how strong you Mothers are.

KATHERINE

So, you're not really looking for talent as much as brawn for this role. Craft doesn't matter.

AD

What we're looking for, Kathy, is a certain physicality and the commitment to do the work of a plow horse. If you're not interested let's end the audition. Otherwise, start at, "Well, I must say..."

SFX: Partway through her lines, the AD's phone ring. He answers it and has a conversation through her lines

KATHERINE (as Lady Bracknell)

//Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice--as far as any improvement in his ailment goes!//
Now, do you have a set of weights I could dead lift for you?
Or do you prefer a clean and jerk!

AD

Listen, KiKi, I'm gonna guess from your credits that most likely you can act. Your attitude is pretty crappy, but you read fine. We just want someone who is physically fit. We're thinking of flying Mother Courage during a couple of her songs. And, frankly, you could drop a few pounds.

KATHERINE

Flying? Like Peter Pan?

AD

We see it more like she's an aerial artist as she negotiates her way through Eastern Europe--trapeze bar to trapeze bar, staying above the fray of war—surviving by her wits and her...

KATHERINE

Circus skills? You're looking for circus skills?

AD

Yes! Exactly. Kind of a Cirque de la Mère Courage.

KATHERINE

Oh, for God's sake.

AD

So, Kate, I think we have enough of you on tape. I'll go and get the cargo sled ready. Take a couple minutes and meet me in the stairwell.

KATHERINE

Whoa, there, fella. First of all, my name is Katherine. You haven't used it once during this audition.

AD

I've seen over two hundr...

KATHERINE

Bup-bup-bup! Secondly, I was told to prepare a monologue and that would be sufficient until call backs. There was no mention of being Sisyphus or Lady Bracknell or a Flying Wallenda.

AD

Well, if you can't be flexible...

KATHERINE

Third, and most important, your skill in running an audition is non-existent. You're boorish, ignorant and blatantly rude. Time to go back to school, kid. If you want to run things, learn how it's done. The people you see up here, who put themselves on the line time and again, deserve some respect. They make or break a production; not you, sitting on your fat ass eating salami and slurping Red Bull!

AD

Pull yourself together, then leave. You know the way out.

SFX: Footsteps fading as the AD exits

KATHERINE (as Mother Courage)

//The poor need courage. Why? They're lost. That they even get up in the morning is something--in their plight. Or that they plough a field in war time. Even their bringing children into the world shows they have courage, for they have no prospects. They have to hang each other one by one and slaughter each other in a lump; so, if they want to look each other in the face once in a while, well, it takes courage. That they put up with an Emperor and a Pope, that takes an unnatural amount of courage, for they cost you your life.//

Sorry, old girl. Maybe another time.

SFX: Footsteps fading, door opening and slamming in distance as KATHERINE exits

SFX: Footsteps running on

AD

So, what do you think?

DIRECTOR'S VOICE

She's perfect. Go bring her back.

-END OF PLAY-

Andrew

Thank you for listening to Finding Mother Courage, here on The Half Hour Audio Hour. Next up is a brief interview we conducted with Pamela Kingsley after the recording of this show.

Andrew: All right. So first thing, Pamela, is just thank you so much for allowing us to be part of your show, Finding Mother Courage.

Pamela: Well, I'm thrilled that, uh, that you selected it. And to tell you the truth, I love the idea of your half hour radio hour. Uh, I listened to the broadcasts, and they're wonderful.

Andrew: Oh, well, thank you very much. I, I appreciate that it's always it's always nice when, uh, people who are on it have, have listened to it.

Pamela: Yeah, I think that's a good idea.

Andrew: So the first question I have for you is, how long have you been writing?

Pamela: Well, um. Gosh, uh, I was taught writing in grade school. Mhm. Um, first with a little poetry. Little poems. Uh, and I wrote poetry throughout, uh, throughout high school. But, uh, in terms of playwrighting, uh, I began writing plays just for my own satisfaction in college. I think I have a BFA and an Ma in theater, and at some point I think every theater student tries to write a play. Mhm. And then, uh, in

later years I just occasionally write a play, but I never shared them with anyone. I have taught playwriting off and on for many years, but it's only been in the 6 or 7 years recently that I've committed to the craft itself.

Andrew: Oh, that's very interesting.

Pamela: I'm mostly an actor and director, so.

Andrew: That takes up enough of your time. So what inspired finding Mother Courage?

Pamela: Well, um, I was at an audition for a show that I really wanted to do, and it was a role I felt that I could do quite well. And right in the middle of the audition readings, which happened to be with others who were called back, the director said to me and me only are you able to do stairs?

Pamela: And I.

Pamela: Was shocked.

Pamela: Oh, there.

Pamela: Were stairs just to get into this, this particular room where I was, you know, doing the callbacks. And I thought, am I walking a certain way that only throw me off in the middle of this audition reading? But the question sat with me for quite a while.

Andrew: Mhm.

Pamela: And, uh, there is finding Mother Courage.

Andrew: I, I, I had a feeling it was going to be something. Something like that. I was, I was I was hoping you didn't live through that, but, um.

Pamela: Yeah, I.

Pamela: Did. Well, and, you know, uh, the director not trying to be.

Pamela: Malicious, um.

Pamela: Or in any way provocative. But you know it was one of those moments where you go oh yuck. You know, this is, this is not what I expected at this audition. So anyway.

Andrew: Well I asked everybody else in their, uh, interview this question and it's I'm going to be very interested to hear your answer to this question, which is considering the last line of the play.

Pamela: Yes.

Andrew: What do you think Katherine's response is when that poor ad has to run out and get her back?

Pamela: Oh, I know what her response is.

Andrew: What? What is what? You're gonna you're gonna get it straight from the source. Everybody. What?

Pamela: No. you're not.

Andrew: Oh, you're going to keep it a secret.

Pamela: I'm writing the full length plan from the original short.

Andrew: Oh, wow. Okay.

Pamela: Yeah, and I kind of don't want to reveal too much. Suffice it to say, she does come back.

Andrew: Okay? No.

And all Hell breaks.

Pamela: Loose. Oh.

Andrew: Okay. I'm. I'm going to say this. You have to send me the the the full length when you're done with it. I desperately want to read this.

Pamela: Well, I.

Pamela: Promise that I will. Um, there's a little bit of, um, hostage taking, let us say.

Andrew: Okay.

Andrew: This is this is this is great. All of a sudden, it becomes Dog day afternoon. It's going to be wonderful.

Pamela: Yes. Oh. Oh, my.

Pamela: My own, my own dog. Day. Afternoon.

Andrew: I, I don't know exactly what happens, but I have a feeling that on behalf of actors everywhere, I am going to be fully, fully supportive of it. Yeah. Um. All right. So we we won't reveal exactly what the response is until the full until the full length comes out.

Pamela: That's right.

Andrew: Excellent. Well, speaking of things like that, do you have any upcoming projects that you'd like to promote?

Pamela: My plays are done pretty frequently. A lot of my shorts are done in festivals around the country. Um, uh, I do have a live production of Finding Mother Courage. That'll be, uh, in July, I believe.

Andrew: Okay.

Pamela: Uh, in, uh, Edmonds, Washington, uh, on beautiful Puget Sound north of Seattle.

Andrew: Oh, wow. Yeah.

Pamela: And a full length play of mine that I wrote, which is about the packsaddle librarians of the 1930s that were part of the WPA project out of Roosevelt's administration. Um hmm. Uh, in Kentucky, uh, called Minister of Sorrow. And it is, uh, won the Appalachian Playwriting Festival in 2023 and had its debut in North Carolina at the Parkway Playhouse. It's going to be if you happen to be in the Pacific Northwest in December of this year, uh, it's going to be at Spokane's Stage Left Theater, which is one of our great theaters here in Spokane. So that'll be coming up. I have a play scars that I just found out is going to be, uh, produced as one of eight as part of the, um, uh, Lights Out one act, uh, festival in Tampa. Oh. Uh, yeah. And that's going to be produced in, um, August, I believe. I should have written all this down. Um, anyway, uh, yeah. So I have things coming up. And if you're in Tampa or you're here in, uh, Spokane in, uh, December. Come on by.

Andrew: Those are the two best times to be in those places. To August in Tampa and December in Spokane.

Pamela: Well, you might be traveling through to get up to.

Pamela: Banff that.

Pamela: You never know to go skiing.

Andrew: So that's true. That's true. Well, I think you may have already answered this question since we've discussed how how, uh, this play came into being. But but this is, of course, the most important

question of the entire interview, which is what is the weirdest audition or theater experience you've ever had?

Pamela: Oh gosh. There have been a few. I'm sure I had one audition where never read from the script. We only did improv.

Andrew: Oh.

Pamela: Which was weird. Um, but it was a two hander. The old two hander chestnut called Same Time next Year.

Andrew: Oh.

Pamela: Yeah. And, uh, the director wanted to see how we'd punt on stage, you know, together. So that was interesting. And I think those of us there, they, the director and Adi and everybody else knew of our work. But anyway, um, and then another play we only made animals there.

Andrew: No.

Pamela: Yes. Of course it was for an Ionesco play.

Andrew: Oh, well. Okay, now it all makes sense.

Pamela: And I think probably one of the most challenging theatrical experiences I've ever had was and this was when I was a fairly young actor, was I did a summer stock, uh, of melodramas at a huge, I mean, giant RV park in the Midwest, in the Midwest, where the beer and the wine flowed Oh, like like a river.

Andrew: Oh.

Pamela: And I mean, you know, they were trying to get on the stage.

Andrew: Oh.

Pamela: Yeah, it was, it was, it was challenging. But looking back on it, it was, it was kind of funny and fun at the time. You know, it was a little daunting. And then it became, oh, what the heck.

Andrew: Well, you know, that's that's.

Pamela: Melodrama. Let's just get crazy together.

Andrew: That that's.

Andrew: Kind of the the thing you have to embrace in a situation like that, I would guess, is we're not going to stop this from happening. If you can't beat them.

Pamela: Yeah. Join them, you know.

Pamela: Let them join you.

Andrew: And and I gotta I have to say I have asked this final question of everybody else involved with this, with with this recording, and to a person, everybody's answer, at least one of them had animals involved in it, had having to become an animal or make noises like an animal. Everybody it's it's.

Pamela: I guess.

Pamela: I.

Pamela: Guess they don't figure that the human experience is enough for actors that they really have to devolve into. Yes.

Andrew: How else? How else would you ever be able to play this role? That is, and a human. If, if, if I don't see you bring out your inner gerbil.

Pamela: Yes.

Andrew: Well, Pamela, I have to say this was this was delightful. And, uh, we had an absolute blast with your show. And once again, I just want to say, on behalf of myself and everyone here at FCC, thank you so much for allowing us to be part of your show, Finding Mother Courage.

Pamela: Oh, and thank you very much, Andrew, and many successes for years to come..

Andrew

We hope you enjoyed Finding Mother Courage. Next month, we will be presenting Eight One Eight Two, by Rishi Chowdhary, And don't forget to head over to eclectic-theatre.com to find out about all our other shows and projects.

On behalf of myself and everyone here at EFCT, thanks for listening