



Presents

Let Me Down Easy

by **Anna Deavere Smith**

Presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc. , New York



Photos by Ray Boc

The RAAC Community Theatre
Washington, Virginia

Director's Notes

Like theaters all over the world, our theater halted production and closed its doors soon after the onset of Covid 19. It was the safe and prudent thing to do. But it left a big hole, for our audiences and for our actors and crew who so enjoy acting in and producing plays.

After a while - - and it was too long a while - - it became quite clear that we had "to do something!" What that something was and how to do it were not quite so clear. There are stories aplenty to be told about the process that ensued. But for now here are just a few words about what we chose to do, this remarkable play by Anna Deavere Smith.

The twenty characters in "Let Me Down Easy" are, or were, real people. All the words in the play are their words, even the "uhs", the "ers", and the other sounds we make when we are talking "off the cuff." Ms. Smith collected their words in lengthy interviews which she conducted, often over several days or even over a period of years. We don't have the entire interview; but we do have enough words to provide an insight into a person, or an idea, or both. It's an insight that can be moving, or informative, or amusing, or a thoroughly human admixture of them all.

"Let Me Down Easy" opened in 2009 and was the fifth in a series of similar plays written by Smith, the initial productions of which were one-person shows featuring Smith herself. She is an accomplished actor with a distinguished career in addition to being a brilliant playwright. She is also a self-proclaimed mimic to which she added the clear advantage of familiarity with the characters she presented. Though some of the characters are public persons, some are not. We, the current actors, had to find the person, or persona, that fit the given words. As Michelangelo said about his sculptures being present in the marble block, Smith might say that the character is present in the words.

Wikipedia lists fourteen songs titled “Let Me Down Easy” as being recorded between 1965 and 2009. I do not know which, if any, was the inspiration for Smith. Most any could have been, I suppose.

This show, more than any other I have been involved with, is the result of a collective effort. Perhaps because of the challenges posed by the virus and perhaps because the technologies were so new to us, there is no moment in the play, no line of dialogue, no camera angle, no prop that has not been considered and influenced by multiple members of the cast and crew.

The actors do not take bows at the end of this video as they would were it a live show. It is fitting that they do not. The show is not theirs alone. It is offered to you by cast and crew together. I hope you like it.

Mike Mahoney



Let Me Down Easy

PROGRAM

JAMES H. CONE—*LET ME DOWN EASY*

AUTHOR, REVEREND, AND PROFESSOR

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK CITY

MIKE MAHONEY

ELIZABETH STREB—*FIRE DANCE*

*CHOREOGRAPHER, STREB DANCE COMPANY, NEW
YORK CITY*

ANDY PLATT

LANCE ARMSTRONG—*RIGHT ON TIME*

TOUR DE FRANCE VICTOR

ERIN PLATT

SALLY JENKINS—*ASHES*

SPORTS COLUMNIST, WASHINGTON POST

STEPHANIE MASTRI

EVE ENSLER—*A RAISIN A DAY*

WRITER, ACTIVIST

ERIN PLATT

BRENT WILLIAMS—*TOUGHNESS*

RODEO BULL RIDER, IDAHO

ANDY PLATT

MICHAEL BENTT—*WHEN BOXERS SEE LIGHTS*

WORLD CHAMPION HEAVYWEIGHT BOXER

STEPHANIE MASTRI

**HAZEL MERRITT—*A SHEET AROUND MY
DAUGHTER***

PATIENT, YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL

STEPHANIE MASTRI

LAUREN HUTTON—*MOJO*

SUPERMODEL

ERIN PLATT

RUTH KATZ—*THAT BEDROCK OF CARE*

PATIENT, YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL

ERIN PLATT

**KIERSTA KURTZ-BURKE—*HEAVY SENSE OF
RESIGNATION***

PHYSICIAN, CHARITY HOSPITAL, NEW ORLEANS

ERIN PLATT

PHIL PIZZO—*TAKES A LOT OF TIME*

DEAN, STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

ANDY PLATT

SUSAN YOUENS—*PASSING BELLS*

MUSICOLOGIST, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

STEPHANIE MASTRI

EDUARDO BRUERA—*EXISTENTIAL SADNESS*

PALLIATIVE CARE, MD ANDERSON CANCER CENTER

ANDY PLATT

ANN RICHARDS—*CHI*

FORMER GOVERNOR, TEXAS

STEPHANIE MASTRI

LORRAINE COLEMAN—*GLOVES*

RETIRED TEACHER, ANNA DEAVERE SMITH'S AUNT

STEPHANIE MASTRI

**JOEL SIEGEL—*THREE THOUSAND YEARS OF BEING
KICKED AROUND EUROPE***

ABC MOVIE CRITIC

ANDY PLATT

PETER GOMES—*WHY DON'T YOU STICK AROUND?*

REVEREND, MEMORIAL CHURCH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

MIKE MAHONEY

TRUDY HOWELL—*DON'T LEAVE THEM IN THE DARK*

DIRECTOR, CHANCE ORPHANAGE, JOHANNESBURG

ERIN PLATT

RICARD MATTHIEU —*TEACUP*

*BUDDHIST MONK, AUTHOR, FRENCH TRANSLATOR FOR
THE DALAI LAMA*

MIKE MAHONEY

CREW

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Director | Mike Mahoney |
| Assistant Director | Andy Platt |
| Stage Manager | Beth Plentovich |
| Lighting | Ron Makela |
| Sound | Howard Kelly |
| Video Editor & Technical Consultant | Mark Cooley |
| Video Photographer | Howard Kelly |
| Camera Consulting | Ray Boc |
| Set Design/Artist | Cynthia Stamps |
| Set Construction | Ron Makela |
| Set Assistant | Kaye Clark |
| Costumes/Makeup/Hair | Cynthia Stamps |
| Still Photographer | Ray Boc |
| Program | Bette Mahoney |

CAST PHOTOS AND BIOS

Photos by Ray Boc



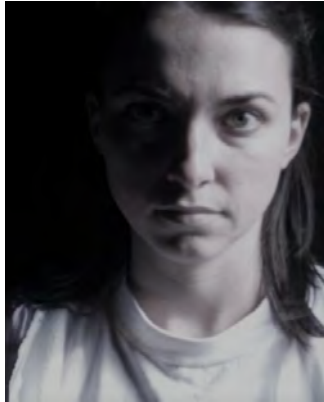
Andy Platt has participated in many RAAC productions over the last decade as actor, stage manager and director, including Proof, Uncle Vanya, Driving Miss Daisy, The Gin Game, Red, Arcadia, and most recently, Waiting for Godot.





Stephanie Mastri has worked with this theater group since moving to Fauquier County in 1991. She has acted, assisted directed, directed, and stage managed. Recently she appeared in *Good People*, and in both *Arca-dia* and *Waiting for Godot* with the current production crew.





Erin Platt has participated in a number of RAAC Theatre productions. She has worked with her father, her son, and other non-related cast and crew. She excels at both comic roles, (Miss Hannigan in Annie) and serious roles (the daughter in Proof). In this production, she shows the breadth of her skills.





Mike Mahoney has acted in Ki Theatre and RAAC Community Productions for much of the organization's life. More recently, he has taken on the role of director. In 2012, he directed "Driving Miss Daisy." It was followed in 2015 with "Gin Game"; in 2017 with "Arcadia"; and, most recently in 2019 with "Waiting for Godot." In this production, he is both an actor and director.



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