

# Charlie's Waiting

a new play by M<sup>ê</sup>lisa Annis

directed by Ludovica Villar-Hauser

Xanthe Elbrick photo by Ashley Garrett

parity  
productions

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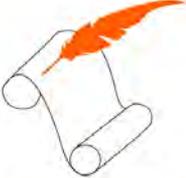
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## FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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We often use the phrase “a singular talent for storytelling” to describe part of our selection criteria for playwrights. Mèlisa Annis has that very singular talent. Her thematic range, style, and voice as a storyteller are incredible. Mèlisa explores intimacy, trust, abandonment, abuse of power, and relationship dynamics — all told with her characteristic dark wit and deep wisdom. Mèlisa can make us laugh and make us uncomfortable, all while keeping us on the edge of our seats. At their core, her stories serve as cautionary tales for small cruelties and injustices in the world.

Mèlisa’s play was selected from among 300 applicants for the 2017 Annual Parity Productions Commission, and we could not be more excited to be producing *Charlie’s Waiting*.

As you will see by the accolades showered on her by Cusi Cram and Theresa Rebeck, Mèlisa is loved in our community.

**Do please help us bring *Charlie’s Waiting* to Theaterlab, March 28 through April 14, 2019.**

**- Ludovica Villar-Hauser, Founder and Artistic Director of Parity Productions**

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## SYNOPSIS

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Annual Parity Gala October 2017. Left Pictured: Anna Frankl-Duval and Liz Jasicki. Photo by Carlotta Brentan.  
Annual Parity Gala September 2018. Right Pictured: Maggie Mason and Liz Jasicki. Photo by Ashley Garrett.

*Charlie’s Waiting*, a world premiere by 2017 Parity Commission winner Mèlisa Annis, follows two women the night before their wedding. A very pregnant Louise is busy with all the planning while her fiancée Kelly busies herself feeding the goats. Everything is going to plan, that is until Louise is forced to confront questions of trust and intimacy, and she discovers how quickly plans can get derailed.

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## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

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As an artist, I am interested in intimacy, familial betrayal, blood ties, duty, shame, repression and how these elements can coexist. What are the 'if's' we choose not to talk about, but we know are present? What are the deals we strike with our allies to survive? To talk about this in the context of *Charlie's Waiting...* Set today in a calm, open and fresh-air house in the British countryside, *Charlie's Waiting* is the story of three people who at one time have needed each other to survive and have chosen unconventional paths to fill a void of loneliness and feel whole. Living the dream, Louise – an upper class soon to be mother – prepares for her wedding, her marriage to the beautiful and ethereal Kelly, a day she has been dreaming of her whole life, when an unexpected guest arrives at her doorstep armed with a blast from Kelly's past which threatens to derail her big day, and her dream of the perfect life. What if these women decide to move forward selfishly? What if they choose their own happiness at the risk of sacrificing another's? Why do we expect women to conform to the nurturing, mothering image? What if they don't? These are all questions my characters present, and I love challenging the audience with these questions.

I grew up as a child working in the theater, surrounded by its magic and endless possibilities. Transformation inspires me, and I believe that we transform and evolve on a daily basis, influenced by those we meet, those we love and especially when faced by those who challenge us. I hope that my plays are easily accessible at a first glance, but I also hope that the themes and behaviors stay with the audience and allow them to understand why characters sometimes choose to behave badly. I don't believe that theater needs to be complicated or highbrow to be important. It simply needs to be truthful to the given circumstances and the characters' experience; it is only then a play can be translated into understanding, empathy and action.

To tell you a little about myself; I was born and raised in Wales. It rains a lot there. Outsiders mock our grey skies, our language and lament the damp air. I like to remind people that the rain provides us with lush green mountains. The grey sky sends us indoors to write poetry—our bardic language is as old as stone—and the dampness forces us to hold each other close. Despite my strong stereotypical roots, I have lived in the United States for over a decade – now the majority of my adult life – and so I find myself straddling two worlds in politics, nature and attitude. History, language, rhythm and cadence continue to be an important part of my work, as does looking forward into the future to try and decipher our actions and attitudes as a modern society.

- Mèlisa Annis, playwright



Ludovica Villar-Hauser, Jennifer Kranz and Mèlisa Annis. Photo by Lizzy Bryce.  
Annual Parity Gala October 2017

# PRODUCTION HISTORY

October 29, 2018	Parity Productions
September 28, 2018	Parity Productions
April 30, 2018	Parity Productions
February 28, 2018	Parity Productions
November 29, 2017	Parity Productions
October 26, 2017	Parity Productions awards M $\acute{e}$ lisa Annis its Annual Commission for <i>Charlie's Waiting</i>
April 6, 2017	The Parsnip Ship Podcast
January 26 - 29 and February 3 - 6, 2017	Lamb Theater Company Developmental Performance / Under St. Marks

Originally developed at Primary Stages ESPA under the guidance of Melissa Ross in 2016.

## Parity Productions Developmental Reading October 2018.



Pictured clockwise from top left: Xanthe Elbrick, M $\acute{e}$ lisa Annis, Clare Latham, Xanthe Elbrick, and Amy Scanlon. Photos by Ashley Garrett.

## — FROM CUSI CRAM & THERESA REBECK —

“I had the great fortune to be M $\acute{e}$ lisa’s professor for two years while she got her MFA in the Fordham/Primary Stages Playwriting Program and now I have the even greater good fortune to consider her a dear friend and colleague. It’s a very strange thing teaching writing; it’s part therapist, part cheerleader, part nanny and in truth you can only teach so much. The more I do it, the more I realize the real thing you do is listen. And sometimes you listen and you really don’t get it, or wish it were different, or you just want to tell the student to put the play away in a lock box and throw away the key—but you can’t do that—or I can’t. In two years of working closely with M $\acute{e}$ lisa week to week I never had that experience. I always wanted more.

M $\acute{e}$ lisa is like her plays, which are all very different and quite unexpected. She is Welsh but married to an American and has lived here for a decade. She comes from a family with deep roots in the theater and that inherent drama is present in her life as well as what she brings to the stage. More than anyone I know, she understands plays from the inside out because she has acted in them, directed them, and been involved in every aspect of making theater for most of her life. It’s in her blood and that deep knowledge lives in every word she writes.

Whether she’s writing about Skinheads in London or fundamentalist Mormons in Arizona, she approaches everything she writes with a deep curiosity and an unerring humanity. There is an old clich $\acute{e}$  that your students teach you more than you teach them and I’ll be honest, sometimes they don’t, but when they do it is profound. From M $\acute{e}$ lisa I learned a deep humanity; she doesn’t judge her characters, no matter how badly they behave. She leads with empathy in life and in her work. And her plays percolate with a desire to see the good in even the most lost and tortured of souls. I also learned curiosity. M $\acute{e}$ lisa doesn’t write one kind of play. She won’t put herself in a box. She has infinite interests and she is not afraid to write about them. Her curiosity takes her to dangerous places. She is brave. And also a lot of fun.”

**– Cusi Cram, playwright**

“It is a wonderful thing when a dazzling talent announces itself and better yet when it is seen and acknowledged. Better still when that talent is nurtured and encouraged with real support. Many congratulations to M $\acute{e}$ lisa Annis and to Parity Productions! I am already chomping at the bit to see the fruits of this mighty collaboration.”

The world need your plays, now more than ever, M $\acute{e}$ lisa.”

**– Theresa Rebeck, playwright**

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# THE CAST

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## **Xanthe Elbrick\* (Louise)**

Broadway: *Coram Boy* (Tony Award, Drama Desk Nom, Theatre World Award Winner) Off-Broadway: *Candida* (Drama Desk Award), *Beebo Brinker Chronicles*, *Leaves of Glass*, *The Alice Complex*, *Peter And The Starcatcher* (original workshop cast). Sith Inquisitor: *STAR WARS The Old Republic*, *Body Of Lies* (dir. Ridley Scott), *Igraine The Brave* (Parents' Choice Award). Trained Royal Academy Of Dramatic Art, Actors Studio MFA.



## **Stephanie Heitman (Kelly)**

Stephanie trained at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts, Shakespeare & Company and UCB and is a current member of THE BATS; resident acting company of The Flea Theatre. Recent work includes *A Snowfall in Berlin* directed by Shaun Peknic at Teatro Latea and *The Cutthroat Series: Grand Guignol* at The Flea Theatre. In the U.K. Stephanie worked extensively with Castle Theatre Company and performed in regional tours of *Richard III*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Arcadia*. Voiceover work includes spots for MTV and Kindle.



## **Amy Scanlon (Annie)**

Amy is thrilled to be joining Parity Productions for *Charlie's Waiting*. Training includes: Film and Theatre BA, Musical Theatre RADA, The American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Theatre credits include: *One Flew Over The Cuckoos Nest*, *It Runs in the family*, *Midsummer Nights Dream*, *Bliethe Spirit* (Gallery Players), *For Now* (NYFringe), *The Rental* (The Secret Theatre), *Scenes of a Sexual Nature* (Water People Theatre), *Balladeers Play to the Moon* (Joe's Pub). [www.amy-scanlon.com](http://www.amy-scanlon.com)



## **Jenna Ng Lowry (Stage Manager)**

Jenna is a freelance stage manager based in New York City. Recent credits include *Completeness*, *The Dream of the Burning Boy* (Normal Ave); *Dogs of Rwanda* (Urban Stages); *Hair, Grimm!* (Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre); and the 10 Minute Play Festival in Season 9 of The Fire This Time Festival. She also serves as the stage manager at Urban Stages Summer Camp. Jenna holds a BA in Theatre from Muhlenberg College.

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\*Actors appear courtesy of Actors' Equity Association (AEA)

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## THE TEAM

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### **M&eacute;lisa Annis (Playwright)**

M&eacute;lisa Annis' work has been seen at or developed by Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, The Lark with Dorest Theater Festival at the Theresa Rebeck Writers Colony, The New School, Primary Stages, ESPA\*Drills, Tangent Theater, AboutFace Theater (Ireland), RAL Productions and her play *United Front* was a finalist for the Lark's Playwrights Week. She won the

Margaret Lamb Creative Writing Prize, and was the recipient of the Fordham Summer Fellowship while studying for her MFA in playwriting at Fordham/Primary Stages. M&eacute;lisa has written for new children's show *Jessy and Nessy* for Amazon Studios, and is currently working with Conde Nast on creative content for an upcoming puppet driven campaign. M&eacute;lisa's play *Aberfan* was published in Clockhouse Literary Magazine (Goddard University) and her play *Fit for a King* was illustrated and published in Fourth Wall Magazine. M&eacute;lisa has also worked as a dramaturg for Primary Stages (*A Walk With Heifetz*) and loves working with new writers to help develop their work. As a director M&eacute;lisa has worked at The Arcola Theater (UK), Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Shadowland Stages and Primary Stages to name a few select theater companies. M&eacute;lisa is a frequent contributor to BBC Wales factual programming, and has written personal essays for The Western Mail (UK) and BBC Online. M&eacute;lisa also teaches at the Dramatic Writing department at NYU.



### **Ludovica Villar-Hauser (Director, Artistic Director)**

Ludovica's directorial accomplishments include the New York premiere of Otho Eskin's *Duet*, the world premiere of Teresa Lotz's *She Calls Me Firefly*, the Off-Broadway world premiere and West End premiere of Gregory Murphy's *The Countess* (634 Off-Broadway performances), Philip Ridley's *Leaves of Glass*, and Laura Pederesen's *For Heaven's Sake!*, among many other critically-acclaimed productions. Ludovica was the youngest woman ever to simultaneously produce and direct in London's West End. In the New York theatre industry, she was also one of the few women to own and

operate her own theatre for 17 years — The Greenwich Street Theatre. She served on the Board of the League of Professional Theatre Women from 2009-2018 and is currently the Producer of its Oral History Project at NYPL for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center.



### **Jennifer Kranz (Dramaturg, Producing Artistic Director)**

A retired television executive, Jennifer spent two decades in TV as a key senior executive at AMC Networks, Time Warner, Lifetime Television Networks, and NBC Universal, working on Top 5 network TV businesses USA Network, Sy Fy Channel, Lifetime, Lifetime Movie Network and WE TV. Her expertise and passion lies in the development of new work in the not-for-profit and commercial theater spaces and she is exceedingly proud of her tenure as Producing Artistic Director at Parity Productions,

where she has helped to create the Parity Commission and shape the literary and brand trajectories of the company. Jennifer also serves as a scout for commercial producers and investors and a dramaturg for playwrights on independent projects. She is also currently the Director of Creative Development for the Tony-nominated New York-based production company Rosalind Productions and is on the reading team for Rattlestick Playwrights Theater. Jennifer is also a longtime board member of influential theater company Page 73 and a voting member of the TV Academy of Arts and Sciences. M.A., New York University.



### Judith Binus (Assistant Director)

Director: *Numb is a Freezing Point*, *Red Emma* (Readings); Assistant Director: *She Calls Me Firefly* (Soho Playhouse, NPTC), *For Heaven's Sake!*, *The Brightness of Heaven!* (Cherry Lane Theatre), *This Will All Be Yours* (MITF), *Final Analysis* (Signature Theatre). Stage Manager (Highlights) Broadway: *A Doll's House*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Children of a Lesser God*, *A Broadway Musical*, *Hello, Dolly!*; National: *Deathtrap*, *City of Angels*, *Annie*; Opera: Dallas Civic Opera; Dance: Joffrey. Lighting Designer: *The Trojan Women*, *The Lower Depths*, Joffrey II Ballet. Assistant Lighting Designer to Thomas Skelton, Ken Billington, John Gleason, Gil Wechsler. Board member: League of Professional Theatre Women. Founder: Women Count Research Project.



### Meganne George (Production Designer)

Broadway: *A Wonderful Life* (Actor's Fund Benefit). Off-Broadway: *She Calls Me Firefly*, *The Brightness of Heaven* (Cherry Lane) For mabou mines: *Glass Guignol* (CS 122 inaugural production), *Medea*, *Finn* (NYSCA commission grant), *Dollhouse* (2012 Elliot Norton Nomination-Design); *Red Beads*, *Cara Lucia* (ATW Hewes Nomination, Best Design 1st Irish Fest 2011); *Superpowers*, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, *Children of Ararat*, *Hurray for Iceboy*. *John Goldfarb Please Come Home* (FringeNY Best Costume Design 2007) Regional/International: *For Heaven's Sake* (Buffalo), *Grey Gardens*, *As Bees in Honey Drown*, *No Way to Treat A Lady*, *Radio Gals*, *Choeophorae* (Patras), *Lucia's Chapters* and *A Prelude to a Death in Venice* (Kilkenney Arts Festival), *Jihad*, *Peola's Passing* and *God Don't Exist for Girls from Brooklyn*, *Code Blue* and *Sublet* (NPTC at Sala Seki Sano, Bogota) Bronx Opera (14 seasons) Film/Industrial: mabou mines' *Dollhouse* (Arte, France); *Don't Nobody Love the Game* (PBS Independent Lens); *Sesame Street Celebration Parade*, (Beaches Resorts).

### George Weinhouse, M.D. (Assistant Stage Manager)

George Weinhouse is a long-time supporter of Parity Productions through all its past iterations. Since retiring from medical practice in 2017, he has been working for the company as production assistant hoping to break into stage management.



### Parity Productions

Parity Productions is a formidable producer of new theatrical work that as a company always ensures that we fill at least 50% of the creative roles on our productions—directors, playwrights,

and designers—with cis women and trans and gender nonconforming (TGNC) artists. Artistically, we develop and produce compelling new plays that give voice to individuals who rebel against their marginalized place in society. [www.parityproductions.org](http://www.parityproductions.org)

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## THE THEATER

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### Theaterlab

Theaterlab is an artistic laboratory dedicated to research into the nature of live performance. Through the development of new and experimental work, including theater, music, and visual arts, Theaterlab supports New York City's diverse community of artists as well as the general public in seeing emerging new work. Theaterlab also focuses on audience development as a creative project. We regard seeing the theatrical experience as a creative public assembly with the audience as an important partner in fulfilling our mission.

— ESTIMATED PRODUCTION & OPERATING BUDGET —

Creative Team	\$6,994.00
Production Team	\$3,700.00
AEA Artist Fees	\$10,235.00
Production Materials	\$2,725.00
Theatre Rental and Rehearsal Studio	\$13,000.00
Insurance	\$750.00
Advertising, Marketing & Publicity	\$10,250.00
Administrative	\$11,700.00
Front of House, Opening Night & Live Music	\$2,540.00
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$61,894.00</b>
Contingency @ 10%	\$6,189.00
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$68,083.00</b>

Special Thanks to the Team and Board at Parity Productions.

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
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# THE OPPORTUNITY

If you are interested in coming on board at the producer level please contact Ludovica Villar-Hauser at [ludovica@parityproductions.org](mailto:ludovica@parityproductions.org)

DONATION	TICKET ALLOCATIONS, ETC.
\$5,000.00	“In-Association With” Producer Credit Dinner with Writer and Director Invitation to first day of rehearsal 10 Opening Night Tickets 10 Tickets to Opening Night Party Signed Poster (by Cast and Creative Team)
\$2,500.00	“Made Possible By” Credit Invitation to first day of rehearsal 8 Opening Night Tickets 8 Tickets to Opening Night Party
\$1,000.00	“With the Generous Support of” Credit 4 Opening Night Tickets 4 Tickets to Opening Night Party
\$500.00	2 Opening Night Tickets Guest Tickets to Opening Night Party
\$200.00	2 Regular Tickets (subject to availability)

## How To Donate

Online:	<a href="http://parityproductions.org/donate">parityproductions.org/donate</a>
Checks:	Please make checks payable to Parity Productions and mail to 450 West 17th Street, Suite 604, New York, NY 10011

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