

PRESS RELEASE

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WBOC's Lisa Bryant makes her acting debut in Clear Space Theatre's THE NORMAL HEART!

On Saturday, March 3, and Sunday, March 4, Clear Space Theatre Company, in collaboration with AIDS Delaware, will present Larry Kramer's iconic play, THE NORMAL HEART, with Lisa Bryant playing Dr. Emma Brookner. The role is based on physician Linda Laubenstein, who discovered some of the first cases of the illness which became known as AIDS. Frustrated and distraught as her gay, male patients died of a disease with no name – and less public acknowledgement – she pushed relentlessly for research, recognition and support services for her patients. THE NORMAL HEART won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play in 2011.

Of her debut, Bryant remarks, "Appearing in this play takes me well outside my comfort zone – I've never been in a staged production before! But I've been trying to spend more time outside that zone, in order to grow – so I really wanted to play this role. While this is definitely not the "feel good" story of the year, the star of the story – ultimately – is love. I like that."

Says Clear Space Executive Director, Wesley Paulson, "We are honored that Lisa Bryant joined the cast of THE NORMAL HEART. I have enjoyed appearing on Delmarva Life with Lisa and her co-host, Jimmy Hoppa, and look forward to seeing her on our stage, here at Clear Space."

Asked about her role, Bryant says, "Dr. Brookner is tough and speaks her mind, but she also is very loving and compassionate. Even when everything seems so dark and uncertain, her love shines through." She continues, "I find balancing Dr. Brookner's competing emotions is the biggest challenge for me. She's angry over what's going on – or *not* going on – and she's frustrated that her efforts to figure out the disease draw no support. But she's also got this softer, compassionate side that is revealed in her devotion to her patients."

Noting that the original play opened Off-Broadway in 1985 and portrays the earliest years of the AIDS epidemic, Bryant adds, "For those who remember the early 1980's, I want the show to be a reminder of just how far we've come. For those who don't, I think it's going to be an education. It should serve also as a reminder to everyone that we still have a long way to go in creating a society of equality."

THE NORMAL HEART is the fourth in a series of collaborations between Clear Space and local non-profit organizations. Partners in prior years have included Immanuel Shelter (CARDBOARD STORIES, 2017); CAMP Rehoboth (THE LARAMIE PROJECT, 2016); and Beebe Healthcare's Women's Health Services (LOVE, LOSS AND WHAT I WORE, 2015).

Sponsored by Bell Rock Capital, THE NORMAL HEART runs for only two performances: Saturday, March 3, at 6:00 pm and Sunday, March 4, at 2:00 pm. Tickets for each show are \$50, and include a pre-show reception with hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine. Proceeds benefit both AIDS Delaware and Clear Space. Tickets may be purchased on-line at www.clearspacetheatre.org, or by calling the box office at 302-227-2270.