Dead Man's Cell Phone
By Sarah Ruhl

In-Person Performances
November 11-27, 2021

Online Streaming Performances
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Dead Man’s Cell Phone
By Sarah Ruhl

CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Fran Gebhard
Set & Lighting Designer: Patrick Du Wors
Costume Designer: Parker Feenstra
Sound Designer: Miriam Dumitra
Livestream Director: Sloane Vasko
Stage Manager: Olivia Reid-Friesen
Choreographer/Fight Director: Jacques Lemay

CAST

Maddy el Baroudi: Mrs. Gottlieb
Holly Hamilton: Hermia
Ryan Kniel: Gordon
Jane Rees: Jean
Branden Sugden: Dwight
Taylor Williams: Carlotta

Ensemble:
Brandon Caul
Hannah Farquhar
Katie Lacroix
Akari van den Driesen
Theon Winn

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Dead Man’s Cell Phone explores our post-millennial fixation with wireless communication. Jean, our naïve and quirky heroine, answers a cell phone in a café only to discover the gentleman whose phone it is has quietly died. Things get even more complicated when Jean goes to the funeral of Gordon (the dead man), pretending to be a former co-worker. Wishing to bring fulfillment and a sense of closure to others, Jean fabricates stories about Gordon’s last moments.

I got this far in reading Sarah Ruhl’s play – only two scenes – and already I was hooked. The play’s premise takes sad events and important themes and treats them in a bizarre and meta-theatrical way. This definitely appealed to my offbeat sense of humor.

We are so connected with one another through our devices that we actually feel painful isolation when we misplace or lose our cellphones. I love how in this play Ruhl creates two characters that bring us a vivid participation with old fashioned stationery and its tactile properties.

When I read Ruhl’s stage direction referring to a moment akin to a figure in an Edward Hopper painting I really began to envision the play. Mark Strand says of Hopper’s work, “In Hopper’s paintings there is a lot of waiting going on…They are like characters whose parts have deserted them and now, trapped in the space of their waiting, must keep themselves company.” During this era of the pandemic many of us have all experienced a feeling of loneliness and we are waiting, waiting for whatever the new normal will be.

It is such a pleasure to welcome you back to the Phoenix stage to experience this magical comedy about connectivity. Enjoy the show.

About the Playwright

Sarah Ruhl is a multi-award-winning American playwright, author, essayist, and professor, whose plays include The Clean House (Pulitzer Prize finalist, 2005; Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, 2004), In the Next Room, or the vibrator play (Pulitzer Prize finalist, 2010), and Eurydice. Her work has been produced on Broadway, across the country, as well as internationally, and translated into fourteen languages. Originally from Chicago, Ruhl received her MFA from Brown University where she studied with Paula Vogel. She has won the MacArthur Fellowship, a Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award, a Helen Merrill Emerging Playwrights Award, Whiting Writers’ Award, a PEN Center Award for mid-career playwrights and a Lilly Award. She proudly served on the executive council of the Dramatists Guild for three years. Ruhl currently lives in Brooklyn with her family and teaches at Yale School of Drama.
Fran Gebhard  
**Director**

Fran acted on stage and in front of the camera for many years before turning her attention to directing. She received her MFA in directing from UBC in 2001. For UVic, she has directed *Problem Child, 7 Stories, The School For Scandal, Crackpot, Wreckage, Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Favourites for other theatres include *As You Like It, For The Pleasure of Seeing Her Again, Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Fran has had a long association with the development of new Canadian work, and served as the Program Head of the Playwrights Colony at the Banff Centre for many years. Acting is Fran’s first love and her most memorable roles include: Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, Lady Wishfort in *The Way of the World*, Elizabeth in *Richard III*, Joanne in Norm Foster's *Jupiter in July*, and Martha in Joan MacLeod's *Amigo's Blue Guitar*. She regularly performs her one-woman show *Looking For Kitty* and has hosted her own radio and TV talk shows. Film and TV credits include appearances on *The Chris Isaak Show, Stephen King's Dead Zone, Friday's Curse* and *Moment of Truth*. She played Bette Davis' daughter-in-law in *A Piano For Mrs. Cimino* and was nominated for a Genie Award for her work in *Blue City Slammers*. Fran also performed in *As You Like It* and *The Fantasticks* during Blue Bridge Repertory Theatre's inaugural season. Teaching has become a focus in Fran's life – she loves sharing her passion for theatre with the next generation of talented and energetic theatre professionals.

Patrick Du Wors  
**Set & Lighting Designer**

Patrick is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Theatre. Working in a wide range of performance styles and production scales, Patrick’s work has been recognized across Canada and internationally. His work has been exhibited at the Canadian National Exhibition at 2015, The Prague Quadrennial 2015, World Stage Design 2017 (Taipei), and Critical Costume 2020 Exhibition (Oslo). The Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology (CITT), the Dora Mavor Moore Awards (Toronto), the Critic’s Choice Awards (Victoria), the Betty Mitchell Awards (Calgary) and SAT Awards (Saskatoon) have recognized Patrick’s work with both nominations and awards over the last decade.

Parker Feenstra  
**Costume Designer**

Parker is currently in her fourth year of the design focus in the Department of Theatre. She has had the incredible opportunity to work in all facets of theatre in Calgary, Victoria and Toronto, and is thrilled to be able to display what she has learned throughout the last three years on this stage. She would like to thank her parents and dear friends for supporting her dreams no matter how crazy they may think she is. Recent credits include *Love and Information* (Assistant Costume Designer, Phoenix); *Queen of Crystals* (Costume & Visual Designer) and *Death by Horoscope* (Costume Designer, SATCo); *Zoo Story* (Costume Consultant, Front Theatre Company); and *A Dinner Party* (Production Assistant, Bad Knaps Collective).
Creative Team

Miriam Dumitra  
**Sound Designer**

Miriam is a polymath and fourth-year student specializing in sound and lighting design. You might find them perched on a ladder hanging lights or hidden behind a laptop, creating playlists and soundscapes. A random sampling of their skills: playwriting, website construction, and blacksmithing. Previous credits at the Phoenix include mainstages *Love and Information* (sound design), *Othello* (musician, alto recorder), and *The Drowsy Chaperone* (spotlight operator), as well as selected SATCo shows *Rain Carnation* (playwright), *A Kind of Apocalypse* (lighting design), *Hey There, Mr. Moon* (sound design), and *Death by Horoscope* (sound design).

Sloane Vasko  
**Livestream Director**

Sloane is a fourth-year design student in the Department of Theatre. Previously she was the Assistant Lighting Designer on *Problem Child*. She is so excited to be working in live theatre with an in-house audience again, and is looking forward to sharing her work! Sloane would like to dedicate all of her work this year to her grandmother, who was integral to her education.

Olivia Reid-Friesen  
**Stage Manager**

Olivia is a fourth-year production and management student in the Department of Theatre. Previous stage management credits include *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Green World Theatre Company), senior assistant stage manager and livestream show caller on *Love and Information*, and assistant stage manager on *Comic Potential*, and *The Dining Room* (Phoenix). Olivia has also been a work study for the Phoenix’s costume department for 3 years. Outside of theatre, she has been a proud member of the British Columbia Youth Parliament since 2013, and is the current Minister of Intergovernmental and Sessional Affairs. She’d like to thank you all for coming!
Cast

Brandon Caul  
Brandon is a second-year self-directed student. He has spent his time on stage and backstage, acting and designing a variety of productions. Brandon has loved working on Dead Man’s Cell Phone and is very grateful to have met a very passionate cast, crew, and creative team.

Maddy el Baroudi  
Maddy is a fifth-year student in her final year at the Department of Theatre. She is excited to take part in her third mainstage after a year away from the theatre. Maddy would like to thank her friends and family for their continued support through all of her endeavours!

Hannah Farquhar  
Hannah is a third-year performance focus student here at the Department of Theatre. She’s participated in radio plays and workshops with SATCo. Dead Man’s Cell Phone is her first mainstage production and she is extremely excited to be a part of the ensemble. She hopes you enjoy the show.

Holly Hamilton  
Holly, a performance student in her fourth year in the department, is delighted to make her exit with this hilarious and heartfelt show. Recent acting credits include Midsummer Night’s Dream (Green World Theatre), Such Creatures (Untitled Theatrics), and Love and Information (Phoenix). She hopes you laugh, cry, and applaud.

Ryan Kniel  
Ryan is a fourth-year performance focus student in the Department of Theatre, and is overjoyed to once again be performing live on stage for you. His previous credits include Love and Information, Comic Potential (Phoenix), Knife Skills (SATCo), Our Town (Peninsula Productions), and The Secret Origin of Mojo Man (VISTA).

Katie Lacroix  
Katie is a third-year performance focus student. They are making their Phoenix debut with Dead Man’s Cell Phone and could not be more thrilled to be working alongside such wonderful people. Katie is deeply grateful for this opportunity to perform live on stage, and hopes you enjoy the show!
Jane Rees  
**Jean**  
A fourth-year theatre major in the performance focus, Jane is delighted to be returning to live theatre with *Dead Man's Cell Phone*! Past UVic credits include: *Love and Information*, *The Children's Hour* (Phoenix), and *The Next Colour Blue* (SATCo).

Branden Sugden  
**Dwight**  
Branden is an actor, director, and playwright in his fourth year of the self-directed focus. Previous acting credits at the Phoenix include: *Comic Potential*, and *Othello*. Branden was the Livestream Director last year for *Love and Information* and *Problem Child*. Elsewhere: *The Audition* (Theatre Inconnu) and *Hey There, Mr. Moon* (SATCo).

Akari van den Driesen  
**Ensemble**  
Akari is a second-year performance student at the Department of Theatre. She is thrilled and honoured to be working with an amazing cast and crew. Previous theatre credits include *Little Women*, and *The Outsiders* (Burnaby Mountain Secondary School). She hopes you will enjoy the show!

Taylor Williams  
**Carlotta**  
Taylor is a fourth-year student, and she is ecstatic to welcome audiences back to the Phoenix. Previous credits include *Summer Bucket List* (Collectivus/Belfry), *Death by Horoscope* (SATCo), and *The Children's Hour* (Phoenix). Taylor wishes to thank all of her loved ones, especially her mother Brenda, for their unwavering support.

Theon Winn  
**Ensemble**  
Theon is making their debut on stage at the Phoenix as a member of the ensemble. Favourite roles include: Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (William Aberhart Theatre) as well as Death in *2012* (Calgary Young People's Theatre). Theon is a first-year student of the Phoenix.
Production Team

BFA Set Supervisor
Patrick Du Wors
BFA Costume Supervisor
Graham McMonagle
BFA Stage Manager Supervisor
Peter McGuire
Production Stage Manager
Aura Magnien
Senior Assistant Stage Managers
Bonnie Burton (Costumes), Georgia Sherman (Props)
Assistant Stage Managers
Analiese Lohr (Costumes), Connor Runnings (Props)
Crew Members
Grace Carmichael, Aldana Padron
Assistant Set Designer
Ken Matthews
Stage Carpenter
Andy Blair
Assistant Scenic Carpenter
Izabela Zawadzki*, Karina Kalvaitis*
Head Scenic Painters
Hannah Abbey, Link Bechtold, Zoe Bechtold, Zoey Collins, Rebecca Davey, Sam Frew, Brock Keeler, Ken Matthews, Ariel Pretty, Riley Schaffner, Lisa Van Oorschot, Devon Vecchio
Scenic Painters
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Emily Schuler
Hair and Makeup Coordinator
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Livestream Show-Caller
Devon Vecchio
Livestream Technical Director
Kornél Danis
Livestream Switcher Control
Carson Schmidt
Livestream Camera Operators
Rebecca Davey, Theo Falkiner, Spencer McAirns
Student Assistant Technical Director
Emily Trepanier
Assistant Lighting Designers
Brock Keeler, Lisa Van Oorschot
Lighting Technical Supervisor
Hina Nishioka*
Head Electrician
Jadyn McGregor
Assistant Head Electrician
Zoey Collins
Show Electrician
Trystin Simon
Lighting Board Operator
Carson Loughridge
Sound Design Mentor
Brian Linds*
Assistant Sound Designer
Jaeden Walton
Sound Operator
Jack Storwick
Props Coordinator
Daniela Snyders-Blok
Assistant Props Coordinator
Brianna de Jong
Props Builders
Zoe Bechtold
Marketing Assistants
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Marketing Team
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Box Office Staff
Raeleigh Aberg, Rose Cory, Kevin Eastman, Amanda Huang, Taylor Williams
Front of House Managers
Lauren Alliston, Madi Collins, Carter Gulseth
Front of House Mentor
Sydney Hunt
Box Office Staff
Maddy el Baroudi, Roan Foshaug, Carter Gulseth, Klara Kopeinigg, Katie Lacroix, Sophia Radford, Jenny Robinson, Taylor Williams, Landon Wong

And Theatre 105, 205, 305, 405 and work study students  |  *Guest Artists

The Department of Theatre would like to thank the following for their support of this production:
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Congratulations to the following Department of Theatre undergraduate students for their academic achievements last year (2020/21).

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Clio Book Prize in Theatre History: Jane Rees
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Finlayson Award: Sophie Groves, Ken Matthews
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Opening Night Scholarship: Christopher Stewart
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Vincent Short Memorial Theatre Award: Brock Keeler, Aura Magnien
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