

PHILADELPHIA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *NIGHT SIDE SONGS: A NEW MUSICAL BY THE LAZOURS HONORING PHILADELPHIA'S HEALTHCARE AND CAREGIVER HEROES*

This soulful story celebrates the humanity of caregivers during a special pre-residency tour to area healthcare and community institutions before its run at the Suzanne Roberts Theatre.

PHOTOS

PHILADELPHIA, PA- January 13, 2025- [Philadelphia Theatre Company \(PTC\)](#) (480 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146) is proud to present the world premiere of *Night Side Songs*, a groundbreaking new musical from acclaimed musical theatre duo Daniel and Patrick Lazour and directed by PTC Co-Artistic Director and Obie-winner Taibi Magar. Showing February 21 through March 9 at the Suzanne Roberts Theatre, *Night Side Songs* is a profound exploration of illness, caregiving, and the resilience of the human spirit, blending intimate storytelling with a rich musical score. The production features actors Jonathan Raviv, Brooke Ishibashi, Jordan Dobson, Robi Hager, and Mary Elizabeth Scallen with live accompaniment on piano, guitar, and strings, fusing performers and viewers in a shared 95-minute experience.

Taking inspiration from American writer, philosopher, and cultural critic Susan Sontag's observation that "illness is the night side of life," the Lazours weave together a tapestry of interconnected stories, spanning time and perspective and featuring characters ranging from medieval healers to modern-day oncologists. The brothers' personal experiences and extensive interviews with patients, caregivers, and medical professionals inform the story of *Night Side Songs*, which examines the complexities of the American healthcare system. Through its poignant and immersive folk music reminiscent of Joni Mitchell, the play shines a light on the intersections of illness, caregiving, and family while also raising questions about access, equity, and the systemic problems in our healthcare industry. Each song gives a window into a different perspective—patients facing daunting diagnoses, family members offering support, and healthcare workers grappling with their own limitations. Together, these voices create a stirring portrait, calling on audiences to reflect on their own relationships with care, illness, and survival.

"This piece is incredibly personal to me because I've lost both parents to cancer," said Taibi Magar, PTC Artistic Director. "I know firsthand how painful that experience can be and how important community is in those moments, and I hope this beautiful new musical can provide comfort and connection. I'm particularly proud we're touring to hospitals and community centers, so those touched by illness are able to experience the piece for free."

Anchored by the journey of central character and patient, Yasmine Hollie (Brooke Ishibashi), the story follows her as she navigates the physical and emotional challenges of a life-altering diagnosis. Her challenge begins with mysterious symptoms followed by a series of treatments, moments of remission, and profound personal triumphs and struggles. Alongside her mother, Desirée (Mary Elizabeth Scallen), whose own health declines, and her husband, Frank (Jonathan Raviv), who struggles to balance support with his frustrations, Yasmine confronts the isolation and unpredictability of illness. Interwoven throughout *Night Side Songs* are vignettes featuring historical and fictional characters, including Prudence (Mary Elizabeth Scallen), a medieval woman seeking a cure; Dr. Emil Freireich (Robi Hager), an

oncologist battling for medical progress; and Harris Reading (Jordan Dobson), a man defiantly rejecting conventional treatments. These stories parallel Yasmine's experience, exploring themes of resilience, mortality, and connection. Through song, intimate conversations, and theatrical experimentation, including Yasmine's encounters with historical and imagined characters, *Night Side Songs* depicts Yasmine's quest for meaning in the face of adversity.

Daniel and Patrick Lazour, renowned for their innovative and socially conscious musical storytelling, have carved a significant niche in contemporary theater. From Lebanese-American roots, their work explores themes of identity, resilience, and socio-political transformation. Their musical *We Live in Cairo*, also produced in collaboration with Magar and inspired by the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, premiered at the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University (Cambridge, MA) in 2019 before an extended run this fall at New York Theater Workshop, and earned the prestigious Richard Rodgers Award for Musical Theatre in 2016. The Lazours are also recipients of the Jonathan Larson Grant (2021), an honor that recognizes emerging talents shaping the future of musical theater. Deeply invested in creating art that bridges personal and global storytelling, their productions incorporate extensive research and a commitment to representing marginalized voices. Developed in collaboration with A.R.T. and referencing more than a dozen interviews with Philadelphia area healthcare professionals, caregivers, and patients, *Night Side Songs* reflects this ethos by examining the intimate realities of illness and caregiving.

In continuing a tradition of creating socially relevant works, the Lazours bring to life a kaleidoscope of character songs and ensemble music for PTC's production of *Night Side Songs*. Tracks including *Santa Cruz*, *Glow Glow Glow* and *I Will Check In on You* offer audiences moments of gentle contemplation and communal participation through polychoral antiphony, a type of performance characterized by interactive alternate musical phrasing between cast and crowd.

The Lazours and director Taibi Magar have assembled an accomplished creative team to stage *Night Side Songs*, including scenic designer Matt Saunders (*Daddy*, Off-Broadway), costume designer Jason A. Goodwin (*Back to the Future*, Broadway), lighting designer Amith Chandrashaker (*Prayer for the French Republic*, Off-Broadway), and sound designer Justin Stasiw (*Lempicka*, Broadway). Alex Bechtel serves as music director and pianist, with Elizabeth Emanuel as production stage manager, assisted by Olivia McQuerry. Casting is led by Taylor Williams, CSA, with additional casting by Brenna Geffers.

In a unique initiative preceding its residency at PTC, *Night Side Songs* will [tour local health and human services institutions](#) throughout Philadelphia from February 4 to 15. These free performances celebrate healthcare workers, caregivers, and patients, reflecting the production's mission to honor their stories and uplift their voices through art. Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, the Radiation Oncology Department at the Perelman Center for Advanced Medicine, and the Historic Surgical Amphitheater at Pennsylvania Hospital are among the local venues hosting the show for select audiences. *Night Side Songs* makes its official world premiere in Philadelphia following its run at [Under the Radar](#), New York City's premiere annual festival of experimental theater, from January 14 to 19 at Lincoln Center. After its run at PTC, it will continue to the [American Repertory Theater](#). Find a full schedule of PTC's production tour dates open to the public and press, tickets, and reservation information [here](#).

PTC's production offers various affinity nights for audiences, including Local Community Night on Wednesday, February 26, and Black Theatre Night on Friday, March 7. PTC, working in partnership with the Philly Children's Theatre, also offers a free childcare matinee on Sunday, March 2 at 3 p.m. A curated post-show (*AFTERWORDS*) talkback will take place on Sunday, February 23, and March 9, an audio-described performance on Saturday, March 1, and an open caption accompanied performance will

take place on Saturday, March 8. PTC also offers an ASL-interpreted performance on Thursday, March 6. In addition, all performances will include a post-show discussion led by either Artistic Director Taibi Magar, Artistic Director Tyler Dobrowsky, or Director of Education Josh Campbell. A complete schedule of performances can be found at philatheatreco.org.

PTC is grateful to the sponsors for their support of the 2024-25 season. Support is made possible through the Suzanne Roberts Cultural Development Fund, David & Nancy Colman, Glenn Gundersen, Sally Katz, and Daryl & Ellen Morey. *Night Side Songs* is supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. Additional support has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, National Alliance for Music, Shubert Foundation and the William Penn Foundation.

Find a complete schedule of tour dates for *Night Side Songs*, a detailed lineup of productions this season, rental, partnership/sponsorship opportunities, and a schedule of community programming on the [Philadelphia Theatre Company](http://PhiladelphiaTheatreCompany.com) website. Like and follow PTC on social media [@philatheatreco](https://www.instagram.com/philatheatreco), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/philatheatreco), [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/@philatheatreco), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...), and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/philatheatreco).

Bios:

THE LAZOURS (*Night Side Songs* Words and Lyrics)

Daniel and Patrick Lazour are brothers and music theater writers. Projects in development include a musical adaptation of Ritesh Batra's film *The Lunchbox* (Lincoln Center Theater) and their show with communal singing, *Night Side Songs* (Under the Radar, A.R.T./PTC co-production). They wrote original music for Caroline Lindy's debut feature *Your Monster* (Sundance 2024) and their movie musical *Challenger: An American Dream* is being developed with Bruce Cohen Productions and Spark Features. Their original musical *We Live in Cairo* makes its off-Broadway premiere this Fall at New York Theater Workshop after a world premiere at the American Repertory Theater in 2019, directed by Taibi Magar. Original songs by the Lazours can be heard on their independently released albums: *Freres*, *Flap My Wings (Songs from We Live in Cairo)*, *Beth's Homemade Cowboy Breakfast*, and *Lullabies*. They are Jonathan Larson Grant and Richard Rodgers Award recipients, MacDowell and Yaddo Fellows, and New York Theater Workshop Usual Suspects. They have worked with Noor Theatre Company, Ars Nova, and PAC NYC and are proud teaching artists. Patrick holds a B.A. from Boston College and Daniel holds a B.A. from Columbia University. @frereslazour

TAIBI MAGAR (*Night Side Songs* Director)

Taibi Magar is an Artistic Director of Philadelphia Theatre Company. As a freelance director, her most recent credits are *We Live in Cairo* (A.R.T. world premiere, upcoming at New York Theatre Workshop), *The Half-God of Rainfall* (New York Theatre Workshop and A.R.T.), *Macbeth in Stride* (co-direction with Tyler Dobrowsky), *Help* (The Shed), and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Signature Theatre and A.R.T., Lortel Award Best Revival). Other New York credits include *Capsule* by Whitney White and Peter Mark Kendall (Under the Radar Festival/The Public Theater, co-directed with Tyler Dobrowsky), *Blue Ridge* starring Marin Ireland, and *The Great Leap* starring BD Wong (Atlantic Theater Company); *Is God Is* (Soho Rep, 2018 Obie Award); *Master* (The Foundry); and *Underground Railroad Game* (Ars Nova, Obie Award). Regional: CTG, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre, Alley Theatre, The Guthrie Theater, and Seattle Repertory Theatre, among others. International: Hamburg Festival, Edinburgh Festival, Malthouse Theatre (Melbourne), and Soho Theatre (London). MFA: Brown University.

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[Philadelphia Theatre Company](#) (PTC) is a vital civic institution dedicated to the creation of extraordinary theatrical experiences that reflect the essential issues and ideas of our time and that foster connection, understanding, and transformation. PTC engages and strengthens our community through exceptional productions of new and contemporary plays and musicals, inspiring education programs, and mutually beneficial civic partnerships. PTC develops exciting new work that resonates locally and nationally and upholds a deep commitment to be a fully inclusive, welcoming home for Philadelphia's artists, audiences, and people.