

**KEEN  
COMPANY**

**1993**

**by finkle**

***HEAVEN YEA***

**HEAVEN**

**YEA**

***Heaven***

***yea***

**Keen Company**  
Presents

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**1993**

by **finkle**

Directed by  
**Jonathan Silverstein**

**All voices, music, sound, noise, and silence created  
and compiled  
by finkle**

**Publishing Assistance  
by Garrett Schultz**

**“Warning Bells” music by finkle, lyrics and melody by  
finkle and Jennifer McKenna**

**This performance is part of  
Keen Company’s Hear/Now  
Season of Audio Theater.**

**The Hear/Now Season of Audio Theater is Artistic Directed by Jonathan Silverstein, with  
Director of New Work Jeremy Stoller. Season Audio Consultant is Garrett Schultz.  
Hear/Now theme composed by Billy Recce.**

# **Welcome to the Theater**

**Welcome to Keen Company! Our mission centers on identification and connection, two elements which thrive in comfortable and safe environments. So we're taking a second to really say, "Welcome! We're glad you're here." Our audiences are at the heart of our work, and your experience matters to us. We hope you'll feel free to enjoy this piece of audio theater in whatever way moves you. Go ahead: laugh, cry, gasp, scream, even give it a standing ovation! Great stories invoke big reactions. We aren't here to tell you how to connect, we just hope you feel welcome to listen.**

# **Land Acknowledgement**

**We offer this Land Acknowledgment to recognize the long history of the territory where we live and work, and its significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived and continue to live here and to demonstrate our commitment to addressing the legacy of colonialism in our work and practices. Keen Company produces in New York City, which is the traditional land of the Lenape People. Since our activities this season are shared digitally, we'd also like to acknowledge and consider the legacy of colonization embedded within the technologies. Much of the art we make leaves significant carbon footprints, contributing to changing climates that disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples worldwide. We invite you to join us in acknowledging this as well as our shared responsibility: to make good use of this time, and for each of us to consider our roles in reconciliation, decolonization, and allyship. We plan to continue this practice of land acknowledgments at all future live events, and to build on this practice in thoughtful ways, so as to better engage with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous stories.**

# **Note from the Author**

**I started writing 1993 in the spring of 2013 after visiting the New Museum - as I talk about in Episode Eight. Seven years seems like a long time to work on a project but in the scheme of things, it's really not even a blip. Over the course of its development 1993 went through a million and one forms, experiences and experiments. The original title of the piece was 1993 Melancholy. I don't remember when we dropped "melancholy", but it just seemed to make sense. For a long while the piece was going to be performed with four actors as well as me as host/narrator. At some point the piece was more in line with a three-act structure, with the second act being a complete detour out of the main story in order to tell the story of Lorena Bobbitt. We've done the piece in small rooms and big rooms, for large groups and small, we've done the piece with people sitting in normal chairs, with people lying on the ground on yoga mats (which caused one audience member to pull out their back!). One special group got to experience the play at its longest running time - 4 hours and 45 minutes and all they had to sit on were some rehearsal mats. But I think we provided them with snacks so that made up for it a little bit. At some point there were twenty-five songs in the piece, all of which are still there, often times now as background or underscoring - maybe that's what they were always meant to be? Creation is such a strange and mysterious beast.**

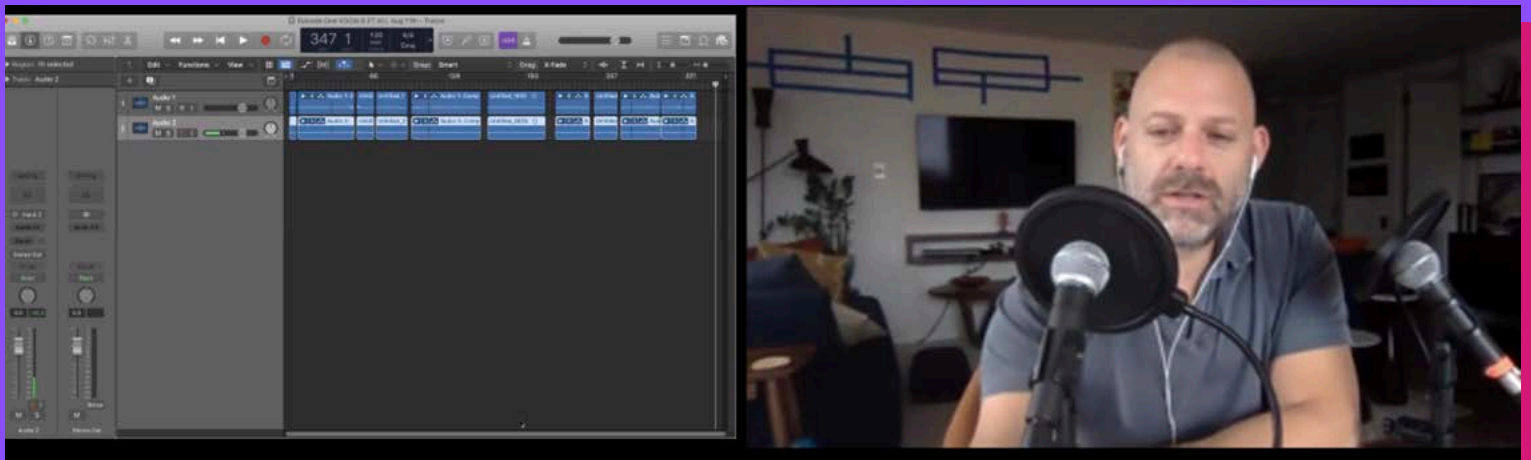
**Though so much changed over time, one thing that always stayed constant was the certainty that 1993 was to be an experience for one's ear(s). As a live performance this piece is meant to be heard durationally preferably with audiences lounging in comfortable spots in a large room with their eyes closed. In this way the performance is both intimate and collective. As a recorded audio experience, I like the idea of this being something to experience like a dream - reflective, imaginative and even more deeply intimate. I like the idea that you will listen to this and fill in the visual details with images from your own life. So that this may start as my story, but it ends as yours. Or that's what I hope. What do you hear in the soundscape? What do you hear in the voices? What do you hear in the music? What do you hear in the noise? And most importantly what do you hear in the silence?**

**To end, I'd like to share a passage from the writer/thinker Pico Iyor's 1993 essay - "The Eloquent Sounds of Silence" that has guided me frequently through the process of creating 1993.**

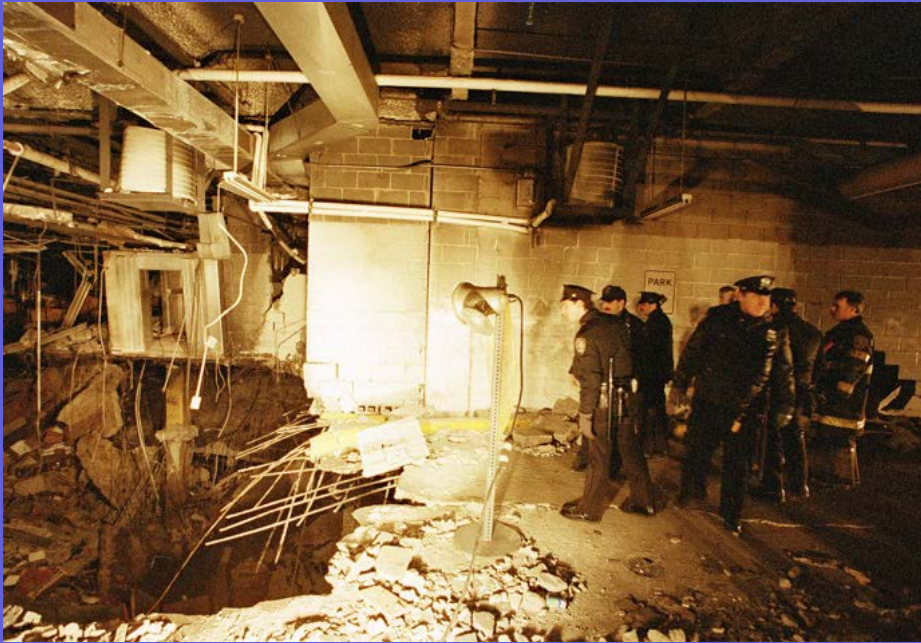
**"All profound things and emotions of things are preceded and attended by Silence," wrote Herman Melville, one of the loftiest and most eloquent of souls. Working himself up to an ever more thunderous cry of affirmation, he went on, "Silence is the general consecration of the universe. Silence is the invisible laying on of the Divine Pontiff's hands upon the world. Silence is the only Voice of our God." For Melville, though, silence finally meant darkness and hopelessness and self-annihilation. Devastated by the silence that greeted his heartfelt novels, he retired into a public silence from which he did not emerge for more than 30 years. Then, just before his death, he came forth with his final utterance - the luminous tale of Billy Budd - and showed that silence is only as worthy as what we can bring back from it".**

**I have brought this story back from my silence.  
Do you have something you need to bring back?**

**—finkle**



**Finkle records an episode of 1993.**



Clockwise from Left: Jurassic Park (dir. Steven Spielberg), "Birth of Venus" (Frank Moore), "Queer Love", "Wedding Series" Adam Lambert, Leshko's Coffe Shop, World Trace Center Bombing

# **Note from the Director**

**Keen Company has been developing 1993 for over five years. As I type these words, I am floored. Up until the past few years, Keen was known as a place for revivals of plays. Sure, we had produced a handful of world premieres in our 20 year history, but we had never committed to a rigorous and deep developmental process for any work. We began the Keen Playwrights Lab in 2013 to give mid-career writers the space and time to develop their work - yet the year they spent with us was only a fraction of the time it takes to nurture a play into production. What made 1993 so different?**

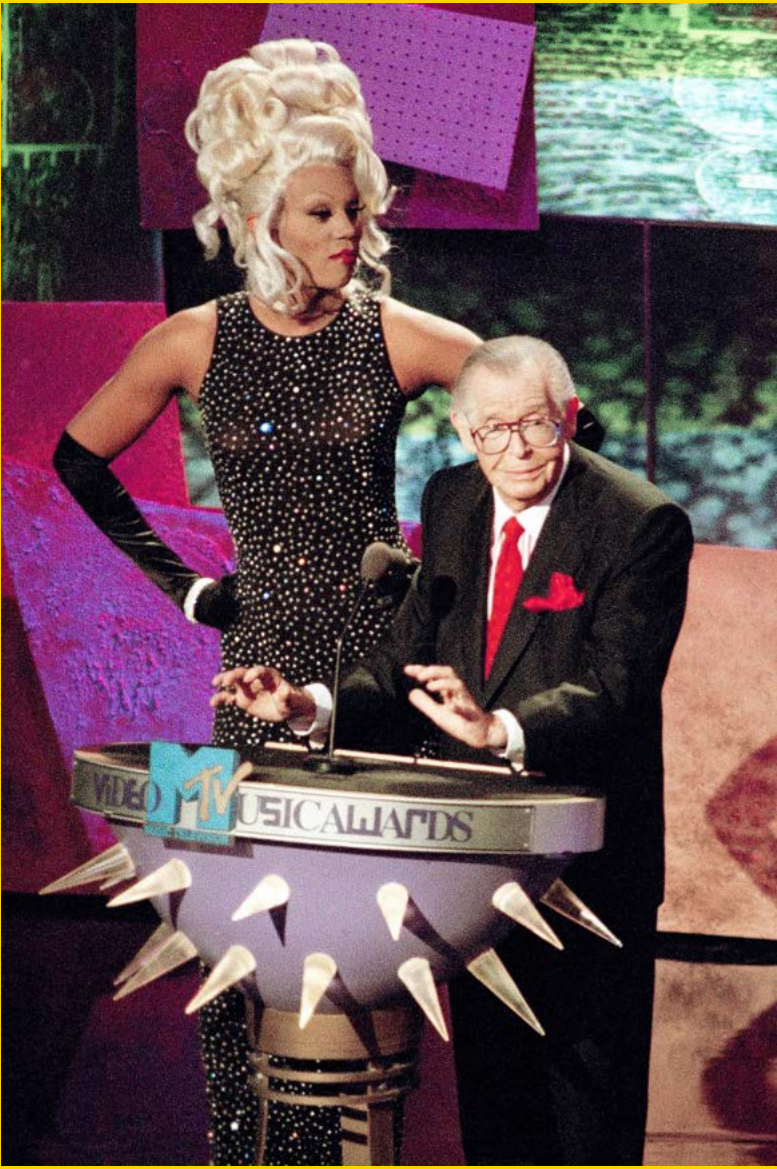
**First and most importantly, it is the writer, Kenny Finkle. Kenny (or finkle, as he is known as the creator and performer of 1993) has been in the Keen orbit for years. His generous heart, incomparable writing, and healthy sense of humor made him someone we wanted to work with from early on in Keen's history (indeed, before I took over as AD). As a freelance director, I had worked with Kenny on a very personal play of his and was enamored of his ability to create work that was both personal to my experience yet also universal. When I took over as AD, it was a no brainer to include Kenny as first, a writer on our Keen Teens program, and then in our Playwrights Lab.**

**Second, it is his process. I'm a big believer in process over product. If the process is good, chances are the product will be stupendous. Kenny shares this view. As Kenny writes in his own note, the process of 1993 took many roads and detours. Through the Lab, a grant from the NEA, several rounds of workshops, readings and showings, and, finally, this pandemic, 1993 reached its inevitable final destination. We had never planned on it being a piece of audio theatre nor had we planned that Kenny would voice, sound design and edit the entire project. Yet here we are - and it seems inescapable this is what it would become.**

**Finally, it is 1993 itself. Its blend of pulp, history, humanity, and vulnerability make it a true Keen experience. The love at its core is not only present in its content, but clear in every minute of its creation and execution. Keen has always been a place for open hearted storytelling. It's only natural that something so full of heart is the piece we have spent so long developing. I hope you enjoy it as much as we enjoyed making it.**

**-Jonathan Silverstein**





Clockwise from Left: Rupaul and Milton Berle, The World Trade Center Bombing, E 6th Street 1993, Wonder Bar, Epehera



## finkle

finkle's theatrical work includes a visual play with music and puppets called Touch (originally commissioned by Dallas Theatre Center, 2018) and his graphic novel musical for intimate audiences entitled U R ★ (You Are Star), which was developed by the Orchard Project and produced at the American Repertory Theatre (2016) and presented at Ars Nova (2017) as well as a multitude of people's living rooms. His plays written under his full name (Kenny Finkle) have been produced both nationally and internationally including Indoor/Outdoor, Alive and Well and Transatlantica all of which are published by Broadway Play Publishing. His long relationship with Keen Company started in 2014 when he was commissioned to write the play Syd Arthur (published by Samuel French) for the Keen Teens program. In 2015 finkle was a member of the Keen's Writer's Group where 1993 was initially workshopped and in 2017 Keen received an NEA New Play Development grant to continue developing the piece.



He received his MFA from Columbia University's Playwriting program and his BFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. He is currently Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts (Playwriting) at Marymount Manhattan College where he oversees the Writing for the Stage concentration. In addition, he worked as a Teaching Artist for the DreamYard Project for two decades and served as Playwright Mentor for Miami Dade's Playwright Development Program for two terms. Finkle is a member of the Dramatists Guild and an alumnus of The Good Writers' Group. For more about finkle go to [finklefactory.org](http://finklefactory.org). Also check out his relatively frivolous podcast All I Want To Do Is Talk About Madonna co-hosted by Mark Snyder.

# **Jonathan Silverstein**

## **Director**

**Keen Company Artistic Director: Molly Sweeney, Ordinary Days, Later Life, Lonely Planet, When It's You, Tick, Tick...Boom!, Travels With My Aunt, John & Jen, Middle of the Night, The Film Society, The Old Boy, Marry Me a Little. Also with Keen: Lemon Sky, The Dining Room (Drama Desk Award: Outstanding Ensemble), I Never Sang For My Father, Tea and Sympathy, and The Hasty Heart. Selected Off-Broadway: The Temperamentals (Drama Desk Award: Outstanding Ensemble), Red Herring (FringeNYC; Outstanding Direction Award), Blueprint (Summer Play Festival), and The Train Play (Clubbed Thumb). Regional: Buck's County, Huntington, Old Globe, Cleveland Play House, Merrimack Rep, Dorset Theatre Festival, Cape Rep Theatre. Alumnus, The Drama League Director's Project. MFA, UCSD. Member, SDC.**

# **Jeremy Stoller**

## **Dramaturg**

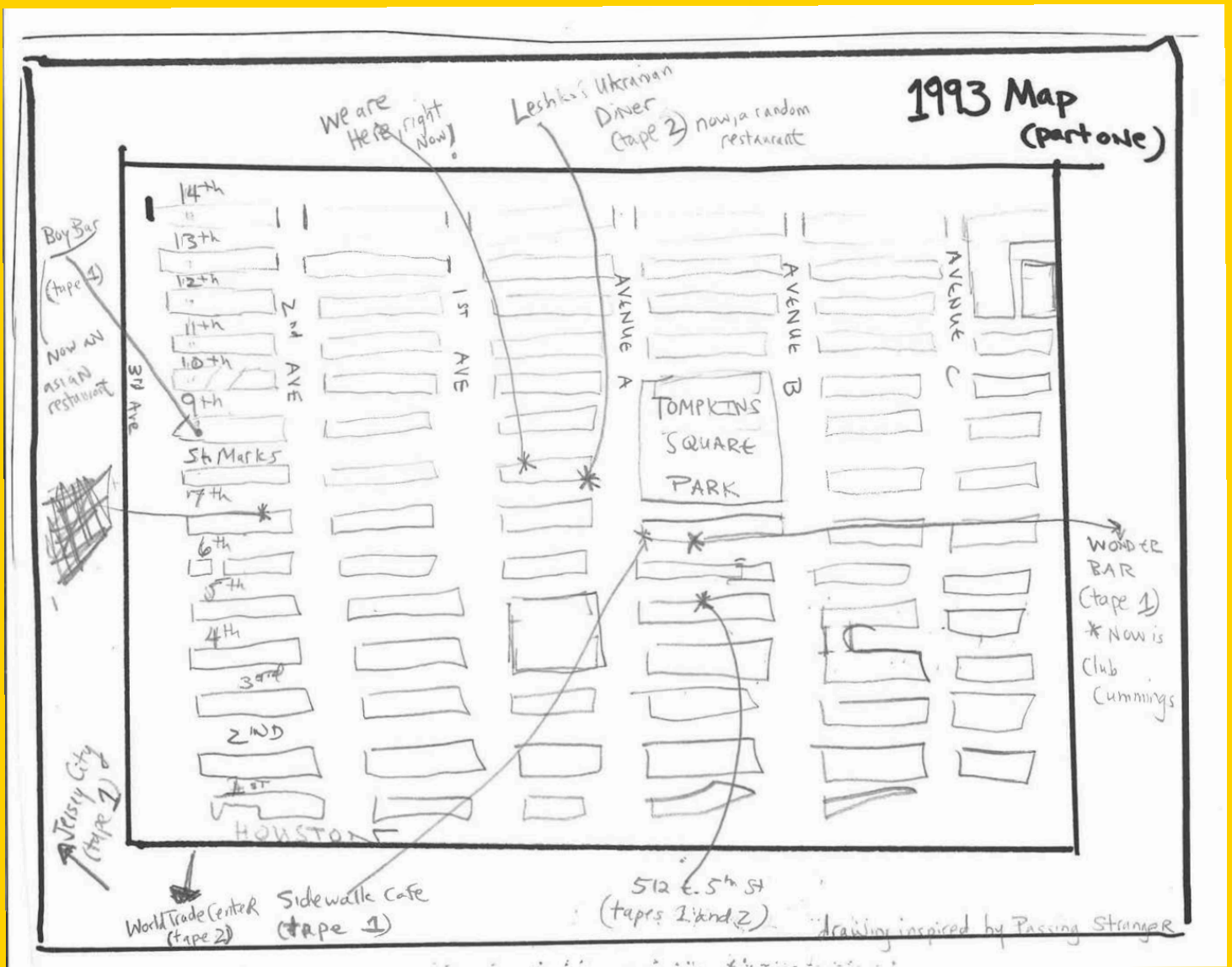
**Jeremy has served as dramaturg on the world premieres of Ken Urban's A Guide for the Homesick (Huntington) and Nibbler (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater); L M Feldman's A People (Orbiter 3); Paper Canoe's Light (Triskelion Arts); and R. Eric Thomas's Will You Accept This Friend Request? (First Person Arts Festival); and on the US premiere of Ken Urban's Sense of an Ending (59E59). Additional dramaturgy/literary work with The Civilians, Disney Theatrical, Hypokrit Theatre, Luna Stage, Musical Theatre Factory, Play On! Shakespeare, PlayPenn, Jewish Plays Project, terraNOVA Collective, Two River Theater. Teaching: Drew University, KCACTF2, PlayPenn. Co-founder, Beehive Dramaturgy Studio.**

# **Garrett Schulz**

## **Audio Consultant**

**Garrett works in production audio and post-production sound design/mixing for film, tv, podcasts, radio, and ads. He is a Columbia College Chicago graduate from the Audio Arts and Acoustics department, and has been making sounds and noise for over decades. He founded Destrier Audio in 2008 which has afforded him to work on some exciting projects. You can see some of his latest works at [destrieraudio.com](http://destrieraudio.com). He also likes coffee and beer.**

# BEHIND 1000 1993



ABOVE: This map was created by finkle during an early workshop production of 1993.

BELOW: A flyer by finkle for a workshop production of 1993 in 2019.

Keen Company presents a workshop presentation of

# 1993 MELANCHOLY

by finkle\* (part 1)  
OR  
(tapes 1 & 2)  
OR  
(Jan - April)

directed by  
(Jonathan) Silverstein

It is June 10<sup>th</sup> 2019

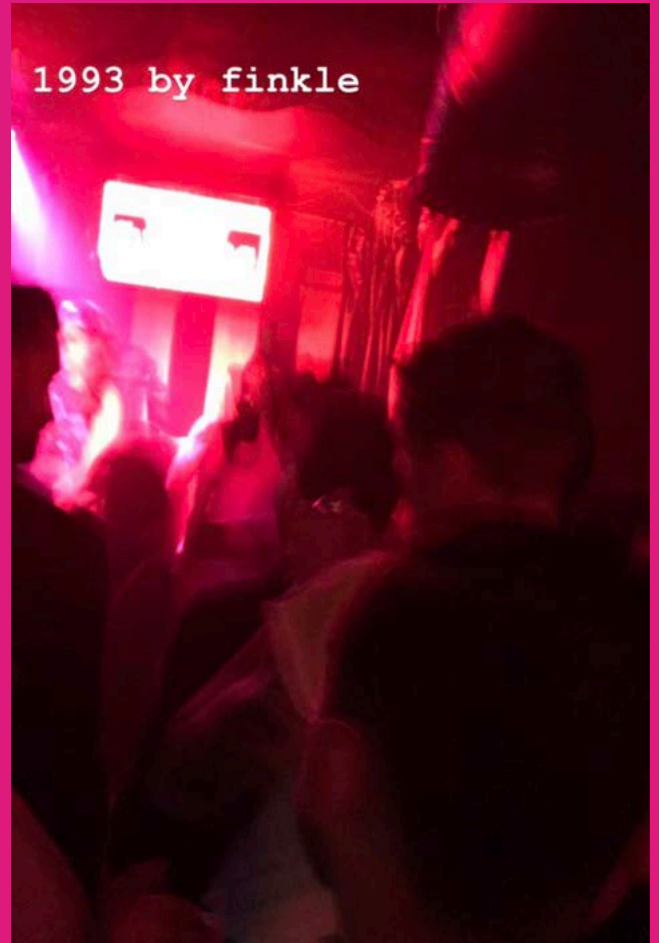
We are @  
Theatre Under St. Marks

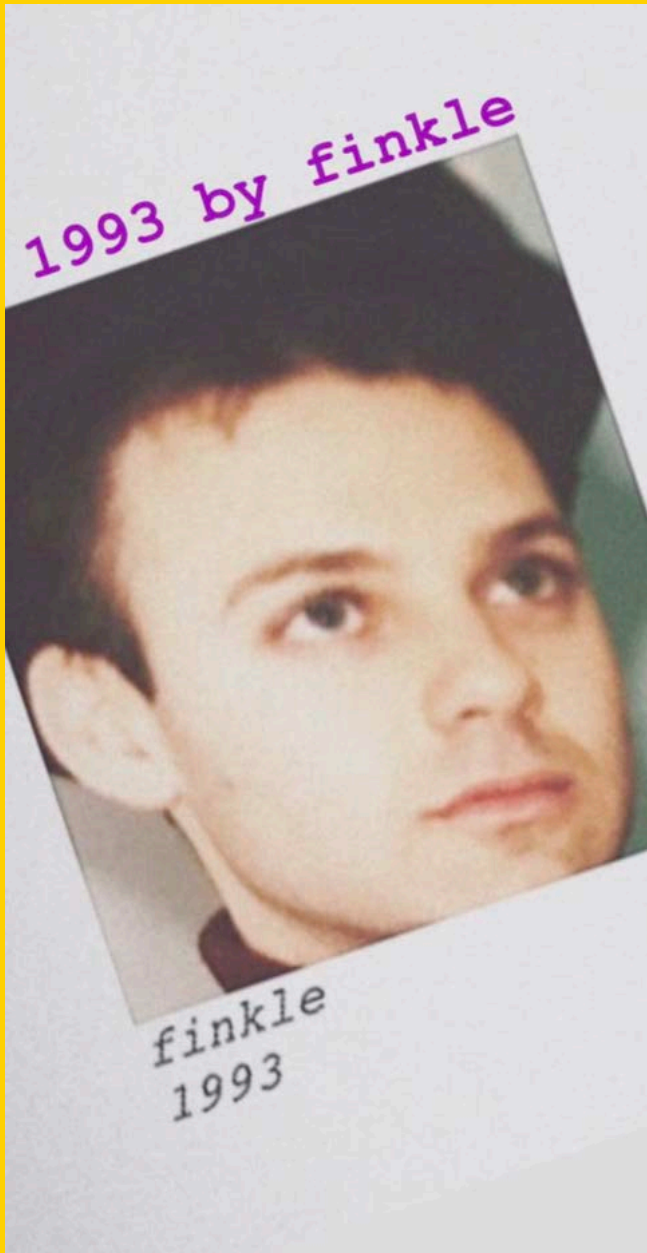
This piece is dedicated to those who fear  
being forgotten and for those who fear  
forgetting.

Is that you?

\*sound, music, noise, voice by finkle factory

# Early Artwork Early Artwork



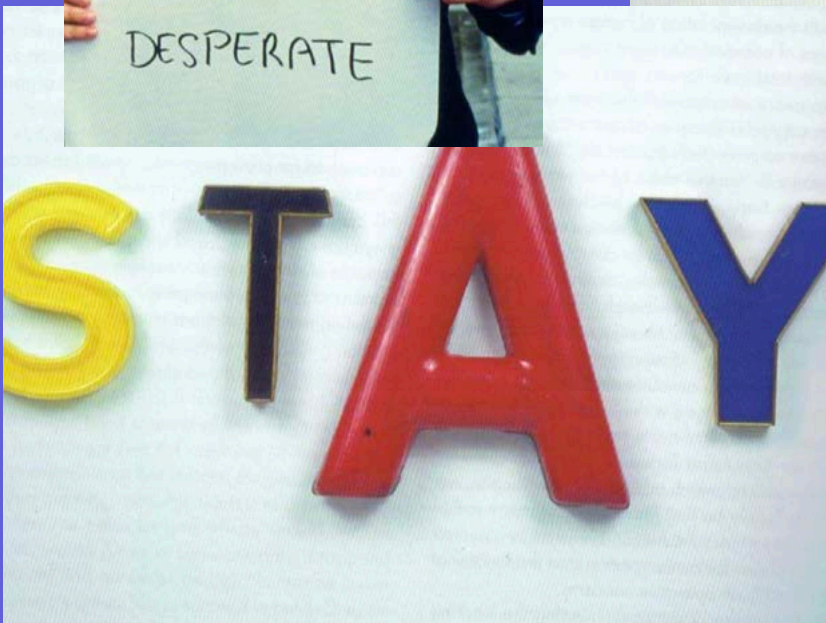


1993



# THE ART OF 1993 1993

1993 was in part inspired by the 1993 Art Exhibit at the New Museum in 2015. Below are a few pieces from the installation.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: "I'm Desperate," by Gillian Wearing, "Virgin Mary," by Kiki Smith, "Heathers," by Karen Kilimnik "Stay" by Jack Pierson



# **Thank You Thank You Thank You**

**First and foremost, all my immense gratitude to my unflagging collaborator, director, guide and friend Jonathan (Jonny) Silverstein. Never have I worked with someone who has believed in my work so much or been willing to go so far with me on a journey. This piece is as much Jonny's as it is mine. Without his talent, passion, joy, persistence and rigor I would never have completed this.**

**Along the way I had the opportunity to work with some of the most talented and amazing theatre artists who gave of themselves generously and frequently freely. Jennifer McKenna, my original play partner and songwriting partner, Mark Armstrong who encouraged and encouraged, Brooke Berman, Kate Moira Ryan (from the Keen Lab), Alfredo Narciso, Chris Perfetti, Jessica Dickey, J. Stephen Brantley, Chris Dwan, Polly Lee, Christine Holt (who lived 1993 with me), Matthew Montelongo, Zoey Kamil, Ethan Barker, the illustrious Jeremy Stoller who gave me the tough questions and tougher looks, but listened with an open heart, Bart Fasbender who taught me how to use logic and a 4 track and who always said yes, Kelly McAndrew who created Loreena and honestly performs the role so much better than I ever could and Andre Ward for giving so much to Byron, coming over and recording songs with me and becoming my friend. And to my friends who sat with this work - read it, heard it, talked to me about it ad infinitum - Kevin Moriarty, Mark Snyder, Jesse Geiger and Beth Whitaker. AND a most special thanks to my agent and friend Beth Bickers who came to EVERY reading, workshop and happening related to this piece and always believed in its possibilities. And finally, big love to my husband Sheldon, who was the unexpected light at the end of 1993 and continues to shine on me and everyone he meets.**

**—finkle**

# TEAM KEEN

**Jonathan Silverstein - Artistic Director**  
**Jeremy Stoller - Director of New Work**  
**Jasminn Johnson - Director of Education**  
**Ashley DiGiorgi - Managing Producer**  
**Reed Ridgley - General Manager**  
**Billy Recce - Marketing Manager**

# KEEN COMPANY

**Keen Company is an award-winning Off-Broadway theater creating narrative driven work that provokes identification, reflection, and emotional connection. In intimate productions of plays and musicals, the company tells stories about the decisive moments that change us. Through our educational arm, Keen Teens, we raise the quality of plays written for the high school stage and provide a free professional training program for teens. Through the Keen Playwrights Lab, we bring together three mid-career playwrights to develop new work and facilitate that work's exposure to a greater audience. On-stage Keen champions the impact of integrity, and we uphold that same mission backstage. It is important to our company, and our work, that everyone feels safe, valued, and inspired to do their best.**

# HEAR/NOW

**Keen Company's 21st Season will reimagine the classic radio drama with the debut of five world premiere audio plays from a multifaceted group of Off-Broadway playwrights. Hear/Now welcomes patrons into a theater of their imagination, showcasing new work by Pearl Cleage, Kate Cortesi, finkle, James Anthony Tyler, and musical team Melissa Li and Kit Yan. Our audiences can expect a season of unique pieces of audio theater - each will be intimate, engrossing, fully-produced shows that will feel just as satisfying as a great night at the theater!**

# WE'RE KEEN ON YOU

**We are endlessly grateful for the support of our community which has fueled Keen Company for over two decades. Thank you to all of our donors, patrons, and friends for your steadfast generosity this year. The theater may be dark, but we are honored to continue to create and connect.**

**You're welcome to explore more about Keen Company at [www.keencompany.org](http://www.keencompany.org)**

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