

Monthly Storytelling Series



Brett Iarrobino's **POOR CONNECTION**

(a reading with the Original Cast)



Original production photo by Jayameena Sundar Rajan.

Monday, December 14, 2020: Online!



ABOUT THE STORYTELLING SERIES

Our monthly storytelling series is all about community engagement. We believe that stories impact change, that we better our world by coming together to learn about our shared and unique experiences. While we may be forced physically apart for some time to come, we are very much together in spirit.

As you can imagine, many of our artists and theatres are struggling right now. If you are in a position to help, please consider “tipping” our presenting artists and others you may know through their **Venmo** and **PayPal** accounts, along with donating to your favorite local theatres and arts organizations. So many of our colleagues are creating virtual programming, maintaining salaries and benefits with no earned revenue feasible for months. Please, help us help them open the doors on the other side of this!

ABOUT TONIGHT’S PRESENTATION

Tonight marks the inaugural partnership between Undiscovered Works and the Clark University New Play Festival whereby we select one of the Festival’s pieces to receive a reading in our monthly storytelling series, featuring a talkback with the student playwright.

We are thrilled to kick off what we hope will be an ongoing program with Brett Iarrobino’s full-length play, *Poor Connection*, read by the original cast of current students and recent graduates.

Brett Iarrobino's
**POOR
CONNECTION**

a reading with the Original Cast

Cast

Kathryn Esther de Araujo
Meredith Aanandita Bali
Jimmy Claire Cohen
Elle Bella Conary
Peder Jimmy Jackson
Angelo Dylan Parra
Alicia Maddie Thomas

A two-act comedy-drama concerned with love, companionship, and our fear of loneliness amid a world that boasts connectivity.

Alicia is a rancorous psychiatrist, afflicted with a self-proclaimed crippling allergy to electricity. Jimmy, her new patient, is a reclusive man-child gifted with savant-like memory; insecure about his brainpower, he has declared himself a technologically-perfect supercomputer. Cornered by mounting pressure from family and loved ones to find pathways back into the outside world, their paths inevitably converge in unexpected, quixotic ways.

Poor Connection received its first staging at Clark University's 6th Biennial New Play Festival in Worcester, Massachusetts, directed by Lyndsey Hawkes.

TONIGHT'S STORYTELLERS



Brett Iarrobino (Playwright) is a senior attending Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, double majoring in English and Theatre Arts, and a candidate to receive his Masters of Arts in Teaching for secondary English education post-undergrad. A budding playwright, his full-length play *Poor Connection* was first produced for three nights at the Clark University Biennial New Play Festival. He has written numerous short plays; his ten-minute comedy, *Aw, Nuts!*, was the first-place recipient of the 2019 Loring Holmes & Ruth Dodd Drama Award, and placed nationally with the 2020 Kennedy Center Playwriting Intensive. A dedicated advocate for performing arts education, Brett has also worked extensively with nonprofit organizations in Worcester and throughout the Northeast, in administrative and programming capacities for Worcester's Main IDEA Youth & Arts, and Jersey City's Art House Productions.



Esther de Araujo (*Kathryn*) is a sophomore at Clark University double majoring in Media Culture and the Arts and Sociology. Her first experience with theatre was in the eighth grade in which she played a dancer on the Corny Collins Show in *Hairspray Junior*. She then went on to perform in various musicals and plays throughout high school, her most notable role being Francisca in a production of *West Side Story*. In high school she also had the opportunity to student produce two musicals and direct a student written play. At Clark she has participated in the bi-annual CUPS PlayFest where she first performed her role as Kathryn in *Poor Connection*. She also briefly co-directed the Cabaret for Clark Musical Theatre, but that was unfortunately cut off by the move of the spring semester online in March of this year.



Aanandita Bali (*Meredith*) is a sophomore double majoring in Psychology and Theatre. She did some acting in high school, primarily in skits and classes, but *Poor Connection* was actually the first theatre production that she was a part of! In Spring 2020, Aanandita was slated to play the role of Eliante in *School for Lies*; unfortunately, it was cancelled due to the pandemic.



Claire Cohen (*Jimmy*) A big nerd who loves playing electric bass, Claire is a 19-year old trans girl junior at Clark University, majoring in sociology and theater. Claire played Jimmy in the original production of *Poor Connection*, Dromio of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors* (until COVID messed things up) and has acted in some films made by their brother. Claire has also done a lot of playwriting, including *Elevator Pitch*, which was featured in the Clark University Player's Society 24-hour play fest last spring.



Bella Conary (*Elle*) has been in theater since the 5th grade where she made her debut as Snow White. In high school, she appeared in four musicals and two plays. Favorite roles have included Gangster #2 in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, Savannah in *Freaky Friday*, Obrien in *1984*, and now Elle in *Poor Connection* that debuted last fall. Bella is majoring in Psychology at Clark and considering a theater minor She is beyond excited to be doing this production for a second time!



Jimmy Jackson (*Peder*) has been participating in theatre since elementary and middle school plays, and worked with a semi-professional theatre company in high school where favorite roles included Horton in *Seussical the Musical* and Elijah J. Whitney in *Anything Goes*. Jimmy is also a musician, who regularly performed with his band throughout high school. He rediscovered his love for theatre performance at Clark when he auditioned for a role in the Playfest and was cast as Peder in the original production of *Poor Connection*. He also participated in Clark's 24-Hour Playfest as both a playwright and a director (of his own script) which was a tremendous and fun experience. Currently in his junior year, working towards a double major in Screen Studies and Music, Jimmy hopes to compose music for film, television, or video games and is interested in writing, directing, and music production. He is currently a Production Assistant intern at a local media company.



Dylan Parra (*Angelo*) is a junior at Clark University studying Media, Culture, and Arts with minors in Theater Arts and Political Science. He currently serves as Vice President of the Clark University Players Society. In terms of acting experience, Dylan was in the Players Society's production of Neil Simon's *Rumors*, as well as in the original cast of *Poor Connection*. He was also in Clark's Theater Department's production of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*.



Maddie Thomas (*Alicia*) is a 2020 graduate from Clark University with her B.A. in Theatre Arts and Psychology. During her time at Clark, she concentrated in acting under the mentorship of Gino Dilorio and Raymond Munro. Some of her favorite credits from her time at Clark include Mrs. Givings (*In the Next Room, or The Vibrator Play*), Harper (*Far Away*) and Prince John (*King Henry IV, Part One*). She recently starred in Clark Screen Dept's short horror film *Meridian*. She's appeared in the NC Women's Theatre Festival (*Love and Information*) as well as Advice to the Players' new play reading of *Jacob's Ladder Surface*. She currently resides in Vermont with her family and chickens.

UNDISCOVERED WORKS NEEDS YOUR STORIES!

Are you a creative artist looking for an opportunity to share new work? We'd love to consider including you in our monthly series! Please contact us at leaha@undiscoveredworks.org.

Undiscovered Works is dedicated to supporting artists as they develop plays, music, monologues, comedy, and film. Our monthly storytelling series presents work in all stages of development, bringing together voices from across our community. Our ensemble-based Off and Off-Off Broadway productions bring to light the social issues of our times, all the while entertaining and inspiring dialogue.

THIS MONTH'S NON-PROFIT PARTNER



A portion of tonight's proceeds will go to **Crossroads Community Services**, whose mission is to unite our community in the fight to end hunger and homelessness. Throughout the pandemic, Crossroads has maintained its commitment to providing food for our fellow New Yorkers. While they have had to close down their women's shelter, they've continued to offer nightly hot dinners, thrice-weekly hot breakfasts, and a Saturday morning cafe, all in a grab-and-go format, as well as providing free weekly groceries. Exemplifying community partnership, they work with local restaurants and hotels as well as with Coalition for the Homeless, and are housed on the grounds of St. Bartholomew's Church on East 51st Street. <https://www.crossroadsnyc.org/>

HELP SUPPORT OUR COLLEAGUES

Tonight's artists are all college students and recent graduates. You can imagine what a challenging time this is for them. Please, if you're able, consider "tipping" them via their **Venmo** accounts:

- Esther de Araujo: [@estheregaa](#)
- Anandita Bali: [@AnnBali](#)
- Claire Cohen: [@Cohen-Cohen-Kowan](#)
- Bella Connary: [@Bella-Conary](#)
- Brett Iarrobino: [@brettiarrobino](#)
- Jimmy Jackson: [@Jimmy-Jackson-27](#)
- Dylan Parra: [@CapyParra](#)
- Maddie Thomas: [@maddiethomas1998](#)

Our Next
MONTHLY STORYTELLING EVENT

JANUARY 2021 *on ZOOM!*

Be sure to follow us on social media and sign our mailing list to get all the updates!

www.undiscoveredworks.org



Our Next **MIXOLOGY**
MARCH 2021 *on ZOOM!*

ENJOYING THE WORK? FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



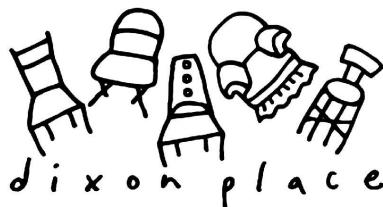
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While we are not able to gather together in person tonight, New York's arts community remains committed to being a source of support for all of us as we navigate a new reality we'd hoped we'd only ever know through novels and history books. We normally gather at Dixon Place's lounge, a staple of the downtown theatre scene for over three decades, where we remind you to stay hydrated and know that every dollar you spend at the lounge goes directly back into supporting the thousands of artists Dixon Place hosts every year. Well, it's more important than ever to stay hydrated and Dixon Place needs our support more than ever to open its doors to all of us as soon as it becomes safe to gather again. ***Please, if you're able, consider making a donation - perhaps the cost of that drink at:***

<https://shop.vendini.com/dixonplace/product-details/donation/054d4ca95ace388c1932e38137522652>