

TRUE BELIEVERS

By Thom Dunn

Directed by James Peter Sotis

Cast:

Chad Mailer Ryan Edlinger
Billy Horowitz Zach Winston
Calvin Elder Jeff Marcus
Chloe Long Rachel Katherine Alexander
Ted Thompson Michael Avallar
Box Jim Remmes
Kt Watts Caitlyn Conley
Ensemble Anne Colpitts, Steve Marois

Production Team:

Assistant Director/Cameo Appearances David Max Gibbons
Technical Director Josh Friedensohn
Scenic Design/Construction Josh Friedensohn
Costume Design/Construction Allison McDonough
Lighting Design Lucas Garrity
Sound Design Sam Sewell
Hair/Makeup/Headpieces Katie Richmond
Props Josh Friedensohn, Erica Magelky,
Peter Moriarty, James Peter Sotis
Fight Choreography Meron Langsner
Fight Captain Rachel Katherine Alexander
Animation Team Jacob Belouin, Jeff Callahan,
Paul Calo, Omeed Honary, Colin
Mitchell, Matt Shumway, Andrea
Trochimiak, Eyal Zilberman
Stage Manager Erica Magelky

Featured Artists:

Mike Fallek Chase Richard
Jim Gallagher Emmanuel Tavares (poster illustration)
Franco Governale John Kinney Wells (1921-1950)
Janet K. Lee

Much of the art you see on stage is available for purchase after the production is over! For more information or to make a purchase, contact Vagabond Theatre Group Technical Director, Josh Friedensohn at Josh@vagabondtheatregroup.com.

Playwright's Note, by Thom Dunn

Comic books are so in vogue. Yeah, I said it. With Marvel's *The Avengers* ranking as the third highest grossing film of all time (hey remember 4 months ago when Joss Whedon was just "That guy who made *Buffy* and a bunch of other shows that got cancelled?") and *The Dark Knight Rises* looming overhead, what was once deemed as "nerd culture" now seems to rule everything around us. But even though this culture tends to focus its collective attention on the big-budget Hollywood blockbusters, I've always found more common ground between comic books and theatre. All three are visual mediums, sure, but comic books and theatre both tend to be driven by the literature and then transformed into something more fantastical and sensory. Even comic book conventions are inherently theatrical—comic creators perform on a stage in front of an audience during the forums, and of course, there's the costumes. People might associate masks with superheroes now, but there is a longstanding tradition of mask work in theatre that far pre-dates *Batman* (or the Internet, for that matter). And really, what's the difference between the stock characters of *Commedia dell'arte* and the pantheon of super characters owned by Marvel and DC?

In writing this play, I hoped to create a relatable, human story about relationships, passion, ambition, and creation -- one that just so happened to be set over a weekend at a comic book convention. As ridiculous as that goal might sound, none of it would have been even remotely possible without the awesome folks at Vagabond Theatre Group and Bazaar Productions at the Berkshire Fringe Festival (where I workshoped the play in 2011). Vagabond Artistic Director James "Not Jim. Never Jim" Peter Sotis has had such a firm understanding of this play that he often enlightens me to details in the script that I didn't even realize I had written, and he's taken those moments and built upon them to create something better. Laura Maria Censabella, my fantastic playwright mentor at the Berkshire Fringe Festival, may not have had any idea who Han Solo is (yes, seriously), but she knew that there was a strong cast of living, breathing characters on these pages, amongst all my nerdy kitsch vagary, and she believed in me enough to help me find them.

And finally, I'd like to dedicate this production to Mike, Starring, Mama Cooter, Crystal, and anyone else who couldn't be here, because you were exactly the kind of people who inspired me to make this thing happen.

So anyway, thanks for indulging my fanboy obsessions and general geekery, and I hope you enjoy the ride. It's a lot cheaper than a plane to San Diego and a hotel room for the week.

Director's Note, by James Peter Sotis

I think the experiment worked.

True Believers is the result of a new approach VTG is taking to theatre. We realized some time ago that its not those few nights on stage that make us love theatre, but the whole dirty process—everything from the readthrough to set strike.

If we could get people to come along and enjoy the ride, then the destination could be anywhere. Comedyland. Dramaville. New Worksylvania. We wouldn't have to sacrifice what kinds of theatre we did for the sake of a hook or marketing tool. And if we wanted our audience to join us, we figured we should start at the beginning. So we opened up the development process and took a chance.

And thus *There Will Be Words* was born. This is when it all started to get real. We opened submissions and, wouldn't you know it, a cheeky little play called *True Believers* fell into our lap. It was right up our alley, every joke landing and every little pause hitting close to home. There was no play more perfect to run this gamble with than one as near and dear to our hearts as *True Believers*.

We assembled a crackerjack cast, and the TWBW reading was a success. We kept going. We took that cast and performed at Improv Boston's Geek Week. It was a blast. We kept going. We grabbed a few new people along the way, and here we are.

Over the past few months of this endeavor, I've come to see a whole lot of VTG in the characters of *True Believers*. There's Chad, who wants to write comics his way, but can't quite gain his footing. Calvin, who wants desperately to spend his life doing what he loves. There's KT, who is awesome at doing both of those. The problems of Ted, Billy, Chloe, and Box all have reflections in what we've been trying to do here. It's rather wonderful, in a meta kind of way.

What *True Believers* has become amazes me. We have computer animated sequences and film clips. We have great performances. We have a robot. This whole thing is a sandbox, and I'm overjoyed that everyone came out to play.

I reserve a special shout out to the brilliant, talented, and prophetic Thom Dunn, who allowed us to play with his words, and who went above and beyond to see this thing through to the end. Thanks are more than due to the cast and crew—old and new—for bringing this thing to life. *True Believers* came from everyone in this program. It's all possible thanks to their talent, drive, and passion.

CAST



Rachel Katherine Alexander (Chloe Long)

Rachel Katherine Alexander is a recent alumna of Salem State University. She completed her BFA in Theatre with a Concentration in Performance this spring and is now focusing on getting out of Salem. She was previously seen in Salem State's *Our Lady of 121st Street* as Marcia, and before that performed as Lexi in Vagabond's *Burning the Barn* and as Sybil Vane in Ghostlight Theatre Company's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. She would like to thank James and Thom for giving her this opportunity, and all of the members of Vagabond for their commitment to the company. Also, thanks to her family and friends for always supporting her efforts. [Click for a short interview with Rachel!](#)



Michael Avallar (Ted Thompson)

Michael Avallar is happy to be making his premier with Vagabond Theater Group. He has worked for several theater companies over the years including Centa Stage, the Huntington Theater Company, Theater on Fire, Theater Cooperative to a name a few. For the past two years he has spent his time focusing on film and web series. However, he couldn't resist the lure of the theater for long.



Anne Colplitts (Ensemble)

This marks Anne's first time with VTG, and she wants to thank the group for including her in this experience. Recent other credits include *Floyd Collins* and *Lucky Stiff* with Moonbox Productions, *Absurd Person Singular* with the Footlight Club, and *Crimes of the Heart* with Divine Stageworks. Anne grew up in a museum, spent her formative years on a farm, and lives in a garage, but has never been on a houseboat (offers are accepted). Her favorite X-Man is Cyclops, which makes her appalling, by all accounts. [Click for a short interview with Anne!](#)

Caitlyn Conley (Kt Watts)

Caitlyn is only slightly excited to be working with such a talented cast and crew. She holds a degree in Theatre from Westfield State University. Her recent credits include *Wandaleria* (Argos Productions), *Huck Finn* (New Rep on Tour), *Twelfth Night* (Summer Festival Theatre), *The Effect of Gamma Rays* (Happy Medium Theatre Co), *Farragut North* (Zeitgeist Stage), *The Coast of Utopia* (Westfield State University) and *Scenes from Hurray for Hollywood* (4th Grade Parent Night, Robin Hood Elementary School). Caitlyn is a three time nominee for the Irene Ryan Scholarship and placed in finals in 2008. She thanks her dad for letting her live with him and her dog, Marty Mcfly, for some wonderful adventures. [Click for a short interview with Caitlyn!](#)



Ryan Edlinger (Chad Mailer)

Ryan is no stranger to VTG, having appeared in last year's *The Unfortunate Cutthroats* and multiple instances of *There Will Be Words*. Other recent credits include *Lucky Stiff* with Moonbox Productions, *The Curse of the Starving Class* with Ghostlight Theatre Company, and *Hair* with Counter Productions Theater. He can also be found dressing up in colonial costume and pretending to be an American Revolutionary at the newly reopened Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, continuing a long tradition of convincing people to pay him to wear period clothing and mess with tourists. In addition to being a fan of comics and video games, he really misses his long-term relationship with his tabletop gaming group, and thinks it might finally be time to move on and start meeting new geeks. [Click for a short interview with Ryan!](#)



Jeff Marcus (Calvin Elder)

Jeff Marcus is overjoyed to be working on Thom Dunn's *True Believers* with Vagabond theater. Having only been back in Boston for a little over half a year he is hopping back into the acting scene last appearing on stage as Dr. Gerald Cuthbert in *Pirate Lives! The Musical*. Some of his other favorite roles include Gary/Roger (*Noises Off*), Berger (*Hair*) *DASH and IRNE

nominee, Bottom (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and Frenchy Cabazon (*Cannibal! The Musical*). After this show he will be taking on the role of the Price in Brown Box's production of *Romeo and Juliet*. [Click for a short interview with Jeff!](#)



Steve Marois (Ensemble)

Steve Marois is thrilled to be involved in his first Vagabond show, especially considering the amount of *Doctor Who* references in it. His previous acting experiences include appearances in Boston University Stage Troupe's productions, such as *Beauty and the Beast* (Lumiere), *Amadeus* (Kapellmeister Bonno), and *Poona the F@*kdog and Other Stories for Children* (Cigarette Box, Aide, VCR, Sparky, Stagehand, Guard, Satan, Reporter, Angry Villager). He has never cried more than when he watched Episode 4 of *Torchwood: Children of Earth*. [Click for a short interview with Steve!](#)



Jim Remmes (Box)

Jim has a degree in Theatre from the College of the Holy Cross and a Juris Doctor from Northeastern University. He is now an attorney. Jim was previously seen as Gary/Roger in *Noises Off*, a Charlie Baker in *The Foreigner*, and will be appearing in Acting Out Theater Company's production of *Almost Maine* in September. Jim is also a member of the Providence, RI & Cambridge, MA based improv troupe "Bring Your Own Improv." He wants to thank his family and friends for their love and support, James and Thom for the opportunity the wonderful cast and crew of *True Believers* for making this an amazing experience. [Click for a short interview with Jim!](#)



Zach Winston (Billy Horowitz)

After being conned into auditioning for *A Skull in Connemara* in the summer of 2009, Zach is honored to be working on his fourth production with Vagabond Theatre Group. Since then, Zach assistant directed VTG's IRNE award nominated production of *Burning the Barn*, and penned last year's piratical sea epic, *The Unfortunate*

Cutthroats. Other local acting credits include *Hair* (Counter-Productions Theatre Company), *The Boys of Winter* (Boston Playwrights Theater), *The Shape of Things* (Salem State College, Student Theatre Ensemble; KC/ACTF Irene Ryan Scholarship nomination), and *Tigers Be Still* (Zeitgeist Stage). Zach works as Literary Associate, and can be seen reading stage directions at VTG's new play reading series *There Will Be Words*. He would like to extend his thanks to the VTG staff, designers, and performers for their endless inspiration and passion. In case he doesn't get the chance to do it in person, Zach would like to extended a special "thank you" to each and every person in attendance for, without an audience, it's merely a rehearsal. And last but, certainly, far from least, Zach would like to thank VTG's unsung hero, guardian angel, and resident "proud mom," Cynthia Winston. [Click for a short interview with Zach!](#)

PRODUCTION TEAM



Thom Dunn (Playwright)

Thom Dunn is a Boston-based writer, musician, homebrewer, and new media artist. He enjoys Oxford commas, metaphysics, and romantic clichés (especially when they involve whiskey and/or robots). A graduate of Emerson College, his plays have been performed in Boston and Hollywood, and his comic books have been published by GrayHaven Comics. By day, Thom is a mild-mannered Web & New Media Manager at the Huntington Theatre Company and writes for a number of websites, including Quirk Publishing, Tor Dot Com, and Five By FiveHundred. He grew up in the same town as Eli Whitney, Thornton Wilder, and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, and currently resides in Jamaica Plain, MA with a chinchilla named Yubnub (Ewokese for "Freedom") and a totally awesome girlfriend who actually puts up with him having a chinchilla named Yubnub. He plays guitar and sings in Boston's premiere all-male Lady Gaga glam rock cover band, Alejandro and the Fame, as well as a number of other musical projects. While he does not cosplay or practice chaos magic,

Thom was once challenged to a barfight by the then-current writer of Justice League, who also ended up paying his entire bar tab. *True Believers* is Thom's first full-length play that he's not too embarrassed to be seen with in public. You can keep up with the rest of his wild adventures at thomdunn.net.



James Peter Sotis (Director)

James is a superhero. It's about time he went public with it. Many thanks to Batman for paving the way. When he's not superheroing, he's leading the charge as Artistic Director of VTG. Many, innumerable thanks to everyone he's tricked into working for him. In his civilian life, James holds a degree in Film and Television from Boston University. Assorted past directing credits include *The Unfortunate Cutthroats*, IRNE-Nominated *Burning the Barn*, *A Skull in Connemara*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Five stars to everyone in attendance.



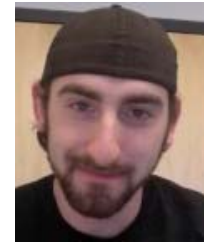
Josh Friedensohn (Technical Director, Scenic Design/Construction, Props)

Josh couldn't possibly turn down the opportunity to work on a show that combines the three biggest loves of his life: Theatre, Star Wars and cats. Wait...there are no cats in this show? I'm out. More accurately, Josh has thoroughly enjoyed the incredible development process that has been *True Believers*. It has monopolized a third of his year and many miles driving to and from Connecticut, but hell hath no fury that will stop Josh from working on a Vagabond show. A huge thank you to James, Erica and Allie for being the Fantastic to my Four and to the Friedensohn clan for making it out to another crazy production. Josh Friedensohn has notably worked on *The Unfortunate Cutthroats*, IRNE-nominated *Burning the Barn*, *A Skull in Connemara*, *Angels in America* and *Beauty and the Beast*. By day, a mild-mannered engineer, but by night he dons the utility belt of VTG Technical Director!

Lucas Garrity (Lighting Design)

Lucas graduated from Northeastern University with a major in Business Administration and a minor in Theatre. In his Theatre

Minor he focused on technical theater with an emphasis on Lighting Design. Lucas spent 5 years at Northeastern working for both the Theatre Department and the Center for the Arts where he held many positions including Lighting Designer, Master Electrician and Assistant to the Technical Director. He is a founding member of Vagabond Theatre Group, currently freelances as a theatrical electrician in Boston, and recently ended an 18-month internship at Central Square Theater.



David Max Gibbons (Assistant Director, Cameo Appearances)

True Believers is DMG's second full production (not to mention the list of other Vagabond events) with Vagabond Theatre Group. He spends most of his time playing Iron Man to James' Batman, making sure the Director is hydrated, the cast is attended to, and extra roles get a dose of cameo. He is now a full-time member of Vagabond (Excelsior!) it would seem he's fitting in quite nicely. A bit of crazy also helps.



Meron Langsner (Fight Direction)

This is Meron's second collaboration with VTG, his first being this past May when his play, *Burning up the Dictionary* was read for There Will Be Words. He was one of three playwrights in the country selected for the pilot year of the National New Play Network Emerging Writer Residencies, and his plays have been performed around the country and overseas. He has also fight directed for Merrimack Rep, New Rep, Lyric Stage, Stoneham, Zeitgeist, and Whistler in the Dark (where he is an artistic associate). Meron thanks VTG for helping him follow the wisdom of the great samurai, Miyamoto Musashi, who wrote, "Be well versed in the arts of pen and sword." MA: NYU/Tisch, MFA: Brandeis, PhD: Tufts.



Erica Magelky (Stage Manager)

Erica is unbelievably excited to be stage managing Vagabond's summer production for the second year in a row. She started doing theater while attending Boston University, mostly on a whim, and has since stage managed productions of *The Music Man*, *Anything*

Goes, Into the Woods, Beauty and the Beast, Pillowman, and last summer's The Unfortunate Cutthroats. By day, she works in a research lab studying immunology. By night, she acts as Vagabond's Production Manager. In her other OTHER spare time, she enjoys trivia, burlesque, historical fiction/fantasy novels, and academic articles about the nature of celebrity. She has always wanted a pet octopus.



Allison McDonough (Costume Design /Construction)

Allison joined Vagabond Theatre Group in 2010 to work on marketing for *Burning the Barn* and picked up the position of Marketing Director soon thereafter. She is currently the Assistant to the Managing Director at the Huntington Theatre Company and has previously held marketing/public relations positions with Company One (Boston), Boston Ballet (Boston), Camden People's Theatre (London) and Ardea Arts/Family Opera Initiative (New York City). She holds a B.S. in Communications with a focus on Public Relations from Boston University.

Katie Richmond (Hair/Makeup/Headpieces)

This is Katie's third show with Vagabond Theatre Group after having done makeup for *Burning the Barn* and *The Unfortunate Cutthroats*. Other Credits include Production Manager for *Rachel Tension & Sybil Disobedience at the Stonewall Inn* (The Theatre Offensive); Makeup for *Beauty and the Beast, A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Anything Goes* (Boston University Stage Troupe); and Technical Direction for *Man Who Came to Dinner* (Boston University Stage Troupe). She holds a BA in International Relations from Boston University. Katie has a very close and personal relationship with glitter.

Sam Sewell (Sound Design)

Sam Sewell is a newcomer to the Vagabond Theatre crew and is delighted to be on-board. Other credits include; *Car Talk The Musical!!!, Yesterday Happened: Remembering H.M., Arabian Nights, The Hound of the Baskervilles, and Matt & Ben* (Central Square Theatre); *Futurity* and *BOB: A Life in 5 Acts* (Oberon); *St. John the Divine in Iowa* (Boston Playwrights' Theatre); and *Wild Swans* (A.R.T.).

SPECIAL THANKS

- David Atwater
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- John Koptonak
- Droo Menard
- Simone Sklan
- Emmanuel Tavares, The Jupiter Press
- Boston University Center for Digital Imaging Arts
- Boston University Stage Troupe
- Boston University Tsai Performance Center
- Encore Bed and Breakfast
- Huntington Theatre Company
- MIT Museum
- Newbury Comics
- Small Theatre Alliance of Boston
- Spirit of Broadway Theatre, Norwich, CT
- StageSource
- Trident Booksellers & Café

True Believers runs one hour and forty-five minutes with no intermission

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ABOUT VAGABOND THEATRE GROUP

Artistic Director James Peter Sotis founded Vagabond Theatre Group in the fall of 2009 as an outlet for young artists to get their work into the competitive Boston theatre scene. **VTG** produces new plays and established works through an open creative process. By inviting the public to experience and contribute to the various stages of development, VTG promotes collaboration between artist and audience.

We also like to think of ourselves as pretty nice people.

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STAFF

James Peter Sotis, Artistic Director
Allison McDonough, Marketing Director
Gabrielle Krumins, Development Associate
Erica Magelky, Production Manager
Josh Friedensohn, Technical Director
Zach Winston, Literary Associate
Ryan Edlinger, Member at Large
David Max Gibbons, Member at Large



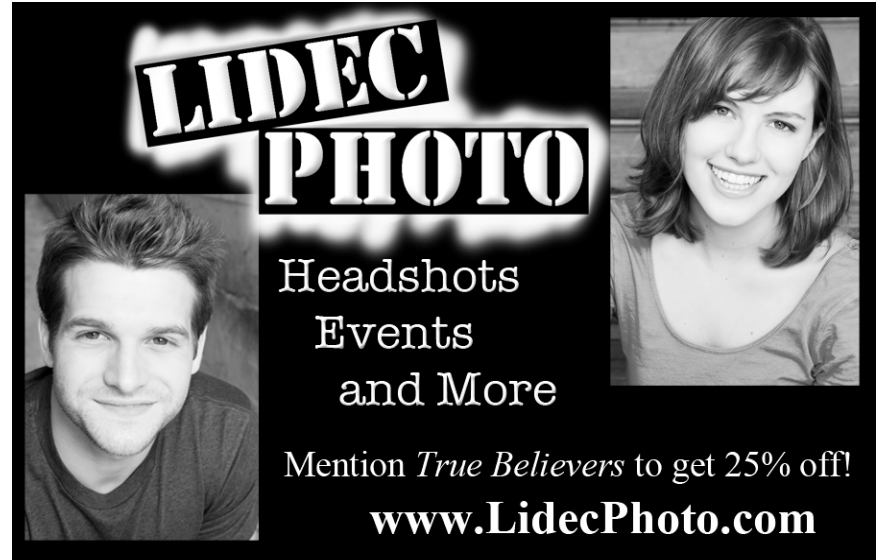
Artwork from the original comic, *Spectre*

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Sculptures by Mike Fallek
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