



# LUCIA BERLIN: STORIES WORD FOR WORD Opens 2/17 at Z Below

by BWW News Desk Jan. 29, 2018

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Word for Word's first production of their 25th Anniversary Season is Lucia Berlin:Stories running February 14-March 11, in the Z Below Theater in San Francisco. Lucia Berlin:Stories opens with press performances February 17 & 18, Saturday 8 PM and Sunday 3 PM (previews Feb. 14 - 16). The stories are from Lucia Berlin's posthumously published, critically acclaimed, A Manual for Cleaning Women featuring the stories "Her First Detox", "Emergency Room Notebook 1977", "Unmanageable", "502" and "Here It Is Saturday".

Directed by Nancy Shelby and JoAnne Winter, Lucia Berlin:Stories is set to an evocative jazz score by **Marcus Shelby**, and illuminated with vibrant projections by Naomi Kremer. Author Lydia Davis in The New Yorker described Berlin's work: "Lucia Berlin's stories are electric, they buzz and crackle as the live wires touch....This is exhilarating writing" On Sunday, February 25, following the 3PM performance: Lucia's Sons, a post-show talk with Jeff Berlin and **David Berlin** in conversation with the audience and remarking about the performances, stories, and their life with their mother Lucia Berlin.

Wry, electric commentary on the dark corners, the everyday, and the oft-overlooked, these 5 Bay Area stories from Berlin's posthumous A Manual for Cleaning Women illuminate her insightful, compassionate view of American society. The production is directed by Nancy Shelby and JoAnne Winter, music composed by **Marcus Shelby** with set/sculptural design by Oliver DiCicco and Video art design by Naomi Kremer. These redemptive stories feature Bay Area actress and Word for Word charter members Jeri Lynn Cohen\*, and **Delia MacDougall\***, with actors Cassidy Brown\*, **Ryan Williams** French\*, Norman Gee\*, Gendell Hing-Hernandez\*, Indiia Wilmot, and **Phil Wong**. \*Actors Equity

Lucia Brown Berlin (1936 - 2004) was an American short story writer. She had a small, devoted following, but did not reach a mass audience during her lifetime. She rose to sudden literary fame eleven years after her death, in August 2015, with Farrar, Straus and Giroux's publication of a volume of selected stories, A Manual For Cleaning Women, edited by Stephen Emerson. It was enthusiastically recognised coast to coast in the US and abroad. The book hit The New York Times Bestseller List in its second week, and within a few weeks, had outsold all her previous books combined. Berlin's book was described at publication as "possessing wit of Lorrie Moore, the grit of Raymond Carver, and a blend of humor and melancholy all her own, Berlin crafts miracles from the everyday, uncovering moments of grace in the cafeterias and Laundromats of the American Southwest, in the homes of the Bay Area upper class, among switchboard operators and struggling mothers, hitchhikers and bad Christians." - Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Berlin was born in Juneau, Alaska, and spent her childhood on the move, following her father's career as a mining engineer. The family lived in mining camps in Idaho, Montana and Arizona, and Chile, where Lucia spent most of her youth. As an adult, she lived in New Mexico, Mexico, northern and southern California and Colorado. She became published relatively late in life. Her first small collection, Angels in the Laundromat, was published in 1981, but her published stories were written as early as 1960. Several of her stories appeared in magazines such as The Atlantic and **Saul Bellow's** The Noble Savage. Berlin published six collections of short stories, but most of her work can be found in three later volumes from Black Sparrow Books: Homesick: New and Selected Stories (1990), So Long: Stories 1987-92 (1993) and Where I Live Now: Stories 1993-98 (1999).

Lucia Berlin:Stories Team - Actors, Directors, Composer and Designer.

### Hot Stories



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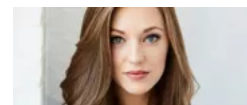
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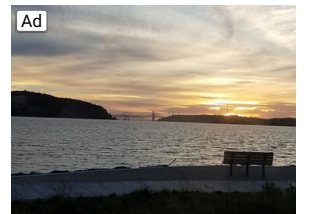


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Lin-Manu and Emily MARY P RETURN

Directed by Nancy Shelby, JoAnne Winter

Actors: Word for Word Charter Members Jeri Lynn Cohen\*, and **Delia MacDougall\***, with actors Cassidy Brown\*, **Ryan Williams** French\*, Norman Gee\*, Gendell Hing-Hernandez\*, Indiiia Wilmot, and **Phil Wong**. \*Actors Equity

Oliver DiCicco (Sculptural Set Design) Naomie Kremer, (Video Artist), **Marcus Shelby** (Composer)

Cassidy Brown (actor) has appeared at TheatreWorks in Fallen Angels, Doubt, Distracted, The 39 Steps and The Loudest Man on Earth; at Aurora Theatre in Safe House and Bosoms and Neglect, and most recently at Berkeley Rep in Imaginary Comforts. Other Bay Area credits include Center Rep, San Jose Rep, Marin Shakespeare Company, and San Jose Stage. Regionally he has appeared at Capital Stage and in numerous shows at Pacific Repertory Theatre.

Jeri Lynn Cohen (actor) is a Charter Member of Word for Word Performing Arts Company where she has originated roles in over 16 productions. She has performed at theaters throughout the Bay

Area and has toured internationally with both Word for Word and the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

**Ryan Williams** French (actor) is an actor, singer, and writer, who works as an educator. He recently completed a production of **James Baldwin**, Blues for Mister Charlie in Seattle with The Williams Project. Other credits include **Mr. Burns**, A Christmas Carol (**American Conservatory Theater**) Holy Ghostly (Campo Santo) The Guthrie, Chautauqua Theater Company, and Hudson Guild NYC. He received his MFA in Acting from A.C.T. and B.A. from Dartmouth College.

Norman Gee (actor) just performed in Stories from Silence at PianoFight, a Utopia Theater #MeToo response. He also did Death of A Salesman with Ubuntu Theater last year, and played Polonius and The Gravedigger in Arabian Shakespeare Festival's Hamlet

Gendell Hing-Hernandez (actor) has performed with Word for Word in Sorry Fugu, and has been a lead teaching artist for the company here and in France.

**Delia MacDougall** (actor) is an actor, director, and is a Charter Member of Word for Word. She last performed with Word for Word in Smut. Other Word for Word shows: Sorry Fugu, The Necklace, Rose-Johnny, The Islanders, Friend of My Youth, 36 Stories by **Sam Shepard**, and In Friendship which she also directed. Other direction credits for WfW include Immortal Heart, Winesburg, Ohio, Oil!: The Ride, and Mrs. Dalloway's Party.

Indiiia Wilmot (actor) has performed in the Bay with Zenith, San Francisco Playhouse, All of What You Love and None of What You Hate, San Francisco Playhouse, Antony and Cleopatra, African-American Shakespeare Company, and Bootycandy at Brava Theater Center/Black Artists Contemporary Cultural Experience. She is also is a teaching artist working **American Conservatory Theater** and California Shakespeare Theater.

**Phil Wong** (actor) is an actor, musician, comedian, and teaching artist from Oakland, last seen with Word for Word in SMUT: An Unseemly Story. He is a Resident Artist with SF Shakes, a graduate of Oberlin College, and received his physical theatre training at the Accademia dell' Arte in Arezzo, Italy.

Nancy Shelby (Director) is a Charter Member of Word for Word, and has appeared in more than fifteen Word for Word productions, most recently - SMUT: The Greening of Mrs. Donaldson. This fall Nancy directed Greg Sarris' How a Mountain was Made.

JoAnne Winter (Director) co-founded Word for Word in 1993, and has helped produce over 100 shows, readings and student performances for the company. She is also Artistic Director of Word for Word's arts education program, Youth Arts, and is an actor, director and teaching artist.

**Marcus Shelby** (Composer) is a bandleader, composer, arranger, bassist, educator, and activist who currently lives in San Francisco, California. Over the past 25 years he has built a diverse biography as a composer, focusing on sharing the history, present, and future of African American lives, on social movements in the US, and on early childhood music education. Currently, Shelby is an artist in residence with the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival and the Artistic Director of the **Marcus Shelby** Orchestra. He has



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received numerous awards, and collaborated with many artists in original composition. For Word for Word, he composed 2008's award-winning score for *Sonny's Blues* ([James Baldwin](#))

Oliver DiCicco (Set Design) is a multi-talented designer who is a sculptor, fabricator, scientist, engineer, and musician. DiCicco's large-scale kinetic sound sculptures and avant-garde set designs have drawn rave reviews while being used as interactive components in unique theatrical productions. For Word for Word, he designed the kinetic car sculpture featured in [Upton Sinclair's](#) *Oil!*: Chapter One: The Ride. DiCicco has made San Francisco his base of operations for over thirty years. Early in his career he was the owner and chief engineer of Mobius Music Recording, a highly respected, state-of-the-art recording facility. His work in the audio field has been recognized by several Grammy nominations, and RIAA gold record awards. His sculptural work focuses primarily on musical instrument sculpture and kinetic sound sculpture.

Naomie Kremer (Video Artist and co-scenic designer) is a painter, video artist, and stage designer. She has exhibited widely in the US and abroad. Her work is in many private and public collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Berkeley Art Museum, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and the US Embassy, Beijing, China. Her video based set designs include *Alcina*, by GF Handel, performed in Acre, Israel by the French Baroque orchestra Les Talens Lyriques; the world premiere production of *The Secret Garden* co-commissioned by San Francisco Opera and Cal performances; *Light Moves*, a collaboration with Margaret Jenkins Dance Company; and *Bluebeard's Castle* by Béla Bartók, commissioned by the Berkeley Opera. She recently completed a 40-minute film, *In the Beginning was Desire*, with documentary filmmaker David Grubin, for which she conceived and created all the visuals.

WORD FOR WORD Performing Arts Company, a program of Z SPACE, is an ensemble whose mission is to tell great stories with elegant theatricality, staging performances of classic and contemporary fiction. Founded in 1993 by Susan Harloe and JoAnne Winter, Word for Word believes in the power of the short story to provide solace, compassion, and insight into our daily lives.

Z SPACE: Operating two venues in San Francisco's historic Mission District, a mainstage and a black box theater, Z Space hosts new works from a variety of performance disciplines year-round. Under Artistic Director Lisa Steindler, keystone initiatives include *New Work*, a development program that supports artists and ensembles from conception to realization of unique works, *Word for Word*, a resident theatre company that transforms works of literature verbatim to the stage, and *Youth Arts*, an arts education program promoting literacy and engaging students' creativity. We foster opportunities around the nation for these works and we engage diverse audiences through direct interactions with the process, the projects, and the artists.

For more information about Z SPACE on the web and social media:

WEBSITE: <https://www.zspace.org>

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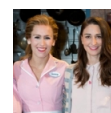
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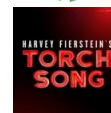
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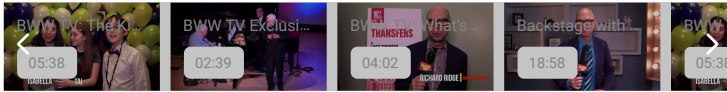
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