

THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE PRESENTS:

Constellations

by Nick Payne
Directed by Lesley Delmenico

November 17-20, 2016
Flanagan Studio Theatre
Bucksbaum Center for the Arts



GRINNELL COLLEGE

Please turn off all cell phones and pagers.
No texting or flash photography permitted
during performance.

There will be no intermission during this performance.



Constellations

by Nick Payne

Directed by Lesley Delmenico

Scenic Designer	Lauren Nigri
Lighting Designer	Becca Jeffords
Costume Designer	Erin Howell-Gritsch
Technical Director	Erik Sanning '89
Assistant Technical Director	Kate Baumgartner '15
Stage Manager	Keli Vitaioli '19
Sound Designer	Nora Schoenle '19



Morgan 1	Deborah Msekela '17
Jack 1	Nolan Boggess '19
Morgan 2	Quinn Ercolani '20
Jack 2	Ryan Galang '19
Morgan 3	Hannah Miller '20
Jack 3	Joseph Knopke '19
Morgan 4	Kira Duff '20
Jackie 4	Amelia Darling '20

Constellations
is presented by special arrangement with
Dramatists Play Service, Inc.



Resetting Nick Payne's *Constellations*, a play that was written for a London setting, to Chicago was an easy task. But the original version was also a "two-hander," and a cast of two doesn't make sense in an academic setting, where we encourage more actors to be involved in productions. In a conversation a year ago with a Chicago theatre colleague, we mused that since this play is set in the multiverse, there could conceivably be multiple iterations of Morgan and Jack as well as multiple iterations of scenes, each with its different consequences. It was a complicated process to make this concept work, but I found that the play divides rather neatly for four couples. This division of scenes is what dramaturg Keith Hoagland volunteered to chart and explain for us.

I like the idea that these human beings could have multiple appearances, sexual orientations, and quirky approaches to their relationships, since the play is as much about the joys and vagaries of love as the reality of death. People have wrestled with the concept that love and life might trump death throughout history (as well as in recent variation, the slogan that love might trump hate). We feel that a love story comes at a good time this year, and hope that you will enjoy *Constellations*.

Three quotations from Stephen Hawking that are useful for thinking about the infinite possibilities presented by the rules of the multiverse:

"The past, like the future, is indefinite and exists only as a spectrum of possibilities."

"God not only plays dice, but also sometimes throws them where they cannot be seen."

"I believe things cannot make themselves impossible"



Emily Howe

Growing up in a pastor's house, conversations about death, dying, trauma, and loss were a normalized part of my home life. These conversations would come up during service projects, over cereal before school, and even wormed their way into my academics, so I was thrilled when Lesley asked me to join the *Constellations* team and assist in the sharing of these discussions among others in the Grinnell community. Conversations surrounding these issues are often uncomfortable and difficult, but so important. They allow us to better understand the situations we find ourselves in and the options we have even before we must face them. Maybe Morgan and her/his analytical mind would have found death with dignity without the experience of her/his mother's death but it certainly changed her/his outlook.

Conversations about death, dying, trauma and loss can ease the pain simply because it allows common ground to be built between people even when, as you see in the play, there are moments when it may seem like walls are rising. Just as in a multiverse, all of the associated emotions are felt and experienced differently at various times by different people, so sometimes, especially in the light of immense pain or shock, it is challenging to overcome the discrepancies in outlook.

In the end, it comes to Grinnell's motto – truth and humanity. Truth, in that we must be honest with each other in the conversations we have, in order to genuinely communicate and understand one another and what each of us wants as our ideal quality of life. And humanity, because we must treat each other as fragile, beautiful living beings. It is our humanity that continually provides us a common identity and allows us to care for one another, just as Jack/ie and Morgan care for each other.



Understanding Possibility on the Scale of the Multiverse

By Keith Hoagland

Next time you happen to be walking around outside, pick a tree and walk towards it. When you are standing beneath the tree you have chosen, follow with your eyes the direction of the tree's trunk as it stretches upwards. Then, when it splits off into branches follow one of the branches. Continue to do this until you follow a twig to its end or run into a leaf. Now imagine you are an ant crawling along the twig you have chosen. Imagine you only get one second to crawl along the twig you are on before you die. If you were only ever given this fleeting glimpse of this twig as you crawl along it in your short life, would the possibility of the existence of the entire tree as a concept seem fathomable to you? What about the existence of an entire forest?

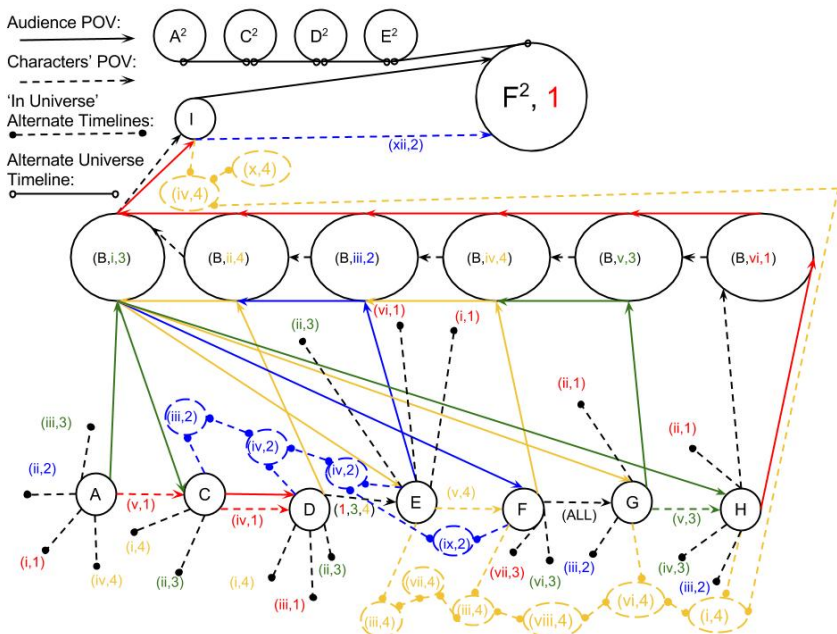
This crude analogy is meant to demonstrate the sheer scale at which the multiverse exists relative to the all too brief existence that is a human life. This play, *Constellations*, offers us a glimpse of how one playwright imagines the multiverse would look like. It offers us a glimpse of the forest by showing us a tree. The play's nonlinear storyline demonstrates to us how time is nonlinear and how everything within our universe is predetermined by the existence of a multiverse. To understand these ideas further, it is necessary to explore how the universe fits together.

The first three dimensions of our universe are as follows: the 1st dimension is a line (made up of points, the 0th dimension), the 2nd dimension is a plane, and the 3rd dimension is space. Most people label the 4th dimension as time, but it is better to think of this dimension as duration. It is much easier to imagine plotting where a ball is in 3D space while denoting the duration of second one to second two. To begin imagining higher dimensions, a simple thought experiment is necessary. The first step of which is to reimagine the 4th dimension as similar to the 1st dimension. Imagine that duration is measured in a linear fashion, made up of 3D frames (points).

Therefore, the 5th dimension is now a plane in which multiple 4th dimensional timelines could exist. Likewise, the 6th dimension is similar to a 3D space in which multiple 5th dimensional planes could exist. It is beyond these 6th dimensional spaces that a 7th dimensional multiverse could exist.

But let's back up a bit. How do we distinguish these 4th dimensional timelines as different from one another? One idea, based on the Many-Worlds Interpretation of quantum mechanics suggests that for every occurrence of chance or choice, an alternate timeline is created that encompasses only one of all the possibilities. For example, if you roll a six-sided die, there exist six separate timelines wherein you get one of the six possible results. By the same reasoning, there also exist many other timelines where you never learn the outcome of the die roll for as many reasons as you can come up with. Thus, the only way to distinguish our timeline from the others would be based on the history we associate with. In other words, we can only determine the outcome of the die roll because we rolled the die at some point in our past. An example of this in the play can be found when the lesbian couple brings up Alison O'Connor at the dance lessons. The only reason her name is of any relevance is because the Morgan and Jackie of this timeline have the corresponding history to go with it.

All in all, the play explores the various branching timelines of the lives of Jackie and Morgan. It is not until the end that we are offered a glimpse of an alternate universe, wherein it is Jackie who invites Morgan out for a drink, rather than the reverse-as established as a fixed feature of the play's current universe. It also makes for a convenient bookend to have the couple that opened the show then close it, from a director's point of view.



Main Timeline: Alternate Timelines: Scene:

	A	B _i	C	D	B _{ii}	E	B _{iii}	F	B _{iv}	G	B _v	H	B _{vi}	I	F ²
1.)	(i) (v)	∅	(iv) (iii)	∅	(i) (vi)	∅	(iv) (vii)	∅	(ii)	∅	(ii)	(vi)	(ii) (viii) (xi)	(i)	
2.)	(ii)	∅	(iii) (iv)	∅	(iv) (iii)	(ii) (v) (ix)	∅	(i) (iii)	∅	(iii)	(vi)	(iii) (vi) (xii)	∅		
3.)	(iii)	(i)	(ii)	∅	(ii)	∅	(i) (vi)	∅	(v) (v)	(iv)	∅	(i) (v) (vii) (ix)	∅		
4.)	(iv)	∅	(i)	(i)	(ii) (iii) (v) (vii)	∅	(iii) (viii)	(iv) (vi)	∅	(i)	∅	(iv) (x)	∅		



SPECIAL THANKS TO

Bill's Jewelry Shop

Rabbi Rob Cabelli

Rodas Hailu

Mike Hunter and the Grinnell-Newburg High School

Professor Caroline Latta, Columbia College

Sofi Mendez

Dr. James R. Paulson



Nolan Boggess (Jack 1) is a second-year Theatre and Dance Major from Des Moines. Nolan is excited to work with Lesley again after previously working with her in *Translations* (Manus). Nolan has also been in *The Tempest* (Alonso), *Lord of the Flies* (Piggy), and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Barfee). He is very grateful for the continuous support from his family and friends and hopes everyone enjoys the show.

Amelia Darling (Jackie 4) is a first-year from Philadelphia. She's excited to be in her first show at Grinnell after four years of theatre in high school.

Kira Duff (Morgan 4) is a first-year from Portland, Oregon who is extremely excited about participating in her first production at Grinnell. She was active in her high school's theatre department, both onstage and behind the scenes, as well as in court as captain of the Mock Trial team. Kira is hopeful regarding the next three and a half years here, and is honored to be presenting this show to you today.

Quinn Ercolani (Morgan 2) is an undeclared first year in his first performance (outside of 24Hr Theater Project) at Grinnell. After spending the last four years acting and directing and the last two with the META, he's excited to join a production with such an illustrious cast and crew and hopes to continue with theater here.

Ryan Galang (Jack 2) is a second-year from Los Angeles, California. He plays baseball for Grinnell College and is a Computer Science Major. This is Ryan's first Grinnell theater performance and he is excited and grateful to be a part of it.

Joseph Knopke (Jack 3) is a second-year from Kansas City. He has previously performed at Grinnell in *Translations* (Owen) and *Lord of the Flies* (Ralph). He has four cats and three dogs.



Hannah Miller (Morgan 3) is a first-year student from Minnesota and is considering a major in Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies; Religious Studies; or English. This is Hannah's first theatre production, and she is grateful for the opportunity to work with a talented, spirited cast and crew to create a beautiful show.

Deborah Msekela (Morgan 1) is a fourth-year Chemistry Major from Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. She has been in previous Grinnell productions such as *Hamlet*, *One Acts* and now *Constellations*, of which she is very excited to be a part. She enjoys anything fun and is always ready to try something new. Deborah is grateful for all the people in her life and would like to send her heart out to all of them.

CREW

Britt Bovbjerg (Costume Chief) is a second-year Biological Chemistry Major from Pittsburgh, PA. She was part of her high school theater program both behind the scenes and as an actress. This is her first year working for the Grinnell theater program.

Leyi Dai (Light Board Operator) is a first-year from Shanghai, China. She was active in her high school drama club as an actress. Now she is excited to be a light board operator for the first time and thrilled to be a part of the *Constellations* crew.

Lily Fitzsimmons (Assistant Stage Manager) is a first-year from St. Louis, Missouri where she attended Crossroads College Preparatory School. There she stage managed high school theater productions including *Animal Farm*, *The Winter One Act Festival*, *RENT*, and *The Addams Family Musical*. She is extremely grateful and thrilled for the opportunity to continue being involved in theater in college. This is her first experience in theater at Grinnell, but it is certainly not her last.



Keith Hoagland (Dramaturg) is a third year Theatre and Dance Major who has participated in several Grinnell productions. He was assistant director/dramaturg for *Copenhagen*; directed the One Act play *Glass*; and created sound design, fight choreography, and props for *Lord of the Flies*. Keith also acted in *Midsummer Night's Dream Project* and *The Tempest*. He has a strong interest in film making.

Hannah Hong (Costume Chief) is a third-year Biology Major from Iowa City. She was active in her high school's theater as part of the costume crew and worked on Grinnell College's *The Tempest* last year as well. She is happy to be working on *Constellations* as her first time as a costume chief.

Emily Howe (Assistant Director) is fourth year General Chemistry Major. She is thrilled to be working with Lesley and the cast and crew of *Constellations*. This is her first experience assistant directing at Grinnell, and last spring she was a member of the cast of the Salman Rushdie adaptations. Emily will be graduating in December after which she will return to her home in rural Idaho to continue to promote the arts and quality end of life care.

Chris Jones (Sound Board Operator) is a fourth-year Theatre and Dance Major from Washington D.C. He is normally involved with the performance side of things and is co-director of a campus improv troupe, The Trustees (A Comedy Team).

Anh Thu Pham (Costume Crew) is a second-year considering a Computer Science and Theatre double major. She is on RTS Improv Troupe. She acted in *Lord of the Flies* and *The Laramie Project Project*. She looks forward to working her first show as costume crew.

Nora Schoenle (Sound Designer) is a second-year Theatre and Dance Major from St. Louis, Missouri, who has previously worked on the department's productions of *Translations* (sound designer/sound board operator) and *The Tempest* (projections operator).



Keli Vitaoli (Stage Manager) is a second-year Political Science Major with a concentration in Global Development Studies. She is happy to be working with Lesley again, having previously assistant stage managed for *Translations* last fall. She also assistant stage managed for *The Tempest* and stage managed the Salman Rushdie adaptations last spring. This is her first experience stage managing a main stage production at Grinnell and she is thankful for the opportunity to work with such a phenomenal cast and crew.

Anna Warm (Assistant Stage Manager) is a second-year intended Chemistry Major from Boulder, Colorado. This is her third time assistant stage managing at Grinnell.

PRODUCTION AND DESIGN TEAM

Lesley Delmenico (Director) Lesley's directing focuses primarily on contemporary British plays (of which *Constellations* is one) and includes several US premieres. She has long been engaged in creating and researching theatre in communities, especially with immigrant and marginalized women. These productions include *Balancing Acts* in Grinnell (co-created with six student researcher-writers) about life after the financial crisis, and *Water Pressures*, a play about water insecurity devised with women artisans in the Mumbai slums. She is currently working with women's NGOs, devising and staging communities' concerns about sexuality, law, and changing identities in the London metropolis. Her adaptation of a landmark rape trial transcript, *Pursuing Justice*, was performed there in 2015 and is currently in process for revival. Last year at this time, she served as Artist-in-Residence for the community-based, site-specific *Home Theatre Project* for the Theatre Royal Stratford East, London. During her sabbatical in spring 2017, she will devise and direct a production for FORWARD, a London-based African women's NGO that focuses on violence against women and girls, including FGM and forced marriage.



Erin Howell-Gritsch (Costume Designer) has designed all Mainstage costumes at Grinnell College since 1999, where she is the resident costume designer. Last year she taught Costume Design and Costume Construction. She was previously an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Cornell College. Other design credits include the University of Iowa (Theatre, Dance, Playwright's Festival, Black Action Theatre), Riverside Theatre, RT Shakespeare Festival, RT Young People's Company, Graffiti Theatre, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, Ballet Iowa, and Hurley Dancers. Erin holds a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Design from the University of Iowa and a Bachelor of Science from Iowa State University.

Becca Jeffords (Lighting Designer) is based in Chicago and is thrilled to return to Grinnell this year to work on *Constellations*. Becca received her MFA in Lighting Design from Northwestern University and her BFA in Production Design from Columbus State University. Recent designs include: *Betrayal* (Raven Theatre); *In the Penal Colony*, and *A Turn of the Screw* (Chicago Fringe Opera); *How the World Began* (Rivendell Theatre); *Soon I Will Be Invincible*, and *Sparky!* (Lifeline Theatre); *A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *A Nice Indian Boy* (Rasaka Theatre); *The 2014 Winter Pageant* (Redmoon Theatre); *The Three Faces of Dr. Crippen*, *The Dead Prince*, *Half-Brothers Mendleshon*, and *Funeral Wedding: The Alvin Play* (Strange Tree Group); and *Mr. Chickee's Funny Money* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *The Glass Menagerie* and *South of Settling* (Steppenwolf). For more information about Becca's upcoming work please visit www.beccajeffords.com



Kate Baumgartner '15 (Assistant Technical Director) has been building, designing, and tech directing with various performance groups in the Grinnell area since 2005.

Erik Sanning '89 (Technical Director) is a graduate of Grinnell College. He spent the first two years after graduation working as the Technical Director/Lighting Designer for Ballet Iowa. In the summer of '91 Erik was able to return to Grinnell as the Technical Director. In addition, he is also one of the founding members of Grinnell Productions, a semi-professional theatre company that was based here in Grinnell. Erik has also been a member of IATSE, the professional stagehands union, since 1990.

Lauren Nigri (Scenic Designer) is a Chicago native and current Northwestern MFA candidate. She was featured as a Design Exhibitor at the 2015 Prague Quadrennial. Previous work includes: *Betrayal* (Raven Theatre); *The Few* (Steep Theatre); *Adding Machine, A Musical* (The Hypocrites); *My American Cousin* (Silk Road Rising); *The Awake* (First Floor Theater); Northwestern University Credits include: *In the Next Room* (or the *Vibrator Play*), *Wild Party*, *Eurydice*, *True West* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. For more information about Lauren's upcoming work, please visit laurennigri.carbonmade.com





Stage Manager	Keli Vitaioli '19
Assistant Stage Managers	Lily Fitzsimmons '20 Anna Warm '19

Sound Designer	Nora Schoenle '19
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Light Board Operator	Leyi Dai '20
Sound Board Operator	Chris Jones '17

Wardrobe Crew Chiefs	Hannah Hong '18 Britt Bovbjerg '19
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Costume Crew	Anh Thu Pham '19
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Poster & Program Design	Joyce Bergan
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ADMINISTRATION

Production Stage Manager	Emily Griffith '17
Assistant to the Chair	Sophyaa Nayar '17
Box Office Manager	Lauren Fenton '17
Archivist	Rodas Hailu '18
Publicity Assistant	Nolan Boggess '19

FRONT OF HOUSE

Front of House Staff

Sarah Cannon '19	Luis Rojas '18
Jeremy Epstein '19	Jonathan Sundby '17
Laura Fenton '17	Keli Vitaioli '19
Emily Griffith '17	Yue Yu '17
Michelle Risacher '17	

COSTUME STUDIO

Costume Storage Coordinator	Stella Gatzke '17
Stitchers	
Britt Bovbjerg '19	Hannah Hong '18
Olivia Caro '17	Emily McClure '18
Yuxi Deng '18	Daniel Nanetti-Palacios '16.5
Stella Gatzke '17	Anh Thu Pham '19

SCENE SHOP

Properties Storage Coordinator	Sandy Barnard '17
Scene Shop Staff	
Joshua Ball '18	Alexa Raasch '19
Julie Dursztman '19	Nora Schoenle '19
Erin Gaschott '17	Sooji Son '18
Keith Hoagland '18	Lucas Verrastro '17
Molly Kraus-Steinmetz '17	Anna Warm '19
Emily Mamrak '19	Lilly Webster '17
Rowan Queathem '17	



One-Act Festival

One Acts staged by THD 235 Directing students
The Wall Theatre
December 2 & 3, 7:30 p.m.

Dance Ensemble/ACTivate

choreographed by guest instructor Waewdao Sirisook
Flanagan Studio Theatre
December 2 & 3, 7:30 p.m. & December 4, 2:00 p.m.

THD 211 Site Specific Performances

December 5-7
See poster for places and times.

The Playboy of the Western World

directed by Ellen Mease
Flanagan Studio Theatre
March 9-12, 2017

Dance Ensemble/ACTivate

choreographed by Celeste Miller and Dora Arreola
Roberts Theatre
April 28-30, 2017