



HORSE GIRLS

BY JENNY RACHEL WEINER

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE CHAIR



“May you live in interesting times,” is commonly attributed as a translation of an ancient Chinese proverb. As it turns out, it is neither ancient nor Chinese but is likely an English invention from the mid-twentieth century, popularized by such luminaries as Winston Churchill and author Arthur C. Clarke. Regardless of its provenance, the phrase is a curse masquerading as a hopeful wish: the speaker of the phrase wishes turbulence, difficulty, and chaos on the one they address.

There are days when it seems someone recently bestowed this wish on me, and maybe not just me, but on all of us. This is certainly the most chaotic moment in time I have experienced in my lifetime, with beliefs long held as truths questioned by the media, politicians, and sometimes even our friends and families; with politics the most polarized I have experienced; with the relationships between government and educational institutions shifting seemingly beneath our feet.

Theatre is at its best—in my mind—when it speaks to the experiences of all of those who participate in it, whether as artists, artisans, or audience members. (If we put on a play in the forest and no one comes to see it, did we really perform it?) Finding productions that speak to the needs of our students as they travel along their learning journey at the same time they speak to our audiences, particularly in a time of incredible chaos, is a tough balance to strike. Big kudos to our season selection committee, because I think they did an incredible job finding that balance. These plays are funny, poignant, touching, and thought-provoking; they will stretch our students’ skills and talents, and—I believe—will speak to you and, in some way, to the interesting times we are living in.

I ask that you consider the experience you are about to have (or maybe just finished, if you’re reading this after the show) as part of a dialogue as we explore ideas and themes together. If we have done our jobs well, you leave here tonight thinking about the ideas presented here—sometimes agreeing, sometimes not, but thinking and, more importantly, *talking* about them. And, hopefully, if we continue listening, thinking, and talking—about ideas, and questions, and the things maybe we disagree with one another about—maybe together we can push back the chaos, even if only a little bit.

Thank you for sharing your time with us, and for being willing to engage in dialogue with us and with each other.

Rich Dionne
Chair, Department of Theatre and Dance

September 25 - October 5, 2025 | Carole & Gordon Mallett Theatre
Yue-Kong Pao Hall of Visual and Performing Arts

HORSE GIRLS

BY JENNY RACHEL WEINER

DIRECTED BY
Tom Robson

SCENIC DESIGNER
Jiacheng Sun

COSTUME DESIGNER
Emily Rosolowski

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Tatyanna Rodriguez

SOUND DESIGNER
Jacob Clouse

STAGE MANAGER
Amelia Gardner

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Vince Lobello

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This production is made possible in part through the generosity of Tomm Tomlinson.

"Horse Girls" is presented by arrangement with
Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
www.concordtheatricals.com

Video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

BoYz may come and Go, bUt hOrSes aRe 4ever.

In 2012, while her husband ran for President of the United States, Ann Romney traveled to London for the Summer Olympics. Her horse Rafalca, co-owned with trainer and rider Jan Ebeling, was competing for gold in the elite sport of dressage. Sometimes referred to as “horse ballet” or “horse gymnastics,” dressage features riders steering highly trained horses through a series of choreographed maneuvers. Due to the high costs of the animal and the years of training required, dressage largely remains a sport for the wealthy.

Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1988, Ann Romney has repeatedly said that raising, training, and riding horses have functioned as a form of therapy for her. She draws a direct line between her connection with horses and her physical, mental, and emotional health. A 2012 *Vanity Fair* headline posed the question, “Ann Romney, America’s First Horse Girl?”

In the decade-plus since the Romney family started bringing the concept of the “horse girl” into the mainstream lexicon, the label has been applied to figures from the young Taylor Swift to Britain’s Princess Catherine to animated icon Tina Belcher. Often considered prissy, privileged, or just plain weird, the single unifying characteristic of all horse girls is a deep, unwavering love of these animals.

Jenny Rachel Weiner’s play drops us into this world, one in which every daily activity revolves around equine interests. Weiner holds a twisted mirror to nature, comically reflecting both the stereotypes and realities of childhood. The girls of *Horse Girls*—and they are girls, all between the ages of 11 and 13—navigate shifting social dynamics, the importance of status, budding romantic feelings, and the delight of a virgin strawberry daquiri.

Tom Robson, Director



CAST

Ashleigh **Margaret Gholdson**

Tiffany **Nayantara Nair**

Margaret **Jadyn Parks**

Robin **Eleni Rappa**

Brandi **Jaylin Murray**

Camille **Brayden Kuxhausen**

Trish **Alaina Smith**

U/S Ashleigh, Tiffany **Negha Sethuramalingam**

U/S Margaret, Robin **Nikita Shah**

U/S Brandi, Camille, Trish **Kenya Gilyard**

RUNTIME: 50 minutes, no intermission

CONTENT DISCLOSURES: Strong adult themes, strong language, theatrical violence, flashing lights

Cover Art by Biak Par, VCD BFA '26



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ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOLS
OF THEATRE



Purdue University is a member in good standing of the University Resident Theatre Associate (U/RTA) and a full member of the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) which integrates educational and professional theatre throughout the nation.

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PRODUCER
Rich Dionne

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Lucy Yahr

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Gianbari Deebom

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER
Laila Matuk

INTIMACY
CHOREOGRAPHERS
Anne Marie Damman
Sammie Resnick

ASSISTANT STAGE
MANAGER
Rivers Blue

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Syd Coe
Spencer Kahn

SCENIC CONSTRUCTION
SUPERVISOR
Vince Lobello

DECK CARPENTER
Ella Benzvi

SCENIC CHARGE ARTIST
Jake Wood

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CREW
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Ella Benzvi
David Braun
Even Cahoon
Naomi Chirawala
Dawan Davis

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Mason Friedman
Adam Gillette
Blake Godfrey
Brianna Hainje
Caleb Hudson
Natalie Kandra
Sara Kestenbaum
Gemma Klisovic
Alex Leonard
Lily Maher
Biddy Moore
Mary Wang

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Natalie Makeeff
Kendal Ross
Jiacheng Sun

COSTUME SHOP
MANAGER
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FIRST HAND
Caitlin Davey

STITCHERS
Rivers Blue
Leah Eldridge
Allison Puckett
Lucille Thomas

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Samara Miernyk
Eric Schwartz

WARDROBE CREW
Amelia Bailey
Trisha Godara
Sumukhi Gupta
Payton Stachelski

ASSISTANT LIGHTING
DESIGNER
Emily Morelli

PRODUCTION
ELECTRICIAN
Sisi Clark

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION
ELECTRICIAN
Lily Edwards

LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR
Daniel Davis

LIGHTING CREW
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Madelin Billings
Rivers Blue
Brianne Brummett
Evan Cahoon
Ryan Cameron
Elaine Chuang
Syd Coe
Jonathan Heinz
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Andrew Lullo
Ava Moreno
Simon Rasansky
Ava Robinson
TJ Sandor
Sydney Studer
Lauren Turnquist

PRODUCTION SOUND
ENGINEER
Drew Rogers

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION
SOUND ENGINEER
Zach Schoensiegel

A1/PLAYBACK OPERATOR
Yi-Kuan Cheng

CONTRIBUTIONS

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Department of Theatre and Dance