

Central Works
THE NEW PLAY THEATER

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PRESS PAGE: <https://centralworks.org/after-happy-press-page/>

CENTRAL WORKS - THE NEW PLAY THEATER presents...

AFTER HAPPY

Written by Patricia Milton

Directed by Gary Graves

World Premiere #79: A New Comedy from the Central Works Writers Workshop

Welcome to The Pirate Festival!

Feb. 26 – March 29, 2026

Opening Night - Sat. Feb. 28, 2026 at 7:00 pm

Limited Engagement - 20 Performances!

Thurs. & Fri. shows at 8:00 pm; Sat. shows at 7:00 pm; Sun. shows at 5:00 pm.

Berkeley City Club * - 2315 Durant Ave. (Ellsworth & Dana Sts.) Berkeley, CA 94704

TIX: \$35-\$45 advance: Fri. -Sun.

** Venue Accessibility Info.: The Berkeley City Club and restrooms are ADA-accessible.*

TICKETS: <https://bit.ly/after-happy-tix>

WEB SITE: <https://centralworks.org>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063737253574>

INSTAGRAM: [@centralworkstheatre](https://www.instagram.com/centralworkstheatre), <https://www.instagram.com/centralworkstheatre>

CENTRAL WORKS - THE NEW PLAY THEATER – Is pleased to announce the full cast and creative team for the first show of their 36th season, **AFTER HAPPY** written by Patricia Milton. This is World Premiere #79: A New Comedy from the Central Works Writers Workshop. The show is Directed by Gary Graves. **AFTER HAPPY** runs Feb. 26 – March 29, 2026. Previews Thurs. Feb. 26 & Fri. Feb. 27 – 8:00 pm.

Opening Night Sat. Feb. 28, 2026 at 7:00 pm.

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SINGLE TICKETS: Fri. -Sun.: \$35 - \$45

Thurs. & Previews: pay-what-you-can

DAY OF PERFORMANCE DISCOUNTS: Fri.-Sun.: sliding scale \$45-\$20 at noon day of show.

FOR INFORMATION & SUBSCRIBER RESERVATIONS Call 510-558-1381 or visit <https://centralworks.org>

Please note: Reserved Seating only for subscribers; General Seating for all other ticket-holders.

CENTRAL WORKS - presents...*AFTER HAPPY* - by Patricia Milton – Feb. 26 – March 29, 2026

SYNOPSIS:

A hurricane named Happy has devastated Lake Charles, Louisiana. Brenda Barrow, owner of a family-run oil company that sponsors the annual Pirate Festival, is desperate for a last-minute replacement for the festival's Pirate Queen. When her estranged niece, Kat, arrives unexpectedly, Kat claims she's returned to apologize for running off after the hurricane hit. But Kat has joined the Climate Commandos, a rag-tag band of rebels dedicated to eradicating oil companies just like her aunt's. Has Kat come home to reconcile with Aunt Brenda, or is this an eco-terrorist plot? *Welcome to The Pirate Festival!*

Playwright **Patricia Milton** opines about *AFTER HAPPY*:

"Writing a play about our climate crisis is particularly difficult as the situation becomes more and more grim. We've been failed by our leaders. At the same time the earth is exceeding temperature targets, and harmful effects are accelerating. Like death, people may be willing to acknowledge the reality but are unenthusiastic about coming to terms with it. What can theater do to address this reluctance? Bring to the stage plays that inspire conversation and effective action...leavened with a bit of humor."

CAST:

AFTER HAPPY written by Patricia Milton features a three-person cast that includes: **Rezan Asfaw** (Steph), **Lauren Dunagan** (Katherine), **Jan Zvaifler** (Brenda).

TECH and DESIGN TEAM:

Stage Manager: **Nikki Eggett**, Assistant Stage Manager: **Hannah Haliburton**, Costume designer: **Tammy Berlin**, Light designer: **Gary Graves**, Property designer: **Sara Harris**, Sound designer: **Gregory Scharpen**

BIOS:

Rezan Asfaw (Steph) is an actress born and raised in Oakland, CA. She is excited thrilled to make her debut with Central Works. Recent theater performances include roles in *Good People* at Altarena Playhouse, *Les Blancs* at Oakland Theater Project, and *Mother/Tongues* at The Magic Theater. She completed a 2-year Meisner training and continued acting development with African American Shakespeare Company. She is grateful for the love of community in the Bay Area and for the welcoming encouragement from the Bay Area theater community. Rezan is also a student of the art of Muay Thai and has a great respect of storytelling through physicality. Instagram: [@rezanwithlove](#)

Lauren Dunagan (Katherine) is delighted to be returning to Central Works, where she last appeared as Loveday in Patricia Milton's *Accused!* Favorite Bay Area credits include *Timon of Athens*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Measure for Measure* (A.C.T.'s ACT Out Tour), *Pony* (Cutting Ball), *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Custom Made), and *The Balcony* (Collected Works). Lauren holds a BA in Drama from Stanford University, and an MFA in Acting from UCLA. Instagram: [@laurdunagan](#)

Jan Zvaifler (Brenda) is delighted to be on stage again after her last appearance as Melina in the Central Works' production, *The Last Goat*. Since 2011, she has originated roles in 6 of Patricia Milton's previous world premieres. Ms. Z. is a founding member of Central Works. She is co-director along with Gary Graves, participating as an actor, designer, director and/or producer over the past 35 seasons. Previous work with other local theater companies includes Berkeley Rep, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, Marin Theater Company, SF Playwrights Foundation, and SF Shakespeare Festival.

Gary Graves (director) has been a resident playwright and company co-director at Central Works since 1998. He has been a part of developing 78 world premiere productions with the company, many of which he has either written and/or directed. Titles of plays he has directed include: last season's *Push/Pull*, *The Last Goat* and *Dada Teen Musical; The Play*, as well as *Machiavelli's The Prince*, *Chekhov's Ward 6*, and *Boss McGreedy*. He also leads the Central Works Writers Workshop, and he teaches playwriting regularly at the Berkeley Rep School of Theater.

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Patricia Milton (playwright) is Resident Playwright at Central Works Theater in Berkeley. Her plays at Central Works include *The Engine of Our Disruption*, (Best Stage Play, Scriptwriters & Co., Bath, UK) *Bamboozled* (Outstanding Production, East Bay, and Outstanding Ensemble, Theatre Bay Area), *Hearts of Palm*, *Reduction in Force*, *The Victorian Ladies' Detective Collective* (BroadwayWorld Critics Choice "Best of Maine" 2022, at The Public Theater), *Escape from the Asylum* (Outstanding Production, 2022, SF Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle), and *Accused! Enemies: Foreign and Domestic* (Central Works) was awarded Outstanding World Premiere Play by TBA. *Without Mercy* was commissioned and produced by Off-Broadway West. Her comedy *Believers* was produced in San Francisco (Wily West Productions) and ran for 3 years in Istanbul. <https://patriciamilton.net>

Show Dates (20 shows):

Thurs. Feb. 26, 2026 – 8:00 pm (Preview – pay what you can)
Fri. Feb. 27, 2026 – 8:00 pm (Preview – pay what you can)
Sat. Feb. 28, 2026 – 7:00 pm (Opening night. Limited availability)
Sun. March 1, 2026 – 5:00 pm (pay what you can)
Thurs. March 5, 2026 – 8:00 pm (pay what you can)
Fri. March 6, 2026 – 8:00 pm
Sat. March 7, 2026 – 7:00 pm
Sun. March 8, 2026 – 5:00 pm
Thurs. March 12, 2026 – 8:00 pm (pay what you can)
Fri. March 13, 2026 – 8:00 pm
Sat. March 14, 2026 – 7:00 pm
Sun. March 15, 2026 – 5:00 pm
Thurs. March 19, 2026 – 8:00 pm (pay what you can)
Fri. March 20, 2026 – 8:00 pm
Sat. March 21, 2026 – 7:00 pm
Sun. March 22, 2026 – 5:00 pm
Thurs. March 26, 2026 – 8:00 pm (pay what you can)
Fri. March 27, 2026 – 8:00 pm
Sat. March 28, 2026 – 7:00 pm
Sun. March 29, 2026 – 5:00 pm (Final performance)

To arrange an interview with *AFTER HAPPY* playwright Patricia Milton, director Gary Graves, the actors, or anyone from CENTRAL WORKS, please call or e-mail publicist Lawrence Helman at 415-336-8220 heytheresells@gmail.com

Central Works: The Company

Over the past 35 seasons Central Works has filled a special niche for theater artists in the San Francisco Bay Area, producing more new plays by local playwrights than any other company in the region. "The New Play Theater" utilizes three basic strategies: some are developed in the Central Works Writers Workshop, some are products of the Central Works Method, and some come to the company fully developed.

The Central Works Writers Workshop is an ongoing commissioning program established in 2012. Twice a year, in 12-week sessions, 8 local playwrights are selected to develop projects through informal readings and carefully directed discussions. Last season, both Cristina García's *King of Cuba* and Patricia Milton's *Bamboozled* emerged from this program, followed by two more this season. For more information, visit www.centralworks.org

Central Works Method plays bring together writer, actors and director at the very outset of the playwriting

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process. In a supportive workshop environment, group research and collective brainstorming contribute to the entire development of the script.

Company co-directors Jan Zvaifler and Gary Graves remain steadfast in their mission to develop and produce new works. “New plays are the lifeblood of the theater,” says Ms. Zvaifler. “We look at current events, politics, classic literature and traditional storytelling to bring our audience face to face with the challenges of our lives every day, juxtaposed against the reflections of history, both recent and far-reaching. Given our current harrowing times, we all need an opportunity to pause, feel, think and act.” The special intimacy of the Central Works theater offers this in a truly unique package.

CENTRAL WORKS 36th Season Continues

The Prince Part 1

written by Gary Graves

July 18 – Sept. 6, 2026

World Premiere #80: part 1 of two plays about the life and times of Niccolo Machiavelli (performed in rotation)

The Prince Part 2

written by Gary Graves

Aug. 1–Sept. 6, 2026

World Premiere #81: part 2 of two plays about the life and times of Niccolo Machiavelli

Inspired by the infamous “Handbook for Tyrants” of the same name, *The Prince* follows Machiavelli over the course of his tempestuous career as the consummate political fixer matches wits and weapons with the likes of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and the Borgias.

One big story, two big plays, performing in rotation.

Calendar Editors:

WHAT:

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