

"A" TRAIN A NEW SOLO COMEDY

ONE MOM'S JOURNEY ON THE AUTISM TRAIN
LAUGHTER. SONGS. SUBWAY STOPS. F-BOMBS.

WINNER
SANTA BARBARA
INDEPENDENT AWARD
2019

WINNER
BEST PRODUCTION
NYC'S 2017
UNITED SOLO FESTIVAL

WINNER
BEST ENCORE
NYC'S 2018
UNITED SOLO FESTIVAL



WWW.ATRINTHEPLAY.COM

WRITTEN & PERFORMED BY ANNIE TORSIGLIERI
MUSIC BY BRAD CARROLL // DIRECTED BY RISA BRAININ

ANNIE'S PERFORMANCE IS FEARLESS, HILARIOUS, PERSONAL
AND SO FULL OF LOVE...A WONDERFUL MIXTURE OF
BOTH HEARTACHE AND JOY.

— Andrew Borba, Artistic Director, Chautauqua Theater Company

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**LAUGH OUT LOUD FUNNY AND
TENDERLY HEARTBREAKING**
— Michael Ritchie, Center Theatre Group

A NOTE FROM ANNIE TORSIGLIERI

**I'd like "A" Train to do for autism what
The Vagina Monologues has done for vaginas.**

As a child I was taught what happiness looks like. There were boxes that needed to be checked for one to find it...certain kind of job, certain kind of personality, certain kind of dreams, and woe to those who did not.

As an adult, all of those ideas were challenged when my husband and I gave birth to two delicious babies, one of whom we would soon learn was "different." I feared for his happiness (and of course, selfishly, for mine). If he couldn't check off all those "boxes," what kind of life would he have?

Over the next few years, in my search to help him, and more importantly ACCEPT him for exactly who he is, I learned that happiness comes in many, many forms. In fact, by smashing those "boxes" and living in the moment, we discover that happiness is available for us to find and experience in the small things. These "strawberries" are all around us waiting to be tasted.

This is the story of "A" TRAIN. Its story is universal. And will serve its audiences, encouraging them to search for and find the strawberries in their own moment to moment worlds.

And of course, "A" Train is a play that will hopefully do some good in the world of autism: educating, inspiring, and encouraging acceptance and understanding. Celebrating all the joys while acknowledging the great need for supports for all the challenges.

Thank you for your support in this venture.



**"A" TRAIN IS AN INTENSE AND EMOTIONAL GLIMPSE
AT SOMETHING MOST PRETEND NOT TO SEE,
AND FEW UNDERSTAND.**
— Chance Morgan, All About Solo



ABOUT "A" TRAIN

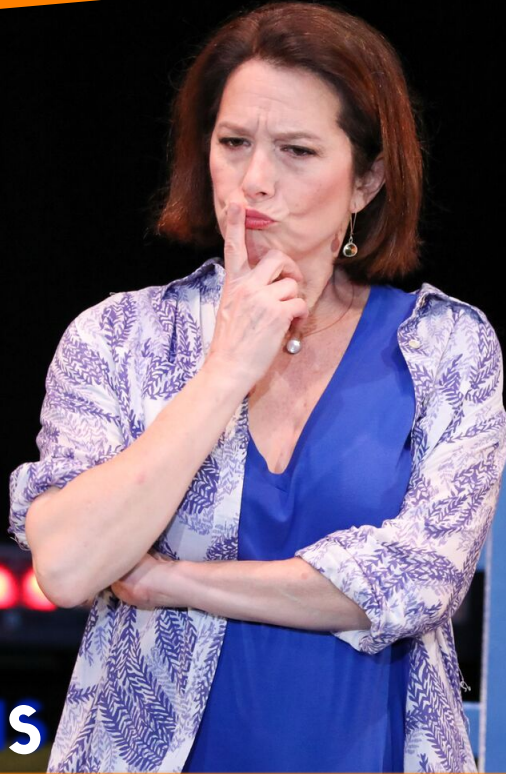
The world of "A" Train, an award-winning solo comedy, is a magical journey which connects us to the heartbeat of a different way of being.

For an engrossing 90-minutes "full of stops and turns and the occasional unexpected jolt" the audience travels with a mom as she navigates coming to terms with her son's autism diagnosis, parenting, unconditional love, conflict, and the search for Zen.

It's a tour-de-force performance told through Annie Torsiglieri's voice and through a multitude of characters she embodies, all of whom have experienced autism (parents, medical professionals, and especially those who identify as autistic.) She brings their stories to life, weaving them with irreverent humor, song, pathos, and F-bombs.

www.ATraintheplay.com

"A" TRAIN IS A NEAR PERFECT EXAMPLE OF HOW A TALENTED STORYTELLER HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD.
— Jen Maxcy, Skirball Cultural Center



SYNOPSIS

When Amy discovers one of her young twins is diagnosed with autism, everything she thought she knew about motherhood and life is flipped upside down. Feeling as if her life is falling apart, Amy plunges into the world of autism, trying to piece together a new reality from the countless people she discovers along her journey, especially her son. In her search for insight, Amy is changed forever, learning to see the world, her son, and the very nature of happiness with clearer eyes.



SIMPLY THE BEST SOLO SHOW...THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF TORSIGLIERI'S PERFORMANCE CANNOT BE OVERSTATED.
— Charles Donelan, Santa Barbara Independent

THE PROCESS

"A" TRAIN was born out of a mom's desire to share the messiness of life and the search for happiness in grappling with her son's autism diagnosis.

Annie knew she had a story to tell: one that would illuminate, educate, and of course entertain. (Irreverent potty-mouth included). She believed that in telling it, she could help create a softer landing for her son and all who've been touched by autism, while shining a light on the search for happiness we all face.

Annie received several grants to support her research on the project including a Hellman Family Fund Fellowship, and proceeded to attend conferences, collecting taped interviews with numerous individuals: parents, teachers, researchers... and especially those who identify as autistic. After transcribing the interviews, she set off to cull through the material.

Armed with pages upon pages of transcriptions and her own writing, Annie began to develop the piece with colleague and frequent collaborator, Risa Brainin, as director, and Liz Engelman, dramaturg, at The Tofte Lake Center. Risa, artistic director of the nationally recognized new play development program, LAUNCH PAD, at UCSB, supported Annie's vision through several workshops including a reading with The Lark in NYC.

Composer Brad Carroll and designer Michael Klaers joined the team and "A" Train continued to grow. A big part of Annie's mission with this project has been to give voice to the voiceless and she has striven to honor all those she's met along the way. She brought The Art of Autism and their amazing artists onboard with a montage of their gorgeous images, curated by Keri Bowers.

Working with Brad, Risa, and Michael, Annie continued to revise and workshop "A" Train over the next two years under the umbrella of LAUNCH PAD experimenting with both format and cast size.

In the near future, they plan to add an onstage three-piece band composed of musicians who identify as autistic.

They also want to promote more dialogue about autism through community engagement events, talk-backs, and art installations/exhibitions connected to performances of "A" Train.



"BEST PRODUCTION"
UNITED SOLO 2017



AUTISM CONFERENCE
2012



THE TEAM
THEATRE ROW IN NYC



"A" TRAIN WAS DEVELOPED THROUGH LAUNCH PAD AT UC SANTA BARBARA

SIZZLE REEL

TAKE A QUICK RIDE ON THE "A" TRAIN

"A" TRAIN A NEW SOLO SHOW



[CLICK HERE TO PLAY](#)

A PRODUCTION THAT OOZES CHARM
WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SHAKING YOU TO YOUR CORE.
— Jaci de Villiers, www.stagebiz.com

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Fall 2017 // Premiere at NYC's United Solo Festival
Theatre Row, NYC. WINNER "Best Production"

March 2018 // The Skirball Cultural Center
Los Angeles, CA

April 2018 // Playmakers Repertory Theatre
Chapel Hill, NC

Fall 2018 // Invited to open NYC's United Solo Festival
Theatre Row, NYC. WINNER "Best Encore"

October 2018 // Center Stage Theatre
Santa Barbara, CA

October 2018 // Wallace Theatre
Produced by the McCarter Theatre Center in
association with the Lewis Center for the
Performing Arts, Princeton, NJ

November 2018 // The Old Globe
New Voices in the Community
San Diego Central Library, CA

January 2019 // The Actors Company | Let Live Theatre
Los Angeles, CA

February | March 2019 // HartBeat Ensemble
Hartford, CT

March 2019 // Chain Theatre, NYC

October 2019 // Theatre Horizon
Norristown, PA

May 2020 // Rubicon Theater
** TRACK INTERRUPTIONS! **
** GLOBAL PANDEMIC! **

April 2024 // Rubicon Theater
Ventura, CA

**PERSONAL, FUNNY AND TOUCHING...
SO THEATRICAL AND SO TRUE**
— *Libby Appel, Artistic Director Emerita,
Oregon Shakespeare Festival*

THE TEAM



ANNIE TORSIGLIERI (she/her)

Playwright & Performer

Annie's Broadway credits include *Top Girls*, *Parade*, *Blood Brothers* and *Miss Saigon*. She also performed in the National Tour of *Les Misérables* (as Fantine) and extensively Off-Broadway & Regionally including at Second Stage, Playwrights Horizons, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Geffen Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, McCarter Theater, The Huntington, Playmakers Rep, Northern Stage, Great Lakes Theater Festival and more. Annie is the recipient of Back Stage West/Drama Logue and Garland Awards for her performance in *The Heiress* (Berkeley Rep), the NH Theatre Award for Best Actress in a Musical for her titular role in *The Drowsy Chaperone* (New London Barn Playhouse) and a Santa Barbara Independent Award for *Stupid F*ing Bird* (as Emma, Elements Theater Collective). Her play, "A" TRAIN, was awarded both Best Production and Best Encore at the United Solo Festival in NYC, and a Santa Barbara Independent Award. Other recent favorite roles include Tracey in Lynn Nottage's *Sweat* and Donna in *Mamma Mia!* (both Northern Stage), Shakespeare's Falstaff (*The Death of Kings*) and Rose (*Gypsy*). Annie is a Professor and the Director of BFA Acting at UCSB and founder of AMPLIFY, a theater initiative to support underrepresented voices. Annie's received both a Fox Fellowship and Hellman Family Fund Fellowship, and is a

"A" TRAIN A NEW SOLO COMEDY ONE MOM'S JOURNEY ON THE AUTISM TRAIN LAUGHTER. SONGS. SUBWAY STOPS. F-BOMBS.



RISA BRAININ // Director (she/her)

Risa is an award-winning director and the Founder/Artistic Director of the groundbreaking new play development program LAUNCH PAD at UC Santa Barbara where "A" Train was originally developed. She served as Artistic Director of Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Associate Artistic Director at Kansas City Repertory Theatre and Indiana Repertory Theatre, and Resident Director at the Guthrie Theater. Other directorial credits include plays at American Players Theatre, Actors' Theatre of Louisville, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Clarence Brown Theatre, Commonwealth Theatre, Denver Center Theatre, Elements Theatre Collective, Ensemble Theatre, Great Lakes Theatre Festival, History Theatre, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Illusion Theatre, Kansas City Actors' Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Mixed Blood, New Harmony Project, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Playmakers Repertory Company, Portland Stage Company, Red

Bull Theatre, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis, Skylight Theatre, Syracuse Stage and TheatreSquared. She directed the premiere of Bob Stromberg's *That Wonder Boy* in Minneapolis and the United Solo Festival in NY (WINNER: United Solo Festival and Backstage Award, Best One Man Show and Best Direction - 2015) and is so proud to be a part of Annie Torsiglieri's "A" Train. Brainin is a graduate of the Carnegie Mellon Drama Program.

BRAD CARROLL // Composer

Brad Carroll is a recognized regional theatre director, music director, and composer whose work has taken him all over the world. He is the composer of *Lend Me A Tenor, The Musical*, (Gielgud Theatre, London, 2011), *Christmas is Here Again* (in association with Renegade Animation and PCPA Theaterfest). Other produced works include *Amelia Lost* (librettist); *A Christmas Carol: On The Air* (composer/co-author); *Cio Cio San* (composer/arranger); *Christmas Is... A Musical Memory*. Such prestigious ensembles as the San Francisco Symphony and the Boston Pops have performed Brad's musical arrangements and orchestrations. He is currently Resident Artist/Artistic Associate for the Pacific Conservatory Theatre (PCPA) in Santa Maria, CA.



MICHAEL KLAERS // Production Designer

Regional credits include Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Great Lakes Theater Festival, Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Guthrie Theater, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, Syracuse Stage, and Indiana Repertory Theatre. Klaers is the lighting designer and production manager for the hit show *Triple Espresso* which has played in over 60 cities in the US, Canada, and Europe.

KERI BOWERS // Curator of Artwork

Keri Bowers is a long-time autism advocate, filmmaker, speaker, writer, and program designer/facilitator. Co-founder of The Art of Autism and owner of Normal Films, Keri is a featured writer for *Autism Asperger's Digest Magazine*. Keri and founding partner Debra Muzikar are honored to feature works of Art of Autism artists in "A" Train. The Art of Autism is an international non-profit resource for autistic artists, poets, bloggers and other creatives.

"A" TRAIN A NEW SOLO COMEDY ONE MOM'S JOURNEY ON THE AUTISM TRAIN. LAUGHTER. SONGS. SUBWAY STOPS. F-BOMBS.

BUZZ

"A" Train is a wonderfully engaging true family story. Laugh out loud funny and tenderly heartbreaking at the same time. Anne Torsiglieri opens her home, and her heart, to all of us in an incredibly charming and moving piece.

Michael Ritchie

Artistic Director, Center Theatre Group in LA



Anne Torsiglieri's "A" Train is an engrossing 90 minutes — and an absolute must-see show! ... It is the highest goal of theater to take the stories of what makes us human and share them in an intrinsic way that moves an audience to be a bit more compassionate towards their fellows. Anne Torsiglieri's charisma, talent, and unflinching personal bravery, under the adept direction of Risa Brainin, does exactly that.

Melanie Simmons

Triangle Arts & Entertainment

all about SOLO

Ms. Torsiglieri's performance is rich, engaging and honest... "A Train" is an intense and emotional glimpse at something most pretend not to see, and few understand.

Chance Morgan

All About Solo

Santa Barbara Independent

"A" Train is simply the best solo show and quite likely the best original play of any kind to come out of Santa Barbara this decade, and it will undoubtedly hit hard when it hits home. The emotional impact of Torsiglieri's performance cannot be overstated.

Charles Donelan

Santa Barbara Independent



"A" Train is a near perfect example of how a talented storyteller has the power to change the world. Annie's personal journey made us all laugh, cry, empathize, and in the end the audience was changed.

Jen Maxcy, Assistant Director

Skirball Cultural Center, LA

"A" Train is the best of a one person show: engaging, entertaining, elucidating and under 90 minutes. Annie's performance is fearless, hilarious, personal and so full of love that you can't help but find yourself crying tears that are a wonderful mixture of both heartache and joy.

Andrew Borba,

Artistic Director,

Chautauqua Theater Company

PLAYBILL®

...listed "A" Train as one of "8 Shows To Catch at the 2018 United Solo Festival."
"Back by popular demand... *A Train*... moves between comedy and poignancy."



"This year's highlights include... *A Train* ...the show that opens the festival!"

Annie's show is so personal, funny and touching. It is so theatrical and so true. It is a world all in one show. What joy!!

Libby Appel, Artistic Director Emerita

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival

**INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR TEAM?
PLEASE REACH OUT FOR MORE DETAILS TO
HELP US PUSH "A" TRAIN DOWN THE TRACK.**

MAPPING "A" TRAIN'S FUTURE

Off-Broadway

Regional theatre productions and touring

Television special: Think Hannah Gadsby's *Nanette*,
Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, or the
works of Anna Deveare Smith and Sarah Jones

Licensing of various "A" Train script versions:
— a solo play version
— a multi-character version
— a multi-character version without
"F-Bombs" so that schools and
community groups can perform the piece

Television episodic inspired by "A"
Train: Think *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* meets

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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THE ARTISTS FEATURED IN "A" TRAIN



JULIAN BILLOWING



VITO BONNANO



JULIAN ARSI



KEVIN HOSSEINI



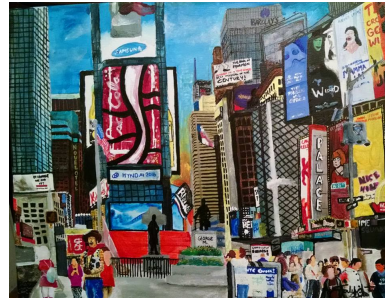
BRYAN DUNN



KIM TUCKER



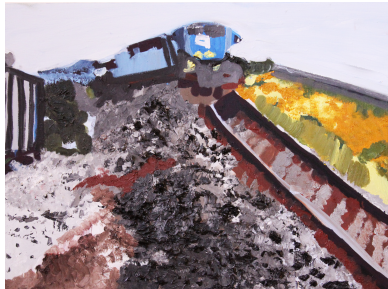
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JALYN WESTON



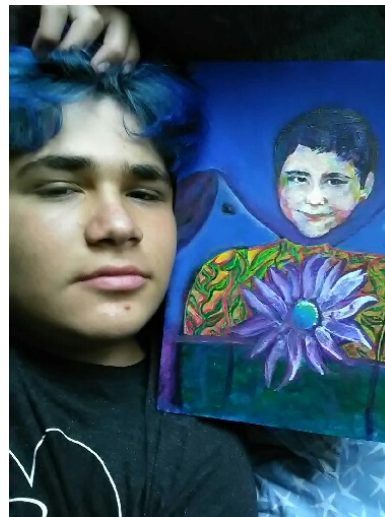
VITO BONNANO



KEVIN HOSSEINI



JALYN WESTON



JULIAN ARSI



JADEN TUCKER



CARISSA PACARELLI



RONALDO BYRD



KIM TUCKER



JOEL ANDERSON



KEVIN HOSSEINI