

Factory Treasure

A Full-Length Play by Amy Oestreicher

Four family members, one factory and an incalculable legacy. Factory Treasure is a collective confrontation of how we view our past and what we choose to do with it.

Running Time: 90 minutes, no intermission

Genre: biography, comedy, docudrama/historic, experimental, immersive, movement/physical, pantomime

Keyword: History, Jewish, family, devised, magical realism, young adult, Ancestry

Synopsis

Jake and Marilyn have arranged to meet their daughter, Betsy, at her grandfather's abandoned factory to break the news: after collecting dust for decades, the defunct MYRA corporation will finally be sold to a developer and turned into condominiums. Betsy is devastated by this surprise, and struggles for a way to save it. What decision will be the most honorable way to keep her grandparents' legacy alive?

Betsy, influenced by the new "hipster culture" in Brooklyn, begs to refurbish the old factory into a thrift shop, and revive her grandparents' memory by reimagining it. Now joined by Marilyn's younger brother, Steve, Jake grows more impatient, as Marilyn admits she was never taught to sew because of her own mother's secrets, surviving the death camps of Auschwitz. When Betsy reveals that she dropped out of college when struggling with her grandmother's death, the family realizes that these secrets may threaten to tear their own legacy apart, if they aren't brought to light. In the meantime, factory papers still must be signed or destroyed. What is the most honorable decision for their future as a family and as a community? As the family leaves the decision in Betsy's hands, Steve shows her the papers, which leave the factory in her name, revealing why she was brought to the factory in the first place.

The play begins and ends with the actual recordings of Irving Stochel, Betsy's grandfather, as a Prologue and Eulogy to the play, which are pantomimed scenes from Betsy's perspective. In the Prologue, Betsy discovers her grandfather's tape cassette tucked away in a coat he made, where she learns all about his factory. In the Eulogy, Betsy plays Irving's tapes once more, as she struggles to make a final decision, with the fate of the factory in one hand, and a handful of her grandfather's fabrics in the other. Her decision is uncertain, but the characters who now create shadows, silhouettes, and sweeping fabric movements throughout Irving's final recorded song seem to lead her on another journey...

Cast of Characters (Cast: 4-6)

MARILYN: F, Early 50's, with youthful spirit. Optimistic, compassionate and cautious mother with her heart on her sleeve.

JAKE: M, Late 50's, Married to Marilyn. Stern, generous, not easily swayed.

BETSY: F, Almost 20. Idealistic and colorful. Marilyn's daughter, somewhat.

STEVE: M, Young 40's. Very young. Marilyn's kid brother. Clown who out-colors his niece. Jovial with an axe to grind. "He's an actor."

HANNAH and IRVING STOCHEL (*not seen*) are the deceased parents of MARILYN and STEVE, who, after arriving on the Lower East Side by ship after the holocaust, founded the MYRA Corporation, one of the most successful sewing factories on the Lower East Side.

Place

An abandoned factory on the Lower East Side, New York

Time

Late Fall

*“In Amy Oestreicher’s “Factory Treasure,” ghosts haunt a factory, while their descendants argue about whether to sell or begin again. The conflict reopens wounds inherited from an older generation of Holocaust survivors. Inspired by the Moment Work of Tectonic Theatre, Oestreicher organizes the story in **symphonic-like movements**, combining scenes of realism with scenes of dream-like tableaux of music, puppetry, and dance. With great beauty, Oestreicher addresses the impact of intergenerational trauma. The story is **highly moving and relevant**; “Factory Treasure” reminds us that in a country of immigrants, the past is always with us.”*

— Lucretia Anne Flammang, Depot Reading Series

Developmental History

Reading: Long Island University, 2018

Winner (One Act) Central PA Theatre Festival June 2018

Theatre for a New City’s Dream Up Festival, 2018

The Player’s Theatre NYC Short Play Festival, 2018

Identity Theatre, 2018 (NYC)

Depot Reading Series, 2019 (NYC)

Actor’s Theater of Newburyport, 2019 (RI)

Actors Quarantine Festival, 2020 (Virtual)

- Watch an excerpt from **Player’s Theatre Short Play Festival**:
<https://youtu.be/dV0rtlub12Y>
- Watch an excerpt from **Identity Theatre’s Staged Reading Series**:
<https://youtu.be/cQKhpwRfV14>

***Amy Oestreicher** is an Audie award-nominated playwright, performer, global speaker and multidisciplinary creator. A singer, librettist, and visual artist, she’s given three TEDx Talks on transforming trauma through creativity, and dedicates her work to celebrating untold stories, and the detours in life that can spark connection and transform communities.*

<https://www.amyoes.com/playwright>