

Organization: Bazaar Productions / Kickwheel Ensemble Theater

Press contact: Sara Katzoff

Email: sara@kickwheel.org

Mobile Phone: 917-685-2982

Photos: <https://bazaarproductions.org/press>

Kickwheel's Climate Change Romance, *PASSAGE* to Premiere This July

Pittsfield, MA—Kickwheel Ensemble Theater (the creative arm of The Berkshire Fringe) is in the midst of devising a new play that will premiere in the Berkshires with a limited run of performances at Shire City Sanctuary July 27th–31st.

Merging original text, music, researched accounts and fantastical imagery, *PASSAGE* weaves together two parallel storylines of survival: the tale of Sir John Franklin's doomed 19th expedition to conquer the famed Northwest Passage and the story of a modern day couple on a luxury wellness cruise through the now melting arctic.

A dark comedy exploring themes of a changing climate, love and loss, *PASSAGE* integrates sea otters on razor scooters, a guru of ultimate enlightenment, dead sailors, marketing executives and questions of hubris and faith to reveal the cyclical nature of human history.

Kickwheel Ensemble, composed of 12 performers, designers and theater makers from the Berkshires, Pioneer Valley, Boston, New York and Ohio have spent the last year collaboratively writing, researching and generating new material.

“*PASSAGE* has been a unique process in new play development because it did not start with a script but rather with a series of questions” says director Sara Katzoff. Kickwheel has taken those questions (some surrounding climate change and disputed territory, some surrounding survival) and explored them through the wide angle lens of research, writing prompts, character explorations and manipulation of props to create a landscape where these two stories can unfold.

“Everything that appears in *PASSAGE*—text, images, movement—has been collectively generated by the company. Diving into this process without a script is both exhilarating and terrifying. It’s part of our belief that making theater is a living, breathing process. Doing this type of work requires a huge amount of trust and flexibility from all collaborators involved as well as from the audiences coming to experience the work.”

The company has been working on material for the piece for over a year, including an intensive artist residency at the Millbrook School last July where research ideas and inspirations congealed into a first draft. This experience helped the group learn that audiences were surprised to find humor in a piece they assumed would herald the end of the world.

“Laughter always creates an opportunity for people to come together. Theater creates opportunities to ask huge questions that impact our lives, our work, and our communities. These conversations are vital.”

~~~~

## *PASSAGE*

Written and Devised by Kickwheel Ensemble Theater

Directed by Sara Katzoff

Featuring:

Michael Brahce, Amy Brentano, Emma Dweck, Jacquelyn Gianetti, Julian Claire Mia Kang,  
Marcus Neverson, Timothy Ryan Olson and Chris Tucci

Music & Sound Design: Peter Wise

Lighting Design: Tim Cryan

Set Design: Juliana Haubrich

Costume Design: Stella Giulietta Schwartz

All performances take place at Shire City Sanctuary

40 Melville St, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Seating is limited

Performance Schedule:

Wednesday, July 27 at 8pm (Pick Your Own Price Opening Night)

Thursday, July 28 at 8pm

Friday, July 29 at 8pm

Saturday, July 30 at 8pm (Followed by post-show talk with the ensemble)

Sunday, July 31 at 3pm

For more information and tickets please visit [kickwheel.org](http://kickwheel.org) or call (413) 418-4113.

*PASSAGE* is supported in part by grants from the Martha Boschen Porter fund and the Tadd Gero Fund.

### **ABOUT KICKWHEEL ENSEMBLE THEATER**

Founded in 2007, Kickwheel is an assembly of theater-makers, performers and designers based in the Berkshires and throughout the northeast who create original, collaborative and genre-bending new works for the stage.

Emerging from diverse backgrounds in performance, soundmaking and visual design, Kickwheel utilizes a full-contact, multidisciplinary approach to concocting, composing and devising original theater productions and events. While each project is unique, Kickwheel draws from diverse approaches to storytelling that often integrate heightened physicality, rich language and original music to capture what is most outrageously human in all of us.

Recent projects include *The Waypoint* (Mass MoCA, artist in residency); *Dark: An End of the World Play with Music and an Exercise Bike* (Berkshire Fringe, Mixed Company); *Tree Wives* (Commissioned by the Office of Cultural Development for the City of Pittsfield); *Long Way Down* and *Bad Influence Stephen: A Very, Very Short Pop Puppet Operetta* (Daniel Arts Center). The company is currently working on its newest full-length production, *PASSAGE* which will premiere in 2016.

As a company of artists Kickwheel is interested in asking questions and creating performances that serve as a gathering place for diverse audiences. Open rehearsals, post show chats and affordable tickets are some of the ways Kickwheel engages new viewers, inspires dialog and promotes the medium of live theater as a popular hub for innovation and exchange.

###