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In this episode of TA(L)KING DIRECTION, Artistic Director **Gabriel Stelian-Shanks** and Associate Artistic Director **Nilan** speak with Tony Award-winning director, **Rebecca Taichman**. Known as a director who is committed to the development of the projects she works on, they discuss her role as director and co-creator of *Indecent*, her dedication and determination to bringing *Sing Street* to Broadway, as well as her thoughts on gender parity in the theater, considering she has an exclusive role as one of only 10 women directors to have received a Tony Award for direction.

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SPEAKERS

Rebecca Taichman, Nilan , Gabriel Stelian-Shanks

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 00:00

Welcome to Talking direction. I'm Gabrielle Stelian-Shanks, the Artistic Director of the Drama League. I'm here with my friend and co host Nilan, our Associate Artistic Director. Hi Nilan Hey Gabrielle, and also to our listeners around the world. Thanks for being here. Our guest today Rebecca Taichman is a director whose commitment to new work, I think really stands as an example of what rigorous contemplative investigation of new ideas and voices can be in the American Theatre. In 2017, Rebecca received the Tony Award for Best Director of a play for *Indecent* which was credited as co-created by both Rebecca and the playwright Paula Vogel and Vogel is just one of the many influential playwrights who have turned to Taichman as collaborator

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and colleague. In recent years, she staged the world premieres of *School Girls or the African Mean Girls Play* by Jocelyn Bioh. *Familiar* by Dany Guerrero *Luck of the Irish* and *Don't Collect Sugar* by Kirsten Greenridge. And a string of incredible partnerships with Sarah Ruhl, including *Stage Kiss*, *Orlando*, *The Oldest Boy*, and *How to Transcend a Happy Marriage*. In New York, audiences have been able to know Rebecca's work intimately at Playwrights Horizons Lincoln Center, the vineyard, classic Stage Company, second stage and New York City Opera among many others. But she keeps equally busy across the United States with multiple productions at the Old Globe and La Jolla Playhouse in California, the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington DC, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, New Jersey's McCarter theatre, the Huntington theatre company in Boston and many more, you can check out Rebecca tishman.com For truly impressive body of work. And after quickly following *Indecent* with the roundabouts revival of JB Priestley's *Time and the Conways* Rebecca's current Broadway Bound project, the musical *Sing Street* has had its own fascinating journey and encounter with John Carney's enchanting film of the same name, led Rebecca to seek out its creator, who at the time was best known to American audiences for the musical film *Once*, which subsequently of course became a hit Broadway musical. Partnering with the author Enda Walsh Rebecca obtained the rights instead about bringing *Sing Street* to the stage, ultimately finding its way to premiere at New York Theatre Workshop, the original home of *Once*, where *Sing Street* made its off Broadway debut in late 2019. A transfer to Broadway was quickly announced for the following spring and there was even a Broadway cast recording released which you can listen to now on Spotify, Apple and elsewhere. But I'm guessing you know what happened in the spring of 2020? Yes, is COVID-19 Shut Down theaters across the world it also closed *Sing Streets* opening has happened to so many shows during that time. But the story doesn't stop there. The musical is now planning what has been called a pre-Broadway engagement in the fall of 2022 at Boston's Huntington Theatre Company, with Rebecca returning to lead the production that began with her advocacy and determination. It's just one part of the fascinating story we're excited to explore today. Please welcome director creator and may I add with pride Drama League directors project alumnus, Rebecca Tishman to talk in direction. Hi, Rebecca. Hi. Wow, that was like the greatest intro ever.

Rebecca Taichman 03:25

I know, the whole thing. If only like 20 years ago, or 15 years ago, I could have glimpsed that intro. I would have calmed down so much.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 03:38

It is really easy to put together that intro I have to tell you, you have accomplished so many things. And we're just really excited to dive in today. Well, thank you means a lot.

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Nilan 03:51

Yeah. In the intro, Gabriel spoke about your commitment to the development process of your projects, which is one of the many reasons I think you are so admired by other directors in the field by many artists in the field. Um, what do you personally find important in the director playwright relationship?

Rebecca Taichman 04:11

I mean, I guess the most essential element of a really, you know, meaningful, productive and enduring relationship between a playwright and a director to me is trust. And and I think that and maybe just the speaking on the director side, like a really profound curiosity, to understand what the writer wants their piece to do and to be so that it's not about an imposition of a set of my own ideas, but rather a kind of process of hopefully excavating and, you know, creating the most powerful version of what that playwright really, really wants to make. And I think that's, you know, it's, that process usually can build trust in a very meaningful way quickly with a writer, in my experience, because just the act of like, the deeply and authentically listening before, you know, kind of diving into, here's what I think doesn't work, or here's what I think you should do. That it's, it's much more about, like a really profound inquiry into, you know, okay, if you. So once I understand what a playwright really hopes the piece, how the piece will impact an audience, then from that place, it's much, it's a more profound conversation around is the piece doing that? Does that make sense?

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 05:57

It does, it does. Yeah,

Nilan 05:59

I wonder, Gabriel, before we move on, could you expand your thoughts a little bit on when you want to give a note to a playwright, and I just think you have a history of working with some of the writers I deeply admire. And the way that you help get that script to a place of production is key, and maybe like, how was that process for you of like, giving a note?

Rebecca Taichman 06:25

You know, honestly, my, my, my relationships with writers varies on the so much on sort of what the writer need that specific writer response to. So I can say one thing I've learned over many, many years is that I never will kind of analyze a play before I've heard it out loud, which can be very frustrating. In a way, if a writer wants after I've read a play, if they kind of want, you know, tell me what you think doesn't work, I always very forcefully ask that a writer give me the opportunity first, to hear it read. I constantly find I'm surprised by what I think I understand from

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the reading of a play to the process of you know, actually being in a space with the play, like in some kind of motion, even if it's just people sitting around a table and reading. I don't know, you know, a note I also always say to like, I'm, I'm working right now with this really wonderful writer. His name is Brian Selznick. It's a very well known illustrator and children's book author. He's written a trilogy of like, divine books, two of which were adapting for the stage together. And I he always he's two of his books have been turned into into films wonderstruck and Hugo, and he clearly is like, he's, you know, the the vocabulary of working with filmmakers about sort of like, give me notes, let's does it need a polish? You know, that kind of thing? And I'm sort of like, oh, wait, that's the way I guess I like to, I think about notes is more as provocations. I use that word all the time. I'm finding him because Brian and I are so intimately collaborating right now. I'm always saying like, he says, What are your notes? And I'll often say, I hate I don't want to, I don't want either of us to think of them as notes. Because they really, it feels too prescriptive to me. But the idea of a provocation, which like, maybe that sounds esoteric, or weird, but I think it there's something about that, that feels very true. Like, I want to provoke you about something. And I'll often say, you know, I know the question, I know something isn't working, but I may not have the right answer. So it's often sort of going to, in, you know, to look at it with a deep curiosity rather than a prescriptive solution.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 09:16

Yeah, I really am responding right now. I've literally just wrote down that notes as provocations feels to me like an idea of positive energy of exploration of a meant to have artists engage in a path together. And it and it kind of parallels was something I knew I wanted to talk to you about today. Because in in my preparation and research, for talking to you I found an interview you did about your rehearsal practice. And in it, you were talking about creating safe space, which is a phrase I think a lot of directors wrestle with, and I think it's, you know, something that is especially in the conversation and the ethos around now for directors, but in this interview, you defined what you meant by safe and it and it blew me away a little bit you. And I'm just going to quote you a little bit, you said, you try to create a space where people can get frustrated, where they can make a mistake and explore a mistake. And that you are creating safe space is in the tone of whatever the moment is, you're crafting in that rehearsal. And then you follow that by saying something I thought was incredibly profound, similar to this idea of provocation, you said that you give lots of notes, but there is also something about loving someone up the value of that how powerful that can be. If you can feel safe and feel love, you can release yourself. And I found that to be incredibly potent as we're coming out of the pandemic, as artists are trying to be in space again. And then I looked at the time stamp on this interview, and you said this in 2009, you know, over a decade before the calls that we're currently having in this moment. You know, and this is a podcast that is listened to by a lot of directors, I'm, I'm curious about this notion of puppet of both

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provocation and loving people up, do you have any thoughts on what we can do as directors now in our rehearsals and our processes, to to bring that sense of of provoked exploration and love into a room?

Rebecca Taichman 11:32

Wow, well, thank you for reminding me. It's interesting to me that it's like, all those feelings have persisted or those beliefs for so long now that's in me, you know, it's when you said it was 2009. I, it's moving, you know, that, I guess that's that has remained the core and defining organizing principle in a way. For me, I'm just thinking, what's it's such a provocative and moving question, you know, how do you how do you create a space where people feel comfortable, and welcome, seen, you know, and valued, and like they can invest? Artistically, like, be vulnerable. And one of the one of the ways that, I guess, I don't know, it's very deep in my like DNA, a belief about what makes a space safe is, or a room a process safe, is the ability to talk about very difficult feelings or experiences, and not deny that they're happening. Like, I'll often feel it's been a while since sadly, since I've been in, you know, a real rehearsal room. But over the years, if I feel somebody is frustrated, or sad, or you know, angry, I'll immediately ask them, and I can't help it. Like, it's not a it's not strategic. I just, I can't I'm not good at sort of a state of denial about a negative experience. So I remember, once a chorus, like somebody in the chorus, I guess, actually, the ensemble, I should say, of a Shakespeare, like, they were, you know, standing way in the back, and I was like, I think you're upset What's upsetting you? And I remember the actor was like, can you just please it lead? Like, just ignore me? You know, like, right? Yes, I've haven't garter but I don't need I don't need to talk about it. But it's, it's like antenna, my antenna or so. Up to the feelings are what I sense. And I'm not always, of course, I miss things. And I'm not always right, you know, but I do find that if people feel I have found in the past that if people feel they can say, What's wrong, it's the most effective way, you know, to really get to know each other what each other needs, and create a space in which you feel like hopefully, the group feels safe enough, you know, to be that authentically themselves. I also always say and I really believe, you know, bad ideas that you might think are bad ideas or impulses that you might negate or welcome. That you know, often I think we and I could say I like judge a first impulse as being stupid or seems simplistic or something. And I'm always reminding myself not to judge like that because sometimes there's a gold you know, in in that first idea or first instinct that you can miss cuz you're trying to impress or you're trying to, you don't want to seem like you have, you know, simplistic ideas or whatever, some idea of who we're supposed to be. And that I find whenever I say that not always sometimes lately, like, in the past couple years, I forget to say it because I just like so I think it's a given now, but I'm always working with new people, and I find people just breathe this huge sigh of relief, you know, like, have your worst possible idea in this room? Bring it, you know, let's explore. Let's not

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say no, to those impulses. So, yeah, I guess, I don't know if that answers your the question that like, beautiful question that you asked me?

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 15:48

I think it does. I think, you know, I'm, I'm just deeply struck by the power of your collaborative focus. And I think in an effort to create safety, so many directors are realizing that, oh, we what we're trying to make safe room for, is actually provocation is actually interrogation. And, and that is not necessarily safe does not equal comfort, safe equals the ability to explore. Yeah. And I really love I'm just deeply enamored with that. So thank you, yes, you answered that perfectly.

Nilan 16:35

I also want to lift the reminder that you spoke before yourself, that you need to bring it forward. Sometimes these things become habits, but then sometimes they leave a habit at home. I love that reminder. And I think has done well for you. You're a part of a very exclusive group of artists, a daring, inspired and rigorous group and I'm talking about you are one of the 10 women in the Tony Award 74 year history to win a Tony Award for direction, seven for direction of a play, and three for Direction of a Musical. We all know that this number alone is a call to action. And the commercial sector has much to do and work there. But I wonder with withholding this piece of history being a part of a piece of history like this, and what are your thoughts around gender parity, especially in the commercial sector of theater?

Rebecca Taichman 17:40

I mean, you know, as you just said, it's like just that alone, just that number 10. Like women have won Tony Awards for direction is madness. I think just a just a cold look at basic numbers tells everything, both in terms of gender and race like it is I think Rachel Chavkin said, when she won a Tony Award, she said something like, you know, it's a profound lack of imagination, that it's such a very small, very limited kind of person that has access to those opportunities. And it's, it's, it's extreme, if you're actually willing to open your eyes and really look at it. It's a very stark out of balance picture in many, many, many, many ways. Hopefully it you know, change is afoot. But it's sometimes I think, like, we just need somehow like publish really publish all the numbers. You know, just do like an accounting in of, you know, how many artistic directors of color are there how many women female artistic director, you know, if like, the starkness of the numbers tell such an extreme story. And it's it was, you know, starting doing this a long time ago, it was very hard. As a white woman It was it was just it was really challenging to be just to get the work and then also to not have a negative reputation. Easily that I always felt. I mean, it's different now. But I did always I felt very much that I was walking this there was like a tiny space where I was not perceived as like a real bitch or a like an indecisive like pushover and it would flip from one side to

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the other. like very easily and very quickly, and I was always like thinking like, what is how, what is that little space between those two? perceptions, you know, as a leader, as a, as a woman leader in a space where there had been so few women leaders, it was a huge uphill process, you know, to find my way through that for personally just speaking. Yeah, just my own. Many, many it was took many, many, many, many years. Sometimes I felt like there was a gate and there was a key and I just could I didn't have the key and I didn't know how to get it. I didn't know who had it, I didn't understand. You know, why? I couldn't seem to open it.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 20:44

Well, and I think you're nailing it pretty solidly that these responses to determination to women embracing positional power is deeply gendered and misogynistic, and, and require has, you know, I think we can see in your career, the amount of time that you have had to tenaciously support the telling of your stories that are important to you. You know, I was thinking about the collaborations I would love to talk to you about and so many of them are not only done in collaboration with other women artists, but our women's stories of *School Girls*, or *Milk Like Sugar*. And, you know, the one I kind of rested on, that I would love to talk to you about is *Indecent*. You and just in full transparency to our readers, we were lucky enough to have you join us prior to the pandemic as a guest speaker at DirectorFest and, and in that discussion, you told the story of the creation of *Indecent* and just for any listeners who are unfamiliar, I will catch you up that the play and descent follows the original historical production of *Shalom Ashes*. 1923 play *The God of Vengeance*, which is a really important work in it's in the Yiddish theatre movement in the LGBTQ theatre movement and in the portrayal of women, I think. And that production, of course, represented a same sex love story that saw the arrests of company members for indecency giving the piece its title and what audiences may not know is that this project actually starts 17 years before its Broadway premiere as your thesis project at Yale, where you brought together the text of this 1923 Play and the transcripts of the trial. And then over a long period of advocacy of yours and bringing in Paula Vogel as a collaborator, you, you i and responding to all the things you were just talking about. This piece found its way to become a, you know, modern classic. So I know you've told this story before. I've heard this story before. But would you mind sharing any recollections or lessons and what we're talking about, on how you got this show from Yale to Broadway?

Rebecca Taichman 23:18

Oh, my God.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 23:19

big thought. But if

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Rebecca Taichman 23:23

You just know everything about me. I first read Shola Matias play *The God of Vengeance* in my first year of graduate school, and started then, I was working with a dramaturg named Rebecca Rugg. And we found the transcript from when *The God of Vengeance* from the trial, the obscenity trial that surrounded the play its production in 1923 on Broadway. And it happened to be housed at Yale, which is where we were students and that transcript so we sort of thought, oh, wouldn't it be interesting to look at it and then, you know, two hours later had massive document. And really my three years as a graduate student were pulled together by trying to figure out how to tell the story of what happened to the play. And it turned out that everything was housed at Yale. I mean, it was just amazing. Really Shola Marsh, the playwright, his papers are kept at Yale. And Harry Weinberger who was the producer of the play on Broadway in the 20s. And also, then the defendant of it in court. His papers were at Yale. So it was an incredible sort of fall down a rabbit hole during you know, into this moment in the 20s in New York. With like, original documents, you could sort of I felt like I was with those people in some way, you know, their handwriting and their personal notes. So I became really obsessed with the story of the of what had happened. And I guess I felt by the time I graduated, like I had inherited this memory, and I had to somehow caretake it somehow, I was my attempts at sort of encompassing the complexity of it onstage weren't successful. So I had, I'm not a playwright, I am a dramaturg, and an editor. But I saw what I was attempting to do was combine found materials. So the transcript of the trial, combined with the text of the play, it was at that time called *The People V.S The God of Vengeance* And there was something there, you could feel like there was a, an important story, wanting that should be told and not forgotten. And really, my process was from there was about finding the collaborator who could do what I can't do, and who would have the passion for the story that I had, who could share that passion. And, you know, the miracle was that Paula Vogel said yes, I mean, I barely had the spoken the idea. And she said, Yes. So she knew of *The God of Vengeance* before I brought the idea to her. And I think we sometimes talked about it as like two Trekkies that found each other, you know, in a very unlikely, in an unlikely way. And she then did more research than I had done, which seemed impossible to me. I mean, I had spent so much time in these archives, and, and had the very quickly really, Paula had the impulse that, that the story was much bigger than what happened to *The God of Vengeance* in New York in the 20s. But rather, was that we that she could tell the story of the birth of the play *The God of Vengeance* in 1907, when he wrote it through to 1953 when when the playwright himself banned productions of the play, post holocaust. So she took Paula took this idea, this memory, you know, that I had felt and I had inherited and expanded it exponentially. It was a very intimate, very extraordinary process creating the piece together. And Paula is not only a really brilliant writer, she's also a brilliant teacher. And so, you know, witnessing Paula's process and how she, how she thought about, right, the writing of a play, the

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development, you know, of an idea into actual embodiment was an incredibly sorry, was an extraordinary gift. There. I remember joking with Paula at one point about whether we could just keep extending the process of making it because it was so fun. And, and so beautiful to kind of figure it out together. So, yeah, that's a little those are some I could talk about it for hours and hours and hours. It's one of the great gifts of my life, I think, to have had the opportunity to work on that piece with Paula.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 28:54

I could I could to, and I think the collaboration on the piece is, is deeply inspiring to me. I don't think I've ever told you this. But in the early 90s, I was doing a lot of work with queer theaters and I was working with a playwright Rebecca Ranson, who desperately wanted to produce *The God of Vengeance* and Atlanta and and we we sat with the play for countless hours trying to figure out how it could speak in a contemporary way and and never cracked it and ultimately did not do it. And I remember reading about *Indecent* and and thing and being so grateful that artists of you and Paul his caliber, were tackling this. And then when I saw the play, to see how Paula had contextualized it how you had created space for a larger canvas for that conversation. It just really deeply moved me and so I'm never told you how grateful I am. But it's a play. God of vengeance is a play I have sort of loved and had in my back pocket for a long time. And thank you. Thank you for that.

Rebecca Taichman 30:09

I think I did see it production of *The God of Vengeance* in Atlanta weirdly.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 30:14

And maybe they did it after I left. It is it is real possible.

Rebecca Taichman 30:19

It was I think Joe Chaikin directed it.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 30:24

Oh, it's was at Seven Stages. Maybe? Yeah. Yes. Joe did a lot of work there. Yeah, it's interesting.

Rebecca Taichman 30:31

Yeah, there was a, I mean, that's so there was this weird, amazing moment where suddenly productions of *The God of Vengeance* were happening. I feel like it was like the late 90s, which is rent when I was had first discovered the play too. And I had a similar experience to yours that I couldn't quite the play its itself, I couldn't quite figure out how to access it. And, and it was

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obviously there's many decades long process to figure out, you know, you make a piece in which the play is your protagonist.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 31:11

Right?

Rebecca Taichman 31:12

Really fascinating thing that how to do it, you know? And and can you have an audience fall in love with a play? All questions that Paula really was so brilliant at asking, and, and having real faith in sort of the idea of audacity of the impulse of the idea that of course, a play can be a central character. But I love to know that you had you had discovered the play long ago.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 31:49

Yeah, I think this was probably late 80s. There and or that moment, and I think there were a lot of queer artists and activists discovering this play in that time and sort of felt it was part of the the history that had kind of been erased that that the both the movement around aids in the theater and and in queer liberation started to so this was a script that you know, I think was bubbling under but it finding what you were saying that the play is the protagonist inside a larger story, it just clicked something in me. It's absolutely it's, it's a you're to be commended. You and Paula, it's a wonderful, wonderful project. And someday, we will talk about it for hours and hours. But

Nilan 32:45

I love that. I'm going to share a little bit I would love to talk to one of your current projects. *Sing Street*. Yeah. I know, I was very excited to read that the announcement of the pre Broadway run at the Huntington suit in the fall. Yeah. And this musical seems to me to be a story still in the making, but also instructive about how theatre artists have navigated the pandemic and ensured that important stories get to their audiences. And I also want to say that Gabrielle and I, Lord, were two people in this office to have a good dance break, we got to keep it light and joyful. And read a lot of the model is a big hit here.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 33:33

It has been more than one dance break in the Drama League offices, the *Sing Street*.

Nilan 33:38

I mean, everybody needs a little 1980s New Wave Energy. Love it. And I guess the where the question, Lance is, what has it been, like, you know, to personally to to shepherd this musical through this difficult period in the American Theatre?

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Rebecca Taichman 33:56

Yeah. It's been such a difficult time for so many people and like, and, you know, and to actually witness and be part of an entire entire industry shutting down, you know, I just never I could never have dreamed that was possible. just devastating. And terrifying. And we were on the we were in the first day of tech on Broadway for *Sing Street*, one everything closed, and like everybody, I think, are most people never would have ever guessed. I mean, I remember, you know, a zoom with the company sort of let go. I remember saying, let's all guess what the new opening date was going to be. And it was like, you know, the longest anybody imagined it might last was like three months. We just had no concept of what we were heading into. And I was so passionate. I am I mean, I was and I am so passionate about the story. And about I realize I'm, in many ways, there's a particular like, core story that I keep finding different ways to tell, not, it's not always the story at the heart of what I'm doing. But it is a story that I find incredibly powerful and resonant and obviously keep returning to. So for me with *Sing Street* it's, it's about you know, a group of kids in a very violent, very oppressive, very dangerous world, finding their way to self expression and like liberation, through music through making art, and the power of art to really help people survive and find themselves. And so, in a way, the meaning of things street because, you know, that meaning just just own has become more kind of potent to me, having lost theatre for so long. And sort of being forced in a very just talking on a very personal level to like to look at what theatre is for me and how it has defined me for so long and to kind of lose that anchor, you know, it very, has been very, very, very disorienting. So the story of *Sing Street*, I guess I'm saying just feels like it's redoubled in its power. And, you know, it, I feel it differently. I feel it more I felt it before deeply personally, but I feel it now in a new on a new level, in a very, very personal way. And I was very scared that it wouldn't return, you know, there's so many obstacles to a show of this scale. With that, you know, that hadn't yet found its audience. You know, with all the money that had already been spent. Finding its sea legs again, there was a lot, there were many, many obstacles that the producers faced, and had to overcome and thought to overcome, to get to make it possible to return. So I've been for a while, for me, it was very painful to even listen to the music just felt like it might disappear, it could possibly disappear. And then when they announced it was coming back, they put this hashtag that's from the final song, we've got another chance at life, which just made me weep. I mean, you know, that it does feel like that. We have this, it feels like a, you know, potentially deeply moving, very important, hopeful story, and one that could touch people very deeply, given what we've all been through. And I'm just so insanely relieved, you know, to not have to say goodbye to it, but instead, you know, to be given this extraordinary opportunity to reinvestigate it having gone through what we've all gone through, to hopefully grow the production and piece itself. And, you know, use the passage of time and the experiences that we've all gone through to make it hopefully that much more powerful. An event. So yeah, I

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can't I don't even know that I have the right words, you know, um, so it all feels very tender. How to kind of step back in and beyond belief, exciting, and relief and a huge relief. Yeah, that was a very long answer. I think.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 39:51

Well, I you know, lovely. Yeah, it is. And I'd also just say, Rebecca, I'm a I'm a big believer that art finds its time And what I remember about *Sing Street* watching it at New York Theatre Workshop was how joyous it felt and, and how much I needed to see people who were struggling, you know, it said in the early 80s, and in Dublin, where no one has a job, you know, and, and, and to find joy in, in their experience, and I, you know, I don't know the work that you have done on it, or how it will exist in this new manifestation. But it feels like there are resonances inside that story that that could, will resonate for people in this moment. So, you know, congratulations on persevering to, to everyone on that team. I'm excited to see it again.

Rebecca Taichman 40:51

Thank you. Thank you. Yes, I think it will, I think it will. It, I can say for me, you know, and for everyone working on it, it feels like it's it is moving in a different in a new way. It sort of has that joy. And that like explosion of joy, I think what it's like there's more access to the moment that it's coming out of, to that sort of extreme isolation and that like extreme fear and a culture and then the, like, tremendous power of coming together and making something making something that has meaning, sort of out of a culture of fear. I you know, I wish to speak to the times, yes, it does. It does. And I think it I'm, I'm I'm sure the production will grow. I can't, I can't wait.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 42:01

Us too. Well. Unfortunately, I am seeing that we are coming close to the end of our time. But we do have a couple of questions, sort of fun questions that we are asking all the directors who join us for this podcast. And I'm going to start with a conversation about your bucket list. You know, when I when I think about your career that you have worked with, you know, such extraordinary artists, and especially playwrights, but I'm curious on your bucket list, are there any plays you are still dying to do someday? Artists you would love to collaborate with? That? You haven't yet? Does anyone come to mind

Rebecca Taichman 42:41

So many the list goes on and on and on. And, um, you know, what I've come to really love doing is it's sort of more akin to *Indecent* the process around indecent which is coming from the inception. So I'm taking an idea and really then building like a family around that idea and, and figuring out how to how to bring it to life. And I'm lucky enough to be doing that on a bunch of several large

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scale pieces. So they feel like bucket list dream projects. That you know, I learned so much from that those years making *Indecent* and that sort of as a director because you don't write language, how you can take an idea and manifest it. That's probably right up there is you know, these I remember the feeling in the room and *Indecen* where I thought just even at the very first preview, I vividly remember thinking these 300 people know this story. And they didn't know it last night. And if nobody was ever learns it, that's enough. And you know, sort of finding stories that feel like they resonate that deeply on a very personal level and hopefully also cultural and, you know, a mythic level. Those are the the ones I'm hoping to find and share.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 44:11

I'm not gonna let you off the hook. Is there any specific ones that you're like, Oh, I really would love to do this play, or I would love to collaborate with this person.

Rebecca Taichman 44:23

Oh like I really seriously. I mean, it just, there's so many. I'm trying to think of a good example. I think it's fine to say there's a British pop artists, she called her name is Self Esteem. Oh, wow. So she's not yet really known in the US but she will be. She writes these incredibly, you know, fears powerful, very funny. Like bad ass songs about like, it's particularly about empowerment. and about, like, just the like the actual act of loving oneself and what is, you know, like wild liberation of just stepping into owning that she and I, that's one one artist that I've found, I think of like these people sort of as fellow travelers, you know that word and we're dreaming out a piece to make together. But there really there are. So I'm finding a more and more I want to be working with music. I'm working with the rapper Lupe Fiasco. Also, I'm making a new piece. So these I think it's really exciting to me, right now to work with songwriters who don't come out of theater and who, but who are really interested in telling stories that have that can like, really touch something profound culturally. So I don't know, there's a lot. I don't know if I'll have time to do it all that.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 46:01

I think it just I'm really intrigued to discover Self Esteem. And obviously, Lupe Fiasco. And before I turn it over to Nilan, with the last question, I'll geek out again, on your career a little bit and say, as a young person, there was a band that was not deeply popular here in America, but did have one big hit here, called Mary's Prayer by a band called Danny Wilson. And the major composer of that is the composer of Sing Street. And the joy that it brings me to rediscover Gary in this context, I just can't tell you

Rebecca Taichman 46:39

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He is so insanely good. He's so brilliant. I mean, his music is just extraordinary. Yeah, it's, you know, and he's now created a through score with sort of underscore the six terrific, so gorgeous.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 46:57

Yeah, so that's a that's a shout out for saying street fans go look at the band. Danny Wilson.

Nilan 47:02

I love that. And the the closes out you you had a moment of this at the very top. After the intro speech on you happen. And I saw you run to that pass you. Um, and I'm wondering, what advice would you give your younger self?

Rebecca Taichman 47:20

If I could, like, hold hands with my say 20 year old 22 or something? I think I would just say don't worry, like, calm down. It's gonna be okay. That's that's the advice I would give faith.

Nilan 47:35

I love the I don't it's weird, cuz I hope the listeners can feel it. But you did such a relief, a breath out. Just exhale because I felt your Excel that was like, oh, that's, that's a trick. That's a gift.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 47:46

I did too. I you know, our ability to be kind to ourselves is something I think we have to learn over time and having faith that it will be okay as hard sometimes, but but certainly useful. Thank you so much for that, Rebecca.

Nilan 48:04

Yes, we're at the end here. Thank you so much for your time. It's been lovely, lovely getting to talk to

Rebecca Taichman 48:12

you, you as well. Seriously.

Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 48:15

We'll see you again soon. Bye bye.

Nilan 48:20

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Nilan 48:25

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Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 48:31

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Nilan 48:43

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Gabriel Stelian-Shanks 48:51

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