

# The Gabriels

A rehearsed reading of Richard Nelson's trilogy of plays

## Cast

Mary Gabriel | DEBORAH FINDLAY

Hannah Gabriel | CLARE HOLMAN

Patricia Gabriel | SARA KESTELMAN

Karin Gabriel | SYLVESTRA LE TOUZEL

Joyce Gabriel | HERMIONE NORRIS

George Gabriel | OWEN TEALE

## Creatives

Director | CLARISSA BROWN

Writer | RICHARD NELSON

Producer | POSTSCRIPT PRODUCTIONS

# Author's Note

## The Gabriels and A Rhinebeck Panorama

Each of these plays is set at a distinct moment over nine months of the nation's 2016 Presidential election: the Friday after 'Super Tuesday' when primary season was in full swing; the middle of September when the general election was in full swing; and election day itself. When first performed, neither the characters nor I [nor you, the audience] knew what was going to happen during this memorable election, nor what would happen on election day itself. Now, we all do. Since their openings, I have not changed or added or deleted a single word to any of the plays; they, in part, constitute real time snapshots of one family's life during this past year.

Given the high anxieties of this election, and its unsettling conclusion, it is highly likely that the subtitle for these three plays, *Election Year in the Life of One Family*, will be misread as simply: *Election in the Life of One Family*. But these plays follow not just an election, but a year in the lives of these characters; a year which reveals their hopes and losses, their fears and resiliency, and how these entwine with a political season few of us ever imagined. My goal then, in part, has been to weave together an unruly and contentious national event with the small (and large) events of private life.

Finally, these plays are set in Rhinebeck, New York. This village is very small, yet the more I write about it, and populate it with my characters, the larger it looms in my imagination. Years ago I came across a very large (8' by 3') watercolor panoramic panel hanging in the Museum of London, in England, with the fascinating title: 'The Rhinebeck Panorama.' Unfortunately, from the perspective of someone who lives in Rhinebeck, this massive watercolor does not depict a panoramic view of my tiny Hudson Valley village, but rather is a birds-eye view of London, England, in the 1830s. My village, I have learned, did however give this picture its name; in 1941, this work was discovered in the attic of a Rhinebeck house, lining the inside of a barrel of pistols. Still the phrase 'Rhinebeck Panorama' has stuck with me and, I think, inspired me, suggesting, as it does, *a grand view of wide expanse, but of a very small place.*

My ambition for these plays, I think, lies somewhere within this phrase.

Richard Nelson  
Rhinebeck

## The Gabriels

March to November 2016. The kitchen in the Gabriel family home in South Street, Rhinebeck, a small town 100 miles north of New York. In these three plays, real-time snapshots allow us to follow not only the American presidential election but also a year in the life of a middle-class family and the private hopes and fears of its members.

## Part 1: Hungry

Friday, 4 March 2016. It is the Friday after Super Tuesday, the day when the primaries take place in many states. While the Gabriels prepare ratatouille and apple crumble together, they talk about their small town in which the newly-arrived wealthy are making life increasingly difficult for the long-established residents and about Hillary Clinton who is of the same generation as them and who they regard with a mixture of scepticism and hope.

## Part 2: What Did You Expect?

Friday, 16 September 2016. The middle of the election campaign. As the family meet for dinner, they talk about their financial worries – as a previously comfortably-off middleclass, they've never had to give much thought to money before but it appears that not only their small town but also the entirety of American society is increasingly changing.

## Part 3: Women of a Certain Age

Tuesday, 8 November 2016. Election Day. Most of the family members have already cast their vote for Hillary Clinton, not because they are fully convinced by every aspect of her election manifesto or her as a person, but because it seems important to them that a woman moves into the White House. The lives of women appear to have changed a great deal during the previous decades. Or have they?

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**Jez Bond**

Artistic Director

**Catherine McKinney**

Executive Director

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