

Heidenberg

A LOVE STORY

By Simon Stephens
Directed by Emily Ranii

When two **ALMOST**
perfectly-matched strangers collide
by accident, they begin to
ask themselves the questions:

WHY him? **WHY** her? **WHY** now?
Is everything **RANDOM**?
Or is there a **DESIGN**?

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Welcome to Burning Coal's Production of Simon Stephens's *Heisenberg*, a love story unlike many others. What do you know? How much can you know about another person? Why him? Why her? Why now? Can we love somebody we know absolutely everything about? Can we even know that much? This play asks all these questions and more, so we would like to invite you on an uncertain journey with us.

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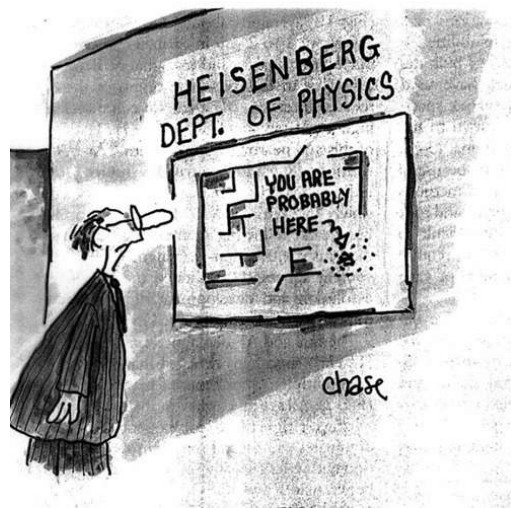
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LOVE & UNCERTAINTY: JUST WHO THE HECK IS HEISENBERG ANYWAY, OR WHY DID THEY GIVE THIS PLAY SUCH A FUNNY TITLE?

It seems remarkable that there is one particular word that does not appear in the script of Simon Stephens's *Heisenberg*. That word is "Heisenberg." Not once do the characters speak the name of the man for whom the play is named. This is not to say that the title of a play need be spoken with regularity, like some sort of gimmick, a flashing neon sign simply screaming "see how clever and well-constructed this work is?" However, it is notable that while Heisenberg is himself never mentioned, his signature ideas run through the play like rebar in reinforced concrete.



So who is Heisenberg anyway? Werner Heisenberg was a German theoretical physicist who formulated an idea known as the Uncertainty principle. In his work with Danish physicist Niels Bohr, he is one of the founding thinkers in the field of quantum physics, which studies the behavior of light as both a particle and a wave. His Uncertainty Principle, which is a fundamental principle of quantum physics, underlies much of what this play is all about.



Uncertainty, in its most basic form, is the idea that the more you know about the velocity of a particle, the less you can know about its location. The opposite is also true, in that the more you know about the location, the less you can know about velocity. This is a very basic principle that is built into all wave systems. It is sometimes confused with the "observer effect" wherein particles

behave differently if they are being observed, but it is instead a more basic discovery and exists independent of measurement.

This is precisely what we have in *Heisenberg*, layered on top of a threadbare love story. Georgie, our heroine, is incredibly difficult to pin down. Is she meeting someone? Really? Is she a secretary? Her almost-regularly-scheduled contradictions mean that we as an audience have great difficulty figuring out her precise "location" as a character. However, all of this means that we have a very clear idea of her velocity, and that is most certainly just the other side of "break-neck speed." Contrast this with Alex, the butcher who has done just about the same thing every day for most of his seventy-five years. We have no reason to doubt any given thing that he says, indeed we are even taken inside his butcher shop as proof of his profession. We have a very clear idea of where he is, but other details are murky.

While this is all very interesting, there is the important question of how does physics, however metaphorically applied, relate to love? Having two characters resembling different quantum eigenstates is all very good, but, as the Black Eyed Peas asked, "Where is the Love?" Philosopher Slavoj Žižek points out that the very act of love is an uncertain proposition, like all great truths. When we say to our lover "I love you," this statement carries an implied "forever." Of course, we cannot know that our feeling will last forever. We know our current location (ie, we are in love), but we are only somewhat certain about the trajectory (that we will stay in love forever). We can only postulate that because we love someone now, we will continue to love them forever.

We see this in the differing responses of Alex & Georgie. Georgie, in asking the butcher to be her boyfriend, concerns herself with the overall trajectory of their relationship. She wants to know where they will be going, and at what speed. Alex, focused more on location, states that there are things he would like to keep doing, which may or may not add up to "boyfriend."

And so, we find that this little play with the funny title has a whole lot more going on than meets us at first glance. After all, what role do our choices play in our future? The big ones? The small ones? What happens if we are so focused on where we are going, we have no idea where we are? The meaning, dear friends, lies in balance. Because, as the Cheshire Cat told Alice, if you don't know either where you are or where you are going... it matters not what route you take.

The Uncertainty Principle

$$\Delta p \Delta x \geq \frac{\hbar}{2}$$

impossible to know exactly:

- where something is
- how fast it is going

SYNOPSIS

Amidst the hustle and noise of London's St. Pancras station, two strangers meet for the first time. Georgie Burns, a middle-aged American secretary (Assassin? Con artist? It is never completely clear) plants a kiss on the neck of seventy-five year old Alex Priest, a placid English butcher. He is, needless to say, surprised.

What follows is a love story that might not be what everyone expects, regardless of how threadbare the basic conceit is. The quirky woman who breathes life back into the man who's life has become a monotone is, after all, at least as old as Katherine Hepburn (and many actors have built an entire career on this trope: Zooey Deschanel). However, what follows is a meditation on life, love, and meaning that follows the structure of Heisenberg's Uncertainty principle. The more you know about one thing, the less you can know about another.

Though, on the surface, we have a mating dance between two people so

dissimilar that they are made for one another, one also finds quieter elements, meditations on the minutiae that shape our lives in every moment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born 6 February, 1971 in Stockport, UK, Simon Stephens is a lauded English playwright whose work has been produced throughout the United Kingdom, United States, and Continental Europe. He studied at the University of York for a History Degree, then moved to Edinburgh where he met his wife, Polly. After then completing a teaching credential at the Institute of Education, he worked as a teacher. He would eventually leave this job to become a professional playwright on a full time basis.

His writing is noted for an "in-your-face" style, part of a generation of playwrights who question social norms and niceties. He is one of the most performed English-language writers in Germany. He was also the inaugural Associate Playwright of the Chicago-based Steep Theatre Company, where two of his plays (Harper Regan & Motown) received their US premiers. He now lives in London with his wife and three children and works as

an Artistic Associate at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre.

His adaptation of Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* has been nominated for a Tony award.

He is a former member of the Scottish punk band Country Teasers.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Heisenberg was originally commissioned by the Manhattan Theatre Club. It received a successful run at their off-Broadway space in 2015, and then moved to Broadway's Friedman theatre in October of 2016. It would then close in December of the same year. Burning Coal's production is the regional premier of this work.



THE COMPANY

Emily Ranii (Director). For Burning Coal (Company Member since 2002): Romeo and Juliet, Brigadoon, Much Ado About Nothing, The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer. For Playmakers Rep: 9 Parts of Desire. For New Repertory Theatre Company: Tongue of a Bird. For Cornell University: Blood Wedding, The Body Project. For Boston University: The Cradle Will Rock, Hydrogen Jukebox, The Old Maid and the Thief. Emily is an Assistant Professor of Performing Arts at Wheelock College, Academic Program Head of Boston University's Summer Theatre Institute, and on the faculty for Boston University's Opera Institute. Her upcoming projects include directing Mrs. Packard for Bridge Repertory Theatre Company and Playhouse Creatures


Beth Mayo (Stage Manager). This is Beth's first show with Burning Coal and she is grateful for the opportunity. Stage management credits include: For Asheville Community Theatre: Oliver!, Dixie Swim Club, Guys and Dolls, Chicago, Grapes of Wrath, Spamalot, Steel Magnolias, Annie Get Your Gun, Cabaret, The Addams Family, A Streetcar Named Desire. For the Montford Park Players: Romeo and Juliet, The Importance of Being Earnest, Dr. Faustus, As You Like It, Richard II, Macbeth. For the Ballet Conservatory of Asheville: Nutcracker, La Fille Mal Gardee, Sleeping Beauty, and Swan Lake. Beth also worked with sound for three summers at Unto These Hills in Cherokee, NC. She holds a BA in Dramatic Art from UNC Chapel Hill and has recently returned to the Triangle after spending eleven years in Asheville, NC.

E. D. Intemann (Scenery and Lighting Designer) A member of the Burning Coal Company, his scenery and lighting designs include Sunday in the Park with George, The Heretic, Good, Brigadoon, and Much Ado About Nothing. Lighting designs also include Asylum, Romeo and Juliet, Blue, St. Nicholas, The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer, Crowns, and Way to Heaven. He has Lighting credits in New York City off-Broadway at 59E59, Danspace at St. Marks, and La MaMa. Internationally he designed for the Confrontations Festival in Lublin, Poland and Garajlstanbul in Istanbul, Turkey. He has designed at the Kitchen Theatre in Ithaca, NY, the Eastman School in Rochester, NY, the Flat Rock Playhouse and Charlotte Repertory Theatre in NC, and the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. Currently he teaches at Cornell University where he has designed over 70 shows. Previously he was Associate Professor of Lighting in the University of South Carolina's MFA program.

Michael Gorman (Assistant TD). Burning Coal company, worked local area theatre and city of Raleigh gigs including RLT, history stage, Raleigh ensemble players, bare theatre , nc opera, NC theatre, mortallcoile theatre company she and nelson productions, exit through eden group, PNC arena, carter finely stadium, I enjoyed my years behind scenes plus working with this wonderful cast and crew 20 years of burning coal .

Beatriz G. Wright (Sound). Bea has done a wide range of jobs in theatre including stage managing, costuming, directing, and even acting (when forced). While every aspect of theatre has rewards, Bea has found sound design to be the most fulfilling. This is her second show with Burning Coal. She would like to thank Magic Dave and her sestra for being awesome.

Alex Procknow (Assistant Stage Manager): For Burning Coal: Blue Sky, Spoonface Steinberg, Oakwood Lives 2016: Home Again!, and Written on the Heart.



E. Renee Eisenhour (Assistant Stage Manager, Assistant Lighting Designer) is originally from Goshen, Indiana where she studied Theatre Production with a focus in Lighting. Renee is delighted to be working on another show with Burning Coal. Some past production credits with Burning Coal include Stage Management: Skylight, Kidswrite and Oakwood Lives. For Justice Theatre Project (SM): Black Nativity and Ragetime. For RLT (LD); Bat Boy the Musical. For Little Green Pig (SM): Maccountant. She is extremely grateful to be a part of this production and looks forward working on many more. Renee would also like to send a special thanks to her family for always supporting her dreams wherever they take her.


Johnna Chance (Assistant Stage Manager) is a senior at William Peace University majoring in Theatre with a minor in Business Administration. She'd like to say thank you to all the beautiful people who came to the show. I love you! God bless!

Naomi Barbee (Assistant Stage Manager) is a recent graduate of UNCW with a BA in Theatre Performance and a BA in Early Childhood Education. She is currently an education and administrative intern at Burning Coal. She has a great deal of experience in theatre and film, and is excited to get to know the Raleigh area better. She was the Board Op for Written on the Heart and is looking forward to working on a mainstage show again, now as an ASM. She is thankful for this opportunity, and for all of the support she receives from friends and family.

Mia Carson (Master Electrician): Mia is proud to be working on her 5th season at Burning Coal and just recently helped produce their second show of the season Written On The Heart. Some of her other work at Burning Coal includes Skylight (Master Electrician), Dark Vanilla Jungle (Lighting Designer), Seawall (Lighting Designer), Rum and Vodka (Lighting Designer), Romeo and Juliet (ME), Sunday in the Park with George (ME) and the Iron Curtain Trilogy (ASM). She would like to thank Jerome Davis for this wonderful opportunity, and making Burning Coal her second home. Additionally, she would like to thank her boyfriend Andrew for assisting her when needed.

Eric S. Kildow (Dramaturg) Eric is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Kent State University in Ohio and works as a freelance dramaturg & director. As an artistic associate of the London-based Loitering With Intent Theatre Company, he presented the devised work TurnRight/TurnLeft: A Manual for the End of the World at the Fleet Street Theatre in Hamburg, Germany. He is a member of the Stage Directors & Choreographers Society, Literary Managers & Dramaturgs of the Americas, the Lincoln Center Theatre Director's Lab and the Burning Coal Company of Artists. For Burning Coal: Man of La Mancha, Brigadoon, As You Like It, Shining City, Good, Ruined, The Heretic, (Three Man) Tempest, The Jesus Fund, The Diary of Anne Frank, Fayetteville Street, Outrunning Bullets, ASYLUM, The Wiz, Blue Sky, Spoonface Steinberg, Oakwood 2016, Skylight, and Written on the Heart. <http://www.eskildow.com>

Elizabeth Newton (Props Designer) is a proud member of the Burning Coal Theatre Company of Artists. Elizabeth holds a BA in Theatre from Meredith College and an MFA in Scenic Design from the University of Southern Mississippi. While currently based in Raleigh, Elizabeth has worked as a designer and scenic artist in North Carolina, Virginia, Oklahoma, Mississippi, and New York. Scenic Design for Burning Coal: Skylight, Spoonface Steinberg, Blue Sky, Second Stage Series 2015, The Diary of Anne Frank, and KidsWrite. Props Design for Burning Coal: Written on the Heart, Blue Sky, The Wiz, Asylum, Sunday in the Park with George, Romeo and Juliet, Iron Curtain Trilogy, The Jesus Fund, (Three Man) Tempest, The Heretic, Good, As You Like It, and Brigadoon. Elizabeth also enjoys designing for Bare Theatre, NRACT, Raleigh Little Theatre, and Tidewater Stage.



Meredith Riggan (Scenic Artist). Meredith is a North Carolina based artist and is excited to be returning to Burning Coal Theatre Company for the production of Heisenberg. She has previously painted for Burning Coal in the productions of Written on the Heart, Skylight, SPOONFACE STEINBERG, The Wiz, and Good. After receiving her Bachelor's Degree in Scenic Art from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Meredith has worked as the Scenic Charge Artist at several theatres around North Carolina including Triad Stage, City Arts-Greensboro Children's Theatre, The Winston Salem Theatre Alliance, ECU Loessin Playhouse, along with several freelance jobs such as repairing sculptures for the Greensboro Children's Library and painting custom pet portraits.

Katy Werlin (Costume Designer) is thrilled to continue her run as unofficial costume designer in residence for the season. Costume design credits for Burning Coal include Written on the Heart, Skylight, (Three Man) Tempest, and Blue. Other costume design credits include A Midsummer Night's Dream (StageStruck), Urania: The Life of Emilie du Chatelet (independent Chicago workshop), L'Egisto (UNC Opera Workshop), Wild Party, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, and The Secret Garden (UNC Pauper Players). Katy has a BA in Dramatic Arts from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a MA in Visual Culture: Costume Studies from New York University.

Tom McCleister (Alex Priest). Member of Burning Coal Theater Ensemble since 2011. For Burning Coal: The Shape of the Table (2011, 2014), As You Like It (2012), The Jesus Fund (2014), The Prisoner's Dilemma (2014). NYC (in part): The Master & Margarita, Take It from the Top, Joe & Betty, It's a Jungle Out There, The Rocky Horror Show (North American Tour). LA (in part): Johnny Johnson, Salt Lake City Skyline, God's Country, Tartuffe, The Three Penny Opera, Orpheus Descending. Hollywood (in part): Midnight Run, Twins, Million Dollar Baby, Newhart, Murphy Brown, Wings, Crossing Jordan, Married... with Children, Angel.

Sarah Hankins (Georgie Burns). NYC Theater includes: The Queen's Company (As You Like It, Sir Patient Fancy), Guerrilla Shakespeare Project (Tragedy of King Arthur), Toy Box Theatre (Woyzeck, Tis Pity She's a Whore), Metropolitan Playhouse (The Octoroon, East Village Chronicles, Under the Gaslight) and The Shakespeare Forum. Regional theatre includes: Orlando Shakespeare (6 seasons), Shakespeare & Company, Bristol Riverside, Georgia Shakespeare, Virginia Shakespeare, and Depot Theatre including the roles Desdemona, Portia, Ophelia, Miranda, Bianca and Queen Margaret. Film: Hens & Chicks, Lovely, Casting About, Single Male Survivor and a season regular on the award-winning web-series The Chanticleer. Recent directing: Triad Stage's A Christmas Carol (2016). Training: UNCG MFA in Directing, BA Davidson College. In memory of SGH. www.sarahhankins.com

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NC STATE EDUCATION STANDARDS

The state of North Carolina values the skills and competencies of Arts education due to their applicability to other disciplines. These productions are designed to give your students exposure to the competencies and specific standards listed below.

This production and the related study materials will provide students with specific knowledge and skills to address the following Standard Course of Study Competencies and Objectives in the Theatre Arts.

- **COMPETENCY GOAL 1:** The learner will write based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history.
 - Grades 3-5
 - 1.02: Recognize the beginning, middle, and end of a story
 - 1.03: Infer lessons from multicultural stories, fairy tales, tall tales, legends, and myths.
 - 1.06: Refine reading comprehension by using verbal and non-verbal communication.
 - Grades 6-8
 - 1.01: Recognize and explain unique characteristics of the dramatic script such as dramatic structure and dialogue.
 - 1.04: Produce written, verbal, and visual responses to written and/or performed dramatic material.
 - 1.05: Identify themes and plots from multicultural literature.
 - Grades 9-12
 - 1.03: Compare and contrast play structure in relation to other forms of literature.
- **COMPETENCY GOAL 7:** The learner will analyze, critique, and construct meaning from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions.
 - Grades 3-5
 - 7.01: Build skills to critique self and others in a respectful and constructive manner.
 - 7.03: Convey personal reactions to various texts.
 - 7.05: Communicate emotions and thoughts evoked by performance.
 - 7.07: Suggest alternative characters, settings, or events after viewing or participating in a performance.
 - Grades 6-8
 - 7.01: Recognize and practice audience etiquette.
 - 7.03: Develop verbal, visual and written responses to works of informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions from various cultures.
 - 7.04: Express meaning perceived from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions.
 - Grades 9-12
 - 7.02: Develop and relate a world view of theatre in society.
- **COMPETENCY GOAL 8:** The learner will understand context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and present.
 - Grades 3-5
 - 8.04: Experience live or recorded performance
 - 8.05: Discuss the similarities and differences between live and recorded theatrical events.

Heisenberg is also designed to address the following Core Curriculum Anchor Standards in Language Arts Literacy and Social Studies.

- **Reading Anchor 4:** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- **Reading Anchor 6:** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- **Writing Anchor 2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- **Writing Anchor 7:** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.