

HOPE THEATRE ARTS
PRESENTS



THE VELOCITY OF AUTUMN

A PLAY BY **ERIC COBLE**

DIRECTED BY **Susan Fletcher**

**A MOTHER.
A SON.
ONE EXPLOSIVE SEASON.**

OCTOBER 9 - OCTOBER 18, 2026



THE OLIVE BRANCH
Valencia Town Center
(at The Patios)

HOPE
THEATRE ARTS

THE VELOCITY OF AUTUMN



A PLAY BY **ERIC COBLE**

DIRECTED BY **Susan Fletcher**



CAST

Alexandra Donna Wiggins

Chris Sheridan Ward

Chris (understudy Saturday, 10/17 matinee) Joshua Stephen Huot

PRODUCTION TEAM

PRODUCER

Vicki Edwards

DIRECTOR

Susan Fletcher

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Robert Read

STAGE MANAGER

Val Boss

SOUND

Robert Read

LIGHTING

Robert Read

PHOTOGRAPHY

Cristian Herrera

Sheridan Ward

STAGEHANDS

Kevin Fletcher

Dale Boss



SETTING

Time: *The Present*

Location: *Alexandra's brownstone
in Brooklyn, NY*



There will be NO intermission
during this performance.

THE VELOCITY OF AUTUMN premiered at Boise Contemporary Theater (Artistic Director, Matthew Cameron Clark; Managing Director, Helen Peterson) on April 9, 2011. Original Broadway Production Produced by Larry Kaye & HOP Theatricals, Van Dean & The Broadway Consortium, Joan Raffé & Jhett Tolentino, Catherine & Fred Adler, Michael J. Moritz Jr. and KIRN Productions.



DONNA WIGGINS (*Alexandra*)

Donna is delighted to return to HOPE Theatre Arts, where previous credits include Carol Stuckey in *The Amish Project* and Alice in *The Tin Woman*. She most recently originated the role of Esther in the world premiere of *Still Life in Central Park* at The MAIN. A devotee of classical theatre, Donna has also performed with the Santa Clarita Shakespeare Festival and Shakespeare Festival of Dallas in productions including *Tartuffe*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Macbeth*. She holds a BFA from Southern Methodist University's Professional Acting Program. Offstage, she volunteers in pet therapy with Scout. All her love and gratitude to Jim, whose unwavering support, generosity of spirit, and abiding faith make every curtain call especially meaningful.

SHERIDAN WARD (*Chris*)

Sheridan is thrilled to be making his Santa Clarita debut. His theatre credits include *Clue on Stage* (Zephyr Theatre) and *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* (Newport Theatre Arts Center). Film credits include *Laguna Ave* and *There There*. Sheridan trained at Stella Adler Studio of Acting in Hollywood. He would like to thank his mum, his friends, his wonderful Manager Fran and you – the audience – for supporting live theatre in Los Angeles.



JOSHUA STEPHEN HUOT (*Chris Understudy*)

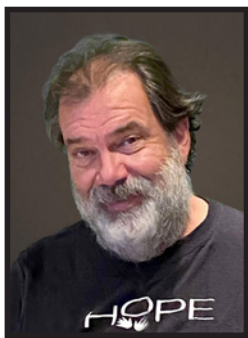
Joshua is thrilled to be working with HOPE Theatre Arts as the understudy for Chris in *The Velocity of Autumn*. Joshua's recent film credits include a small role in the action thriller *Ballistic* (2026) as well as various Los Angeles-based shorts. He continues to hone his craft at Ruskin School of Acting. When not on set, he works as an audiobook narrator, composes music, DJs, and runs an event production company.

PRODUCTION TEAM



Susan Fletcher – Director

As co-founder and VP of HOPE Theatre Arts, Susan is grateful for the opportunity to bring this essential story to the stage. The play invites us to consider how aging can reshape our sense of identity, while celebrating the profound and unwavering devotion between a mother and son. Both themes are active in Susan's own life! Working with this talented cast and crew has been deeply inspiring and rewarding. Her recent directing credits include *Native Gardens*, *Yellow Face*, *Rev*, *The Book Women*, and *The Amish Project*. Susan is especially grateful to her husband, Kevin, for his unwavering love and support of her creative endeavors.



Robert Read – Production Designer

Robert has been designing and building sets since 2000, beginning with his children's theatre programs. He is a valued board member of HOPE Theatre Arts. He has done lights and sound at Canyon Theater Guild. With HOPE, Robert has designed and built sets, lights and sound for *The Amish Project*, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *The Book Women*, *Rev*, *Yellow Face* and *Native Gardens*. Robert was excited to create Alexandra's brownstone for this show. And of course... the tree.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES SUSAN FLETCHER



In 2025, HOPE Theatre Arts chose to submit *The Velocity of Autumn* for staging at The MAIN in 2026. This play spoke to me on so many levels. I am the mother of a son. I have walked alongside friends and family as their faculties diminished. And now, those little “gifts” of aging are beginning to become my own reality. What connects me most deeply to Alexandra is her fierce insistence on independence. I love the unfolding woven through the dialogue as mother and son find their way back to one another through their shared love of art. And, of course, I love her fire!

We had great fun developing marketing ideas around Alexandra's Molotov cocktails and her threats to blow it all up. Then The MAIN burned down.

In an instant, we lost not only a performance space, but a place that had become a second home—a place where we gathered with artists, other theatre companies, and audiences, and where stories helped create a sense of belonging. Now, in this supportive and welcoming venue at The Olive Branch, we are excited to begin again, to make a new home, forge new connections, and welcome a new audience into the circle. One of the small miracles of live theatre is that we walk into a room as strangers, sit together in the dark, and emerge connected by the story we have just experienced.

My hope is that something in this story finds you—that a word, a laugh, or a truth lingers with you after you leave. Perhaps it will touch something you need tonight. Perhaps it will stay quietly tucked away until a moment in the future when you need to remember it.

Thank you for being here. Thank you for supporting live theatre. And thank you for sharing this story with us.

PLAYWRIGHT ERIC COBLE

People find this hard to believe, but Eric Coble was born in Edinburgh, Scotland and raised on the Navajo and Ute reservations in New Mexico and Colorado, playing with rocks, sticks, seeing 1940's serials at the movie theatre thirty miles away, and wandering the desert with his friends trying to avoid cactus until he was 15 years old.

Much of that time was spent writing/drawing comics and rigging up poorly built stage shows (much falling out of trees ensued). Moving off the reservation led to acting in high school, which led to majoring in English at Fort Lewis College (Colorado) before winging it to Ohio University for an MFA in Acting. Along the way he started writing plays, which (thank god) were well-received enough to spur him on.

Since then he has written a lot of scripts for adults and not-quite adults, including *Bright Ideas*, *The Dead Guy*, *Natural Selection*, *For Better*, *Southern Rapture*, *A Girl's Guide To Coffee*, *The Velocity of Autumn*, *My Barking Dog*, and *The Giver* which have been produced Off-Broadway, throughout the U.S., and on several continents, including productions at Manhattan Class Company, The Kennedy Center, Playwrights Horizons, Actors Theatre of Louisville Humana Festival, the Denver Center, New York and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals, Alliance Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Repertory, Florida Repertory Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Asolo Repertory, Coterie Theatre, Curious Theatre, Actors Theatre of Charlotte, Oregon Children's Theatre, People's Light and Theatre Company, Stages Repertory Theatre, Great Lakes Theater Festival, and The Contemporary American Theatre Festival.

Awards include an Emmy nomination, the 2011 AATE Distinguished Play Award for Best Adaptation, the AT&T Onstage Award, National Theatre Conference Playwriting Award, Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award, an NEA Playwright in Residence Grant, a TCG Extended Collaboration Grant, the Cleveland Arts Prize, a Creative Workforce Fellowship from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, and four Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Grants.

Eric has now traded the cactus of the southwest for the poison ivy of northeast Ohio, where he is a member of the Cleveland Play House Playwrights Unit. He does miss the mesas, but can't stop admiring the lush trees and that huge body of water just north of him.



HOPE THEATRE ARTS

WOULD LIKE TO THANK:



Thank you to The Olive Branch who helped us re-home "The Velocity of Autumn".



Thank you to the City of Santa Clarita for supporting the arts in our community.



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Psychology**

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With much appreciation to Dr. Josh Williams and the PCPG family for being our Standing Ovation sponsor for "The Velocity of Autumn".

Thank you to Pam Trammell for the years of your unwavering support for HOPE's projects.



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