

## An honest effort to address Police-community relations ...

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 09 May 2015 23:02 - Last Updated Saturday, 09 May 2015 23:04

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A set piece from "Trust": Officer

**Editor's note:** *The following is a press release from the Performing Arts for Social Change (PASC), an Ithaca College-affiliated group. We print it here for those who missed the opportunity to see a very swiftly assembled group of actors, community members and two members of area police agencies, attempt to address the massive breakdown in many areas of the United States, between those who are sworn to protect the public and a public that is increasingly distrustful of anyone in a blue uniform and a badge ... A "talk-back" of sorts was held after the show ... It was somewhat disappointing owing to times constraints. There also was a complete absence of any local media covering this community event, a very surprising no-show given the importance of the subject matter. Also, Mayor Svante Myrick, who promoted the event and hyped his role in it, was absent. Exactly what his business in Albany was today, would be nice to know, because it would've lent legitimacy to his endorsement of comprehensive remaking of police and community-relations in Ithaca. We will be writing our own take on this event for this page as soon as we have time. Luckily, one of our staff was present and shot photos and "covered" the event. This was serendipity because we'd been personally invited the day before by Cynthia Henderson, director and co-creator of "Trust." For how, this has to serve as the news about this event.*

### **“Trust” Brings Police-Civilian Relations to the Stage**

The Performing Arts for Social Change (PASC) group will present a new devised-theatre piece on Saturday, May 9th at 4:00 p.m. in the Clark Theatre in Ithaca College's Dillingham Center.

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“Trust” is the result of a PASC-commissioned project entitled “Establishing Trust,” in which cast and crew members went into the community to talk discuss the relationship between the police force and civilians. This staged-reading is directed by Associate Professor Cynthia Henderson, the Founder and Artistic Director of PASC.

“Trust” presents many points of view about the police-civilian relationship. Director Henderson explains, “This project involves civilians from various demographic backgrounds within this community as well as officers who are interestedn in find a better way for us all to work together for the benefit of everyone in the Ithaca community.”

Many Ithaca College colleagues have come together to help Henderson realize her vision. Assistant Professor and playwright Saviana Stanescu assembled the script from the discussion transcripts. Stanescu has stated, “Cynthia’s project captivated me through its beautiful ambition: to establish trust between the police and civilians. Can we really do that? I don’t know the answer, but I know it’s an important question.”



Professor Peter Rothbart has composed original music for “Trust” and dance professor Amy O’Brien has provided movement direction.

Henderson explains that “Trust” has become a “microcosm of both the challenges and the possibilities that this community deals with on a larger scale everyday. what we hope is that this

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microcosmic project offers both insight and puts us, as a community, on a path to find a solution for a challenge that exists not only in Ithaca, NY, but throughout our nation."

Mayor Svante Myrick has stated: "I believe whole heartedly in this important project. On the issue of police relations there have been many grievances cited but few solutions. Professor Cynthia Henderson's program Performing Arts for Social Change has created a project, 'Establishing Trust' that presents us with a jumping off point for meaningful dialogue. This will be a unique opportunity for the Ithaca Police department and the civilians in our community to see a play that allows for the conversation to begin around trusting one another as a community."

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well as police officers who are interested in finding a better way for us all to work together for

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sibilities that this community deals with on a larger scale everyday. What we hope is that this microcosmic experimental project offers both insight and puts us, as a community, on a path to

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find a solution for a challenge that exists not only in Ithaca, NY but throughout our nation.

The cast of Trust includes: Officer Mayra Colon, Oghenero Gbaje, Harmony Graves Malone, Micah Martorell Sr., Micah Martorell Jr., Lee-Ellen Marvin, Ella Mead VanCort, Officer Brad Nelson, Cassie Walker, Rebecca Simpson Wallack, and Edward Yankow.

Trust's artistic staff also includes: assistant director Peter Marshall, PASC executive assistant

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Kylie Adams, lighting designer and technical coordinator E-hui Woo, stage manager Lucas Dixon, resident social worker Lucia Sciore, management assistant Rachel Canter, assistant stage manager Vanessa Reyes, sound designer Josh Samuels, acting coach Oghenero Gbaje, acting coach Rebecca Simpson Wallack, assistant to the director Carla Tilghman and assistant playwright Rachael Langton.

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Performing Arts for Social Change is a program whose mission is to raise awareness and edu-

cate by giving a voice to important societal issues that are often overlooked. We do this through the creation and development of performance pieces that serve as teaching moments for the people involved in the creative process as well as for the audiences who view it. Performing Arts for Social Change is not an affiliate of Ithaca College Theatre Arts.

Dillingham Center proudly accommodates all patrons. Individuals with special needs are asked to contact [pa4sc.ithaca@gmail.com](mailto:pa4sc.ithaca@gmail.com) to request accommodations as soon as possible.



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