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*SIDE MAN* AT SIERRA MADRE PLAYHOUSE ON APRIL 22

A staged reading of *Side Man* will be performed as a selection in Sierra Madre Playhouse's ongoing Off the Page series of play readings.

The story: Set in 1953 and traveling to 1985, this lovely and poignant memory play unfolds through the eyes of Clifford, the only son of Gene, a jazz trumpet player, and Terry, an alcoholic mother. alternating between their New York City apartment and a smoke-filled music club, Clifford narrates the story of his broken family and the decline of jazz as popular entertainment. Clifford recalls the key moments in his life, such as the day when he, fresh out of college, picked up his first unemployment check and was congratulated by Gene and his band mates. Gene's music career on the big band circuit ultimately crumbles with the advent of Elvis and rock-n-roll. Terry begs him to get a nine-to-five job to support the family, but Gene refuses to enter the "straight world" of regular paychecks, mortgages and security. For Gene, who knows jazz better than his own son, music is not just a job; it's his life. their marriage slowly dissolves and young Clifford is witness to it all. as things worsen, Clifford assumes the role of parent and throws the hopeless Gene out of his mother's apartment. When an adult Clifford visits Gene in a rundown jazz club after years of separation, he requests that the old man play his mother's favorite song, the old standard "Why Was I Born?"

Warren Leight is the playwright. He won the Tony® Award for *Side Man* and received a Tony nomination for co-writing the musical *Leap of Faith*. He is the author of 28 other plays. He was recently the executive producer and writer of the TV series *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* for six seasons.

Richard Van Slyke directs. He is familiar to Sierra Madre Playhouse audiences from his appearances on its stage, including the production of *A Christmas Story*, *The Odd Couple*, and *The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. His directing credits include *Hello Again*; *The Lisbon Traviata*; and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*. He has written and performed sketches at Acme Comedy Theatre and appeared in plays and musicals throughout Southern California.

The Off the Page series is coordinated by Roxanne Barker and produced by Artistic Director Christian Lebrano.

*Side Man*. Monday, April 22, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. At Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre, CA 91024. This is just east of Pasadena. There is parking available on the street and in free lots behind the Playhouse and across the street. Suggested donation: Five dollars. Phone: (626) 355-4318. Website: [www.sierramadreplyhouse.org](http://www.sierramadreplyhouse.org)