

Developing and producing PHOEBE IN WINTER with Clubbed Thumb was an incredible gift to me as a writer. From our first intensive workshop, as part of their Superlab program with Playwrights Horizons, to its eventual production in Summerworks, I was given resources of rehearsal time, highly skilled collaborators, and Clubbed Thumb's unique brand of resourcefulness and problem-solving. PHOEBE is a sprawling play that takes place in multiple locations and asks for a bathtub full of bloody water onstage, among other challenges. Clubbed Thumb took these needs seriously and worked with us from a producerial and artistic standpoint to make sure we had what we needed as early as possible in rehearsal, so that by the time we got to tech, the actors would be comfortable with all of the demands.

Seeing PHOEBE come to life at the Wild Project taught me more than I could have anticipated about how the play works - especially in terms of tone and pace. The play employs a kind of heightened formal language that builds on itself in speed and stylization before, in certain moments of strong emotion or revelation, it breaks. It calls for actors who have a facility with language, and demands that they switch quickly and relentlessly from Biblical to "parlor room" to casual and back. Having had a few prior workshops, I entered this process knowing that this kind of facility was important, without having previously heard (or being able to exactly articulate) precisely what I was looking for. Even before the first day of rehearsal for Summerworks, Maria Striar hosted a number of table-readings so that I could hear multiple actors in different parts, and make decisions about what tonal style worked best for the play. She and the director and I spent hours talking carefully and deliberately about tone and pace as we considered the actors who might best give us what we wanted. The process was painstaking, and it took time, but Clubbed Thumb didn't rush it. In the end, our cast was exactly right across the board, and what I learned from watching them explore and unfold the play, was invaluable.

Clubbed Thumb is an exceptional company, in the work it seeks to champion (bold, edgy, and often passed over by other companies) and in the integrity with which it seeks to give playwrights what we need to tell our stories. I feel blessed to have seen PHOEBE IN WINTER come to life with them, and I'm proud to be part of the Clubbed Thumb community.



Jen Silverman