

*Sweat*, by Lynn Nottage, was developed by co-commission from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's American Revolutions: The United States History Cycle and Arena Stage.

The play is centered on the working class of Reading, Pennsylvania. Lynn Nottage began working on the play in 2011 by interviewing numerous residents of Reading, Pennsylvania, which at the time was, according to the United States Census Bureau, officially one of the poorest cities in America, with a poverty rate of over 40%. Nottage has said that she was particularly influenced by a *New York Times* article reporting on the city specifically, and by the Occupy Wall Street movement more generally.

She explored the effects on residents of the loss of heavy industry and the changing ethnic composition of the city.

Shifting in time between 2000 and 2008, taking place mostly in the local bar, *Sweat* tells the story of a group of friends, who have spent their lives sharing drinks, secrets, and laughs while working together on the factory floor. When layoffs and picket lines begin to chip away at their trust, the friends find themselves pitted against each other in a heart-wrenching fight to stay afloat.

“...a cautionary tale of what happens when you don't know how to resist.”

– Time Out New York

“Nottage feels that what unifies her plays is their “morally ambiguous heroes or heroines, people who are fractured within their own bodies, who have to make very difficult choices in order to survive.”... The plays also give voice to marginalized lives.”

– The New Yorker

Winner of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Drama

On her research and approach to developing the play while in Reading, Nottage adopted the motto, “Replace judgement with curiosity.” It would be tested.

Character Descriptions from the play:

Evan	40's, African American
Jason	21/29, White American of German descent
Chris	21/29, African American
Stan	50s, White American of German Descent
Oscar	22/30, Columbian American
Tracey	45/53, White American of German Descent
Cynthia	45/53, African American
Jessie	40s, Italian American
Brucie	40s, African American