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Contact: Ami Bennett 617.797.8267, [ami@motormmm.com](mailto:ami@motormmm.com)



**HOW TO BE A ROCK CRITIC**  
**PERFORMED BY ERIK JENSEN | DIRECTED BY JESSICA BLANK**  
**BASED ON THE WRITINGS OF LESTER BANGS**

**IN BOSTON MAY 11-21, 2017**  
**EMERSON/PARAMOUNT CENTER**  
**JACKIE LIEBERGOTT BLACK BOX THEATRE**

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW**

*The press performance is Friday, May 12, 8pm.  
Email for press tickets, high resolution images, and interviews.*

**[Boston, MA – April 18, 2017]** ArtsEmerson proudly announces the conclusion of its 16/17 Season with the one-person play, **How To Be a Rock Critic**, based on the writings of legendary rock critic Lester Bangs, performed by Erik Jensen and directed by Jessica Blank. Part Gonzo rock performance, part mental breakdown — all thrillingly theatrical— **How To Be A Rock Critic** pulls the greatest hits from Bangs’ own legendary words to imagine a single night of his turbulent life. The production takes place May 11 through 21, 2017 at the landmark Emerson/Paramount Center’s Jackie Liebergott Black Box Theatre, located at 559 Washington Street in Boston’s Downtown Theatre District. Tickets are \$60 and may be purchased online at [www.artsemerson.org](http://www.artsemerson.org) or by calling 617.824.8400. Package, group, student, and senior discounts are available.



Photos: Craig Schwartz

**About *How To Be a Rock Critic***

In a living room strewn with vinyl records, beer bottles and drug paraphernalia, a mustached man begins railing about his missing copy of Van Morrison’s *Astral Weeks* album, and it seems he won’t back down until the universe bestows upon him some elusive state of grace. Inside his wild, all-night typewriter sessions, Lester Bangs embraced mistakes as strokes of genius, popularized now ubiquitous terms like “Heavy Metal” and “Punk Rock” and died of an overdose at the Biblical age of 33. Don’t miss this special

evening with music's great, lost critical voice, which the L.A. Weekly called "fascinating, insightful...as cathartic and inspiring as the best rock & roll."

"I love this play," shares ArtsEmerson Co-Artistic Director P. Carl, "because it gets to the essence of why art matters so deeply, and why criticism is an art form about love and persuasion rooted in the possibility that art can connect us to each other. Lester Bangs inspired a generation of critics through his obsession with music, and Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen have captured those obsessions with precision in reverence to one of the great critics of our time."

Click here to view the video trailer:

<https://youtu.be/yjzdVQcOKqU>

### **How to be a Rock Critic Performance Schedule**

Thursday, May 11, 2017	7:30PM	Preview
Friday, May 12, 2017	8PM	Press Opening
Saturday, May 13, 2017	2PM	
Saturday, May 13, 2017	8PM	
Sunday, May 14, 2017	2PM	
Thursday, May 18, 2017	7:30PM	
Friday, May 19, 2017	8PM	
Saturday, May 20, 2017	2PM	
Saturday, May 20, 2017	8PM	
Sunday, May 21, 2017	2PM	

### **Creative Credits**

- Based on the writings of Lester Bangs
- Performed by Erik Jensen
- Directed by Jessica Blank
- Lighting Design, Lap Chi Chu
- Richard Hoover, Scenic Design
- Sound Design, David Robbins
- Dramaturg: P. Carl
- Produced by Thomas O. Kreigsmann

### **About Erik Jensen**

Jensen's acting television credits include major arcs on *The Walking Dead* and *Mr. Robot*, leads in the CBS pilot *Second Sight*, NBC pilot *The Frontier* and Fox TV movie *Virtuality* (dir. Peter Berg). He appeared as baseball legend Thurman Munson in miniseries *The Bronx is Burning*, and has made numerous recurring and guest appearances including *The Americans*, *House of Cards*, *Turn*, *Elementary*, *Person of Interest*, *Major Crimes*, *Chicago PD*, *CSI*, and many more. His film credits include *Black Night*, *The Love Letter*, and over two dozen indies. Theater credits include the Pulitzer-Prize winning production of *Disgraced* at LCT3, *The Good Negro* at the Public, and Arthur Kopit's *Y2K* and Terrance McNally's *Corpus Christi* at MTC. His sci-fi graphic novel *The Reconcilers* was published in 2010 to wide acclaim.

### **About Jessica Blank (co-writer and director)**

Blank co-wrote the play *Liberty City* with April Yvette Thompson and directed its Off Broadway production at New York Theater Workshop (Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle noms). Her second novel, *Karma for Beginners*, was published by Hyperion in 2009 and her third is forthcoming from Penguin in 2018. As an actor, Jessica appeared regularly as the lead's loudmouthed big sister in CBS' *Made in Jersey*. Additional TV credits include the pilot of *High Maintenance* for HBO, *Blue Bloods*, *Elementary*, *The Following*, *The Mentalist*, *Board to Death*, *Rescue Me*, *Law and Order: CI*, *The Bronx is Burning*, and several more. Film acting credits include *The Namesake* (dir. Mira Nair), *The Exonerated*, and several indies including *Creative Control* (SXSW Grand Jury Prize, 2015), *On the Road with Judas* (Sundance) and *You're Nobody Until Somebody Kills You* (prod. Spike Lee). She has acted in theaters throughout New York City and has three new films coming out in 2017.

### **About Lester Bangs**

Lester Bangs was a rock critic who reached iconic status in the 1970s with his passionate, intellectually honest writing in books and publications such as *Rolling Stone*, *Creem*, *The Village Voice*, *Penthouse*, *Playboy* and others. He spent time with and wrote about the 20th century's greatest musicians, including The Clash, Bob Marley, Lou Reed, Paul McCartney, Blondie, Iggy Pop, The Ramones and many more. He was born in Escondido, California on December 14, 1948, and he died in New York City on April 30, 1982.

### **About ArtsEmerson**

ArtsEmerson is the professional presenting and producing organization of the Office of the Arts at Emerson College, and aims to address gaps in Boston's cultural landscape by putting the world on stage and inviting diverse audiences from across the region into its historic downtown venues. Founded in 2010 by Robert J. Orchard under the auspices of Emerson College, ArtsEmerson quickly established a reputation for putting great work from diverse cultures on its stages — work that emanates from the language of theater, yet pushes the boundaries into dance, music, and opera. The organization is committed to building a cultural institution that embraces and reflects the changing demographics of the City of Boston. ArtsEmerson operates from the core belief that the arts are for everyone. In 2015, Orchard moved into the role of Creative Consultant. Currently ArtsEmerson is led by Co-Artistic Directors, David Dower and P. Carl, and Executive Director, David Howse. This shared leadership model reflects the organization's values — that multiple voices are essential to leading a 21<sup>st</sup> century arts organization. Click [here](#) for more information.

### **About Emerson College**

Based in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in the liberal arts, communication, and the arts. The College has approximately 3,500 undergraduates and 670 graduate students from across the United States and 50 countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than 90 student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its experiential learning programs at Emerson Los Angeles, located in Hollywood, and at its beautifully restored 14th-century castle in the Netherlands. Additionally, there are opportunities to study in Washington, DC, London, China, the Czech Republic, Spain, Austria, Greece, France, Ireland, Mexico, Cuba, England, and South Africa. The College has an active network of 37,000 alumni. For more information, visit [emerson.edu](http://emerson.edu). Click [here](#) for information.

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