



PO Box 15392
WDC 20003
(202)415-4838
www.taffetypunk.com

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Contact: Erin Mitchell Nelson
erin@taffetypunk.com
(804) 357-6523

For Immediate Release:

Taffety Punk and Beauty Pill revive and perfect an ode to grief

Ten year anniversary reveals a pivotal moment for the band and theatre company

| Show | & | Album |
|---|---|---|
| Show: <i>suicide.chat.room</i> Conceived & Directed by Marcus Kyd Choreography by Paulina Guerrero Music by Beauty Pill | | Band: Beauty Pill Album: <i>Sorry You're Here</i> (LP/digital release) Label: Taffety Punk Theatre Company Release: February 21, 2020 Price: \$20 for vinyl, \$12 for download-only. <i>Go to www.taffetypunk.com for purchase info.</i> |
| Where: Capitol Hill Arts Workshop 545 7th Street SE, WDC 20003 | | |
| When: February 26-29, 2020 | | |
| Price: \$15, at www.taffetypunk.com | | |

Taffety Punk Theatre Company and DC indie rock luminaries **Beauty Pill** mark the tenth anniversary of a great aesthetic turning point with the remount of *suicide.chat.room* and the official release of the show's score *Sorry You're Here* — the band's haunting music for the original dance play.

The show will be performed in a limited run at the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop February 26th through 29th in conjunction with the triumphant release of this "lost" album by Beauty Pill—available worldwide February 21st.

Ten years ago, Taffety Punk Artistic Director **Marcus Kyd** approached Beauty Pill to score a new work he was developing with **Paulina Guerrero**, fellow company member and choreographer. The founder and leader of Beauty Pill, **Chad Clark**, had just defeated death; his battle with cardiomyopathy (a heart-invading virus) has been well chronicled, but his recovery is notable as the point from which this collaboration was launched. Moreover, this collaboration is notable as the first time Taffety Punk achieved in full their unique vision to bring actors, dancers, and musicians together to create.

Taffety Punk company member **Kimberly Gilbert** returns to play the role she originated. She is working with a new cast, who are discovering the intricacies of movement and text that combine to tell this unique story. The six characters on the stage are quickly surrounded by hundreds of voices, representing the dissonance of the Internet. They navigate their way to a safe space to share their own dark impulses. We know them only by their user names. Guerrero's choreography provides the evidence of their internal conflicts, while the virtual landscape they move through is built from the shifting and evocative tones of Beauty Pill's score. The audience follows Gilbert's character, lostbooks, a relative newcomer to the group, as she responds to her fellow users' extreme highs and lows, their desires, and their confessions. Her fellow users reveal more and more about themselves — although one keeps the secret that she is posting as two people — until they come to a final dire and impulsive goal. In a critical moment, lostbooks delivers a soliloquy that brings all of her strength and weakness to the fore. (This vital speech, delivered by Gilbert, is the only text on the Beauty Pill album.)

The play, *suicide.chat.room* has intrinsic risks and ethical complexities. It blends raw non-fiction with fiction by cutting and pasting from actual suicide usenet groups and chat rooms of the 1990's and early aughts. Real people's words are used verbatim (albeit anonymously). While there has been a long tradition of documentary theatre in the world, this daring methodology proved shocking to some people; however, Kyd and the company feel these are voices that need to be amplified. He writes in the liner notes to the album, "Almost everyone in the ensemble had lost someone they loved to suicide. Ultimately, we were driven to make this work to honor them."

In building the show, Guerrero choreographed on the ensemble as frequently as she inspired them to create. She explains that much of the "movement emerged out of a collaborative set of improv-based exercises that we honed and edited." While the actor-dancers experimented, Clark attended rehearsals and composed. The flow of the music often responded to the choreographer's work. Clark says, "The sensation I wanted to evoke from Guerrero's convulsive choreography was the feeling of entropy, instability—the constantly-falling-apart, vertiginous melee of anonymous online discussion. Nothing is stable, there's no way to know what is real, who is real, what you should believe. There is no known."

Clark also says he was "inspired by the play's nexus of technology, human pathos, and bricolage to experiment with electronic music and orchestration." This experimentation took the band far afield from the guitar-bass-drums world of DC punk.

Kyd always felt the score deserved to be released as an album, but Clark was not sure. He says, "For many years—ten, to be exact—I was reluctant to release it as an album because I felt it was purpose-built for the play." The occasion of the 2020 remounting of the play and the very positive reception to the band's 2015 release *Beauty Pill Describes Things As They Are* (hailed by TIME magazine as best of the decade; and by NPR, Rolling Stone, and New York Times as best of the year) encouraged Clark to reconsider. *Describes Things* is widely considered a watershed work in Beauty Pill's canon, but the experimentation in *Sorry You're Here* laid the foundation for this artistic thrust out of the ordinary indie-rock confines.

Kyd celebrates this dual opportunity to release the album properly in conjunction with a ten-year anniversary performance. He remains mission-driven about the show's goals, saying, "As artists we often have to shine a light in dark places." Paulina Guerrero rejoins the company after a long sabbatical to reset the choreography with company co-founder and choreographer **Erin Mitchell Nelson**. Kyd adds, "This show was an important turning point for us, too. We are thrilled at this chance to release these songs. We love this music."

suicide.chat.room opens at the **Capitol Hill Arts Workshop** (545 7th Street SE, Washington, DC 20003 – two blocks from Metro's Orange/Blue Line stop at Eastern Market) on Thursday, February 27, and runs through Saturday, February 29 at 8:00pm. There is one pay-what-you-can preview on February 26, also at 8:00pm, and an additional matinee performance on February 29, at 3:00pm. The performance is just under an hour in length.

The official release date of the full length Beauty Pill LP *Sorry You're Here* is **February 21, 2020**. It is available in a limited pressing of coke-bottle clear vinyl, in addition to digital downloads and streaming on most common platforms. Pre-orders are available now at Taffety Punk Theatre Company's website: www.taffetypunk.com.

For hi-res photos, go to: www.taffetypunk.com/press

Beauty Pill is a wonderfully difficult-to-categorize band founded by Chad Clark. The band's origins trace back to the mid 90's variegated but solidly guitar-bass-drums driven DC punk scene. Beauty Pill's mercurial nature was a built-in feature right from the start, allowing Clark to call on musicians beyond his immediate bandmates for sonic contributions where needed. After several records and tours, the band began decentralizing guitar in their music, principally because that's what the songs wanted. But for Chad Clark, this shift was also a deliberate way to distance himself from "rock dude culture." At that time, as Clark remembers, "indie-rock dude culture was pervasive, largely male and largely white, parochial and anhedonic." The band continued experimenting, but took a long hiatus in 2008 and 2009 when Clark was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy. During his recovery, Marcus Kyd approached him about making the music for *suicide.chat.room*, the music that is featured on this album, *Sorry You're Here*. In addition to their highly praised 2015 album *Beauty Pill Describes Things as They Are*, the band now regularly composes scores for theatre projects and films and other media. True to their initial instincts, the ground continues to shift beneath them: they sometimes perform as a duet, or a trio, or sometimes the full band performs with their adjunct wind ensemble. Beauty Pill is currently finishing preparation on an even newer album, which will be released this spring on Arto Lindsay's imprint, Northern Spy Records.

Taffety Punk Theatre Company is the resident company at Capitol Hill Arts Workshop in Washington, DC. Taffety Punk's mission is to maintain a dynamic ensemble of actors, dancers, and musicians who ignite a public passion for theatre by making the classical and the contemporary exciting, meaningful, and affordable. The company won the very first John Aniello Award for Outstanding Emerging Theatre Company at the Helen Hayes Awards. More recently, the company received two Helen Hayes nominations for original choreography in both *Phaeton* and *An Iliad*.

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