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Spring 2005

# Review: The Newsletter of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, volume 15, issue 2

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## Shopping = Theatre: Re-Staging Retail in NYC

On a recent trip to New York City, I made a point of visiting SoHo to see the so called "epicenter store" of the high end clothing line, Prada. I'm not one for conspicuous consumption, but on this occasion I gave in to the consumption of a carefully marketed product: the store itself. The SoHo Prada opened on 15 December 2001, and received a rave review in the next day's *The New York Times*, though not in the fashion section. The often cranky architecture critic Herbert Muschamp called the design for the store "a model block of intelligent optimism about urban life," and he added: "If you're in the market for ideas, here's the place to stock up." What could merit such praise for a clothing store, especially in immediately post-9/11 Lower Manhattan? We'd all been told that it was our patriotic duty to go shopping, but not shopping for ideas, nor admiring a store itself and leaving without making a purchase, as I did.

Muschamp compared the Prada store to "a museum show on indefi-



Fig. 1. The Prada "epicenter" store in SoHo. At right, mannequins in the seating area. The shopper at left faces the front of the store.

nite display” — perhaps because the same real estate previously belonged to the SoHo branch of the Guggenheim Museum — but in fact, a theatrical comparison is more appropriate. On arrival, the shopper is confronted at a battalion of at least twenty mannequins frozen in marching formation just inside the front window. Last fall’s line of mid-century-inspired clothing designs were reminiscent of Mussolini-era fashion, complete with the seductively militaristic accents that are the trademarks of Prada’s designer-in-chief, Miuccia Prada. Shoppers were not allowed to walk around to the other side of the display, nor to take pictures; a security guard was there to ensure that this “window display” was not mistaken for an “installation.” See? Not a museum at all: the fourth wall was strictly enforced.

Another phalanx of mannequins met the shopper strolling down a flight of steps in the main room of the store. What starts as no more than a staircase opens into a wide bank of steps that reaches to the far wall, and the steep steps were lined with ranks of vaguely ominous mannequins [Fig. 1]. Notably, these steps also function as the seating area for Prada SoHo’s in-store theatre.

That’s right. The central corridor of the building is built around what Koolhaas calls “the wave”: an undulation of wood that extends from the front to the back of the building [Fig. 2]. The seating area of the theatre is located on the front “crest” of the wave, the fold-down stage (theatre-as-Murphy bed) is set into another crest. And, to be clear, if you’d come to Prada looking for clothes you’d be disappointed: so far, other than the sumptuously attired mannequins, there’s no clothing in sight. Which raises the question: Why build a clothing store around a gorgeous pocket theatre, and then keep all the clothes hidden?

The store’s architect, Koolhaas, has a dramaturg’s love for creative research, and his most exciting projects have evolved out of investigations into the basic meanings of abstract concepts. His design process for the new Seattle Public Library began with simple questions about books and reading, and interviews with librarians about what librarians do. [A discussion of this library is forthcoming in the next issue of *Review*. See page 9.] Koolhaas has conducted a similar investigation into the history and theory of shopping. This research has resulted in several lavishly illustrated books, including the mammoth *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* (2001).

Koolhaas and his collaborators argue that every aspect of contemporary culture has become determined by the idea of shopping: “Shopping is arguably the last remaining form of public activity.” An ironic case in point: When the SoHo Guggenheim occupied the building where SoHo Prada now resides, museum-goers had only one door through which to enter and exit: through the gift shop. So, to accept this theory for the moment, if everything is shopping, how do you make a shopping experience exceptional? This is the question that Prada hired Koolhaas to explore. His answer: Shopping will become interesting if an element of “not-shopping” is part of the shopping experience.

One of Koolhaas’s tenets of shopping is that “Luxury is Waste.” Luxury retail products cost vastly more than their material value, and are generally items that one doesn’t need anyway. Thus, they are themselves “waste.” Koolhaas followed this impulse to build a shopping experience around the experience of not-shopping. Thus the “wasted” space of a store built around a theatre, with the actual space of shopping literally pushed to the margins.

Subjective opinion: Prada SoHo is fascinating. I studied the tableaux of mannequins for long minutes, wandered around and returned to look again. How ironic, it seemed to me, that this fashionable regiment was staged in the seating area of the theatre, while the stage itself stood empty. Was this for purely practical reasons, so that the stage could be taken at any time by a poetry reading or a lecture on architecture and shopping? Or, perhaps the stage was empty and the seating was staged because this space was only ever meant to be an *image* of the theatre, a *fake* theatre, designed to provide the *appearance* of culture rather than to facilitate the *engagements* of culture.

Actually shopping here, after the architectural fireworks of the main “wave” of the building, is a rather mundane affair. The rooms in which clothes are displayed feel like you’re below decks on a stylish submarine: a limited selection of garments is displayed on hangers evenly spaced on racks along the walls of several narrow (almost to the point of claustrophobia) rooms. In the first room I visited, there was a selection of men’s coats, mostly in black: a luxe topcoat was on the rack adjacent to what looked like a hi-tech anorak. I looked at the latter. It looked gorgeous, but was it practical? Reinforced elbows, goretex-ish fabric, taped seams, heavy duty zippers: upon inspection, it looked as if I could actually hike

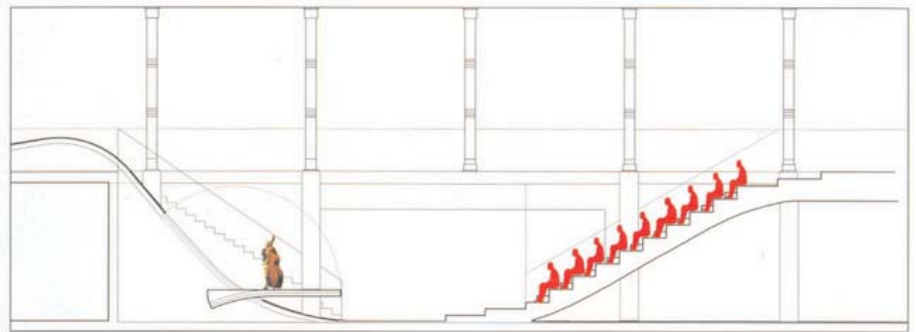


Fig. 2. Side view of the “wave” at Prada SoHo, fold-out stage at left.

or ski all day and still expect my jacket not to fall apart. However, at \$3,500 I could visit the Mt. Everest base camp and still have money left over for a more modest jacket, so I put this one back. In the next room, women’s clothes in shades of green were predominant. I saw a lovely wool blazer that I thought would look nice on the co-editor of *Review*. Last fall, Miuccia Prada featured artisan-made glass beads on many of her designs; this blazer’s collar and lapels were crusted with pearly beadwork. Lovely. And \$760 was starting to seem like a bargain.

The floor-to-ceiling windows in the back of the store overlook Mercer street and the boutique hotel, Mercer. It was here, among miscellaneous accessories and household goods, that I found a \$10,000 mink comforter. Now, I know that Prada is a luxury goods store, but a \$10,000 mink comforter is not luxury goods — it’s avant-garde bedding. It’s like something out of Artaud (...and finally, with nauseating slowness, a frog, a scarab, and a \$10,000 mink comforter).

Every *New York Times* review of Miuccia Prada’s work in the last couple of years has proclaimed her a feminist, an intellectual, and a design genius in virtually every sentence. I can’t quite go there, though I’ve got a lot of respect for Prada herself, more than for the line of goods that bears her name. Perhaps it’s my hopelessly middle class upbringing, but I just can’t help feeling that the greater “waste” at Prada SoHo is in the parts of the store where goods are for sale, rather than in the self-consciously “wasted” space that Koolhaas has reclaimed from shopping.

— D.J. Hopkins

# RAISE YOUR HAND

LMDA's Prez on our upcoming extravaganza in the lone star state

by Liz Engelman

**H**ow many of you have been to Austin? Raise your hand. How many of you have always wanted to go, but never were able to find the right time to get there? Raise your hand again. Well, now's your chance. I can't tell you how excited I am to celebrate LMDA's 20th Anniversary in a city that celebrates the arts and culture in such vibrant ways. But I'll try. I'm no David Letterman (believe it or not, I've never watched an entire episode...), but I'll give you my top ten reasons why I love that we're going to Austin this summer.

10. Because I'm a sun worshipper, even though it will be 90 degrees in Austin in June (but don't worry, allergy season will have passed).

9. Because there's nothing like margaritas and guacamole as additions to our "Conference Bar" tradition.

8. Because Austin is one of the most colorful and lively cities I've ever been to (there is always live music within 100 yards of you).

7. Because I've always wanted to learn more about music (but was too afraid to ask), and this conference places music at the heart of theatre-making.

6. Because local Austin artists (such as the Rude Mechanicals, Physical Plant, Sharon Bridgforth, and Yacov Sharir) will be leading workshops and symposia, insuring that this conference centers around the art itself and the makers of art.

5. Because ever since the Milwaukee TCG Conference 2 years ago, I fell in love with Austin ex-Mayor Kirk Watson, who will be our keynote speaker.

4. Because my good friends Ann Ciccolella (my high school teacher who first told me at 17 that I should be a dramaturg) and Colin Denby Swanson (great playwright and Artistic Director of Austin Script Works) are our hosts for the conference, and have been AMAZING conference co-planners.

3. Because Early Career dramaturgs, Freelance dramaturgs, Institutional literary managers and dramaturgs, and dramaturgs in universities will have more face-to-face time than ever.

2. Because it gets us closer to Mexico (where a future conference is in the works — and Cancun always beckons).

1. Because at this 20th Anniversary Conference we'll be celebrating the past and planning for the future — and you don't want to be left out of THAT, do you?!?!?

Raise your hand! Now, just a few conference reminders:

Conference brochures and registration forms are available online at: [www.lmda.org](http://www.lmda.org).

The early registration fee expired May 5th, but if you reserve your hotel rooms by May 19 you can get discounted conference rates.

Questions? Contact Louise McKay, LMDA's Administrative Director at [lmdanyc@hotmail.org](mailto:lmdanyc@hotmail.org) or 212.561.0315.

See you in Austin!

Liz

# Confessions

## of an Early Career Dramaturg

by Shaun M. McCracken

Shaun M. McCracken is an MFA candidate in Theatre Pedagogy (specialization in Dramaturgy and Theatre History) at Virginia Commonwealth University. Shaun is currently working on her thesis, entitled "Dramaturgy by Permission: The Changing Role of the Dramaturg in Theatre." Shaun has served as the production dramaturg for four shows, including productions of *Metamorphoses* and *The Summer in Gossensass*.

Like most dramaturgs, I never had any intention of making dramaturgy a career (in fact, I had no idea what dramaturgy was until I got to graduate school.) And, like most early career dramaturgs, I have spent the last year reading everything I could about dramaturgy and those who practice it. A plethora of articles and interviews later, I find myself realizing just what it is I've gotten myself into. Young dramaturgs are often subjected to a landslide of conflicting information and no clear idea of just what it is they are expected to do. I wanted to take this opportunity to clarify a few things.

First, we can never know enough. Read articles from Mark Bly, Lynn Thomson and Morgan Jenness. They are some of our best role models and they will fill you with inspiration (and the terrifying knowledge that you will probably never be as smart as they are!). Second, we need to be prepared for the things we will face in the rehearsal room. You will be referred to alternately as: a script doctor, a collaborator, and the annoying person in the corner with all the books. Third, maintain your sense of humor (which will help when you are called "annoying" and will allow you to retain your sanity when you are asked "what is a dramaturg?" by your friends and family.) Artistic directors (and directors in general) often don't realize what they are asking for when they ask for it. And bear in mind that they will ask for everything...and they'll want it by the end of the week. Granted, laughter is easier when you are sleep deprived, but you get the idea.

Finally, read everything you can get your hands on, work on as many shows as is humanly possible, but please refrain from working yourself into an early grave! Write about and talk about the things you are reading. Ask questions. Early career dramaturgs have to learn the "conventions" of dramaturgy before we can break them. It is absolutely imperative that the young 'turgs out there start to find their own creative voices. What is your definition of dramaturgy? What is your favorite way of working with a new director, a new playwright? Once you have begun to answer these questions for yourself, then you can start to take an active role in this profession. Also, remember that we are standing on the shoulders of giants. The dramaturgs who came before us single handedly created dramaturgy in American theatre. We are doing them a disservice if we don't take their work further.

Watch this space: "Confessions of an Early Career Dramaturg" is a column that will appear regularly in *Review*, edited by Shaun M. McCracken. For more information, contact Shaun. Email her at: <mccrackensm@vcu.edu>. Use the word "dramaturgy" in the subject line.



# Dramablog:

>> **Infamous Commonwealth Theatre's**

>> **Online Weblog**

>> **for *The Kentucky Cycle***

**by Jacob Juntunen**

There is a story, perhaps apocryphal, about Betty Crocker cake mixes. Supposedly, when they were first marketed, they did not sell well at all. In a focus group, women told marketers that they didn't feel like they had done anything to make the cake. So Betty Crocker took the powdered egg out of the cake mixes; people now had to crack an egg to make the cake, and the rest is history.

Initially, I wanted the blog for Infamous Commonwealth Theatre's upcoming production of *The Kentucky Cycle* to be that "egg crack" for audiences. I wanted it to be a way for them to be a part of the process of making the play by giving them a way to communicate with us. I wanted to share primary research materials with the audience (such as labor songs that can be downloaded from the internet and pictures that inspired the designers). I also wanted it to be a way for the many artists involved in this project (over 30) to communicate, particularly actors and designers who all too often see very little of each other. But as the project progressed, I saw possibilities of this becoming an online "production sourcebook" which could be archived permanently along with other production material on the Infamous Commonwealth Theatre website; but that's some time away since the production hasn't even opened yet! The play will run in Chicago from May 20 – July 3. Check it out if you're in the area, and look at the blog by going to

>> **Blog Sample Excerpt**

>> **(see the full entry with comments online):**

Date: 2005-03-04

Subject: Lighting Design

This is a picture of Kentucky at sunset that the lighting designer Diane Fairchild particularly likes:



Diane describes the image by saying, "It is a beautiful sunset, but somehow still very volatile. It's like the sky is on fire. I am hoping this makes it into the show."

When designing a show, Diane first comes up with what she calls her "grocery list." For Infamous Commonwealth Theatre's production of *The Kentucky Cycle*, she is thinking about "lanterns, stars, moon, blue backlight, and specials for this and that." She says, "It's like gathering all the ingredients to make

**[www.infamouscommonwealth.org](http://www.infamouscommonwealth.org)**

and clicking on "blog."

Jacob Juntunen is a high school dropout, playwright, dramaturg, and PhD student at Northwestern University. For more about him, see [www.jacobjuntunen.com](http://www.jacobjuntunen.com).

a new meal. The challenge is finding a way to make it all happen, and deciding which items are more important than others when compromises must be made."

# Dramaturging Education AND Educating Dramaturgs

by Shelley Graham

For many of us who call ourselves dramaturgs, the lure of dramaturgy is its promise of blending scholastic and artistic work. I first learned the word “dramaturgy” in an undergraduate theatre course, and was thrilled at the prospect of doing research and sharing it with a production team and an audience. Not long after, a friend (also a new enthusiast) and I drove to Denver to attend our first LMDA conference. That conference and subsequent conversations with “real” dramaturgs inspired me: I needed to do dramaturgy. And, since I was beginning a Master’s program in theatre history at Brigham Young University, and since BYU didn’t have a dramaturgy program, I decided I would create one as part of my MA thesis. I soon realized that this was no small undertaking: after a year of study and dramaturging for as many directors as would accept me (students and faculty), I wrote a syllabus and began teaching “Dramaturgical Theory and Practice.” (It was a classroom of two, but we all have to start somewhere.) Those two students served as dramaturgs for two mainstage shows on the following season, and each subsequent year has brought more students to my class and a better understanding of who a dramaturg is on a production team, and how he or she might be valuable to the process. Questions like, “She’ll be my drama-what?” slowly became “Who will be my dramaturg next season?”

The thesis you’ll find at the URL listed below begins with a dramaturgical manifesto that explores the history and theoretical underpinnings of modern dramaturgy. The bulk of the thesis details how I built a dramaturgy emphasis into our undergraduate theatre program including the creation of another course, entitled “Production Dramaturgy,” and annexed our new play develop-

ment workshop as part of that emphasis.

We now have student dramaturgs for every mainstage production at BYU, and dramaturgical elements include an 8-page study guide within the playbill, “Meet the Company” talkback sessions after each Thursday performance, a University Roundtable session after each matinee, a Thursday morning Theatre Department Forum, and a dramaturgical display in the lobby outside each performance space. Through the undergraduate theatre theory course, we also provide dramaturgs for all of the student lab theatre productions, which include a 2-page study guide and a talkback session after each of the three performances.

In addition to the curriculum development for the dramaturgy emphasis, I also explore the multimedia possibilities open to dramaturgs; as illustration, I present the electronic production casebook I created for a new play, *Archipelago*, by LeeAnne Hill Adams, which won the 2004 David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award.

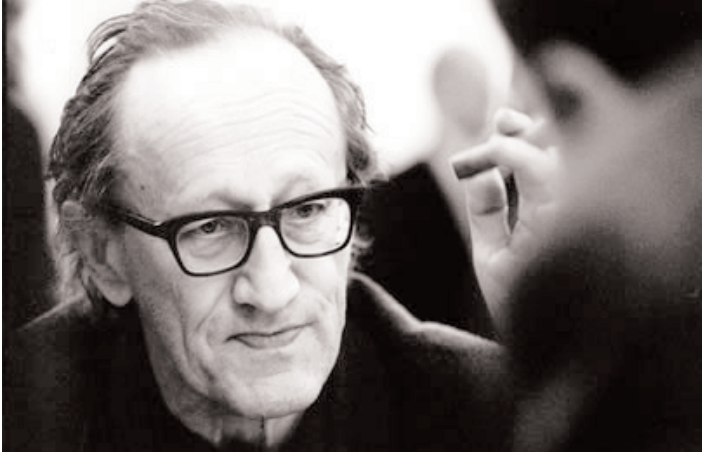
I am now part-time faculty at Brigham Young University, and officially the Dramaturgy Supervisor. The efforts that we have made thus far in developing a dramaturgy emphasis at BYU are part of a broad university commitment to mentoring undergraduate students in the learning process. The spirit of collaboration that drives the profession of dramaturgy drives the program at BYU. Though there are many other universities attempting dramaturgical efforts, Brigham Young University is one of few developing such efforts beyond the scope of main stage productions to include strong dramaturgical support of student work, emphasizing collaboration among educational levels (faculty, graduate, and undergraduate). The curriculum that I designed solidifies this ideology in its theoretical grounding and practical application, providing students with an opportunity to serve one another and develop their skills, artistically and intellectually.

Shelley’s thesis, “Dramaturging Education and Educating Dramaturgs: Developing and Establishing and Undergraduate Theatre Program at Brigham Young University,” is available at the following link:

<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/ETD/image/etd511.pdf>

Shelley T. Graham is currently part time faculty and the Dramaturgy Supervisor at Brigham Young University. She has a BA in Theatre Education and an MA in Theatre History and Theory from BYU. She is a member of LMDA, and has presented her dramaturgical work for the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR), and the Utah Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters (UASAL). She also teaches the annual dramaturgy workshop for the Utah Theatre Association. She lives with her husband and two children in Provo, Utah.





# Heiner Müller on 42nd Street

By Dan Friedman

*Only when a text cannot be done in theatre as it is now  
can it be productive for the theatre,  
or interesting.*

—Heiner Müller

The spirit of that remarkable sentence has long attracted New York City’s Castillo Theatre, where I am the resident dramaturg, to the late German playwright Heiner Müller. We have done 13 Müller productions in English translation since 1986. Each production has demanded that we grow artistically, intellectually, and politically. It is Müller’s challenge to us as artists to go beyond ourselves, and his challenge to our nontraditional, primarily working class, audience to see in new ways that has made him a cornerstone of our work.

Castillo was founded by activist/artists in 1983 and we have always approached our productions as just one part of a larger effort

Dan Friedman is a founder of the Castillo Theatre in New York City, where he has been resident dramaturg since 1989. He is also the artistic director of Youth Onstage!, a youth theatre that produces politically-engaged experimental work, and editor of the journal *Müller in America*. Friedman, who holds a doctorate in theatre history from the University of Wisconsin, is the co-editor, with Bruce McConachie of *Theatre for Working Class Audiences in the United States, 1830–1980* (Greenwood Press) and editor of *Still on the Corner and Other Postmodern Political Plays* by Fred Newman (Castillo).

to impact, in a progressive, developmental way, on the world. So despite all the blood, sweat and tears we put into—and the pride and joy we take from—our Müller productions, by the late '90s we had decided that our staging of Müller’s texts wasn’t enough. If we felt so strongly about the value of Müller’s work, we needed to find ways to take it beyond what Castillo alone could do; we needed to help promote the production and study of his work by others.

We began by organizing public dialogues about Müller between Castillo’s artistic director Fred Newman and others who had directed and/or studied his work. Among our guests over the years have been: Sylvère Lotringer, editor of *Germania*, an invaluable collection of Müller interviews; Jonathan Kalb, author of *The Theater of Heiner Müller*, the first book-length study of Müller in English; Stephan Suschke, who had worked as Müller’s dramaturg and assistant director, first at the Deutsches Theater and later at the Berliner Ensemble; and a number of other innovative Müller directors from around the US. The largest of these discussions was between Newman and Robert Wilson in February 2002. It took place before a full house of 600 theatre artists, students and community organizers at John Jay College of the City University of New York. (The transcript of that conversation was published in *The Drama Review* in the Fall of

2003, T179. A video of the dialogue can be ordered from the Castillo Theatre, [boxoffice@allstars.org](mailto:boxoffice@allstars.org).)

Castillo also launched the journal *Müller in America*, which I edit, in 2003. Its publication was the culmination of two years of outreach. With the help of the Morton Agency, which represents Müller's estate in North America, we sought out everyone who had ever requested the rights to produce Müller in the United States or Canada and worked to track them down. It took a good deal of detective work, but we eventually found some two-dozen directors of Müller. Fifteen of them, including Sue-Ellen Case who had directed the first professional Müller production in the US, *Cement*, at the Berkeley Stage Company in 1979, contributed essays on their productions to the first issue.

The next big step in establishing ties among Müller scholars, artists, and audience members took place over the weekend of April 1 of this year, when *Müller in America* and the Castillo Theatre hosted a three-day conference on "The Cultural Politics of Heiner Müller." The conference was held at Castillo's home, the All Stars Project's performing arts and education complex, on 42nd Street. (Castillo moved to 42nd Street a year and a half ago and we have gotten quite a kick from producing Müller—and other "fringe" playwrights—in New York's commercial theatre district, just a few blocks from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.)

A total of 67 people attended the conference. Scholars and students came from Harvard, Cornell, Mercy College (New York), Georgia Southern University, Illinois Wesleyan, the University of California, Berkeley, and from Mount Allison and York Universities in Canada. Artists in attendance came from Castillo as well as from the DNA Theatre in Toronto and Scènes théâtre cinéma in Lyons, France (the only theatre in the world that has done more Müller than Castillo). A considerable number of Castillo audience members, some of who have wrestled with the German avant-gardist for over a decade, attended as well.

In fact, the conference's opening panel was entitled "An Audience for Heiner Müller." It was moderated by Castillo's managing director Diane Stiles and brought together six theatre-goers to discuss their reactions to and thoughts about the Müller work they have experienced at Castillo. The panel put the difficulty of Müller's texts front and center, raised the issue of accessibility, and created a context for the conversations that continued all weekend among the conference's diverse participants.

Other panels (more traditional, with the presentation of academic papers) addressed: "Müller and the Post-9/11 World," "Compromise and Imagination: Politics in the Life and Work of Heiner Müller," and "Müller, Memory, and History." Views on Müller's cultural politics varied widely, ranging from Joanne Stoddard, a grad student from Berkeley, who located Müller firmly within the frame of Brechtian dramaturgy and politics, to David Kilpatrick, a professor at Mercy College, who argued that Müller had no politics at all (at least in the traditional sense) and that his work was, in fact, "an awaken-

ing from the dream of ideology." Castillo's Newman gave a talk in which he praised Müller for abandoning "the falsification of the story," and for inviting directors, dramaturgs, and actors to play with his texts without the conservativizing constraint of telling a story.

Both Castillo and Scènes théâtre cinéma gave reports, which included video segments, on their theatres' Müller production histories, and Philippe Vincent, artistic director of Scènes, performed in French the entire "Man in the Elevator" speech from *The Task*. The conference began on Friday night with a reception followed by a per-



Ellen Korner as the Mistress of Ceremonies in *Revising Germany* by Fred Newman, directed by Gabrielle L. Kurlander, performed by the Castillo Theatre for conference attendees. Photo: Ron Glassman

formance of *Medeamaterial/Landscape With Argonauts* by students from Mount Allison University (New Brunswick, Canada) under the direction of Cordula Quint. On Saturday night, many conference participants attended the Castillo production of *Revising Germany* by Newman, under the direction of Gabrielle L. Kurlander. The play, which was inspired by John Fuegi's *Brecht & Co.*, included as characters both Brecht and Müller.

The conference has already generated a number of Müller-related projects. Castillo and Scènes théâtre cinéma are talking about the possibility of a joint production for the 2006-7 Season. Many of the papers presented at the conference will be published in the next issue of *Müller in America*. (For back issues or to submit an article, write me directly at [dfriedman@allstars.org](mailto:dfriedman@allstars.org).) The conference has also inspired the creation of "Heinermachine," a discussion list for those interested in Müller. It was set up by David Robinson, a presenter at the conference who teaches in the English and Comparative Literature Department at Georgia Southern University and who is also the secretary/treasurer of the International Brecht Society. Those interested in joining the ongoing conversation about Müller and his work can do so at the list's Web page:

<http://oneeyedman.net/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/heinermachine/>

# In the driver's seat.

## LMDA's Dramaturg Driven project gets under way.

*The idea for Dramaturg Driven began, as such things do, with a conversation. Jack Reuler, artistic director of Mixed Blood Theater, was talking with the Guthrie's Michael Bigelow Dixon (it was a Minneapolis-based conversation). They wanted to include dramaturgs in season planning and give 'turgs a chance to act on their initiatives. Inspired by Mixed Blood's idea, and hoping to get quicker tangible results, Liz Engelman took up the idea as well. While Mixed Blood's project continues, Liz engaged LMDA funds in a program that is not linked to season planning or even necessarily to production. Liz wanted to be able to support projects that are "attached to ideas and to dreams," to give dramaturgs "a nudge to go for something that doesn't need to be in a particular theater or part of a season." What follows are the names of the first recipients of Dramaturg Driven support and brief descriptions of their projects. All participants will be invited to talk about their projects in the pages of Review, so watch this space!*

*The next Dramaturg Driven deadline is August 1st. Consider yourself nudged.*

### Round 1

#### **Matt Di Cintio**

Pennies for Pages. Emigrant Theater is a Twin Cities nonprofit company whose mission is to explore perspectives of the American identity, foster the ingenuity of the American voice and champion living playwrights. In its early stages, the [Dramaturgy Driven] fund will first pay for the costs of photocopying drafts and pages changed by playwrights in the hall. As the company continues to grow, it shall also grow the fund, using it still to pay for paper and ink, but eventually also for airplane tickets, hotel rooms and stipends.

#### **Michael Dixon**

Reenactment Theatre is a pilot program that proposes the use of dramatic techniques to engage people in the constitutional issues of our time. The activity of reenacting historical dialogues was an impossibility prior to the invention of recording devices which allow for the accurate transcription of a public (or private) conversation. The performance aspect of Reenactment Theatre will be accompanied by both pre- and post-performance discussions of the issues and personalities involved in the case. This discussion will involve scholars and others with expertise in the issues being argued, thus creating an interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and information around the theatrical event.

#### **Amy Jensen**

Regional Symposium: Despite growing interest in the Rockies Region in generating new work, this area is still one of the least represented in LMDA. This proposal tackles that challenge head-on with a high-profile symposium/event in Salt Lake City for Fall 2005. Not only would this event dynamically present LMDA's goals and programs, it would provide a forum hitherto unrealized in the theatre community: to start a dialogue between professionals, students, academics, and theatre enthusiasts.

### Round 2

#### **D.J. Hopkins**

Theatre and the City: this project explores the relationship among theatre, architecture, and urban space, and engages the members of LMDA in that exploration. Beginning with a Northwest regional get-together that will include a free tour of the new Seattle Public Library (pictured below), the project will follow with a review of the library in the pages of *Review*, and will conclude with a public discussion of theatre's role in our cities and communities, in conjunction with LMDA's 2006 Conference in Minneapolis, where the Guthrie will be unveiling its own statement on the relationship between the theatre and the city.

#### **Erica Nagel and Matthew Shook**

Erica and Matthew receive funds to increase and enhance community awareness, appreciation, and knowledge of the history of the Ramapo Mountain Folk through a public reading of a play and a traveling museum exhibit based on collected oral histories, stories, music, and history of their extinct communities. Matthew proposed an oral history project with the elderly survivors of this community. A passionate fan of Oral History/documentary theatre, Erica proposed linking the oral history project to a public presentation of a play collaged together from the stories they collected.

#### **Jen Shook**

Jen receives regional funds to address the intersection of poetry and performance with Caffeine Theatre, which locates the nexus of thought and action in language — specifically, in conversation. In order to expand this conversation beyond the borders of the stage, they want to stimulate talk and debate in the old coffeehouse style, an open forum for conversation, and a return to the radical tradition of poetry to pose questions of social conscience and of dramaturgical form.



The new Seattle Public Library, designed by Rem Koolhaas.



# LMDA Regional Updates

*Even when we aren't meeting at our annual conference, LMDA members can stay connected with dramaturgs in their area through their Regional VPs. Please feel free to send news about theatrical happenings in your neck of the woods to your VP. Many regions hold LMDA gatherings throughout the year (often in connection with theatre festivals and the like) — your Regional VP can make you aware of those events. Or if you have an idea for an event, contact your VP! Below is a list of the VPs, along with their e-mail addresses. So go ahead and build those dramaturgical networks! We all know how useful they can be!*

**BUTTE** (Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota): Kathleen McLennan — kathleen\_mclennan@und.nodak.edu

**CANADA:** Brian Quirt — bquirt@interlog.com

**GREATER MIDWEST** (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin): Art Borreca — art-borreca@uiowa.edu, Adrien-Alice Hansel — ahansel@actorstheatre.org

**METRO CHICAGO:** Rachel Shteir — rshteir@depaul.edu

**HOMESTEAD** (Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas): Kae Koger — akoger@ou.edu

**METRO PHILADELPHIA:** Shannon O'Donnell — srodonnell@yahoo.com

**MID-ATLANTIC** (Delaware, Maryland, DC, Virginia, West Virginia): Madeleine Oldham has moved across the country. Her replacement is TBA. Stay tuned.

**NYC:** Elizabeth Bennett — ebennett@mtc-nyc.org

**NORTHEAST** (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, NY State, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont): [Marge Betley (on sabbatical)—mbetley@gevatheatre.org], Ilana Brownstein — sparkleturgy@earthlink.net

**NORTHWEST** (Northern California, Idaho, Oregon, Washington): Bronwyn Eisenberg — imogen@alumni.princeton.edu

**PLAINS STATES** (Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska): Susan Gregg — sgregg@repstl.org, Carter Lewis — carterwl@earthlink.net

**ROCKIES** (Colorado, Utah, Wyoming): Amy Jensen — amythystjensen@netscape.net

**SOUTHEAST** (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee): Freddie Ashley — freddie.ashley@woodruffcenter.org

**SOUTHWEST** (Arizona, Southern California, Nevada, New Mexico): Allison Horsley — ahorsley@ljp.ucsd.edu

## LMDA Canada

LMDA Canada held its annual winter meeting in Calgary on March 4, 2005, hosted by Alberta Theatre Projects at that company's playRites Festival. A dozen LMDA members gathered on a beautiful sunny day to discuss their current artistic and administrative projects and to place on the boardroom table specific hot topics that they wanted to share. The three hour meeting was an excellent survey of some of the powerful work being done by dramaturgs across Canada, and a number of the hot topics resonated for everyone in the room:

- the focus on pop culture themes and references in new writing, rather than substance and depth;

- theatre company culture and the resistance to change in organizations;

- the peripheral position of many theatre for young audience companies and artists;

- ways to involve and communicate artistic ideas/action to non-artistic staff;

- how to get rehearsal/creation back into our theatres, rather than exiled into rehearsal halls;

- how to support large cast plays, and what happens to a theatre culture that can't afford to?

The rest of the festival weekend was a great success, and we were particularly pleased to have Paul Walsh from ACT in San Francisco and Howard Shalwitz from Woolly Mammoth in Washington

in attendance. Much important work was conducted after the productions at the local Auburn Saloon.

LMDA Canada's next event is the annual Mini-Conference on Dramaturgy, July 4 & 5, 2005, presented in association with the Theatre Centre in Toronto. Featuring case studies of innovative projects from around Canada, the conference boasts free admission and an exhilarating panel of speakers. We also hope to hold an inaugural west coast Mini-Conference in Vancouver in the fall.

Brian Quirt  
Regional VP, Canada

## Rockies

After more than two decades as Producing Artistic Director at Denver Center Theatre Company, Donovan Marley is stepping down. Kent Thompson, formerly of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, will be the new Artistic Director. Nagle Jackson, over New Play Development, will be returning to Princeton and his own writing after April and May's last WorkingStages showcase, featuring a fully rehearsed and staged workshop production of *Garbo In My Eyes* by New York based playwright Mark Eisman, and *Slabtown* by Denver acting company member and playwright, Steven Hughes.

Salt Lake Acting Company Playwright in Residence J.T. Rogers was awarded a 2005 playwriting fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts for his play *Madagascar*. His new piece, *The Overwhelming*, will have a free reading at SLAC's New Play Sound-

# LMDA Regional Updates, continued

ing Series on April 25 at 7:30 p.m.

After over three years of development and three intensive workshops, Salt Lake Acting Company Resident Playwright Julie Jensen's *Dust Eaters* receives its world premiere. The play, a "chamber history" on the Goshute Indian's roughly 140 year struggle against white power and privilege, performs April 5 through May 1, at the peak of political furor on the question of nuclear waste storage on the Goshute Reservation. Told in 20-year increments, the play traces the intersecting stories of two families, one Native American, the other Mormon. Events in conjunction with the play include: Post-play discussion with Julie Jensen (April 10); "Plays That Can Change The World"—A Symposium on Political Theatre with playwrights J.T. Rogers and Julie Jensen, and moderated by Mike Dorrell, SLAC dramaturg (April 23); A Panel Discussion with Forrest Cuch, Director, Utah Division of Indian Affairs; Will Bagley, Utah Historian; Julie Jensen, Playwright; and Mike Dorrell, SLAC Literary Manager (April 24).

Writers between the ages of 15–21: Pulitzer winner Suzan-Lori Parks is one of the guest instructors for Denver's Curious Theatre 3-week summer playwriting workshop (July 18-August 7). Twelve young writers along with Parks and other playwrights, actors, and directors to develop and produce a staged reading of their short plays. Applications—submitting a short play—are due June 1. Full scholarships are available. Contact Dee Covington at [dee@curioustheatre.org](mailto:dee@curioustheatre.org) or 303-623-2349.

Since December, Gretchen Haley, and Lisa Lusero have been working on a new piece dealing with citizenship, motherhood, history, suffrage, migration, faith, language and hope. In Gretchen's words, "It's a big sweeping project, ambitious to say the least! It's great to be writing and exploring, and who knows what will come of it!" So keep out an eye for it.

Robert O'Hara is currently at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, working with the university's BFA in Performance students to create a new piece. Originally entitled *Good Breeding*, the piece will be an adaptation of Greek myths based on the stories of Tantalus, Cassandra, Electra, Orestes, Agamemnon, Helen, and Clytemnestra.

In September 2004 the SITI Company's *Systems/Layers* received its world premiere at Utah State University in Logan, Utah.

Steven Deitz's residency at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, resulted in rewriting and remounting *Handing Down the Names*. The play performs through April 9. Deitz will also participate in BYU's regular dramaturgical events, a note in the production study guide, Thursday evening post-show discussions, "Meet the Company," and "University Roundtable," a post-show panel discussion including experts from across the campus. On April 7, Deitz's lecture on "Living History: The Playwright as Story Teller" will be the first in the annual Mary Lou Fulton Endowed Chair Lecture.

The University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah: Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival awarded *The Least of These* by Jared Anderson Meritorious Achievement for Playwriting, Make-up Design and Costumes, and actor Richard Wall. It was recognized for Design Excellence in Sound Design, and received Honorable Men-

tion for its Lighting Design and Stage Management. And coming up: the Lab Theatre/ Studio performs *Bird Catcher in Hell* by master puppeteer and playwright S. Glenn Brown (Bohdi Zen) April 14- 17, 2005. Inspired by Asian puppet traditions and originally a Buddhist morality play, this premiere features, among others a herd of 30 cows, an army of frogs, a troupe of monkeys with magic coconuts, a chorus of disembodied heads, masks galore worn by the 21 human puppeteers/performers—and that's just for starters. The result of over fifteen years of international travels and studies of the art of puppetry, the Peace Corps-bound Brown promises to continue to be committed to seeking "even newer new ways of telling stories. This is vital to the lifeblood of theatre. Otherwise, you're simply dusting off old stories." For times & tickets, call Kingsbury Hall Box Office at 801-581-7100 or ArtTix at 801-355-ARTS (2787).

Amy Jensen  
Regional VP, Rockies

## Greater Midwest

Actors Theatre of Louisville just finished its 29th annual Humana Festival of New American Plays. We held a mini-LMDA meeting on Theatre Professionals' Weekend (March 25–27) to touch base with members (and potential members) about goings-on around the country: we chatted up plays, asked for some ongoing conversations about international work and commissioning/funding structures to support playwrights and saw a whole bunch of plays. Tanya Palmer, outgoing Director of New Play Development, moderated a panel on New Play Publishing, with Playscripts, DPS, and Kathy Sova representing both *American Theatre* and TCG Books. We spoke about the feasibility of having scripts available on a plays' opening night (Woolly Mammoth is actively interested in the proposition, if you want in on the conversation), on the difference between trade publications (TCG) for library and reading use and acting editions (Playscripts, DPS) through publishers that have licensed the rights for plays, and on the ways that literary managers can be useful to publishers (send them recommendations—plays we love, ways they can be useful to us).

The following weekend, Special Visitors' Weekend, Morgan Jenness moderated a panel co-sponsored by the LMDA and the ATCA (American Theatre Critics' Association) called "Transforming the Conversation: Dramaturgs' and Critics' Role in Guiding Cultural Dialogue" with Charles McNulty of *The Village Voice*, Oskar Eustis now of the Public Theatre, Misha Berson of *The Seattle Times*, and playwright Kathleen Tolan, whose play *Memory House* premiered at the Humana Festival and will be running at Playwrights' Horizons in New York April 22 through May 29. The conversation was wide-ranging on the ways critics, dramaturgs and other interested theater-makers can help create a better culture for the arts in the US. Many thanks to the LMDA and ATCA for their generous support of the panel. A transcript is (hopefully) forthcoming.

Got thoughts for a good panel for next year's Humana Festival? Got a favorite under-known writer that we should be reading for 2006? Send suggestions to Adrien-Alice Hansel, Literary Manager at

# LMDA Regional Updates, continued

Actors Theatre: <ahansel@actorstheatre.org>.

The Guthrie Theatre will host a conversation with playwrights Kia Corthron, Jerome Hairston, Jeffrey Hatcher, Naomi Iizuka, Kevin Kling, Charles L. Mee, Julie Marie Myatt, Lisa Schlesinger, Abdel Fattah Abu-Srou, Kelly Stuart, and Naomi Wallace on Sunday, April 17, 2005 from 1–2 pm on the Guthrie Thrust Stage.

Nine playwrights who have traveled the globe in search of dramatic ideas will share their distinct and unique experiences and discuss the range of issues they've encountered while pushing the boundaries of their own playwriting beyond America's borders. Their individual travels, sponsored by the Bush Foundation, have taken them to Liberia, Turkey, Cambodia, Korea, France, the occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel, Ireland, and along the route of the Fourth Crusade during the 13th century from Venice to Istanbul. They're now writing plays for the Guthrie Theater on subjects ranging from the sex trade in Southeast Asia to the "separation fence" being constructed by Israel to the legacy of American resettlement in Africa.

Adrien-Alice Hansel and Art Borreca  
Regional VPs, Greater Midwest

## Metro Philly

Early December, the Metro Philly members held a brunch meeting chez Volansky, and brainstormed on the following questions: How might we educate the Philly Theatre community about the function, value and availability of literary managers and dramaturgs, with the goal to create new partnerships and projects? How might we provide Philly with a "lab" for early career dramaturgs? What kind of professional development and learning opportunities might we provide for ourselves in the near future? The conversation generated a list of potential activities and events that we hope to implement.

Our first action was to establish a regional area list serve which we are hoping will provide a place for local dramaturgs and literary managers to stay connected and involved in the community. If you are interested in joining the "Phillyturgs" list serve feel free to email Elizabeth.pool@villanova.edu for more information.

Mark Lord is currently in production of Charles Ludlam's *Conquest of the Universe or When Queens Collide*, which he is making with students from Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges. He is also doing the early work for a new evening for the Live Arts Festival which will take place in the basement of Smoke in Old City. "Looking at Beckett's dramaticules and preparing to spend the summer in a real and metaphorical basement. Stay tuned for details."

Carey Mazer is currently on sabbatical and is using every second of his time revising his book manuscript, *Shylock's Beard*.

In celebration of People's Light & Theatre Company's 30th Anniversary, Shannon O'Donnell is producing 30FEST, an evening of contemporary one-act plays that explore modern notions of family. In addition to producing plays by A.R. Gurney, David Henry Hwang, David Lindsay-Abaire, Donald Margulies, Kira Obolensky, Edwin Sanchez, Milcha Sanchez-Scott, and Diana Son, three writers have been commissioned. 30FEST will premiere James Still's *Iron*

*Kisses*, Louis Lippa's *The Mourning Show*, and Angela Kariotis' *Say Logos/Say Word*. 30FEST runs June 29-July 24, 2005. For more information see our website at [www.peopleslight.org](http://www.peopleslight.org). Also, Shannon invites everyone to the Philadelphia premiere of *4.48 Psychosis* by Sarah Kane, which she directed with the stellar help of dramaturgy newcomer Jason Franklin. *4.48 Psychosis* is produced by Theatre Catalyst, and plays at the Adrienne Theatre April 4–22, 2005.

Christian DuComb served as dramaturg for *Accumulation Process*, an improvisational music/dance collaboration led by Rick Henderson. He helped fine tune improvisational structures for several sections of the piece, and worked with Rick to develop an overall trajectory for the evening. Christian wrote that, "It was a fascinating challenge to be dramaturg on an improvisational project, and ultimately very fulfilling." Christian has also been accepted to several graduate programs (some in dramaturgy, some in performance studies) and is contemplating his next move for the fall. In the meantime, he's developing a new play with his theatre company, Dead Genius Productions. It's tentatively titled, *A Theatrical Rendering of the Modern Life of Karen Bolleart*. Christian will be acting in this show which will premiere sometime in mid-June.

Gina Pisasale began this year designing the set for the ensemble-created (and extensively dramaturged) fantasy world of *Twelfth Night* at Villanova University. Presently she is acting in *This Day and Age* at the Hedgerow Theatre in Media, dramaturging *Henry V* for the Harrisburg Shakespeare Festival's June outdoor production, and directing and performing for Greenlight Theatrical Productions New Light Series that will play at the Shubin Theatre in June, all while "laboring" in a real estate office as an administrative assistant. She is also in the process of applying to PhD Theatre History/Dramatic Theory programs.

Shannon O'Donnell  
Regional VP, Metro Philadelphia

## Southwest

University of California, San Diego hosted its annual Baldwin New Play Festival in mid-April, featuring full-length and one-act plays by current MFA Playwriting students Barry Levey, Tim J. Lord, Ruth McKee, and Josh Tobiessen. Guests traveled from across the country for a weekend glimpse at some of America's playwriting future.

Scott Horstein has become the part-time Literary Manager and Dramaturg at Cornerstone Theater Company, a community-based theater company located in downtown Los Angeles, while temporarily on hiatus from his Literary Director position at the Black Dahlia Theatre. Cornerstone's big upcoming production is *A Long Bridge Over Deep Waters* by James Still, the culmination of their five-year Faith-Based Cycle of plays uniting 10 different Los Angeles communities of faith in a single drama capturing the joyful and painful quest for faith in contemporary LA. He also recently dramaturged Bernard Shaw's *The Philanderer* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

The Theatre @ Boston Court closed the first show of its 2005 season, a *Medea* reimagined in the kitchen of the hotel where Jason



# LMDA Regional Updates, continued

is marrying his new trophy bride, and followed it up with *Echo's Hammer* by Ken Roht. In February they hosted FourPlay, a weekend of prepared readings of *Gulls*, book by Nick Salamone and music by Maury McIntyre; *Unfinished American Highwayscape #9 & 32* by Carlos Murillo; *A Map of Doubt and Rescue* by Susan Miller; and *Shape of Lies* by Gilbert Girion.

Playwrights Arena's January/February production of *The Orange Grove* by LMDA member Tom Jacobson, a world-premiere adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* set in a church in Los Angeles, was an *LA Times* Critic's Choice. Jacobson's *Ouroboros* at The Road Theatre Company won one Garland Award from *Back Stage West* (playwriting), was nominated for an LA Drama Critics Circle Award (playwriting), and is nominated for four *LA Weekly* Awards. *Sperm* at Circle X Theatre Company was nominated for six *LA Weekly* Awards.

Celebration Theatre's new Managing Artistic Director is Michael Matthews, recently arrived from Chicago where he received numerous Jeff awards for directing.

The Fountain Theatre's current production of *Yellowman* by Dael Orlandersmith has been extended again, this time until May 29, 2005. Critics' Choice in every paper, sold out shows, another wonderful success with two magnificent performances by Chris Butler and Deidrie Henry under the direction of Shirley Jo Finney. Also, the Fountain Theatre recently won 5 LADCC (Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle) Awards, including Best Production, for Athol Fugard's *Exits and Entrances*, which is getting a lot of interest around the country.

La Jolla Playhouse inaugurated its new theatre in February with Mark O'Donnell's world premiere adaptation *Private Fittings*, based on Feydeau's *Tailleur Pour Dames*. LJP's upcoming season includes: *Palm Beach*, *The Screwball Musical*, a Page To Stage workshop of a new musical adaptation of *Zhivago*, *I Am My Own Wife*, Theatre de la Jeune Lune's production of *The Miser*, Lee Blessing's *The Scottish Play*, and *The Essential Alice*, a new adaptation by Annie Weisman with music composed by Michael Friedman.

Allison Horsley  
Regional VP, Southwest

## Northwest

Nicole Galland writes: "I left Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Literary Department as of February 17. I left the department in excellent hands; my interim replacement is Amy Utstein, who dramaturged our just-opened World Premiere of Chuck Mee's absolutely delightful *Fetes de la Nuit*. Caitlin Talbot, my intern, will continue on as Literary Intern for the rest of the 05-06 season.

It has been an honor to oversee the BRT Literary Department, even on a half-time basis. I leave only because the other half of my life has recently surprised me with its fruitfulness: my first novel (*The Fool's Tale*) has just come out and been well-received and the publisher (William Morrow) has signed me up for several more. The chance to be a solvent full-time writer is too tempting to refuse—but I'm very sad about leaving the Rep. It is a tremendous place,

and I hope you all continue your various relationships with it long into the future.

Amy's official title at BRT is Interim Literary Manager / Dramaturg."

Madeleine Oldham has left Baltimore's Centerstage to take a job with the California Shakespeare Theater as Resident Dramaturg. Bronwyn Eisenberg has moved from that position to Director of Artistic Learning.

Duca Knezevic is the new Director of Literary Services at Playwrights Foundation, which continues its year-round play development work. They're partnering with The National New Play Center at Stanford University, and also are continuing their yearly In the Rough series with staged readings of new plays by Marcus Gardley and Elaine Romero in San Francisco.

Terence Keane is the new literary manager at SF Playhouse.

Three of the student plays developed in the New Works Incubator under the dramaturgical mentorship of Jeannie Barroga will be presented at the Magic Theater, San Francisco: Andres Saito, *Just Like Brothers*; Samantha Chanse, *Sleeper*; and Wesley Du, *Shui Jiao*.

The January 2005 playreading of *Banyan* by Jeannie Barroga resulted in plans for the co-production by Bindlestiff Studio and the Asian American Theater, both in San Francisco slated for November 2005.

The LMDA grant for dramaturgy on *The Bubblegum Killers* will help fund the May 2005 workshop in Sacramento.

Barroga's screenplay *My Friend Morty* will be developed and produced by the East Bay film group, Videosyncrasies.

Daniel Omstead, Literary Manager at Aurora Theatre Company, writes: "We've created a new play development program called the Global Age Project (GAP) that is a mixture of prize/commissions to present developmental readings of 6 new one-acts that focus on a global/modern/futuristic theme. More information to be found at <http://gap.auroratheatre.org>. We're very happy that we've already received \$40,000 from the James Irvine Foundation to support this project over the next two years.

We've also commissioned our first playwright for the GAP: Craig Lucas (*Reckless*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *The Dying Gaul*) will develop a play with us over the next two seasons."

And that's the latest from the Bay Area.

Bronwyn Eisenberg  
Regional VP, Pacific Northwest

## Southeast

Jaz Dorsey, of The Dramaturgy Project in Nashville, Tennessee sent this in:

Two Nashville playwrights have sparked this city's theater community by producing and directing their own musicals to tremendous artistic success and enthusiastic audience response.

Mike McFaden, a former artistic director of the Pittsburgh Savoyards has been invited to bring his musical *Ain't We Got Fun* to the Fresh Fruit Festival in New York. *Ain't We Got Fun* is an utterly charming story built around a collection of songs from the roaring

# Regional Updates, continued

twenties and set in 1929 Chicago. It follows the adventures of a charismatic young gay man named Oscar and the girl (Chloe) whose crush on him sets her on the road to true love. *Ain't We Got Fun* has received two staged readings in Nashville over the past year, both of which played to full houses and standing ovations. McFaden has begun raising money to take the Nashville cast to New York for the festival in July.

Kaine Riggan is the author & composer of *Could It Be Love*. Originally staged at the Donelson Senior Center for the Arts the play is now headed to the stage of the Ryman Theater which was the original home of the Grand Ol' Opry. *Could It Be Love* was written with a specific dramaturgical objective, which was to create a musical that provided roles for seniors. It played to packed houses as well and is now moving into what should be the venue for original musicals by Nashville artists.

Riggan is also the author of *Sitcom*, a weekly serialized comedy which brings a new episode each month and performs at PLAY, one of the sophisticated clubs which has sprung up on Church Street. The night I saw it, *Sitcom* drew the most eclectic audience I have ever seen at a Nashville production. Riggan, a former director of Performing Arts for the state of Tennessee, is a real ambassador for the talented actors who are working for him and the script is witty and thought provoking.

I am delighted to be able to ride on their coattails with my musical *Songs from the Café Escargot*, I and suspect that there will be a wealth of new musicals out of the legendary songwriters' community which will support Nashville's claim to be Music City USA. We are all obliged to the owners of clubs PLAY, The Chute, The Gaslight, and DeVil's.

## review

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Special Thanks to the Performing Arts Department of Washington University in St. Louis for contributing production considerations to Volume 15 of *Review*.

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*Inquiries from prospective contributors are encouraged. PROJECTS-IN-PROCESS queries should be directed to D.J. Hopkins: "D.J. Hopkins" <dhopkins@artsci.wustl.edu>. Queries regarding Review's IN PRINT section should be directed to Madeleine Oldham: "Madeleine Oldham" <madeleine@centerstage.org>. General inquiries and inquiries regarding feature articles may be directed to Shelley Orr: "Shelley Orr" <morr@artsci.wustl.edu>. Regional Update submissions should be directed to the appropriate LMDA regional representative. Questions regarding the Regional Updates section should be directed to Megan Monaghan: "Megan Monaghan" <megan.monaghan@woodruffcenter.org>. Review reserves the right to edit (for length) any Update submission without notification. Regional Updates should be 400–600 words in length: keep everybody informed about special events, readings, workshops, lectures, limited performances — the sort of thing that didn't make the subscription brochure.*

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