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LMDA Review

Volume 8, Issue 1 (1996)

FROM THE PRESIDENT, JAYME KOSZYN

I just finished directing Charles Ludlam's wondrous *Mystery of Irma Vep*. As we rehearsed the play, order emerged out of its seeming chaos, one that subscribes to the well-made play form as much as anything by Scribe. Prior to *Vep* I was dramaturg for *Arcadia*. In it Stoppard applies chaos theory to the way life is lived; the characters find there are patterns hidden within the messiness of this world. And while working on these projects since just before summer, I became President of LMDA. Finding the order within chaos seems to be the theme of my life.

With the help of the new LMDA officers, Michele Volansky, Allen Kennedy, John Dias, Emily Morse, Norman Frisch, and our indefatigable office manager Lisa Timmel, this year's order for the organization is beginning to define itself. In varying combinations of those mentioned above, we have cleaned the LMDA office, contacted regional vice-presidents, organized monthly regional meetings, set up email lists, formed committees, assigned newsletter contributors, and developed the driving theme, location and dates for our upcoming annual conference. A massive mailing was done to lapsed members, and we've averaged over five renewals and new members a week since the middle of July. Through organization and solidarity, we implore you to help us continue to channel the energy surrounding our profession, energy that reflects curiosity amongst colleagues, audiences and members of other disciplines about what we do and how we do it.

Unchartered territory has become the focus for many of us who work both as free-lance and staff dramaturgs, and LMDA is taking the initiative for defining this territory to best protect and inform its members. One of those unexplored areas incorporates the details of living in the real world, the world of contracts, fee structures, "work-for-hire" vs. "independent contractor," and especially, the commercial transfers of work that dramaturgs have created. Because of her experience as dramaturg for *Rent*, Lynn Thompson has redirected these concerns as the foundation for the newest LMDA committee, the Advocacy Caucus. The concrete goals of this initiative are outlined in Lynn's article in this newsletter (even as recently as last week we received a request for LMDA guidelines from an attorney dealing with a case involving a dramaturg's work). I feel very strongly that we must define these terms for ourselves, while always giving the benefit of the doubt to producers who are confused about issues of credit and creative rights. Through the work of Lynn's committee, we hope to foster understanding amongst collaborators and producers alike.

The issue of advocacy was raised at the most recent LMDA conference, and this annual event has always been the source of new ideas, new publications (like Susan Jonas, Geoff Proehl and Michael Lupu's *Dramaturgy in American*

Theatre: A Source Book), new friendships, and new projects. Based on conversations I've had with members, this coming year's conference will have a *fin-de-siècle* theme, and will include thinkers from fields other than theatre to comment upon theatre and culture at large. Vice President of Communications Norman Frisch and I had numerous discussions over the summer about a conference that would reflect the widening reputation of the profession and would be suited to the members' interest in a New York City metropolitan area site. The result are plans for an ambitious, extremely exciting event, with the Janus figure (its face looking forward and backward simultaneously) as its mascot. Because of the scope of the conference, it will take place over two years instead of one, united by the turn-of-the-century idea. The first part will be subtitled "Dramaturgs and Their Friends Celebrate the End of Twentieth Century Theatre" and the second part will be "Dramaturgs and Their Friends Anticipate the Theatre of the Twenty-First Century." In keeping with the reflective nature of the first part of the conference, and because of its history within the profession, the Yale School of Drama in New Haven has been chosen for Part One (see conference box for date and details). We are grateful to Mark Bly, stalwart LMDA member, Chairman of the Playwriting, Dramaturgy, and Dramatic Criticism Program at the Drama School, for agreeing to be our host, providing LMDA with the School's facilities at no cost and assigning on-campus personnel to support Norman and his committee's work. I hope that we will set an unprecedented record for attendance this year at what I have faith will be a milestone conference for LMDA.

We hope that this first newsletter of the season will provide you with much needed information and inspiration. You will notice that we have a new column, "Dramaturgs at Large," reports from members about theatre they have seen and their experiences within the field. Please let me know if you are interested in writing a report for us for the next issue of the *LMDA Review*, especially if you live or work in one of the regions not represented in this issue. We would like to cover as much of the Americas and beyond as possible, and use the *Review* as a window to members' work.

As always, remember that LMDA is a member-driven organization. Ideas can be made concrete and productive through strength in numbers. Please do not hesitate to contact officers, committee members, regional vice-presidents or myself about ideas, concerns or questions that you have. Order *can* be gotten from chaos.

Jayne Koszyn is the dramaturg at the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston. To contact her directly, call 617-266-7900, ext.2528, or email her "jkoszyn@aol.com".

DRAMATURGS AT LARGE

How Two 'Turgs Spent Their Summers

BLAULAPALOOZA IN MILWAUKEE

by Scott T. Cummings

"I am interested in what it is that separates theater from what it is not." With this deceptively simple statement, Herb Blau launched his 1996 NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers at the Center for Twentieth Century Studies of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. This was the fifth (and supposedly, final) time that Blau offered his seminar on Performance Theory: Modern Drama and Postmodern Theatre and I was fortunate enough that day to be one of the twelve academics gathered around the seminar table on the ninth floor for the UWM's Curtin Hall.

Blau assembled a diverse dozen: a costume designer from Ole Miss, a Belgian video artist interested in gender, a husband-and-wife directing team who had studied with Lecoq, a Germanist writing on Goethe and marriage, a Lacanian from Argentina, a theorist of "postorganic performance," a Robert Wilson expert, an African-American actor-turned-director, and a few dramaturgs and critics. Within days, it became clear that the composition of the group mirrored the concerns of the seminar, chief among them the contentious relationship between text and performance in postmodern theater. Performance, Blau reminded us, is the privileged heuristic of advanced theater discourse in the 1990s. (If you doubt it, pick up a Routledge catalogue and count the books with the word "performance" in the title.)

For the seminar, Blau put together two thick customized anthologies of theoretical essays, dramatic texts, and performance scenarios, organized around twin theoretical propositions: "(1) that modernist drama is the ideological ground of postmodern performance; (2) that what is meant by postmodern theater (after Brecht, Beckett, and Genet) is as likely to be defined by new approaches to the canonical drama as by the production of new plays." For eight weeks, on Monday and Thursday afternoons, we met to listen to presentations by members of the group, to ruminate over the day's assigned readings, and to rise as best we could to Blau's challenge to think about plays "as a virtual prospectus of theory." The reading was exhaustive and exhausting, ranging from Benjamin and Barthes to Baudrillard and Babha, with a healthy dose of Blau's own writings distributed throughout. Discussions were lively and heated, and often spilled over to the bar across the street. Polysyllables were ubiquitous.

When the air got too thick with the jargon of postmodernism, Blau often demonstrated his ability to cut through the fog and formulate a practical question that went to the theoretical heart of the matter. For example, one day Blau matter-of-factly suggested that at any given moment the evolution of theater boils down to the question, "Do you want more theater or less?" That is, is the act of theater itself to be emphasized, punched up, foregrounded in its execution or masked, obscured, somehow denied? In this paradigm, Chekhov clearly wanted less theater and Restoration Playwrights can be seen to have wanted more. For Blau, these changing historical tides represent an essential ambivalence in the very nature of theater, a desire to show and not to show that is particularly evident in the self-conscious dramas of the modern era.

No sooner had our summertime community of scholar practitioners taken shape than it came time to disband. We parted in good company after our Milwaukee celebrations, ready for a new school year, a new theater season, but first and foremost ready for a long day at the beach.

Scott Cummings, a faculty member at Boston College, is a freelance writer who contributes to American Theatre.

NOTES FROM AVIGNON:

Diary of a Francophile Theatre Junkie

by Susan Jonas

In 1946, Jean Vilar launched "la Semaine d'art" which evolved into the month-long Festival d'Avignon, bringing thousands each summer to the medieval walled city. We arrive fifty years later, and taxi from the train station to the apartment we've rented for the week. It's dusty, noisy, ill-equipped against the crushing heat with only two portable fans, and hideously appointed by the chotchke-of-the-month club. But around the corner is the Place de l'Horloge, embraced by grand Italianate seventeenth-century edifices, among them the municipal theatre, where audiences are greeted at the portals by huge pensive statues of Molière and Beaumarchais.

Because the official festival, or "In," which is hugely subsidized by the government, is usually sold-out long before the opening, I have ordered tickets in advance by phone. So I make my way to the "Off" office, housed in an old lycée on the vast cobbled square facing the Palace, and fight through a receiving line of flyer distributors dispensing descriptions of and treatises on events; these are often the directors, performers and playwrights themselves. Inside I peruse mailboxes of flyers for the 500 show which compete for my time. Publicity folders are updated daily. Though every periodical assigns reviewers, they can't possibly keep up with the voluminous activity, so we all rely on word-of-mouth, favorite companies and blind luck. I collect my press card, allowing me to attend most "Off" shows for free. My companion's "Off" card provides substantial discounts.

We repair to a café for citrons presses with our Village Voice-sized "Off" program and, pens in hand, got to work surrounded by others bent over their Herculean algebraic tasks with seemingly competitive determinations. We circle, list, prioritize, sort by time and location, and emerge with a schedule which allows for five to seven plays per day, if we eschew dance, music, film, lectures, exhibitions, meals and bathroom breaks. Seems doable.

While the repertoire is international, nearly all the companies are French and nearly all the plays are in translation. The Americans represented are David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Christopher Durang, Martin Sherman, Murray Schisgal, Henry Miller, Dorothy Parker, and three (count 'em) plays by Israel Horowitz—not all our best products. Counting one piece by Wilde and a few by Shakespeare, there are fifteen plays from English among the 500 offerings. It's humbling. In hundreds of furnished and found spaces throughout the city, shows are scheduled back-to-back, averaging seven venues per day.

In the end, I see twenty-one shows, averaging only three a day. I take breaks; meander with my dog around the Palace gardens where I glimpse my first peacock (It spreads; I gasp; an old woman laughs.); watch Grand Guignol puppet-shows in the playground; browse through book stalls of antique and theatre-related books; linger over couscous, crepes, tapas; meet at length with each director of the Marivaux productions. By four A.M., when the bistros, clubs and cabarets close and the streets finally empty, the ground is paved by layers of pastel colored flyers like oversized confetti. By nine A.M., when I emerge for a café au lait which seems reason enough to live, the square is miraculously pristine. I relish a calm unpeopled hour before they flood back into circulation with the contended weariness of mild post-party hang-overs. The drug of choice is performing art, just before the earliest shows begin at ten, the addicts, anxious for their first fix of the day, stumble into the winding car-free Venetian streets which ray out from the square, clutching maps and squinting at street signs. It is a city of junkies; I'm home.

THE PLAYS: WIN A FEW (All "Off")

In this superb two-hander *Ay Carmela*, a hot-blooded performer, requisitioned to perform for victorious Franco generals, rebels and is executed. A well-theatricalized diatribe, Diderot's *Paradoxe sur le comédien* demonstrates the acting machinery of "Method" versus technique. *Les Trois Molière* is an impeccable melange of three one-acts about domestic misery, performed with gusto by five quick-change artists, which reminds us that transformation is most delightfully theatrical when a leap of imagination rather than sleight of hand. Hugo's *Hernani* is boldly stylized and melodramatic like flamenco, gloriously declaimed, with jazzy Spanish music counterpointing the alexandrines. In *Bergson-Feydeau*, practitioner and theorist humorously investigate what makes us laugh, and why we can laugh in the theatre about things that elicit few titters in life.

The highlight for me, as a translator of Marivaux, is five (count 'em) productions

AVIGNON--CONT'D

of his plays which are usually mannered effects defined more by preciousness than delicacy. Jean-Pierre Andre's impeccably faithful production of *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* successfully assumed we were Marivaux's contemporaries, offering bright, verbal, playful and dimensional characters, neither farcical nor Cowardesque. Dark edges of temper and cruelty were apparent but not over-emphasized, gender and class restrictions observed but not radicalized. Slide-panels of Watteau-like paintings set the mood, with spare well-chosen period furnishings and costumes. The mise-en-scène for Edmond Tamiz's excellent *Le legs*, a one-act on greed, was a clean square outlined by tiny potted trees, teasingly suggesting a miniature Versailles garden. Dressed in period silhouette, the skilled actors execute scenes with ritualistic efficiency, and sit attentively outside the square watching when "off," the distancing effect suggests a courtly gavotte. With *Le triomphe de l'amour*, Christine Lacombe, in a flight of humorless whimsy, holds this corrective fairy tale hostage in an army camp. With the aid of camouflage, blackface, barbed wired wall, drums and marital arts, love conquers all--by vicious force. Not Marivaux, but interesting. In Herve Van der Meulen's superlative pool-side *Les sinceres*, sophisticated urban dwellers seek romance in a country villa. Initially seduced by candor, the learn they're not prepared to hear the truth, and return to more compassionate society and social veneer. Without altering a word, the play is brought into our time and milieu. In Yves Gourmeins's *Les serments indiscrets*, a baffling set of canvas squares impedes any flow of movement, and straw sombreros, colorful cocktail tumblers, and frilly pink cocktail dresses provide the trappings of frivolity at a dismal party. A lot of whining and pacing. In the comic equivalent of Racine's interior world, characters must be rigorously thoughtful to thread through their own labyrinthine hearts; here they are thoughtless and childish. Lest I get spoiled, it is good to be reminded that to do Marivaux well requires actors, directors and designers who are the playwright's equals in dexterity, intelligence, and restraint.

THE PLAYS: LOSE A FEW

Sand, pronomme George (Off) reinforces rather than debunks her marginal status. Kafka's *Le proces* (On) is long, talky moth-eaten expressionism. *Le fils de Don Juan* (Off) is a young troupe's sophomoric effort to wrestle the avant-garde out of commedia with outrageously clever props, costumes and masks. *Dame et Galants* (Off) offers watered-down theatre-sports as a light late-night snack. *Brançuse contre estas-unis* (On) is the suit led by Duchamp against the U.S., when customs officials taxed art as merchandise in 1926. "What is a work of art?" "Who should judge?" Good questions, bad theatre. The audience wakes at the end to applaud. (French audiences, worshipping intellect over drama and spectacle, won't admit to being bored.) Another ponderous, dimly-lit "adaptation" which misses Chekhov, *La Cerisaie* (On) opens with the final scene, and demonstrates the "On"'s infatuations with anything Eastern European. The Footsbarn Travelling Theatre, my favorite company since their *Lea* changed my life fifteen years ago, and their *Odyssey* again last summer, began twenty years ago as a collective in a Cornwall village barn, developing shows from local legends and playing on town squares, then travelled the world in caravans, staying for a few years in Italy, Australia, India; finally settling near Avignon. In their truly multicultural versions of classics, they weave indigenous performing art traditions, but sadly, the techniques which brought edge to their other works, seem too obvious for Molière, in *Ne Touchez Pas Molière* a pastiche of one-acts. *Les Stances du soir*, a torturous adaptation of *The Odyssey* intercut with a vaguely-related modern version, was delivered concert style to an amphitheatre in which we are two of five, including the director. The nadir.

Susan Jonas is a writer, director, educator and Resident Dramaturg at the Classic Stage Co. in New York City.

1997 CONFERENCE NEWS

The 1997 LMDA Conference, subtitled "Dramaturgs and Their Friends Celebrate the End of the Twentieth Century Theatre" will be held at the Yale School of Drama, New Haven, Connecticut, June 6-10. Specific details about pre-Conference times and schedules will follow.

CANADIAN REGIONAL NEWS

In a timely follow-up to the '96 Conference in Toronto, LMDA members should acquire a copy of the Summer 1996 issue of the *Canadian Theatre Review*. Its theme is "Practising Canadian Dramaturgy". It includes articles written by LMDA members Bob White, Michael Springate and Urjo Kareada and others written by individuals who attended the Toronto conference. The issue offers a pretty good survey of new play dramaturgy in Canada and at the same time captures the biggest single problem in that field today: lack of imagination.

Here in Toronto, Diana Belshaw, Anna Migliarisi and myself are working to attract more Canadians to the LMDA. We are preparing packages which will be used to encourage more academics to join the Canadian Caucus. Similarly, we are planning to hold at least one casual meeting during the winter to chat about our work and to begin the process of establishing a more formal regional caucus in Toronto. Both efforts to solicit members will urge these new members to attend Alberta Theatre Project's Blitz Weekend in Calgary in March and the annual conference in June. We hope the result will be a larger and more active Canadian contingent.

Reported by Brian Quirt. Brian is a director/dramaturge based at the Theatre Centre in Toronto.

This publication is supported in part by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts.

A Letter to My Colleagues

from Lynn M. Thomson

Dramaturg: Jayme Koszyn

At the LMDA conference in Toronto, I spoke out at the general meeting about advocacy. My inspiration was recent experience. I worked for nearly a year on *Rent*. I worked intensely with Jonathan Larson and together we radically refashioned the book, added and changed songs and lyrics. He often and very publicly acknowledged my contribution. I was part of a remarkable team (including director Michael Greif, Artistic Director of New York Theatre Workshop Jim Nicola, and musical director Tim Weil) that finished, after Jonathan's death, the still incomplete *Rent*. Despite this, and universal agreement—among producers, the artistic team, and the Larson family—about the size and significance of my contribution, I was the last person hired for the Broadway transfer and only after much time and a painful uncertainty. Without explanation, the producers refused me appropriate (title page) program credit, and I received compensation in no way commensurate with my contribution. In contrast, other members of the artistic staff are receiving generous and just compensation. I am indebted to the support of Michael Grief—who has also made unusual efforts to honor my contribution publicly—that I was hired at all. I continue a disturbing battle to receive compensation and acknowledgment for my work, which now has simply been appropriated, despite the Jonathan's expressed wishes.

While I have been moving toward activism for many years, having been the source as both dramaturg and director for too many plays and productions in which one way or another my work was the inspiration for theft, *Rent* has been for me the crossover experience. I must take responsibility for giving information and fighting for dramaturgs' artistic and civil rights. I appeal to my colleagues to join me.

We know these truths to be self-evident: throughout this country are wonderful dramaturgs whose passion, diligence, and intelligence have profoundly enriched and radically transformed the life course of plays and productions and institutions. Yet dramaturgs can sometimes be the least acknowledged and the lowest compensated members of the core production team or key artistic staff. I urge we come together to change the conditions in which we work.

The discussion generated by my comments at the conference evidenced that what I have raised is both important and timely. Several weeks after the conference, I met with Jayme Koszyn and we agreed to form a committee, which I have named The Advocacy Caucus. Our mission is as follows:

First, visibility. We need to stop talking to each other about who we are and the value of what we do and start talking to the world. We want to imagine and instigate strategies to strengthen the consciousness within the profession about our identity and the riches we bring to plays, to individuals, to institutions. Our goal is to encourage a better working environment, wherein we universally receive the kind of respect, understanding, and acknowledgment commonly accorded other members of the production team or artistic staff.

Second, guidelines for contractual agreements. We have already begun the process of formulating proposals for minimum standard agreements for dramaturgs. I believe that many of our troubles derive from a naïveté among some of our colleagues about our circumstances, and a confusion about where to begin with contracts. We want to encourage each of you to do what dramaturgs seem rarely to do: think ahead, protect yourself, as does every other person in the theatre, and think that each equitable agreement you sign reinforces a standard that will reach out to protect all your colleagues.

By the spring, we plan to have started ongoing projects pertaining to visibility and have, for all of you, a set of guidelines for contracts, addressing the range of venues and circumstances in which dramaturgs work.

The Advocacy Caucus began in early September with a meeting of Janice Paran, dramaturg at McCarter and on *Having Our Say*; Shelby Jiggetts, Director of Play Development at the Public, and dramaturg on *Bring in Da Noise*, *Bring in Da Funk*, and myself. We shared experiences and began to ask questions, define territory to explore. Undoubtedly, for all of us, the experience of a show moving to Broadway, and that show sometimes earning extraordinary attention and money, transformed our own perspectives about conditions we have never previously questioned. The extremity of the events we went through brought into an unusual focus what are, in fact, all too common conditions.

With the help of Emily Morse, who will function as dramaturg during our work, Jayme, the other committee members and I expect next to initiate work and conversation with dramaturgs and literary managers who have expressed an interest in participating actively in this committee. If you are interested, and we want this to be an effort expanding throughout the Americas, please let us know.

Even if you cannot participate, I urge you to share ideas and experiences. I would like to build a case file, that clearly documents working conditions, including present contractual arrangements. I only ask that each diary conclude with a proposal: take what has happened and propose to us a wish list, what you want to be true about your working life, what compensation and acknowledgment you think is appropriate and fair.

Our process, we hope, will exemplify the best dramaturgy. We want to start by asking stimulating questions. We will research answers, and arrive at guidelines and projects for visibility through a national collaboration.

Here are some of the questions we asked at our meeting: What is appropriate standard program acknowledgment? What are the

Continued on page 5

Thomson, Cont'd

ramifications of consistent listing on the title page?

How should dramaturgs be compensated in relation to subsidiary rights? What are the circumstances which would dictate such participation? If participation is deemed appropriate, who should bear responsibility for meeting the dramaturg's right for on-going compensation?

Can we develop a fee scale for free-lance work? What are the special circumstances we need to address facing free-lance dramaturgs? What are the special circumstances facing staff literary managers and dramaturgs when they do extensive production dramaturgy? What is appropriate as standard for a staff contract at an institutional theatre? Should we, attempt to limit the application of work-for-hire contracts? If yes, what should these limitations be?

If you want to contact me, you may fax me at 212-643-8259 or write to me or Emily c/o LMDA.

Lynn Thomson is a freelance dramaturg, director, and teacher.

ATHE GROUP MEETS, PROPOSES PANEL FOR NEW 'TURGS

The Association for Theater in Higher Education (ATHE) met in New York from August 7-11. The dramaturgy Focus Groups founded by Elizabeth Ramirez, John Lutterbie, and a number of LMDA members offered several workshops and panels including a double session entitled "Passion and the Questioning Spirit: A Conversation of the Role of the Dramaturg in American Theatre and Education." Anne Cattaneo, Norman Frisch, Jayme Koszyn, and James Magruder were kick-off speakers for these sessions with over twenty respondents, many of them LMDA members, all contributors to *Dramaturgy In American Theater: A Source Book* (Harcourt Brace, forthcoming). Following the panel, the Dramaturgy Focus Group, LMDA, SUNY—Stony Brook, and the University of Puget Sound hosted a reception for academic and professional dramaturgs at Sardinia.

Next summer's ATHE conference will be in Chicago at the Palmer House, August 6-9. John Lutterbie will take over from Elizabeth Ramirez as the forum rep. (focus group chair) for the next two years and Geoff Proehl will be conference planner. If you would like to propose a panel for next summer's conference contact Proehl at the University of Puget Sound immediately for details: (gproehl@ups.edu; 206-756-3101). The deadline for proposals is November 7.

A major goal of the ATHE Dramaturgy Focus Group is to work closely with LMDA on educational and professional theatre projects. Proposals are already underway for panels on dramaturgy and community-based theaters; on the role of the dramaturg in rehearsals; the relationship between theory and practice; and other topics.

We are particularly interested in organizing a debut panel for grad student dramaturgs who would write and talk about a project on which they have recently worked. The format for presentations is still being developed, but might include an overview of the project or collaboration, a discussion of special problems encountered, insights into the working process, a discussion of protocols or casebooks, production photos, lists of sources, etc. Presenters will write about their projects and make their writings available to attendees in full or in abstract. The presentations themselves will feature student dramaturgs talking about their work and answering questions posed by respondents and attendees, as opposed to the reading of a paper.

Students who have served or will serve in this capacity during the current academic year should send a 1-3 page prospectus describing the production project and its particulars to Cindy SoRelle, at Coordinator, Theatre Department, Fine Arts Division, McLennan College, 1400 College Dr., Waco, TX 76708; email cms@mcc.cc.tx.us. Letters of recommendation from supervising faculty or theatre professionals are welcome and will also be helpful in choosing which projects to debut. Our goal is to present innovative and outstanding work by new dramaturgs in educational or professional theatre. Deadline for submission of a project prospectus is May 31, 1997. If you require further information, contact Cindy SoRelle or Geoff Proehl.

This story was reported by Geoff Proehl, with input from Cindy SoRelle and John Lutterbie. Geoff teaches at the University of Puget Sound.

REGIONAL NEWS: THE CHICAGO GANG MEETS AGAIN

Chicago Area LMDA members convened for lunch on September 5th at the Whole Foods Cafe on North Avenue, in what felt like a return to LMDA roots in lunchtime roundtable discussions. Present were Richard Pettengill (Goodman), Sarah Tucker (Next), Michele Volansky (Steppenwolf), and Gavin Witt (Court). Ellen Mease (Grinnell College) had called to bemoan that her class schedule and lack of a Lear jet prevented her from attending.

Most of us hadn't seen each other since Toronto (except that Richard's daughter had played Titania's sentinel fairy in Gavin's summer production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). After hellos and congratulations on Michele's recent wedding and Sarah's impending parenthood (November!), We launched into a 90-minute chat about topics like internet research, our respective seasons, diametrically opposed responses to Theatre Complicité documenting rehearsal processes, recruiting new LMDA members, and Michele's grilled Portobello mushroom burger.

All of us praised Robert Menna's idea of a net-based list of production protocols, and we all vowed to get a list of our resources to him. Richard said that he'd add his archive of study guides and video-documentaries as well, while Sarah mentioned how useful the Goodman file on *The Front Page* has proven for her current direction of the play. We all expressed interest in the Dramaturgy Focus Group activities planned for next summer's ATHE conference in Chicago, especially Richard's backyard barbeque. Michele related tales of her work on Steppenwolf's season opener, *Slaughterhouse Five*, and Gavin talked about rehearsal queries on Pinter's *Old Times*.

How can we help LMDA? we asked. Those of us who teach said we'd encourage the organization's future health by getting our students to join and attend the next conference. We also discussed getting our interns directly involved in productions, sometimes each others'. We resolved to meet every month or two, and to so our best to hook up with Ellen when she brings her Grinnell students down to see Randy Newman's *Faust* at the Goodman. The meeting ended with a surprise dessert tray, compliments of the cafe manager, actress Consuelo Allen.

This story was reported by Richard Pettengill. Richard is the Director of Arts in Education at the Goodman Theatre.

Member News ● Member News ● Member News

Three French Comedies, a book of translations by Center Stage Resident Dramaturg **James Magruder**, was published by Yale University Press in May of 1996. The plays are Lesage's *Turcaret*, Marivaux's *The Triumph Of Love*, and Labiche's *Eating Crow*. The book is intended as a means to enlarge the repertory of the American theatre—why should Molière get all the glory?

Regional Vice President, **Tricia Roche** has recently informed us of her promotion from Assistant Literary Manager to Literary Manager/Dramaturg at George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick, NJ. Congratulations, Tricia!

Regional VP's Regional VP's Regional VP's Regional VP's

Canada: D. D. Kugler, Northern Lights, 403-471-1586 Michael Springate **Canadian Sub-Regions:** EAST—Paula Danckert, QUÉBEC—Linda Gaboriau 514-288-3384, ONTARIO—Brian Quirt 416-925-5369, WEST and BC—Rob Moffat **Greater Chicago:** Richard Pettengill, Goodman Theatre, 312-443-3839 Michele Volansky, Steppenwolf, 312-335-1888 Gavin Witt, Court Theatre, 312-702-7005 **Metropolitan New York:** Victoria Abrash, Ping Chong, 212-505-9802 Lynn M. Thompson, 212-643-8259 **Northern California:** Tony Kelly, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 510-204-8901 **Mid-Atlantic:** Tricia Roche, George Street Playhouse, 908-846-2895 **Southern California:** John Glore, South Coast Repertory, 714-957-2602 Alan Havis, UCSD, 619-534-8597 Jan Lewis, Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, 310-477-2055 **Northeast:** David Kent, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, 508-454-6324 **Northwest:** Robert Menna, Intiman Theatre Company, 206-269-1901 Geoff Proehl, University of Puget Sound, 206-756-3754 **Ohio River:** Janet Allen, Indiana Repertory Theatre, 317-635-5277 Elizabeth Engelman, Actors Theatre of Louisville, 502-584-1265 Scott Kanoff, The Cleveland Play House, 216-795-7010 **Plains States:** Susan Gregg, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, 314-968-7340 **Southeast:** Chris Baker, University of North Carolina Carolyn Cole, North Carolina Playwrights Center Adam Versenyi, UNC, Chapel Hill, 919-962-2496 **Southwest:** David Mong, Salt Lake Acting Co., 801-363-0526 Elizabeth Ramirez, Arizona Theatre Company, 602-884-8210. **Washington D.C. Metropolitan:** Darrel de Chaby 212-606-8289

The **LMDA REVIEW** is a publication of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas.