



## WOMEN & THEATRE PROGRAM

June 2017



WTP President Lindsay Cummings

### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings! As I write this letter, we are in the midst of planning for our meeting in Las Vegas. Jessica Del Vecchio is organizing what I am certain will be an excit-

ing, engaging, and provocative event, which she describes in more detail in her own letter. While Jessica previews our immediate future, I want to take this opportunity to address some aspects of WTP's long-term future.

In the past year, WTP has put considerable effort into sustainability and organizational stability. We had a large number of officer positions turn over last August, and in response to this we have moved the ATHE Conference Planner position to a staggered role. Two people will occupy the position at one time: one doing it for the first year and another for the

second year. This will allow for greater continuity and for an active mentoring process in that role. Similarly, Jen-Scott Mobley has been mentoring with Maya Roth for several years in the role of co-coordinator of the Jane Chambers Playwriting Contest—which as most of you know is an enormous and complicated job! We have also introduced a new position, the Jane Chambers Assistant, which will help with the overall workload and allow members to learn more about the process before considering taking on the responsibility of administering the contest in the future. All of these arrangements are intended to preserve institutional knowledge and allow for more direct mentorship in officer transitions.

Looking to our long-term financial stability, we have submitted an application for nonprofit (501(c)3) status. This application was submitted to the IRS in January, and we expect a response any day. This will allow individuals to make tax-deductible donations to WTP.

We will let you know via the listserve as soon

[Continued on next page](#)

### President's Letter Continued

as we hear back about our application. While WTP incurs minimal operational costs, we do have a major annual expense: the Jane Chambers Award, which comes with a \$1000 prize. It is important to maintain the prize at this level, as it helps attract the highest quality submissions. In recent years, the award has been given to such notable playwrights as Emma Stanton, Lisa Loomer, and Jen Silverman. Through this award, WTP is able to support feminist voices in the theatre.

Assuming that our nonprofit status is approved, 2017-2018 will be a fundraising year. We will be calling on you, the membership, to help ensure the financial stability of the organization and the Jane Chambers Award. We will also be seeking grants and pursuing fundraising opportunities outside the membership. Of course, with the current government administration, competition for arts funding will be

tighter and scarcer than ever. We hope you will give generously at a level that is appropriate for you. This is your organization, and you are intimately aware of the hard work that goes into it. You know how your money will be spent, and you can see the fruits of your gift each year at ATHE and the WTP Pre-conference—in the panels, performances, roundtables, and, most particularly, the readings of the Jane Chambers and Student Jane Chambers Award Winning plays (see updates from some of our winners on page 4).

I look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas.

Lindsay Cummings is an Assistant Professor of TheatreStudiesattheUniversityofConnecticut. Her book *Empathy as Dialogue in Theatre and Performance* (2016) is available from Palgrave.



Gwendolyn Alker's 2016 Keynote Address



WTP Vice President Jessica Del Vecchio

## PLANNING FOR A SPECTACULAR PRECONFERENCE

I am thrilled to announce that our 2017 pre-conference, Spectacles of Sex/ualities, will take place at the Student Union at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (a short cab ride from the conference hotel) and that it will be co-sponsored by the Department of Interdisciplinary, Gender, and Ethnic Studies and Gender & Sexuality Studies Program there. I have been in conversation with Anita Revilla, the Program's chair, who is excited

to host our organization, as well as other faculty members and undergraduate students, all of whom are eager to participate in the day's events.

In addition to workshops, panels, and roundtables presented by WTP members, our program will feature a talk entitled "Controversy and Conservation: Inside the Erotic Heritage Museum Las Vegas" by Dr. Victoria R. Hartmann,

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## WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN VEGAS

Amid the spectacle of the strip, WTP co-planners Aoise Stratford and Lynn Deboeck have sifted through, compiled and organized some wonderful panels to enjoy during the main ATHE conference. Make sure to attend them and support these wonderful scholars!

There are four tremendous panels sponsored solely by the WTP focus group, the working titles of which are: "How Dare She?!?: The Spectacle of Historic Women Playwrights," "Making a Spectacle of Other People's Lives – Ethics and Feminist Praxis," "Gendered Performances of the Spectacular, Scandalous and Sensational" and "Women on Display: Subversive Spectacles of American Femininity." Multidisciplinary panels (those sponsored by WTP and one or more other focus groups) include, "Seeking the Spectacular: Women Directors and Designers Using Spectacle to Support and Enhance Classical Texts," "Performing Bohemia: The Masses, the Players and The People" and "Perspectives on Zelda Fichandler: Producer, Director, Educator, Innovator."

In addition to these wonderful selections, WTP is co-sponsoring two debut/emerging scholar panels—one with the LGBTQ focus group and one with BTA and ATDS. The details of these are still solidifying since the call for debut panels is the latest to go out, but at the forefront include papers by terrific new researchers including topics such as an analysis of the tableau vivant, queering Jane Austen, and the spectacle of female wrestling! You won't want to miss these offerings, so write them in your planners now.

Lynn Deboeck is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the theatre department at the University of Utah. Her reviews and articles have appeared in *Theatre Survey* and *PARtake: The Journal of Performance as Research*.



Lynn Deboeck ATHE Conference Planner



## Spectacular Pre-Conference Continued from page 3

Executive Director of the museum. According to Hartmann, the Erotic Heritage Museum is a “preservation center of erotic artifacts dating back to 1500 BCE”; a creative space in which artists show their work; an educational center that focuses on social justice, outreach, and LGBTQIAA advocacy; and a “free speech haven.”

We will also be treated to a keynote lecture/performance by avant-garde performance artist **Nao Bustamante** (see photo and description on page 7). I was first introduced to Bustamante in José Esteban Muñoz’s article “Feeling Brown, Feeling Down” (2006). When I encountered her again, in Laura Gutiérrez’s

book, *Performing Mexicanidad: Vendidas y Cabareteras on the Transnational Stage* (2010), I sought out video of her work, and was captivated by performances such as *America the Beautiful* (2002) and *Indigurrito* (1992), archived on NYU’s Hemispheric Institute’s website. In brainstorming West Coast-based artists whose work fit our preconference theme, Bustamante—who uses her body in performance to critique racial stereotypes and normative sexuality—immediately came to mind. Her presentation of *Body Vulnerable/Body Protected*, a multi-media reflection on what she calls her “acts of performative self exposure” should be a highlight of our event.

I hope to see you there!

Jessica Del Vecchio is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Theatre Department at Drew University. Her writing has appeared in *Theatre Journal*, *Modern Drama*, and *TDR*.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? CATCHING UP WITH WINNERS AND HONOREES OF THE JANE CHAMBERS STUDENT PLAYWRITING AWARD (Part 1)



Carrie Winship

Between 2014 and 2016, I had the great pleasure of coordinating the Student Jane Chambers Playwriting Award, and was overwhelmed by the number of strong, emerging, feminist voices that this initiative celebrated each year. Here is a brief update about some of the dynamic voices we honored during the years of my coordination:

**Inda Craig-Galván** received an MFA in dramatic writing for the University of Southern California School of Dramatic Arts and is currently residing in Los Angeles. Her play *Black Super Hero Magic Mama* won the JC Student Award in 2016 and received a reading at the WTP Pre-con in Chicago. The play has continued to receive attention and was the recipient of the KCACTF Rosa Parks Playwriting Award, a finalist for the Kernodle Award given by University of Arkansas, and will be further developed at the 2017 Eugene O’Neill National Playwrights Conference. The play will receive a workshop production at Trus-

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tus (Columbia, SC) as the winner of their Playwrights Festival and will receive a world premiere production in Los Angeles in Fall 2017! For more info about Inda's current work check out [www.indacraig-galvan.com](http://www.indacraig-galvan.com)!

This May, **Miranda Rose Hall** graduated with her MFA in Playwriting from the Yale School of Drama, which produced her play *The Hour of Great Mercy* as part of its annual Carlotta Festival of New Plays. This summer, Miranda will travel around to a few workshops and residencies, then move to DC. Next year she will be teaching part-time at Georgetown and writing some new plays! There are no updates about *Best Lesbian Erotica 1995* for which she received an honorable mention in 2016. For more information about Miranda's works please visit [www.mirandarosehall.com](http://www.mirandarosehall.com).



WTP Reading of *Black Super Hero Magic Mama*

Since receiving honorable mentions for the JC Student Award in both 2013 for *Battle Cry* and in 2014 for *Rust on Bone*, **Bianca Sams** has been up to a lot! She graduated from Ohio University with an MFA in Playwriting and is currently residing in Los Angeles and working as a screenwriter. *Rust on Bone* has received several readings/workshops including: Gulfshore Playhouse - New Works Festival, Babes with Blades - Fighting Words Series, and Blank Theater - Living Room Series. *Battle Cry* has also had readings with 20% Theater, Footlights Series, and was a finalist for the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. Other awards and honors include Ingram New Works Fellow (Nashville Rep), Warner Brothers TV Writing Workshop, The Playwright Center Core Apprentice (2014), KCACTF Lorraine Hansberry (2nd place), KCACTF Rosa Parks Award (2nd place), Kennedy Center/Eugene O'Neill New Play Conference fellow, Scott McPherson Playwright Award (Ohio University), Eugene O'Neill NPC (semifinalist 2xs), Tracking



Bianca Sams

Board 2016 Young & Hungry List, and WriteHerList 2017. Bianca also worked as a staff writer on the WB/CBS TV show *Training Day* starring Bill Paxton. She is represented by Echo Lake Management and Abrams Artists, and you can find more info about her ongoing work at [www.biancasams.com](http://www.biancasams.com)!

Carrie Winship is a Ph.D. candidate in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Missouri. She is a director and a dramaturg whose research interests include women's voices in playwriting and praxis.

## 2017 PRE-CONFERENCE PREVIEW

Women and Theatre Program Pre-conference

Wednesday, August 2, 2017

9am – 9pm

Student Union at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas

4505 S. Maryland Pkwy.

Las Vegas, NV 89154-2008

The Women and Theatre Program, in association with ATHE's 2017 Annual Conference, "Spectacle: Balancing Education, Theory, and Praxis," presents our annual pre-conference. Co-sponsored by the Department of Interdisciplinary, Gender, and Ethnic Studies and Gender & Sexuality Studies Program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, this year's theme is:

## Spectacles of Sex/ualities

As Gayle Rubin contends, sex is much more than just a "frivolous diversion;" it is, she writes, "always political." As such, sex has long been a contentious issue for feminists. The "Sex Wars"—which Lisa Duggan describes as "a series of bitter political and cultural battles over issues of sexuality" that included everything from pornography and prostitution to explicit art and gay and lesbian rights—raged between feminists in the 1980s. In the 1990s, Third Wave feminists often posited their proud pro-sex stance in response to their (mis)perceptions of Second Wave stodginess. The postfeminist era that followed in the early 2000s brought with it a wave of self-sexualization, which scholars such as Angela McRobbie argue was, in fact, self-exploitation rather than empowerment. These conversations continue today, for example, in arguments about pop stars' sexuality; in examinations of the amateur porn industry; in analyses of performative protests such as the Slut Walks; in critiques of universities' response (and lack thereof) to sexual assault on campus; and in debates about the decriminalization of sex work across the globe.

Inspired by the conference theme and our Las Vegas locale, WTP asks pre-conference participants to consider the spectacle of sex and sexualities on stage, in classrooms, and in everyday life.

Register at [www.womenandtheatreprogram.com](http://www.womenandtheatreprogram.com), under "Conference."



WTP Pre-conference 2016



## BODY VULNERABLE/BODY PROTECTED

**Nao Bustamante** will offer the keynote lecture/performance at the WTP pre-conference in Las Vegas. Bustamante emerges as what José Esteban Muñoz has called the vulnerability artist. While vulnerability proves to be an effective and illuminating lens through which to consider Bustamante's performance, one must also confront aggression and hostility in Bustamante's acts of performative self exposure.



When Bustamante performs, no one in her presence is safe. There is something in the way that she stages distance, technology, and vulnerability such that we are compelled into an immediate field of exchange with Bustamante as violating and violatable body. The videos and performances highlighted in this event will underscore Bustamante's particular skill with technologies of mediation. This artist talk provides a unique opportunity to view Bustamante's performative interventions across time and media, making salient the ways in which Bustamante's live body necessarily arrives as a mediated body historically constructed and one whose survival through mediation ensures its future vulnerability.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? CATCHING UP WITH WINNERS AND HONOREES OF THE JANE CHAMBERS STUDENT PLAYWRITING AWARD (Part 2)



WTP Newsletter Editor  
Bethany Wood

From 2012-2013 I served as coordinator for the Jane Chambers Student Playwriting Competition. I had the honor of reading numerous original works by emerging playwrights. Below are updates and comments from some of our past winners and honorees:

**Martyna Majok** won the Jane Chambers Student Award in 2011 for her play *the friendship of her thighs*. **Majok** recalls, "The Jane Chambers Prize was one of the first I'd won for a play I'd written. It was incredibly encouraging, as all awards are, but especially to receive an honor so early in my playwriting, when doubts can run high. Thank you again for the early faith and encouragement. I've never forgotten it."

After graduating from the Yale School of Drama, Majok moved to New York, where her play

[Continued on next page](#)



Martyna Majok

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*Petty Harbour* was developed at New York Stage & Film. Her play, *Ironbound* later premiered at Round House Theatre in Bethesda, MD, in 2015 as part of the first Women's Voices Theatre Festival. The play recently appeared in *American Theatre Magazine* and is available through Dramatists Play Services.

Majok's play *Cost of Living* runs through June 7th at the Manhattan Theatre Club. *Cost of Living* won the Jean Kennedy Smith Prize from The Kennedy Center in 2016 as well as the inaugural Women's Invitational Prize at the Ashland New Plays Festival. Majok has received a number of commissions -- from Lincoln Center, The Bush Theatre in London, The Geffen Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, South Coast Rep, Manhattan Theatre Club, Marin Theatre Company, and The Foundry Theatre. Her play *Queens* will premier in July as part of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Playwrights Conference.

**Lauren Yee's** play *Samsara* was runner up for the 2012 Jane Chambers Student Playwriting award. The play premiered at Victory Gardens Theatre in Chicago in 2015, and was later produced at Chance Theatre in Anaheim and Single Carrot in Baltimore. *Samsara* is available through Samuel French. Yee's play *The King of Yees* had its U.S. premier earlier this year at the Goodman Theatre. Yee is currently under commission by the Denver Center, Trinity Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, Portland Center Stage, Mixed Blood, and LCT3.

WTP asked Yee what experiences or organizations have been most helpful to her career as a playwright. **Yee** responded, "I am always grateful for the organizations and experiences where I don't have to prove anything as a playwright. Where I can do the necessary messy, ugly work of early drafts before I get to the shiny, polished draft. For this same reason, I also love being able to have sustained relationships with organizations where we're not just looking at one play, but many plays over many years. That I get to be in conversation with an organization about my whole body of work."



Lauren Yee

Bethany Wood is Assistant Professor of Theatre at Southwest Baptist University in Missouri. Her articles have appeared in *Theatre Journal*, *Studies in Musical Theatre*, and *Ecumenica*.



## ABOUT WTP:

The Women and Theatre Program is a self-incorporated division of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) that began in 1974. At that time, the goal was to bring professional theatre women together with women in academia. In the years since its inception, WTP has sponsored panels and activities at ATHE's annual conference. In 1980, WTP began holding its own annual conference. WTP conferences feature panels, informal discussions, workshops, and performances as a means to foster both research and the production of feminist theatre activities. WTP conference topics have included the intersection of theory and performance, multicultural theatre, lesbian theory and theatre, and many related aspects of feminist inquiry. In addition, WTP, in collaboration with ATHE, sponsors the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award. The continuing goal of the WTP is to enable feminist inquiry and to provide opportunities for discussion between those who teach, perform, and theorize about feminism, theatre, and performance.

## WTP OFFICERS

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**FROM THE EDITOR:** The WTP Newsletter not only serves to disseminate information about WTP, but to provide a sense of community and connectivity amongst WTP members. To that end, I welcome any articles addressing issues relevant to WTP members and any questions, comments, suggestions or letters to the editor. For example, submissions might include:

WTP Member Feature Column, an article that highlights a WTP member's recent or forthcoming project, WTP news and/or opportunities, brief publication announcements, summaries of articles, projects, performance reviews, updates on past Jane Chambers Award winners, Past President's Column, pictures of WTP members or happenings, etc.

If you are interested in submitting something, please email me. Thank you, Bethany Wood