

SPONSORED BY THE WOMEN AND THEATRE PROGRAM & THE ASSOCIATION OF
THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

2022 JANE CHAMBERS AWARD for PLAYWRITING

MAIN CONTEST WINNER for 2022

Mama, I wish I were silver (2W—Filipina/ mixed race) by **Amanda L. Andrei**. This magical realist play artfully explores women living in Filipina diaspora and kinship, unfolding in theatrically exciting ways as it conjures relationship with ancestors and intertwines psychic and social worlds: On a cold January day in 2020, Sofia and Ariel, two estranged Filipina American half-sisters, reunite in Virginia to clean out the photographs, papers, and letters of their recently deceased mother. When they find a cassette tape seemingly recorded on the 1972 declaration of martial law in the Philippines, when Ariel was born, they realize that what their mother left behind has a life of its own. If family history repeats itself, can we choose which ones to repeat? Five disparate roles played by two actresses of the Filipina diaspora.

Amanda L. Andrei is a Filipina Romanian American playwright, translator, and teaching artist residing in Los Angeles by way of Virginia/Washington DC. She writes epic, irreverent plays that center the concealed, wounded places of history from the perspectives of diasporic Filipina women, and she translates from Romanian to English. Her plays have been developed with Relative Theatrics, Parity Productions, Echo Theatre, The Vagrancy, Playwrights Arena, Artists at Play, La MaMa, and more. MFA: USC, MA: Georgetown. <https://www.amandalandrei.com/>

2022 Runners-Up to the Jane Chambers Award

In McClintock's Corn (5W, one Black; 2M, white) by **Carolyn Gage**. In this nuanced feminist play about gender-non-conforming geneticist Barbara McClintock and her companion Harriet Creighton, McClintock pursues her revolutionary quest to understand diversity in nature—reframing “deviance” as an expression of variance through her study in cornfields. Quietly radical, this play organically explores neurodivergence and how to live lesbian and feminist in the world, moving across decades in their lives and social history in America. It's also about the metaphysics of “place,” in/equity, and our relationships to nature. Judges were compelled by this play's telescoping of complex inner lives as well as social institutions. Its quietly experimental form reveals that life is infinitely more adaptative, more complex, and more diverse than dogmas might imagine.

Carolyn Gage is a playwright, performer, and activist. The author of nine anthologies of plays and eighty-three musicals, dramas, and one-woman shows, she specializes in non-traditional roles for women, especially reclaiming famous lesbians whose stories have been distorted or erased from history. For twenty-two years, Gage toured in the US and Canada in her award-winning, one-woman play, *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc*, offering performances, workshops, and lectures on lesbian theatre. www.carolyngage.com

Joan Dark (3W, racially diverse; 1WM, 1BM) by **Christina Pumariega**. In this vividly-rendered play attuned to human and social needs, Joan Ruiz hears the call to the priesthood. And she's on her way, as one of 144 women selected by the Roman Catholic church to become a deacon. But her new post in a depressed Connecticut town and conservative parish poses harsh and graceful lessons, attuned to human and social needs. In a country that's sick, what does it take to find faith in a faithless time? A modern retelling of Joan of Arc, this play balances hope and pragmatism, as a small set of characters from diverse races, places, genders and generations try to do good, amid disparities, giving life to this feminist and Catholic play. Conscious casting, as this play offers a window on the multiracial and global range of people in today's Catholic Church.

Notes by Maya E. Roth. See a video interview with Andrei and Other Years' Honorees at WTP's WEBSITE

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Christina Pumariega acts and writes. Often simultaneously. Her plays include *Lei Chiede* (2022 O’Neill Conference finalist), *Her Math Play* (Hartford Stage’s 2021 New Play Festival) and *Joan Dark*. Her TV writing credits include “Turner & Hooch”(Disney+) and “Bluff City Law” (NBC). Acting on and Off-Broadway, and in television and film, Pumariega has cross examined Coach Taylor, made out with the Fly and set a Cuban pharmacy ablaze in a corset. MFA Acting, NYU.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Maiden Voyage (7W, with flexibility for genderqueer, racially-diverse) by Cayenne Douglass.

Haunting and theatrically inventive, *Maiden Voyage* charts the first all-female patrol aboard a US submarine, casting audiences as witnesses to rising pressures and the crew’s lives as mechanics and interpersonal relationships on the ship go awry. Motivated by a subconscious need to overcompensate for gender inequality, The Captain slowly relinquishes her integrity to achieve a successful mission. This unsettling play features deft dialogue and rising tensions as the women — diverse in race, class and sexuality — come to replay cultures of violence instead of changing them. Much awarded, *Maiden Voyage* presents challenging roles for women and non-binary actors.

Cayenne Douglass has had work developed and/or produced at EST, Boston Playwrights’ Theatre, Theatre Masters, Fresh Ink Theatre, New Perspectives Theatre, Dixon Place, The Tank, The City Theatre, FEAST, and Manhattan Rep. Residencies include Barn Arts and The Emerging Artists Residency at Tofte Lake. Cayenne is currently in writing workshops/labs affiliated with BMI, Company One, and Exquisite Corpse Company. MFA in Playwriting, Boston University. www.cayennedouglass.com or follow Cayenne on IG @bruteful_theatre.

Little Egg, Big World (Flexible, from 3-12) by Rachel Leighson. In this cheeky coming-of-age play, Little Egg and Grown Uterus struggle to reconcile themselves as both a donor child and an egg donor. Along the way, they process surprising and enduring questions of identity, family and reproductive ethics, rendered through a host of real and imagined characters — from lesbian moms to geneticists, myriad biological siblings to google itself. With absurdist flourishes and human insight, Little Egg searches for her birth father, and Grown Uterus tries to come to terms with anonymous donation. Judges relished the play’s playful spirit and fully flexible casting, with several roles specified for female-identified characters, regardless of performers’ gender identity.

Rachel Leighson is an actress/singer/writer based in Los Angeles and New York. Her recent credits include performing in *Andean Hope*, a new opera commissioned by the UN, and her own play *Little Egg, Big World* for the Broadway Bound Theatre Festival (2022). Rachel has performed across the United States and in NYC at Carnegie Hall, Playwrights Horizons, St. Luke’s Theatre, The Actor’s Temple Theatre, and the League of Professional Theatre Women. Her acting and writing centers around moralistically grey women and finding nuanced perspectives. A graduate of Oberlin Conservatory and the Vancouver Film School, she belongs to AEA and the Dramatists Guild. <https://www.rachelleighson.com/>

The Dirty: Survival Skills of State School Girls with Good Bodies in the Year 2008 (2W, 2M) by Keyanna Khatiblou. This timely, audacious play begins when ASU student Michelle gets her nudes leaked on an online gossip blog, leading her to rally her best friend to catch a ride with the local megachurch youth pastor into the Arizona mountains, where they confront the budding tech mogul behind the website. THE DIRTY creatively recasts the road-trip play with two young women — one straight, one coming into her queerness — at its center, exploring desire, yearning for equity, and facing the intimate contours of sexism in a digital age. Imminently quotable, *The Dirty* offers psychological discovery and social reveals about gender and power.

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Keyanna Khatiblou is an LA-based playwright. She's been recognized by the Alliance/Keneda National Graduate Playwriting Competition (Finalist), the Barrington Stage Company's Burman Award (Finalist), the Lanford Wilson New American Play Festival (Semi-Finalist), the Nancy Dean Lesbian Playwriting Award (Finalist), and the Theatre Masters National MFA Playwrights Festival. Keyanna is currently an Affiliated Writer with the Playwrights' Center, a member of Echo Theater's LA Young Playwrights and an Original Programming Assistant at Starz. She received her MFA from Northwestern.
<https://www.keyannakhatiblou.com/>

***In The Same Space* (4F, 3M, racially diverse) by Parade Stone.** In this sweeping yet intimate story, on a block underneath the J train, Emma, a Manhattanite and Chuck, a Brooklyn native, debate their right to call Bed Stuy home. Tina and Sallie, two Taiwanese-American sisters who grew up in the apartment above their family's laundromat, make plans to sabotage their mom's building sale—and make their own choices. Emmanuel tests the waters of his queer desires by befriending the line cook Daniel at a 24-hour diner. Punctuated by the omnipresent passage of the train, these residents of Bed Stuy seek connection, resist displacement, and piece together their paths in a gentrifying neighborhood on the brink of change. This ensemble play features roles for actors from diverse backgrounds and language traditions to shape an intersectional story of people, ethics and place.

Parade Stone is a Brooklyn-based writer and an MFA candidate in Dramatic Writing at New York University. Her recent theatrical writings include her musical, *History of Traitors According to Sydney*, supported by the Shubert Organization's Artistic Circle Initiative, her play *Fishing*, presented in NYU's Bespoke Play Festival, and her play *Cupid's Corner*, presented by the Star is Bored podcast which earned her a nomination for the 2020 OffWestEnd Awards in the UK. www.paradestone.com

THE JANE CHAMBERS AWARD recognizes plays & performance texts by women writers that present feminist perspectives & significant roles for female and genderqueer performers. This annual award, established in 1984, is given in memory of lesbian playwright Jane Chambers who, through her plays *A LATE SNOW, LAST SUMMER AT BLUEFISH COVE, MY BLUE HEAVEN, KUDZU, & THE QUINTESSENTIAL IMAGE*, became a major feminist voice in American theatre. We understand feminism to refract across diversity, welcome experimentation in theme and form, and often honor works that stage under-represented lives for the stage. Sponsored by the Women and Theatre Program with the Association for Theater in Higher Education, the Jane Chambers winner receives \$1000 & a reading of the winning play at ATHE, and year's membership with WTP. Guidelines for submission—and our archive of recent winners—can be viewed at < www.womenandtheatreprogram.com >. This year's winning play *Mama, I wish I were silver* by AMANDA ANDREI rose from more than 250 submissions, across three rounds of adjudication involving over 20 feminist critics, theater artists and educators. Honored plays suit a variety of theatre missions and feminist perspectives. The Jane Chambers Winning Student Play—which this year goes to AMANDA KEATING for *WITH FELLOWSHIP*—receives \$250 and a reading at the WTP Conference.

We welcome and rely upon private donations to honor women's playwriting; we have no endowment, nor submission fees. (Please consider donating funds!) The Prize Committee and curation is stewarded by Jen-Scott Mobley and Maya Roth on behalf of WTP and ATHE. The Student Prize is stewarded by Megan Stahl on behalf of WTP.

***Lesbian & Queer Plays from the Jane Chambers Prize* —featuring winning plays and interviews with M. Casey, C. Chafee, M. Cohn, MJ Kaufman, and G.Young—is available from NoPassport Press.**

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