

WOMEN AND THEATRE

Winter 2014



Photo by Daniel Nussbaum

Letter from the President

As most of you know, we are gearing up for ATHE 2014 and the Women and Theatre preconference, which will be held in Scottsdale Arizona July 23rd - 27th. The theme of the main conference, "Dream Acts: Performance as Refuge, Resistance, and Renewal," encourages us as artists, scholars, teachers, and students to "dream outside the box" and rediscover agency and action in our work and within our organization. Women and Theatre is one of the most vital focus groups of ATHE and our membership contributes on multiple levels to national and international practice and scholarship. As the feature article within will describe, WTP-ers have made tremendous contributions to theatre scholarship this past year including past president **Sara Warner's** book, *Acts of Gaiety: LGBT Performance and The Politics of Pleasure*, which won the ATHE Outstanding Book Award, as well as Honorable Mention for the ASTR

Research Barnard Hewitt Award. Another past president and longstanding member and mentor, **Jill Dolan** was honored by the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) with the 2013 Distinguished Scholar Award for "outstanding achievement in scholarship in the field of theatre studies." Our Artist-At-Large, **Joan Lipkin** has racked up awards including the Award for Disability Activism (Sisters of Loretto) and the 2012 Arts Innovator of the Year (Arts & Education Council).

I am inspired by the work of my colleagues and grateful for their example and mentorship. I invite all of us to continue to mentor one another, create new paths professionally and artistically, and to dream big about the potential for feminist scholarship, pedagogy, and practice. Since WTP began, and thanks in large part to our organization, women's presence and influence in the academy has increased. However, as I learned

working on the ASTR "Working Conditions Task Force," there continues to be inequality in compensation, opportunity, and labor distribution within academia. Moreover, the 50/50 in 20/20 initiative reminds us that there remains significant inequity in representation of female playwrights and directors nationally. I believe that WTP can and will continue to be a force behind closing these gaps. The Jane Chambers Playwriting Award creates opportunity and recognition for female playwrights and our precon offers an opportunity for scholars and artists to come together to share their work, create alliances, and visualize the future. I look forward to seeing you all at the precon in Scottsdale: "Dream & Action, Theory & Practice" where we will not only dream of a future in which these inequities are obsolete, but generate strategy and action to implement our goals.

Continued on the next page

President's letter continued

Lastly, let me take this opportunity to thank the WTP officers who labor throughout the year to being you the conference and the preconference:

Rose Malague, in charge of conference planning, **Lisa Hall-Hagen** in charge of preconference planning, **Jessica Del Vecchio**, who seamlessly moved into the role of newsletter editor when **Summer Moshey** stepped down, **Maya Roth** for tirelessly coordinating the Jane Chambers Award and **Carrie Winship** for spearheading the 2014 student Jane Chambers Award. I'd also like to thank **Heidi Schmidt** for her ongoing work as treasurer as well as **Amy Guenther** who has been diligent about outreach and fundraising. It takes a village.

Jen-Scott Mobley

President, Women and Theatre Program of ATHE

Visiting Professor, Rollins College, Department of Theatre Arts and Dance

Member News

WTP member **Teresa Stankiewicz** has two original short plays going up this January. The FronteraFest Short Fringe Festival is an annual event held at the



A scene from *5 Eggs Left*

Hyde Park Theatre in Austin, Texas. During the Short Fringe, every night a new bill of four or five plays no longer than 25 minutes is presented. Every Saturday night is a juried Best of Week and then the last week, February 11 – 15, is the juried Best of Fest. This year **Dr. Stankiewicz** has a ten minute play, *5 Eggs Left* and a twenty-five minute play, *Split Branches of the Terebinth* in the Short Fringe festival. Both plays feature strong female characters, one of **Stankiewicz's** goals in writing. *5 Eggs Left* is a comedy aimed at explaining those hot flashes and sudden sexual urges that occur during menopause. *Split Branches of the Terebinth* is about three women that have married men called to serve God. While their journeys are very

different they are also uncannily similar. All three women share their faith, betrayal and recovery with humor and sadness. Production dates are Friday January 17 for *5 Eggs Left* and Wednesday January 22 for *Split Branches of the Terebinth*.

Rosemary Malague published two articles this fall. The first is her essay "Stanislavsky's System and Women," which is included in the *Routledge Companion to Stanislavsky*. She also contributed "Theatrical Realism as Feminist Intervention: **Katie Mitchell's** 2011 staging of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*" to a special issue of *Shakespeare Bulletin*. This spring, Rose will direct **Lisa Kron's** play *Well* at the University of Pennsylvania.

WOMEN AND THEATRE wants YOU!

This year in Scottsdale, several of our WTP officers will have completed their terms and we're looking for people to fill their shoes. In order to hit the ground running at the 2014 conference in July, we are going to hold officers elections electronically prior to the conference. We are looking for the following Officers:

Vice President (in charge of preconference planning)

ATHE Conference Planner

Co-Chair of Outreach and Development

Assistant Newsletter Editor

Awards Committee

Keep your eyes peeled for the call for nominations and the opportunity to vote coming up this spring.

Letter from the Vice President

By Lisa Hall Hagen

Our annual WTP preconference was held this year at the Hyatt Grand Cypress, where we explored the theme of The Labor of Pleasure, including the work it takes to produce the pleasure of live entertainment, as well as the Pleasure of Labor, pointedly the pleasures and practice of academia and pedagogy. It was a valuable chance for members of WTP to discuss current issues, exchange ideas, and support each other's work. It was an intimate event, which was unintentionally aided by our decision to keep the preconference at the main conference hotel. We gathered in a single conference room together, and had the opportunity to attend the panels without concurrent offerings. The day began with a "State of the Focus Group" discussion with the members in attendance, which was a way of beginning some conversations that would continue in the regular business meeting. We heard from our ATHE Conference Planner, **Rose Malague**, about some larger ATHE issues, and our new Treasurer, **Heidi Schmidt**, about the financial state of the group. We discussed the tensions between wanting to reach out to the local community, and wanting to keep the preconference logistically and financially feasible for the members. Ultimately, it seemed as if the conversation concluded with an appreciation for being at the conference hotel, where members could move between different pre-conferences more easily, a great benefit!

There was also a productive discussion about the branding and identity of WTP, and how the organization might continue to serve its membership. Members discussed the ability of WTP to create fruitful

mentoring relationships, and the ability to provide an intimate, non-ATHE experience during the pre-conference. We aim to continue the intimacy and focus on mentoring, and explore more ways to provide programming that contrasts with the offerings of the main conference. To that end, the Scottsdale pre-conference will focus even more on non-traditional panels. There was a call to action to bring new voices into WTP by asking every member to reach out to other members of the field and invite them into WTP, encouraging them to see the ways the mission of our organization can overlap with their area of study. We discussed how the interests of WTP intersect in compelling ways with almost every aspect of theatre making, scholarship, activism, and performance. Whose voices are not currently at the WTP table? How can we reach out in creative ways to bring those voices in?

Our afternoon was anchored on three compelling panels: First, a panel that explored the "Pedagogical Pleasures of Lost Labors" – or the challenges and joys of teaching forgotten and overlooked female playwrights. Chaired by **Lindsay Cummings**, the group developed a website to share materials like syllabi and bibliographies, which we plan to expand to share even more relevant pedagogical and research materials with one another. (See page 18 for more information.)

Afterwards, we talked with **Mitzi Maxwell**, the Artist Director of Orlando-area theatre company Mad Cow Theatre. She was joined by Orlando producer **Beth Marshall**, and west coast dramaturg **Christine Young**. They addressed the Pleasures of Theatre Practice in an incredible conversation about gender diversity in



Dr. Lisa Hall Hagen is an Assistant Professor of Theatre History and Dramaturgy at Utah Valley University. She holds an MA in Playwriting from Boston University, and a PhD in Theatre History and Criticism from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

casting, directing, and writing. The day ended with a beautiful reading of the student Jane Chambers winner, *Hello, I'm Eve*. We look forward to gathering again in Scottsdale, where plans are already underway for a creative, compelling pre-conference. Don't be hesitant to contact me at any time of the year with ideas! Feel free to contact me at lisahallhagen@gmail.com with any ideas, for this year or next.



Valerie Joyce on the "Pedagogical Pleasures and Lost Labors," panel at the preconference



"Director Christine Young highlighted Bay Area efforts to promote women theatre practitioners, chronicled in the Works by Women San Francisco blog. Young then introduced WTP members to two Orlando theatre professionals: Mitzi Maxwell, Executive Director of Mad Cow Theatre, and producer Beth Marshall . . . It was great to hear from two leaders of Orlando's theatre scene, but the panel also made it clear that there is more work to do to achieve parity in this area."

Lisa Sloan



Spectators at the preconference

ATHE 2013 - Member Notebook:

A Pleasurable Preconference: WTP Works and Plays in Orlando

by **Lisa Sloan**

Thanks to the labor of our preconference planners, WTP's 2013 preconference, "The Labor of Pleasure, and Pleasure of Labor," was a pleasure for all in attendance. WTP members gathered at Orlando's Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress, in the shadow of Walt Disney World, on July 31st for a day of panels and performances. The panels began with a graduate student panel coordinated by **Kristen Rogers**, which brought together engaging papers from **Lynn Deboeck**, **Adriane Epprecht**, and **Carrie Winship**. A panel on performing gender and nation followed, with presentations by **Nichole Eschen**, **Fan-Ting Cheng**, and **Areum Jeong**. Discussing American, Taiwanese, and Korean performances, the panel was truly transnational in breadth.

After the morning session, WTP members took a pause from the panels for lunch at the hotel's Cascade American Bistro. Members caught up with old friends and made new ones while enjoying a view of Lake Windsong.

After lunch, the preconference resumed with a panel on the joys and

challenges of teaching "overlooked" plays by women—a great way to follow up on last year's staged readings of scenes written by under-produced women playwrights. The panelists, **Lindsay Cummings**, **Aoise Stratford**, **Cheryl Black**, **Valerie Joyce**, **Emily Rollie**, and **Teresa Stankiewicz**, discussed little-known plays by women, useful anthologies to use in the classroom, and pedagogical strategies for teaching this material. The panelists have compiled their work and made it available to WTP members on a [webpage](#), which includes catalogs of work by women playwrights, course syllabi, and sample assignments.

In the next panel, director **Christine Young** highlighted Bay Area efforts to promote women theatre practitioners, chronicled in the Works by Women San Francisco [blog](#). Young then introduced WTP members to two Orlando theatre professionals: **Mitzi Maxwell**, Executive Director of Mad Cow Theatre, and producer **Beth Marshall**. Mad Cow manages to stage an impressive ten productions per year. While only 20% of the plays Mad Cow stages are written by women, Maxwell and her colleagues make an effort to track the number of women's roles they make available each

season. Marshall produced Orlando's International Fringe Theatre Festival for nine years. Currently working as an independent producer, Marshall engages local high school students with an annual Play in a Day contest. It was great to hear from two leaders of Orlando's theatre scene, but the panel also made it clear that there is more work to do to achieve parity in this area.

After the day's panels were over, WTP members enjoyed a reading of *Hello, I'm Eve*, a play by **Rebecca Nicholson** and winner of the Student Jane Chambers Student Playwriting Contest. At times funny and at times poignant, the play stages episodes of contemporary African American women's experiences alongside Eve's account of her life with Adam. The actors' love for Nicholson's script was palpable in their performances.

After a dinner break, WTP members flocked to *Foreplay*, a cabaret hosted by the LGBTQ Focus Group, and co-sponsored by the American Theatre and Drama Society, the Black Theatre Association, the Latino/Latina Focus Group, the Music Theatre/Dance Focus Group, and the Women and Theatre Program.

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Preconference continued

Lawhore Vagistan (the drag persona of **Kareem Khubchandani**, a PhD Candidate at Northwestern University who labored to organize *Foreplay*) served as the emcee for the night. In the spirit of our Orlando location, Ms. Vagistan served up parodies of Disney melodies throughout the night, including a "Bare Necessities" burlesque number. The cabaret featured a variety of acts: **Laurelann Porter's** monologue on how not to make love to a woman; a puppet show with a tiny rock drummer called

Egg Baby by **Laura Purcell Gates** and **Tobi Poster**; a performance piece by **Julie Rada** (in collaboration with **Ryan Noble**) that juxtaposed polyamory and polygamy; a love ballad delivered by **Roy Gomez Cruz** called "Tissues on the Heart"; an ecstatic drag performance by **John Musser**; and **Pavithra Prasad's** drag act, in which she channeled queer desires through a performance of the Kal Kahn/Bill Forbes classic, "The Ladies of Calcutta." The cabaret provided a perfectly playful ending to the pre-conference.

Of course, such a pleasurable preconference would be impossible without the hard work of pre-conference organizers and presenters. Many thanks to **Lisa Hall Hagen**, **Rose Malague**, and **Jen-Scott Mobley**, as well as **Cynthia Ward** and **Nancy Erickson** for their many hours of labor! Given the success of this preconference, many of us are surely DREAMing of Arizona already.

Lisa Sloan is a PhD Candidate at UCLA. Her dissertation examines lesbian performance in relation to conflicts in feminism in the 80s and 90s.

ATHE 2013 - Member Notebook

PLAYnary #2 - The Pedagogy "Long Table"

by Lynn Deboeck

Utilizing the "Long Table" discussion format originated by Split Britches founder and performance artist, **Lois Weaver**, the ATHE PLAYnary on pedagogical issues was stimulating and engaging. In the center of the room there was a large table with approximately a dozen chairs around it. The rest of the room was filled with chairs circling this table, for an audience to sit and witness the discussion. The rules of the session were simple and copies of the above list were distributed on seats throughout the room (see sidebar).

This particular approach, not being the norm for an ATHE plenary, ran the risk of falling on its face. Before it began, one of the participants/audience members asked **James Peck**, outgoing editor of *Theatre Topics* and one of the party hosts, "What if no one comes to the table?," to which he smiled and responded, "Yes, that could happen." But they did not need to worry. The table was full almost constantly, with a healthy flow of participants tagging others out and adding their comments to the productive discussion about various systemic woes that plague most of our pedagogical pursuits as well as offering creative and helpful suggestions and ideas. Many of the issues were ones that also came out in the WTP preconference session about the state of our focus group. Everything from using yoga to encourage interdisciplinary cohesion, to the cyclical problems adjuncts



Lynn Deboeck is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Theatre at the University of Kansas. Her primary research interests include the theatrical depiction of maternity and motherhood and she is a proud wife and mother of three beautiful children.

face in their jobs to how to incorporate more process-focus in our teaching approaches was discussed at length. Toward the end our own ATHE president, **Henry Bial**, attended the dinner party to pose the question of what ATHE could do to not only assist with the day-to-day struggles of the members but also to push us toward a time when all the solutions we were discussing would be the norm in our departments, programs, and institutions. The session on the whole was lively, active and healthy--and the approach quite successful. I look forward to seeing other ATHE plenaries use this method in the future!

Rules for the long table

This is a performance of a dinner party conversation
 Anyone seated at the table is a guest performer
 Anything is on the menu
 Talk is the only course
 No one will moderate
 But a host may assist you
 It is a democracy
 To participate simply take an empty seat at the table
 If the table is full, you can request a seat
 If you leave the table you can come back again and again
 Feel free to write your comments on the tablecloth
 There can be silence
 There might be awkwardness
 There could always be laughter
 There is an end but no conclusion



"My performance as Veronica Bleaus at Foreplay was incredibly fun and intense. Wearing a jockstrap in an untucked purple leotard with matching purple hair, I threw myself around the stage and on the ground, wielding a chain ball mace upon the audience, full of sorrow and rage. A drag queen frequently goes through hard times, so I thought I'd share that affect with ATHE."

John Musser
Department of English
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Foreplay: A Queer Kickoff to ATHE 2013

By Kareem Khubchandani

In a homely hotel conference room, with an 8 x 8 foot stage and no theatrical lighting, the performers of *Foreplay: A Queer Cabaret* at ATHE 2013 were a testament to the ability for performance to activate queer affects even in an unremarkable space. They were resourceful in their use of props, deliberate in employing recorded sound, and brilliant in their use of the body; each of these created a beautiful intimacy between the audience and stage and together they offered the perfect queer kick-off to ATHE in Orlando.

The LGBTQ Focus Group decided against a preconference so that our members could attend other preconferences that we often have to neglect. But in a similar spirit of generosity, we wanted to host a cabaret in which members of multiple focus groups could come together in a social setting. *Foreplay*, riffing on the conference's theme of P[L]AY, was held on the night of July 31, and aspired to offer a playful beginning to the conference while also upholding the LGBT Focus Group's intentions of staging gender and sexual diversity. The event was also supported by the American Theatre and Drama Society, the Black Theatre Association, the Latino/a Focus Group, the Music Theatre/Dance Focus Group, and the Women and Theatre Program.



Kareem Khubchandani is a PhD candidate in Performance Studies at Northwestern University completing a dissertation titled "Ishtyle: Queer Nightlife Performance in India and the South Asian Diaspora." He is also a writer and performer; most recently, he has been touring his solo show *Lessons In Drag*. Find him on Twitter [@KareemPuff], YouTube [KKhubcha], Tumblr [diaryofanitemgirl], or Facebook [DesiDragQueen].

After allowing for some milling about with drinks purchased from the cash bar, LaWhore Vagistan (i.e., me in drag) welcomed the audience with a lipsynched interpretation of "The Circle of Life" from Disney's *The Lion King*. The first act featured **Laurelann Porter** (Arizona State University) performing an excerpt from *How Not to Make Love to a Woman*, a piece that maneuvered fluidly across English and Portuguese, transitioned easily between comedy and earnest story telling, and moved deftly from diary entries to field anecdotes. **Roy Gomez-Cruz** (Northwestern University) serenaded his audience in Spanish, captivating us with melodramatic high notes, but also punctuating our empathy with humor as he stuffed tissues into his pants, and then handed them to individual audience members as tokens of intimacy. Using a lamp and table and other small objects, **Julie Rada** (University of Arizona) resourcefully created a warm and homelike setting on stage for her play *Anna in Love* in which she unfolds the love between two women in a polyamorous Mormon household. Rada's queering of domesticity in this performance was further accentuated by her kneading of flour into dough through the performance.

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ATHE 2014 - From the Conference Planner

By Rosemary Malague

The Association for Theatre in Higher Education held its annual conference in Orlando last August, inviting participants to engage with the theme, "P(L)AY: Performance, Pleasure and Pedagogy." The Women and Theatre Program responded with a provocative array of panels, papers, and performances, featuring long-time members alongside emerging scholars and artists. With our group's shared focus on any and all matters relating to women and theatre, WTP reread and/or shed light on a wide range of subjects, both performative and pedagogical.

The notion that "the personal is political" may seem an old feminist cliché, but its truth was borne out in two WTP sessions in particular, one a roundtable, and the other a panel with papers. "Playing the Role of Mother" was a group discussion that looked at the intersections of playing the "role of mother" in both home



Rosemary Malague is the Women and Theatre Program's ATHE conference planner. Rose is a senior lecturer in the Theatre Arts Program at the University of Pennsylvania and is the author of *An Actress Prepares: Women and "the Method"* (Routledge 2012).

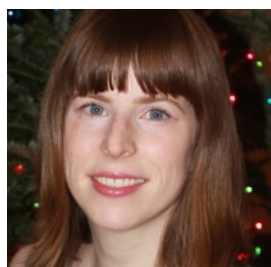
life and academia. In the panel's opening (playful) moment, attendees were asked to display their maternal "props"; the women in the group responded by reaching into their bags, producing the paraphernalia motherhood (snacks, toys, Band-Aids, etc.). Panelists then spoke about the challenges and rewards of performing the mutually influential roles of parent and theatre professional. One memorable testimony came from **Megan Sanborn Jones**, who spoke about how her work as a director has shifted, theoretically and practically, as a result of her experiences of motherhood.

Another jarring panel, "Playing with Power and Privilege: Performing Queer, Feminist Mentorship at Liberal Arts Colleges," brought personal testimony from

participants, as scholars and advocates, asking the question, "How does queer, feminist mentorship transform over time? How is such mentorship informed by an awareness of the intersections of power, privilege, and identity on campus?"

A highlight (or lowlight?) of this session was **Jaclyn Pryor's** troubling and moving account of her experience as a queer scholar who, in her teaching, faced unexpected obstacles in an ostensibly liberal, liberal arts setting. Both of these sessions manifested personal courage by participants, who addressed political concerns shared by many of us invested in our largest understandings of the subject, "women and theatre."

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Catherine Young is a doctoral candidate in Theatre at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Her dissertation draws on contemporary animal studies and traditional archival research to examine the cultural phenomena of animal acts in vaudeville. Her writing has appeared in *Theatre Journal* and *Theatre Survey*.

ATHE 2013 - Member Notebook: Girls Just Want to Have Fun...and Critique Heteronormative Patriarchal Power Structures

By Catherine Young

I know it's a bit obvious, but, I find it hard to resist citing Cindy Lauper when I think about the 2013 WTP ATHE panel "Feminist Fun: Pleasure as Political Strategy in Feminist Performance." Visions of Lauper in leopard-print pajamas and Lou Albano in an old tank top dance through my mind and I find resonant meaning in the lyrics "When the working day is done / Girls just want to have fun."

Of course, we don't just want to have fun and that was the whole point of this excellent panel, which investigated the cultural work of a variety of performance genres including a 1906 melodrama, a 1946 romantic comedy about female war correspondents, the career of Lesbian folk singer Phranc, and contemporary feminist downtown NYC performance.

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Conference Planner continued

In more conventional “panel with papers” sessions (to use ATHE’s official designation), WTP continued to demonstrate the breadth of our scope: the subject of women and theatre pertains to every period, place, performance, and phenomenon. These panels included the following sessions: “Power Play: Women to be Reckoned with from the Spanish Golden Age”; “Size Matters: Playing with Women’s Bodies, Gender and Sexual Stereotypes in Musical Theatre and Performance”; Performing for Whose Pleasure? Female Sacrificial Victims in Greek Tragedy”; and—perhaps most in the spirit of the conference

theme—“Feminist Fun: Pleasure as Political Strategy in Feminist Performance.” And a signature event for WTP, as always, was the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award, which this year recognized **Claire Chafee**, with a reading of her play, *FULL/SELF*.

Perhaps our proudest moment in 2013 was see former WTP president **Sara Warner** receive the ATHE Award for Outstanding Book: *Acts of Gaiety: LGBT Performance and the Politics of Pleasure* (University of Michigan Press). Sara’s work, which bridges feminist and LGBT performance and scholarship, serves as a model for WTP’s ongoing collaboration with another ATHE focus group, LGBTQ. In 2013, we co-sponsored debut

panels, with the aim of honoring our shared commitments.

ATHE 2014 is beginning to take shape, and promises to expand on the work described above. WTP has decided to partner with LGBTQ again for another debut panel, strengthening our connections through shared concerns. The Arizona meeting also promises a similarly balanced offering of panels, papers, and presentations. We hope that WTP members—past, present, and future—will think of our focus group at ATHE as a place where you might discover and realize the promise of this year’s conference: “Dream Acts: Performance as Refuge, Resistance, and Renewal.”

“Feminist Fun” continued

The panel was organized by **Jessica Del Vecchio** and sought to show how these different examples of performance “demonstrate feminist fun, activating pleasure as a political strategy.”

The panelists’ presentations were given in the chronological order of the works covered. This did not suggest a “progress narrative,” rather, it gave important historical context to see how feminist and female writers, performers, and audience members have been able to create meaning and cultivate community in the past 100+ years. **Jessica Brater**’s paper on

Lillian Mortimer’s 1906 play, *No Mother to Guide Her* was an illuminating treatment of the possibilities of writing resistance into a dominant cultural form. Brater’s paper was wonderfully complimented by **Maria Beach**’s paper on Martha Gellhorn and Virginia Cowles’s 1946 play *Love Goes to Press*, which was part of the Mint Theatre Company’s spring 2012 season.

Multimedia was important to **Lisa Sloan** and Del Vecchio’s presentations. Sloan played audio clips and projected images of Phranc from throughout her career, creating pleasure in the (quite crowded!) conference room as audience

members were either reminded of or introduced to Phranc’s ironic take on politics, love, and folksinging itself. Del Vecchio’s description of the “queer millennial feminism” employed by current experimental theatre practitioners in New York City provided a great way to sum up the panel, as it offered possibilities for future queer and feminist engagement with popular culture.

In fact, I was so taken with the panel’s emphasis on pleasure and possibilities that it inspired “Fantasy Feminisms: Dreaming of the Perfect Syllabus” which will be part of the WTP line up at the 2014 ATHE conference. We hope to see you there!

Foreplay continued

The second act opened with the spectacular *Egg Baby Freakout* by **Laura Purcell Gates** (Bath Spa University) and **Tobi Poster** (Wattle and Daub Figure Theatre). The shadow puppet egg baby skillfully played two-dimensional drums; as he repeatedly cracked and reassembled into multiple egg babies, the audience gasped at the intricate visuals—timed perfectly to a jazz

soundtrack—that Gates and Poster created against a white sheet. **Pavithra Prasad** (University of Denver), in dapper drag, got the crowd singing along in her performance *Ladies of Calcutta: a Romp Through the Fields of Queer Racial Desire*, riffing on the ditties of 1960s Anglo Indian pop star, Kal Khan. The show closed with a durational drag extravaganza by Veronica Bleaus, the drag persona of **John Musser** (University of Illinois at

Urbana-Champaign). Veronica’s piece, somewhere between 10 and 45 minutes long, was an experiment in teasing the audience with drag to the point of exhaustion and even inciting fright by sexily wielding a swinging mace over their heads.

The night was a tremendous success, and set a queer tone for the conference by putting performance, playfulness, and perversion at the fore.

ATHE 2013 Debut Panel

By Jason Fitzgerald

The Women and Theatre Program and the LGBTQ Focus Group share greater kinship than most ATHE focus groups. They not only share objects of analysis and political orientations but also many members, who must choose between simultaneous panels, performances, business meetings, and preconferences from one ATHE gathering to the next. At the LGBTQ business meeting at ATHE 2012, a number of members drew attention to a particular problem caused by this existential overlap. Young scholars of theatre and gender were at a loss to decide which of two different debut panels—WTP's or LGBTQ's—they should submit their new papers to. In response, conference planners **Jason Fitzgerald** (of LGBTQ) and **Rose Malague** (of WTP) teamed up to curate a joint WTP-LGBTQ debut panel, with **Sara L. Warner** from Cornell University serving as the panel's respondent.

To nobody's surprise, the panel was a rousing success! **Joy Brooke Fairfield**, from Stanford's PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies, began with her paper "Serious Play in the Love Art Laboratory: Marriage as Relational Art Practice," demonstrating how performance artists **Annie Sprinkle** and **Beth Stevens** used their multi-year series of wedding rituals to radicalize intimacy and to queer commitment. While moving through her colorful and provocatively playful slide show, Fairfield says she was

CFP: Women & Theatre Program and LGBTQ Focus Group Joint Debut Panel

We invite submissions to a competitive debut panel jointly presented by the Women and Theatre Program (WTP) and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) Focus Group at the 2014 Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) conference. Any graduate student who has not presented academic work at ATHE, or any faculty member or independent scholar who has not yet presented at a national conference, is invited to submit presentations for consideration. Papers must engage women's and/or LGBTQ issues in relation to any aspect of theatre and performance. The deadline for submissions is April 1, 2014.

Jennifer DeVere Brody will serve as the respondent for the conference presentation. Professor Brody is Chair of the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies at Stanford University and Affiliate in the CCSRE. Her two books, *Impossible Purities* (1998) and *Punctuation: Art, Politics, and Play* (2008), have been published by Duke University Press. Her scholarship has also appeared in *Theatre Journal*, *Signs*, *Genders*, *Callaloo*, *Text and Performance Quarterly* and in several edited volumes.

A committee composed of select WTP and LGBTQ Focus Group board members will vet submissions. Depending on the variety and quality of submissions, three or four essays will be chosen for inclusion on the debut panel. Those selected may also receive a small cash award, which may be used to offset costs associated with conference attendance.

The 2014 ATHE conference will be held July 24-27, 2014 at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess Hotel in Scottsdale, AZ. All presenters must register and pay the appropriate fees for the conference. For information on the conference (including applicable costs), please visit <http://www.athe.org>.

Papers should be an appropriate length for a fifteen-minute presentation (approximately eight pages). Submit your paper as an MS Word attachment to **Jason Fitzgerald** (jtf2113@columbia.edu). To maintain anonymity, please do not put your name in the body of the paper. Instead, use the first page of the document as a cover sheet, and include the title of your paper, your name, address, telephone number, and email address. Applicants will be informed of the committee's decisions in May 2014. Questions or concerns may be directed to **Jason Fitzgerald** or **Rose Malague** (rmalague@english.upenn.edu), conference planners for LGBTQ and WTP respectively.

"happy to see in the audience the faces of many thinkers in the field whom I deeply respect" and "thrilled

to share my work with such a large and supportive group of listeners."

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Jason Fitzgerald is a PhD Candidate in Theatre at Columbia University, where he is working on a dissertation relating the politics of authenticity to radical performance practice in the American 1960s. He is also a dramaturg, with an MFA in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from Yale School of Drama, and a theatre critic. He has published reviews in *The Village Voice*, *Backstage*, *EDGE*, and *Slant.com*, and he has also published book and performance reviews in *Modern Drama*, *Theatre Survey*, and *Theatre Journal*. He is currently serving as conference organizer for ATHE's LGBTQ Focus Group for the 2013 and 2014 conferences.

Debut Panel continued

Next came **Dora Arreola**, a faculty member in University of South Florida's School of Theatre and Dance, who described the creative process behind *Fronteras Desviadas/ Deviant Borders*, a devised dance-theatre piece by the company she founded in 1999, *Mujeres in Ritual* Dance-Theatre Company. In her paper, "Transgenero Performance: Gender & Transformation in *Mujeres en Ritual*," she presented the work as an exemplar of the possibilities and challenges of a "transgenero"—"trans-gender" and "trans-genre"—aesthetic.

Nicole Gervasio, from Columbia's PhD in English and Comparative Literature, followed with "Queer Mummies, Embodied Politics, and Bodily Presence at play in Hunter Reynolds's *Live Art*." Her presentation vividly described how Reynolds's performed protests reconfigure the work of the "live" in performance art while bringing to visibility the history of a queer counterpublic. Her impression of the event: "ATHE struck me as being exceptional among national conferences; instead of sustaining an atmosphere of competitiveness and hostility, the conference truly seemed to encourage the creation of a theatre community."

Sara Warner concluded with a generous response to the panelists'



Sara Warner and Laura Purcell Gates at the WTP precon

work, highlighting the way each of the papers sought to redirect the category of "ritual" in a feminist and queer direction. Her synthetic feedback not only opened new avenues for Fairfield's, Arreola's, and Gervasio's work but also ignited an engaging discussion among the panel's attendees.

The impressions that are made when a young scholar joins a debut panel inform an entire career, nurturing professional relationships that can last a lifetime—not to mention recruiting new members to hold board offices, organize panels of their own, and determine the future

"The impressions that are made when a young scholar joins a debut panel inform an entire career, nurturing professional relationships that can last a lifetime—not to mention recruiting new members to hold board offices, organize panels of their own, and determine the future of the WTP-LGBTQ relationship."

Jason Fitzgerald

of the WTP-LGBTQ relationship. "I never actually paused to figure out who was part of which focus group," Gervasio remembers, "which I think makes sense, because we all share a political agenda—of making more space for studies of gender and sexuality in the academy." That's why we're proud to announce that 2014 will feature the second joint WTP-LGBTQ debut panel, with former WTP president **Jennifer Brody** serving as the session's respondent. If you have students or colleagues whose work might fit into next year's panel, tell them to respond to the CFP on page 9!

Need to Circulate Information?

Any WTP member can post to our listserv by emailing:

WomenAndTheatreList@athe.org



Nicole Eschen listening at precon

2013 Jane Chambers Award

A Note from the Coordinator

By Maya E. Roth

Feminist playwright and fiction writer **Claire Chafee** won the 2013 Jane Chambers Award for her most recent play *FULL/SELF*, an ensemble work (4W, 1M) set in NYC and the mythic American West. Here magical realism and “prairie logic” intermingle as three generations of women collide with the buried past. Written by the San Francisco Bay Area Playwright of the much-celebrated *Why We Have A Body*, *FULL/SELF* rose to the top of 114 entries submitted to WTP’s Jane Chambers Contest this past year; it advanced through three rounds of adjudication by 10 feminist jurors (playwrights, dramaturgs, and scholars) from across the country.

With wit and imagination, *FULL/SELF* sheds sophisticated light on family, legacy, and living. By way of summary: Louise, just 14, sets off to summer camp from NYC, is intercepted by her long dead grandmother who drives her through the desert, puts her in a dress, brings her to meet her (dead) birth father and mother’s first love, then lands her back in NYC to her furious, high-achieving lesbian single mother and psychoanalysis. The play’s theatrical reinvention of the road-trip genre as a liminal coming-of-age encounter with ghosts, the vitality of characters from the afterlife, the multifaceted exploration of parenting, and the play’s significant range of roles for four women and a man subtly re-centers complex questions of identity, sexuality, class, and gender. Judges were struck with this Chafee’s “stunning facility with language,” “fresh storytelling,” and “wry wit and complexity.”

This new work offers feminist and human insights with a “deceptively



Maya E. Roth is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Performing Arts at Georgetown University. She was honored to receive the Dean’s Excellence in Teaching Award this year. She has overseen the Jane Chambers Playwriting adjudication since 2007.

light tone” as well as graceful explorations of life passages—and choices. Chafee notes that it’s gratifying to win the Jane Chambers Award for what she sees as her most experimental play, due to its treatment of time and space.

Continued on the next page



Bethany Wood graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in December 2012 with a PhD in Theatre and Drama.

A Note from the Coordinator

By Bethany Wood

The 2013 Jane Chambers Student Playwriting award went to *Hello, I’m Eve* by Rebecca Nicholson, M.F.A. playwriting student at Columbia University. **Miranda Rose Hall** of the Missoula Downtown Dance Collective, along with WTP members **Carrie Winship** from the University of Missouri and **Bethany Wood** from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, adjudicated this year’s competition. Nicholson’s *Hello, I’m Eve* recasts the biblical Eve as a witty, sardonic woman exploring the frustrations of life with Adam and her desire for a world outside of Eden. Eve’s musings serve as a connecting thread linking episodes depicting various African American women’s experiences from

the first day of creation to the present.

The reading at this year’s WTP conference in Orlando featured local student actors **Jamaica Reddick** (Rollins College), **Edmarie Montes**, **Khalifa White** (both from the University of Central Florida), and **Darrian Glover** (Valencia College). The actors presented act one of Nicholson’s play, which begins with Eve’s poetic take on the origins of woman. “They say Woman came from Man,” Eve explains, “but I think . . . Before the lines were drawn in the sand/ Or the wild was tamed by the earliest man/ There was the word/ The word was with me/ The words . . . [sic] are me. (Pause) Hello, I’m Eve.” Following this introduction, prehistoric man enters and “creates” woman by scratching out a drawing of a woman and then chanting and dancing. **Continued on page 13**

2013 Jane Chambers Student Award

JC Award continued

In the Awards Ceremony, as well as in interview, Chafee highlighted how especially meaningful this award is to her, given Chambers' work. "To get an award in her name is almost like a secret handshake to say 'keep going.' I very much hope this encourages other lesbian playwrights, particularly, and young women playwrights to keep going." Aware that Chambers left Orlando, where she grew up, Chafee riffed in playful, profound ways on Chambers legacy and on receiving the Award in Orlando. She also reflected in a [YouTube video](#) produced by ATHE on *FULL/SELF*, her own playwriting, and the ongoing obstacles for women, particularly lesbian playwrights, in garnering production.

Chafee's other works include *Whisper from the Book of Etiquette*, *Darwin's Finches*, *Why We Have a Body*, *Even Among these Rocks*, and *Five Women on a Hill in Spain*. Past productions and readings of Chafee's works have been presented by the Magic Theatre, The Women's Project, New York Stage and Film, New Georges, Berkeley Rep and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. Her awards include a Drama-Logue Award, the Bay Area Critics' Circle Award, a Princess Grace Special Projects Grant, and the Oppenheimer Award from New York Newsday for Best Emerging Playwright. Her fiction and plays have been published by Penguin Books, Smith and Kraus (Best Women Plays of 1993), Alexandra Street Press, NuMuse and Zyzzyva. Claire, who holds an MFA from Brown and an Ed.M. from Harvard in Arts Education, teaches creative writing at California College of the Arts (CCA).

WTP presented a professional reading of *FULL/SELF*, which I directed, at the ATHE Conference in Orlando, Florida on Friday, August 2nd, following a rehearsal with

Chafee and featuring a cadre of professional actors affiliated with area universities as well as artist-scholars from WTP (including **Christine Young** and **Lisa Hall Hagen**). Thanks to generous donations from WTP friends and past winners, the award prize was \$1000. As we approach this year's 30th anniversary for the Jane Chambers Award, we welcome donations to keep the award thriving.

The Jane Chambers Contest also recognized two strikingly different plays as Runners-Up in 2013: **Lauren Gunderson's** *Silent Sky* and our own **Domnica Radulescu's** *The Town with Very Nice People*. Fast-moving and creatively staged, *Silent Sky* (premiered at South Coast Rep) theatricalizes the life, scientific imagination and times of 19th century Astronomer Henrietta Leavitt, while Radulescu's "strident operetta," as it is subtitled, traces the transformation of a bigoted American town into a utopic hub of diversity through the interventions of its striking protagonist—an emigre feminist writer. Honorable Mentions went to **Fengar Gael** for her experimental NY fairytale *The Draper's Eye*, **Susan Soon He Stanton** for her gender-bending cross-cultural, mystery *Takarazuka!!!* (produced by Clubbed Thumb), set in the iconic all-female Japanese theatre troupe that stages Western-style musical revues, and **Lauren Yee** for her klezmer-inspired, highly innovative play *A Man, His Wife, and His Hat* (which received its Off-Broadway premiere with Playwrights Realm in August, 2013). Judges were struck with the formal experimentations that this year's final round surfaced, including not only Chafee's winning work, but also Radulescu's festival epic staging with music told across twelve tableaux, Gael's unnerving, speculative universe which characters enter through a drape in a tailor's shop, and Yee's unique poetic comedy,

both magical and absurdist as it mediates on gender roles and relationship.

Details on all six plays honored by the Jane Chambers Award and both student Jane Chambers Contest honorees—including playwright bios—are posted on [WTP's website](#).

This annual ritual of the Award reminds us to advocate for production of feminist works, and plays by women, on stages we know. The Jane Chambers honorees in 2013 serve an array of production venues, cast sizes, and feminist politics. The honored playwrights this year, all writers of creativity and feminist relevance, range from established writers with significant credits to emergent writers; all seek to break the workshop/reading cycle. Their work has been developed and/or produced at theatres such as Crowded Fire, Kitchen Dog, New Georges, The Playwright's Center, Playwright's Realm, Rorshach Theatre, South Coast Rep, The Women's Project, and other venues across the country; most are compatible with university seasons. WTP's interest in these plays—and activism for staging honorees' work—can make a palpable difference in their lives. And in our communities.

The adjudicators for the Jane Chambers Award in 2013 included feminist faculty, playwrights, and dramaturges from across the country: **Sara Chambers**, **Season Ellison**, **Christine Evans** (2007 winner), **Jyl Felman**, **Marietta Hedges**, **Melissa Miller**, **Jen-Scott Mobley**, **Maya Roth** (coordinator), **Sarah Sexton**, **Deb Sivigny**, and **Christine Young**. Great thanks to those who helped identify this year's best works—and to all who will help to promote them for seasons in the year/s ahead.



"They say Woman came from Man," Eve explains, "but I think . . . Before the lines were drawn in the sand/ Or the wild was tamed by the earliest man/ There was the word/ The word was with me/ The words . . . are me. (Pause) Hello, I'm Eve."

Hello, I'm Eve

Rebecca Nichloson, 2013 Student Jane Chambers Award Winner



Student JC Award continued

However, once Woman arrives, she is not amused by Man's dominance of weaker creatures and objects to his constant references to her as his "other." The play then progresses into the modern day, depicting a wonderful date gone horribly wrong, a version of the Clark doll experiment, a partying college woman who is later raped while intoxicated, and a woman mourning the loss of her feminist mother.

During the adjudication process, reviewers commented on Nichloson's dynamic and poetic use of language that enhances each of these scenes. Audience comments after the reading centered on the playwright's use of humor, which frames several incisive and poignant moments in the play, as well as her witty engagement with timely issues. *Hello, I'm Eve* requires an African American cast of six women and two men, employs an episodic structure, and runs for approximately two hours.

Student Jane Chambers Award Reading



"To get an award in her name is almost like a secret handshake to say 'keep going.' I very much hope this encourages other lesbian playwrights, particularly, and young women playwrights to keep going."

Claire Chafee, 2013 Jane Chambers Award Winner



Jane Chambers Award Reading



ATHE 2013 - Member Notebook: “Playing with Feminism: Susan Glaspell’s *Woman’s Honor* as Social Satire of the Sexual Double Standard”

By Aoise Stratford

This year some of my favorite ATHE programming turned out to be early—early enough that I was still on my first cup of tea—but for those of us who were able to postpone breakfast, the rewards were rich and satisfying. Though not officially part of the WTP programming, the panel on Susan Glaspell’s play *Woman’s Honor* hosted by ATDS was a rare treat for anyone interested in women in theatre or the underexposed work of one of America’s great playwrights.

Heidi Schmidt, Cheryl Black, J. Ellen Gainor and Barbara Ozielbo lead the panel. Barbara Ozielbo provided an overview of Glaspell’s career and oeuvre, tracing the highlights, and contextualizing that career within the framework of current practice and scholarship. She then pointed out some of the features to look for in Glaspell’s work and this play in particular, including her use of the absent or offstage character, her careful manipulation of form, crisp dialogue, and the centrality of women and their experiences.

Ellen Gainor then contextualized the play by talking about Glaspell’s period and possible sources, tracing a fascinating and compelling connection through the early twentieth century taste for the sensationalistic writing style known as ‘yellow journalism,’ the changes to deformation legislation that were brought about in an attempt to deal with women seeking redress for defamation of their ‘virtue,’ and the 1915 case of Joe Hill, who sacrificed his alibi in order to protect the reputation of a woman he had been with.

The panelists (with the help of some additional actors) then performed a really delightful staged reading of this very interesting and funny satire about sexual doubles standards. The play follows the story of a man held on suspicion of murder who refuses to clear his name because he does not want to implicate the woman he was with. A long procession of women, all given allegorical names, such as The Motherly One and The Mercenary One, then show up at the prison claiming to



Aoise Stratford is a PhD candidate at Cornell University, where she is working on contemporary women playwrights and their use of the Gothic. She is also a dramaturg and an internationally produced playwright.

be the mysterious woman and refusing, for varying reasons, to allow the young man to sacrifice himself in the name of woman’s honor. In so doing, they call in to question the social and institutionally sanctioned expectations of female sexuality and fidelity. As The Scornful One points out, “woman’s honor would have died out long ago if it had not been for men’s talk of it” (Glaspell, 73).

There was time after the reading for an enthusiastic discussion of the play’s wit, form and social context. Heidi Schmidt shared her experiences teaching this play and some of her students’ reactions to the work. This prompted a rich discussion about pedagogy and strategies for teaching underexposed and historical material. It was a great session: illuminating, thought-provoking, and inspiring. I suspect I am not the only one who came away knowing that I’m now adding *Woman’s Honor* to my list of plays to teach.

Glaspell, Susan. *Woman’s Honor* in *Susan Glaspell The Complete Plays*, Ben-vi, L. & Gainor, J. E. (eds) Jefferson NC: McFarland & Co., 2010.

“With our group’s shared focus on any and all matters relating to women and theatre, WTP reread and/or shed light on a wide range of subjects, both performative and pedagogical.”

Rose Malague

New Books of Interest

Contemporary Women Playwrights

By Penny Farfan and Lesley Ferris

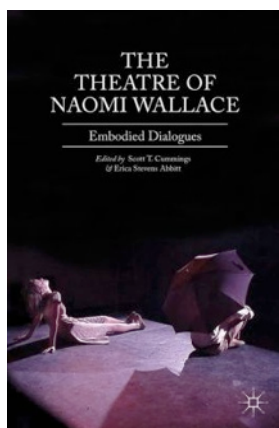
[Palgrave Macmillan](#)

Breaking new ground in this century, this wide-ranging collection of essays is the first of its kind to address the work of contemporary international women playwrights. The book considers the work of established playwrights such as **Caryl Churchill, Marie Clements, Lara Foot-Newton, Maria Irene Fornes, Sarah Kane, Lisa Kron, Young Jean Lee, Lynn Nottage, Suzan-Lori Parks, Djanet Sears, Caridad**

Svich, and Judith Thompson, but it also foregrounds important plays by many emerging writers. Divided into three sections—Histories, Conflicts, and Genres—the book explores such topics as the feminist history play, solo performance, transcultural dramaturgies, the identity play, the gendered terrain of war, and eco-drama, and encompasses work from the United States, Canada, Latin America, Oceania, South Africa, Egypt, and the United Kingdom.

With contributions from leading international scholars and an introductory overview of the concerns and challenges facing women playwrights in this new century, *Contemporary Women Playwrights* explores the diversity and power of women's playwriting since 1990, highlighting key

voices and examining crucial critical and theoretical developments within the field.



The Theatre of Naomi Wallace

By Scott T. Cummings and Erica Stevens Abbott

[Palgrave Macmillan](#)

Naomi Wallace, an American playwright based in Britain, is one of the more original and provocative voices in contemporary theatre. Her poetic, erotically-charged, and politically engaged plays have been seen

in London's West End, off-Broadway, at the Comédie-Française, in regional and provincial theatres, and on college campuses around the world. Known for their intimate, sensual encounters examining the relationship between identity and power, Wallace's works have attracted a wide range of theatre practitioners, including such important directors as **Dominic Dromgoole, Ron Daniels, Jo Bonney, and Kwame Kwei-Armah**. Drawing on scholars, activists, historians, and theatre artists in the United States, Canada, Britain, and the Middle East, this anthology of essays presents a comprehensive overview of Wallace's body of work that will be of use to theatre practitioners, students, scholars, and educators alike.

Theatre for Women's Participation in Sustainable Development

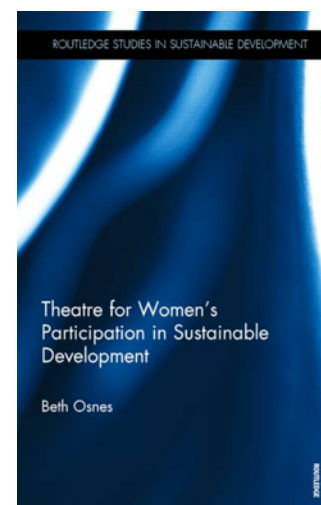
By Beth Osnes

[Routledge Studies in Sustainable Development](#)

Though development researchers have proven that the participation of women is necessary for effective sustainable development, development practitioners still largely lack culturally appropriate, gender-sensitive tools for including women, especially women living in poverty. Current tools used in the

development approach often favour the skill set of the development practitioner and are a mismatch with the traditional, gendered knowledge and skills many women who are living in poverty do have. This study explores three case studies from India, Ethiopia, and the Guatemala that have successfully used applied theatre for women's participation in sustainable development.

This interdisciplinary book has the opportunity to be the first to bring together the theory, scholarship and practice of theatre for women's participation in sustainable development in an international context. This work will be of great interest to scholars and practitioners in a wide variety of fields who are looking for creative solutions for utilizing the contributions of women for solving our global goals to live in a sustainable way on this one planet in a just and equitable manner.



*Book descriptions courtesy of the publishers' websites

Member Feature

A New Festival of Short LGBTQ Plays Attracting National Attention

By Joan Lipkin

Frustrated by the lack of lesbian and transgendered representation on stage and opportunities for female directors in St Louis, three years ago I decided to found and produce a festival of short plays and performance pieces. My approach to many issues and work has been to reach across the aisle so I decided to make it as inclusive as possible as a festival of short LGBTQ work. The brevity of pieces would mean exposure and opportunities for more writers and directors, and a variety of perspectives would help foster a more cohesive community.

I teamed up with *Vital Voice Media*, a local LGBTQ publication that covers both St Louis and Kansas City as well as the St. Louis LGBT Center as partners. On March 21-23, we will present our third annual *Briefs: A Festival of Short LGBTQ Plays*. The festival is a unique venture in St. Louis in that it brings together numerous directors, both emerging and established, to showcase

the work of seven different playwrights all under one roof. That roof is an unorthodox private event venue known as La Perla, a one-time bank and one of the oldest buildings in Missouri. We get a liquor license for the event and bring in a DJ. Our slogan has been, "Come for the plays, stay for the party."

In just three short years, we have attracted one of the most diverse audiences and casts in the region. And last year, we were named the "Best Theatre Event in St Louis" by *Alive Magazine*. We do a lot of community outreach including a free preshow brunch at our final performance for seniors and members of Older Lesbians Organizing for Change, SAGE and Primetimers.

This year's pieces were selected from nearly 100 submissions from across the nation and include such themes as a relationship between a conservative and a liberal, domestic violence between same sex couples, a Victorian version of Grindr (a geosocial networking application geared towards gay, bisexual, and bi-curious men), middle aged lesbian dating issues, LGBTQ parenting and families and more. As a special treat, **Ricky Phoenix** and **Michelle Mynx** of "Gravity Plays Favorites" will open the show.

The tremendous and well deserved success of *Fun Home*, the brilliant new musical by **Lisa Kron** and **Jeanine Tesori** based on **Allison Bechdel's** graphic novel notwithstanding, it is rare to see work that addresses the lives of lesbian, bisexual or transgendered people. It is even more rare that it would share space with work about gay male experience. However, our festival is not intended for one segment of the community. On the contrary, diverse audiences who appreciate good theatre and unusual venues pack our houses. The seven plays each run about 10 minutes and include a myriad of comic and serious pieces.

During its short history, *Briefs* has attracted some of the most seasoned directors in St Louis and also provides an excellent opportunity for younger directors to gain valuable experience and exposure.

Several of the plays that have been done at previous *Briefs* have gone on to numerous productions including my play, "Are You Married?" which debuted at the festival last February. It has since been presented at six theatres including at both the Nuyorican Cafe (where it won a prize as an audience favorite) and the Wild Project in New York City. I am perhaps most excited that it will be performed as the keynote for a national healthcare conference in Columbia in April and at a med school. So the festival has become a laboratory for my work as well.

I think that in this economy it is also essential that ticket prices be as affordable as possible in order to attract and welcome diverse audiences. We have one of the lowest tickets prices in town, made possible through a small grant, sponsorships and selling ads.

After hearing me talk about Briefs two years ago at the ATHE conference in DC, **Frank Miller**, a theatre professor at Georgia State University decided to hold a similar festival on his campus. I think this work is ideal for college classes and welcome WTP members to contact me if they want to consider this for any of their coursework. Ideally, I would love to edit an anthology to make this work more widely available. But in the meantime . . .

It is amazing what you can pull off with an idea and commitment and a lot of work. But I have been doing that for over twenty years. To read more about my company, see www.uppityco.com.



Joan Lipkin is the Producing Artistic Director of That Uppity Theatre Company and is on the board of WTP. A playwright, director, educator and social critic, she divides her time between St Louis and New York City.

Pedagogical Pleasures and Lost Labors: Teaching Forgotten and Lesser-Known Plays by Women

By Lindsay Cummings

If you were at the 2012 preconference in Washington, D.C., you may remember the invigorating conversation that occurred at the “History Matters” roundtable, moderated by **Jill Dolan**. The roundtable began as an introduction to the **History Matters/Back to the Future** project, which promotes gender equity through the study and production of women’s plays. But it soon morphed into a sprawling discussion about how to approach season planning, gender and race in considerations in casting, and the challenges and rewards of teaching some of these plays—many of which are out of print, have little scholarship written about them, or were not part of our own theatre history education. In many cases, reintroducing these women to the classroom or stage means first introducing ourselves to them! I left that roundtable feeling energized, particularly for my work in the classroom, which, let’s face it, is the place where I can most easily effect change. I also felt sure of one thing: the best way to expand my own knowledge and capacity to introduce such plays into the classroom was to turn to my colleagues in WTP for help. I reached out to one such colleague—**Aoise Stratford**, a graduate student at Cornell University—to help me organize a panel that would not only introduce conference participants to playwrights who are seldom staged



or taught, but also to share practical pedagogical strategies for that work. The result, “Pedagogical Pleasures and Lost Labors: Teaching Forgotten and Lesser-Known Plays by Women,” brought together six scholars who highlighted the work of women from the early 19th to the 21st century. **Cheryl Black** spoke enthusiastically about modernist and anti-realist women writing in the early 20th century, including Djuna Barnes, Marita Bonner, and Zona Gale. Aoise Stratford introduced us to women writers of gothic dramas, including Catherine Gore, the so-called first female practitioner of “gentlemanly melodrama.” **Valerie Joyce** shared extensive resource materials from her course in African American Women Playwrights, and **Emily Rollie** discussed the pedagogical value of studying Canadian and U.S. women dramatists comparatively. **Teresa Stankiewicz** discussed the symbolist and experimental dramaturgy of **Marguerite Emery Vallette** (aka Monsieur Rachilde) and **Diane Glancy**, and I spoke about the ways that Mexican-American writer **Josefina Niggli**’s work in the 1930s complicates dominant narratives of Latina/o theatre history. Because one of our goals was to encourage others to include some of these works on their syllabi, we created a website where we’ve shared bibliographies, syllabi, and

Lindsay Cummings is an Assistant Professor of Dramatic Arts at the University of Connecticut, where she teaches dramaturgy and dramatic literature. Her work on the playwright Naomi Wallace appears in the recently released collection, *The Theatre of Naomi Wallace: Embodied Dialogues*, edited by Scott T. Cummings and WTP’s own Erica Steven Abbitt, from Palgrave Macmillan.

ideas for assignments. In some cases, we also suggest the kinds of courses in which these plays might be taught. You can access that website at <https://sites.google.com/site/womendramatists/>.

The website is a work in progress. In fact, I was so excited by the panel that I began “stalking” other potential contributors around ATHE. I attended a wonderful panel, sponsored by WTP, called “Power Play: Women to be Reckoned with in the Spanish Golden Age,” and I have updated the website to include a handout by **Elizabeth Cruz Peterson** detailing the work some of these women playwrights, as well as the names of translators.

This project is ongoing. I would like the website to serve as a resource for members of WTP and beyond. My next goal is to create a “Top 10 Ideas for Including Women in your Theatre History Syllabus before 1900.” Of course, for that I will need your help. Do you have a recommendation? A great lesson plan to go with a play? News about translations or publications? Practical recommendations for supplementing theatre history anthologies while still keeping course material costs low? Send me your thoughts and ideas! We are each other’s best resources. I look forward to hearing from you, and to scouting for new material in Phoenix!

"I left that roundtable feeling energized, particularly for my work in the classroom, which, let's face it, is the place where I can most easily effect change. I also felt sure of one thing: the best way to expand my own knowledge and capacity to introduce such plays into the classroom was to turn to my colleagues in WTP for help."

Lindsay Cummings



Special panel featuring Christine Young, as well as Orlando Theatre makers Beth Marshall (left) and Mitzi Maxwell (center) at the precon



Lunch at the precon

Call for Participants: WOMEN AND THEATRE **Preconference** Scottsdale 2014

Calling all Artists, Scholars, Activists, Feminists!

**CFP: Women and Theatre Preconference,
Scottsdale 2014**

"Dream & Action, Theory Practice"

Wednesday, July 23rd from 8am-5pm, and Thursday, July 24th from 8am-Noon at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess.

We are interested in creatively structured performance, discussion, and activity-based panels as well as traditional papers.

Please submit your proposals by March 31st, 2014 to Lisa Hall Hagen by filling out this [form](#).

"Dream & Action, Theory & Practice" is meant to capture and inquire about the intersections, slippages, tensions, and benefits of the places where abstract and ideal (Dream) is met with material/concrete (Action). This might be theorized as the relationship of theory to practice, or more broadly as the interplay between the dreaming actions of the theatre in both production and scholarship and the socio-political and practice-based actions of the profession as well as research. We particularly encourage a feminist focus on the way gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, etc. impact these concerns.

If you have ideas or questions, please don't hesitate to contact Lisa by email to discuss:

lisahallhagen@gmail.com



Jen-Scott Mobley and Lisa Hall Hagen at the WTP business meeting



Cheryl Black at the precon

WTP Membership and Conference Registration

WTP's membership year runs from the first day of September to the last day of August. As a member, you receive two newsletters each year, which include letters from the WTP President, WTP member features, reports on the Jane Chambers competition, ATHE conference news, and programming for WTP conferences. Please support WTP by joining our organization or renewing your membership via our patron pay pal link [here](#).

For more information, visit [WTP's website](#).

From the Editor

At its center, we believe the WTP Newsletter not only serves to disseminate WTP member and program information, but to provide a sense of community and connectivity amongst WTP members.

Join us in this mission by submitting any of the following for our next WTP Newsletter:

- Past President's Column - did you serve as WTP President? Tell us about your experience!
- WTP Member Feature Column - an article that highlights a WTP member's recent or forthcoming project
- WTP News and/or Opportunities - including brief publications announcements, summaries of artistic projects, or calls for contributors/collaborators/artists
- Pictures of WTP happenings (including Precon pics)

- Articles on Jane Chambers Student Playwriting Award Contest and/or updates on past winners
- Descriptions of and responses to conference presentations, panels, and performances
- Any article addressing issues/ideas relevant or of service to WTP members

If you are interested in submitting any of the above items or any other item that we did not list but that you feel would be of interest to the WTP community, please send an email at the address below.

We also welcome any WTP Newsletter related questions, comments, suggestions, or letters to the editors

Jessica Del Vecchio,
jdel_vecchio@gc.cuny.edu

WOMEN AND THEATRE General Information

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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 to its conference activity, WTP, in collaboration with ATHE, sponsors the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award. This award is one of the few nationally recognized competitions for women playwrights and attracts over 200 submissions annually. The award-winning play is given a reading at ATHE, and an

annotated list of the top contenders is circulated to the WTP members and over 400 regional theatres. WTP also sponsors the annual Jane Chambers Student Playwriting Award, and the winner is given a staged reading at our annual conference. The continuing goal of WTP is to enable feminist inquiry and to provide opportunities for discussion between those who teach, perform, and theorize about feminism, theatre, and performance.