

## 2007 JANE CHAMBERS PLAYWRITING AWARD RECIPIENTS

Sponsored by the Women and Theatre Program of ATHE

CHRISTINE EVANS for *TROJAN BARBIE: A Car-Crash Encounter with Euripides' Trojan Women*. F 8, M 5, 90 mins. With wit, theatricality, and profound poetry, Evans revisions Euripides' classic as a post-modern pastiche across cultures that resonates deeply with our own war times: Past and present violently collide as the dreams of women and their fierce hunger for life and creativity play out in the context of war. Script available from the Australian Script Center (<http://ozscript.org/author.php?id=211>) & Peregrine Whittlesey Agency ([PWWAGY@aol.com](mailto:PWWAGY@aol.com)).

Synopsis: Lotte, a modern-day English tourist who repairs dolls, is enjoying her Cultural Tour for Singles in Troy when she encounters Andromache, fleeing the rape of her city. When an American soldier captures Andromache and flings her back into the ancient camp of the *Trojan Women*, Lotte tries to intervene, only to be captured herself. Meanwhile, two American soldiers kidnap Hecuba's daughter, Polly X, for ritual sacrifice, but dally at the Baghdad Zoo to drink and party with the tigers. When the camp is torched and the Trojan women enslaved, the British Embassy rescues Lotte. Her life returns to normal — until Hecuba claws her way up through the centuries in search of her murdered children's bodies. Lotte's shattered dolls, the women's experience as chattel, and the final suggestion that un-mourned histories return in terrible disguises, as Cassandra prophesies, inventively suggest some of the complex ways that war, gender, violence and even creativity bind together.

Christine Evans' plays have been commissioned and widely produced in her native Australia, including by the Adelaide International Festival of Arts, Belvoir St. Theatre, Vitalstatistix, Deck Chair Theatre, and Spare Parts Theatre. Her play *My Vicious Angel* was nominated for five national literary awards and the Summer Locke Elliot Exchange with New Dramatists, NY, in 1999. In the U.S., her plays have been developed and produced in San Francisco, Atlanta, New York, Providence, Dallas, Pittsburgh, and Washington, D.C. Her award-winning *Slow Falling Bird* showcased at the 2003 Bay Area Playwrights Festival (premiered with Crowded Fire) and she is resident playwright for Perishable Theatre (Providence, RI) where three of her plays have received world premieres. Honors include the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award, the Monash National Playwrights Award, the Rella Lossy Award, a MacDowell Colony Fellowship, a Fulbright, the Weston Award, and two first place awards from Perishable Theatre's Women's Playwriting Competition. Evans, who holds an MFA and Ph.D. from Brown University, fills the Briggs-Copeland Lectureship in Playwriting at Harvard University.

### First Runner-Up

*AISLE 7* by Kendall Lynch. F3, M1; 90 minutes. Among the pristine aisles of Greenway Grocery, Camille finds comfort at the checkout counter, transgression in the frozen foods, danger in the bakery and even redemption for sale. If she can pay the price... This unusual, experiential play stages a tug-of-war between Camille and the Store. Audience members are invited to experience this very visceral world and feel implicated in its creation. Is the store real or in Camille's head? Is it about capitalism, consumerism, feminism, the effects of a Prozac nation? How do power structures operate and what are their racial implications?

Kendall Lynch received her MFA at University of Texas-Austin in 2006. For more information about *Aisle 7*, contact [kenmllyn@gmail.com](mailto:kenmllyn@gmail.com).

### Finalists

*VICTORIA MARTIN: Math Team Queen* by Kathryn Walat. 1F, 4M. 90 minutes. Smart and funny, this play centers on Victoria Martin, third most popular sophomore girl at Longwood High, who unexpectedly becomes a member of the super-nerdy high school Math Team. As Vickie discovers her hidden passion for math and love of math league competition, the geeks must adjust to having a girl (a popular girl—a *smart* popular girl) in their midst. On a winning streak headed

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towards State Competitions, the boy mathletes worship Victoria. But can the Math Team's newest star split her high school life between totally popular Vickie Martin and Victoria Martin, queen of the math team?

Kathryn Walat's *Victoria Martin: Math Team Queen* premiered Off-Broadway at the Women Project's and is being published both by Samuel French and in *New Playwrights: The Best Plays of 2007*. For more information, contact Val Day at William Morris Agency ([VDay@wma.com](mailto:VDay@wma.com)). Walat's other plays have been produced at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Hangar Theatre, Salvage Theater, & Perishable Theatre, and developed at Playwright's Horizon & Manhattan Theatre Club as well as New Georges, where she is an affiliated playwright. She holds an M.F.A. from Yale U.

**THE WOMAN WHO WAS CAPTURED BY GHOSTS** by Julie Pearson-Little Thunder. 3F, 3M, 2 unspecified gender. 60 minutes. This powerful play follows a native woman's journey through diagnosis and treatment for breast cancer, interweaving realism and expressionistic storytelling. Set in a mixed culture, it adapts the Cheyenne story of the origins of the Contrarian Society, liberally adapted, so that the home life and mythic life of the protagonist intersect. In the traditional warrior's story, the Contrarian Society was started by a girl captured by ghosts; when she finally escapes into the sacred mountain, an Old Man and Woman instruct her, giving her a Thunder Bow which helps her to escape death—and return to her people.

Julie Pearson-Little Thunder, Artistic Director of Thunder Road Theater, has worked in Native Theater for 13 years and received her Ph.D. from University of Kansas. For more information on *The Woman Who Was Captured by Ghosts*, contact 918-831-6468.

**PASSING THROUGH** by Vynnie Meli. F3, M2. Two acts. In the shoddy dressing room of an Alabama juke joint, an "all-girl" band, the International Rhythm Darlings, is getting ready. It's 1943 and they're the "Rosie the Riveters" of the big bands—hired to play their music and jazz because most male musicians are fighting the war abroad. Inspired by historic events, sexism isn't the only prejudice this multicultural women's band faces. Touring the Jim Crow South with the first Caucasian and Jewish member put them all in danger.

Vynnie Meli is a member of the Dramatists Guild, Working Title Playwrights and Atlanta Women Playwrights. For more information on *Passing Through*, contact <[Vm3000@comcast.net](mailto:Vm3000@comcast.net)>.

### STUDENT JANE CHAMBERS WINNER

**CONFessions OF A RELUCTANT CAREGIVER** by Merri Biechler (M.F.A., Ohio University). This moving play chronicles the writer's experience as caregiver to her mother and father before their deaths due to cancer. Selected as a Kendeda Finalist, *Confessions of a Reluctant Caregiver* has received readings in New York and Atlanta, and will participate in the WordBRIDGE Playwrights Lab. Biechler, whose *The Bathtub Play* won the 2005 Jane Chambers Student Playwriting Award, brings a professional background in acting and was a founding member of the Edge Theater, together with Peter Hedges, Mary-Louise Parker and Joe Mantello. For more information on *Confessions of a Reluctant Caregiver*, contact <[merri.biechler@gmail.com](mailto:merri.biechler@gmail.com)>.

The JANE CHAMBERS AWARD recognizes plays & performance texts created by women that present a feminist perspective & contain significant opportunities for female performers. This annual award is given in memory of lesbian playwright Jane Chambers who through her plays such as *A Late Snow*, *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove* and *My Blue Heaven* became a major feminist voice in American theater. Sponsored by the Women and Theatre Program with the Association for Theater in Higher Education, the Jane Chambers winner receives \$1000 and a rehearsed reading at ATHE. *Guidelines for submission can be viewed at the WTP website:* <<http://www.athe.org/wtp/html/chambers.html/>>.