

Spring 2003

Review: The Newsletter of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, volume 13, issue 2

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On Borders

In their massive, multi-volume *History of Cartography*, J.B. Harley and David Woodward introduced “an entirely new definition of ‘map,’ one that is neither too restrictive nor yet so general as to be meaningless” (xvi). Their definition:

Maps are graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes, or events in the human world. (xvi)

This simple but expansive re-definition set off an explosion of renewed interest in the history of cartography. Given the ambition of a project that spans thousands of years of world culture, Harley and Woodward chose to re-define “map” so that they could include the historical and cultural contexts in which maps are made; so that the world view of the individual map-maker could be seen as essential to a full appreciation of the map itself; and to reappraise those images that had, on the basis of prejudice alone, had been restricted from a place in the history of cartography. For a start, the authors take seri-

ously the medieval European maps that previous cartographic historians had dismissed as merely “wrong.” The *History of Cartography* project, begun in the mid-1980s, continues to inform the study and appreciation of maps, western and non-western alike: a prehistoric city map in Turkey, pre-modern Japanese maps of towns and private property, medieval European religious maps, and pre-Columbian mapping practices in North America, to name just a few subjects.

As we look ahead to LMDA’s approaching annual conference in Chicago, the editors’ thoughts turn to the geography of theatre, to the diverse body of work performed on this continent, and to the many communities in which our members live and work. The theme of the upcoming conference, “Borders,” is a topographical one: a word that evokes both separation and contiguity, geography and society. Though a border indicates difference, it also locates the point of contact between differences.

Our field doesn’t seem to be in need of a reinvention of terms such as

that proposed in Harley and Woodward's *History*. Dramaturgy as a practice seems to find strength in its broad flexibility of definition. And "performance" as a term has already exploded the limits of "theatre," far beyond the ability of a new definition to reconcile. Theatre and performance both are none the worse off for the definitional detonation.

If there is a language of limitation that applies to our work it seems to stem more from social, personal, institutional, and economic boundaries — the divisions that separate individuals and communities from each other. The table that anchors a dramaturg in a corner of the rehearsal room. The street that separates an affluent college campus from the working-class neighborhood that abuts it. The discomfort that working-class kids feel, bussed to a multi-million dollar arts center. The proscenium arch. Niagara Falls. All of us in some way mark the borders of our experience, not from "some geographical or moral terra firma," as Diana Taylor has put it, but from the shifting ground of someone who crosses those borders daily (179).

The conference organizers have shared their preview with us in this issue. The title for the conference already plays with the discomfort of border-crossing, whether between neighborhoods or nations, and we look forward to hearing the ways in which the members of our international community of theatre artists address themselves to the frontiers of contact and communication.

Also in this issue, Mallory Catlett and Scott Horstein introduce the new In Print section. Their discussion of *Between the Lines*, edited by Judith Rudakoff and Lynn M. Thompson, provides an insightful consideration of a valuable new contribution to the growing body of texts specifically engaged with our field. In the next issue, we'll be hosting another conversation on this body of work, reviewing the impact of the Production Notebooks on our field. The volumes edited by Mark Bly document theatre process as well as product, and we look forward to the conversation that considers their contribution.

We also renew our call for submissions to the Projects in Process section. *Review* welcomes essays in which dramaturgs (and others) can discuss new projects in any stage of development, be it opening night, a work in progress, or a pipe dream. We invite any and all to contribute to the conversation in the pages of *Review*.

Though not part of the Projects project, we also include a brief review of a production that its organizers tout as the largest theatre event in history, ever. The Lysistrata Project attracted considerable media to what was, in practice, an international, grassroots collection of readings. A true reckoning of the number of folding chairs and music stands that were mobilized on this day may never be known, but two San Diego area organizers share their experience.

And we could not close our introduction to this issue without introducing the members of our new editorial advisory board. These advisors will serve as the idea mill for LMDA's newsletter, sharing their experiences and interests with the contributors and editorial staff of *Review*. Please join us in welcoming these valuable voices.

Works cited

Harley, J.B. and David Woodward, eds. *The History of Cartography*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987.

Taylor, Diana. "Border Watching." *The Ends of Performance*. Ed. Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane. New York: New York UP, 1998. 178 – 185.

review

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Review is published twice yearly by the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas. Submissions should ideally conform to MLA format, but we're not too picky. Spelling differences between Canadian and US English will be preserved. As per the name of our organization, "dramaturg" will be the default spelling, but we will preserve the spelling of any submitter who prefers "dramaturge."

Inquiries from prospective contributors are encouraged. PROJECTS-IN-PROCESS queries should be directed to Jacob Zimmer: "Small Wooden Shoe" <smallwoodenshoe@hotmail.com>. Queries regarding Review's IN PRINT section should be directed to Madeleine Oldham: "Madeleine Oldham" <madeleineO@sct.org>. General inquiries and inquiries regarding feature articles may be directed to Shelley Orr: "Shelley Orr" <morr@ucsd.edu>. Calendar and Events submissions should be directed to the appropriate LMDA regional representative. Questions regarding the Calendar and Events section should be directed to Liz Engelman: "Liz Engelman" <lengelman@mccarter.org>. Review reserves the right to edit (for length) any Calendar submission without notification. Regional updates should be 400–600 words in length: keep everybody informed about special events, readings, workshops, lectures, limited performances — the sort of thing that didn't make the subscription brochure.

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LMDA CONFERENCE 2003

Turges in the Hood

Like political ambassadors, literary managers and dramaturgs cross many different borders in the course of a work day: intellectual, aesthetic, managerial, interpersonal, and structural. The artistic results of this process cross borders as well: geographic, generational, cultural, ethnic, economic, professional, and academic—to name a few. In today's economically diminished theatrical climates, shrinking travel budgets often leave these dramaturgical ambassadors inside their theatrical offices, rather than cultivating new relationships and experiences.

Inspired by this fluidity of both process and product, motivated by the current financial challenges, and stimulated by the urban neighborhoods and vital theatre community of Chicago, the LMDA 03 conference aims to explore these — always varied and often difficult — border crossings.

This summer in Chicago we want to discuss, confront, wrestle, and wrangle with the challenge of diversifying both the dramaturgical and the theatrical community. From a bus tour of Chicago's theatrical neighborhoods to presentations of new work that cross generational and geographic borders, to production case studies which focus on expanding the circles of collaboration, this conference intends to identify, investigate, invigorate and innovate the ways we work — and what we are working towards.

So cross over with us — no passport required.

THURSDAY, JUNE 26

UNIVERSITY CAUCUS AND BUS TOUR

10am-8pm Registration

10:00-11:30 Hot Topics • *Presentations welcome which focus on issues of dramaturgy training as well as the hottest topics in academia.*

11:30-12:30 Lunch

12:30-2:00 Training Turges: All roads lead to dramaturgy • *Members invested in training dramaturgs share how their programs help students cross over from the academic to the professional.*

2:00-6:00 Chicago Borders • *Get on the bus! A guided tour and discussions with the artistic staffs of several of Chicago's most diverse and exciting theaters. Destinations are: Neo-Futurists, Chicago Dramatists, ETA Creative Arts Foundation, Court Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Festival.*

6:00-8:00 Dinner on Navy Pier

8:00-9:30 Keynote Address

Chicago theater veteran **Chuck Smith** (pictured above right) traces the development of the Chicago theater movement through his own personal experiences from a small black south side community theater in the mid 1960s to his current position of Resident Director of the Goodman Theatre.



Above: A scene from *Crowns*. *Crowns* premiered at the McCarter Theatre, where it ran from October 13 to November 3, 2002. Shown are Harriett D. Foy, Lillias White, and Lynda Gravatt. Top: Chicago theater veteran Chuck Smith.

photo © Joan Marcus

FRIDAY, JUNE 27

8:00-9:00 Breakfast/executive meeting

9:00-9:30 Intro/welcome

9:30-10:15 Breakout intros • *Personal Borders: What is the biggest border you have to cross working in this profession?*

10:15-10:30 Break

10:30-12:30 Case Studies • *Crossing Collaborative Borders: How four particular projects looked outside the dramatic box and found new definitions of dramaturgy and community.*

Crowns by Regina Taylor at McCarter & Second Stage Theatres

Burning Vision by Marie Clements at Rumble Productions, Vancouver
M/M/C (Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella) by Bill Rauch at Yale Repertory Theatre

Seagull Project by Jim Lasko, Redmoon Puppet Theater, Chicago

12:30-2:00 Lunch

DePaul Playwrights & LMDA dramaturgs work session

2:00-3:45 Playing Telephone: Furthering Geographic Collaborations
A presentation and discussion of how work can literally cross borders; how the seed of an idea can take root and grow to international results.

3:45-4:00 Break

4:00- 5:30 Breakout Sessions and Workshops

Free Street Workshop • *A hands-on workshop with the members of Free Street Theatre, an award-winning, community-based theater.*

Crossing Professional Borders • *What is a Holly-turg?: Disney's own Greg Gunter reimagines the role of the dramaturg in film, TV and the Entertainment Industries and provides tools and insights into the world of commercial arts.*

Institutional Borders: When the Twain Meet • *How can institutions best use their resources to most creatively support and encourage the artists' vision? Hear it from the artists' mouths. Featuring Chicago's own playwrights, designers, directors and artistic directors.*

5:30-7:00 Cocktail Reception at Victory Gardens Theater

7:00-11:00 Dinner/Performance

SATURDAY, JUNE 28

8:00-9:30 Breakfast sponsored by the Playwrights Guild of Canada

9:30-11:00 Breakout Sessions: Dramaturging Diversity

Diversifying the Profession • *Look in the mirror. Theaters and theater departments are not reflecting the changing demographic of our 21st century society. What can we do organizationally and institutionally to embrace this change?*

Diversifying Text • *Not every play is a "well made play." An investigation of the different ways of the selection, interpretation, definition, and instruction of what a "text" can mean today.*

Diversifying Audience • *It's not just marketing's job! An exchange of information and brainstorming on how can we as literary managers and dramaturgs help in reaching out to our community and cross the gender, generational, ethnic and racial lines.*

11:00-11:30 Break

11:30-1:00 Dramaturging Diversity (part 2) • *Breakout sessions share questions, challenges, ideas, and inspirations from the morning session.*

1:00-2:30 Lunch
DePaul playwrights & LMDA dramaturgs rehearse

2:30-4:30 Business Meeting

4:30-4:45 Break

4:45-6:15 Crossing the Lines • *Readings by DePaul playwrights, followed by a discussion on the collaborative process with their LMDA dramaturg partners.*

7:30 Annual Banquet at DePaul University

SUNDAY, JUNE 29

9:00-10:00 Board meeting

10:00-11:00 Regional breakfast

11:00-12:00 Conference wrap up and planning session

12:00-1:00 Executive Meeting



Review's PROJECTS-IN-PROCESS section invites you to send accounts of your project-in-process.

The **PROJECTS-IN-PROCESS** series is looking to foster a discussion that anticipates future work, so this section provides a forum for dramaturgs and other artists to **DISCUSS** their **ONGOING WORK**. Share your current obsessions, accounts of recent work, and your plans for the future. **PHOTOGRAPHS** documenting your project — at any point between inception and completion — are especially welcome.

To start, send a short, preliminary, 100-word description of your project to Jacob Zimmer. Completed **PROJECT** descriptions will be approximately 1000 words.

Jacob Zimmer, editor
PROJECTS-IN-PROCESS
smallwoodenshoe@hotmail.com

call for
submissions

Reading *Between the Lines*

by Mallory Catlett and Scott Horstein

This article inaugurates a new column for Review that deals with literature (or other media) relevant to our profession. In keeping with the collaborative dramaturgical spirit, these reviews are conceived not as a single reviewer's critique, but rather as excerpts from a substantial joint e-mail "conversation" between two dramaturgs.

Between the Lines: The Process of Dramaturgy

By Judith Rudakoff and Lynn M. Thomson.

327 pages.

Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, (September) 2002.

Between the Lines is the latest in a small but growing body of literature about dramaturgy in North America. Canadian dramaturg Judith Rudakoff and American dramaturg Lynn M. Thomson each interview a representative sampling of veteran dramaturgs from their respective countries. Their stated goal is to demystify the profession, to explore what dramaturgical identity, practice, and collaboration mean in a range of theatrical and geographical settings. The interviewees from Canada include: Bill Glassco, Peter Hinton, Urjo Kareda, D.D. Kugler, Maureen LaBonté, and Bob White; from the United States: Mark Bly, Anne Cattaneo, Michael Bigelow Dixon, Norman Frisch, Morgan Jenness, and Shelby Jiggetts-Tivony.

SCOTT HORSTEIN: From this book I mainly got that there is a precedent for me having a powerful place at the table. It helps make the case that there are definable different styles of dramaturging, just as there are definable different styles of directing or acting, etc.; from Norman Frisch (dramaturg as curator) to Bob White (dramaturg as ambassador of the art of theatre to a local region) to Jenny Munday (dramaturg as community artisan). I think it's really important, because it asserts that dramaturgs create a body of work, even though at the end of the day the work isn't "theirs" and doesn't have their name on it.

MALLORY CATLETT: Addressing collaboration, the book most basically suggests that it is about first opening up the dialogue, then looking at choices, how they are made, what problems they solve, what obstacles they might create. Problem solving, the thing I continually come back to, is not about finding answers as much as about making choices. I think there is a difference. What makes these people interesting is their consciousness of this.

SH: I'm very intrigued by an idea you mentioned, that Canadian dramaturgy isn't quite as research-based, that there's a bit more of maverick sensibility about it which may perhaps limit the sense of professional authority Canadian dramaturgs feel. I think you're right, research often does come down to an authority issue of sorts, it's the most concrete reason we can present for being at the table, and for that reason the dramaturgy protocols that Mark Bly describes are a powerful tool for advocacy. But we've all probably been in situations where we've felt like librarians and nothing more, so it's important to balance it all out.

MC: Aside from the question of *what* we do, it seems valid to ask *why* we do it. *Where* is the pleasure in it? Urjo Kareda actually uses the word when describing dramaturgy as a "private" pleasure, and I think you can identify that in-the-moment pleasure for different dramaturgs. For D.D. Kugler it seems to be in that active debate where all sides are struggling to articulate themselves. It's in the conversation, the drawing out of the other in the unanswered question. For Mark Bly it seems to be in that moment that patience pays off, when you recognize a need in your collaborator and you find a way to support it. It's like he is keeping some sort of vigil, keeping his mind on the end of *Measure for Measure* until it has to be dealt with, and then it is. There is a lot of talk about dramaturgs valuing process over product, and I wonder if our belief in process is less about some inherent value and more about our own pleasure.

SH: I confess to a certain sense of frustration with the task at hand – I feel the book makes the dramaturgical process clearer, but that I want it to be even clearer than that. I feel that it's hard to establish our place at the table if we can't concretely explain and train people in what we do, to find a concrete way of talking about our abstract process, a concrete proof that is more than the concreteness of research product and program note, but a concrete vocabulary for our conversation/development work. Part of the stated goal of the book is to "demystify the profession," which it does by elucidating specific dramaturgical processes. But I wonder if the book is hard to get into if you're not already a dramaturg.

MC: I don't share your frustration, but perhaps I don't believe "demystifying the profession" is the best objective for the book. That might be a flaw in the book, but I think it demystifies through understanding history, not explaining what dramaturgs do devoid of that. I don't share your sense that the book is supposed to explain what dramaturgy is to the layman. I feel like it is a book that profiles artists at work.

SH: You're right. I guess what I'm looking for is that step-by-step process, and I think Mark Bly gets at it best – chronicling specific moments of decision and action for a dramaturg, how do you sit "vigil" for them (your term, which I think is great), what is the vigilant process. I think unraveling that goes a long way to demystifying the process, as would describing its pleasure.

MC: I would argue that what the layman reader gets from this book is a sense of the history, the multiple possibilities of the profession and the complexities of the creative process. I think the book resists identity/professional justification through description of skills and it makes that tradeoff because it places more priority on the big picture. The landscape. I think geography is as important as demystification.

SH: Right. By making dramaturgs' stories available and documented, this book demystifies in as much as it establishes specific historical precedents. By the book's end there is a sense of combined dramaturgical history, as well as a sense, through career portraits and the shifting dramaturgical role, of the ephemeral nature of theatre itself.

MC: The book moves back and forth between "what we do" and "how we learned what we do" and when that functional or professional description or identity falls away. I don't know about you, but I think as artists it is always more interesting to talk about the subject matter, the thing outside of us – the subject of the play, the problem in rehearsal, the new discovery in research – than to talk about what we are doing and who we are.

Scott Horstein is a freelance dramaturg and a translator of French drama based in Los Angeles. His current projects include David Edgar's Pentecost at the Globe Theatres in San Diego, and a commission by Cornerstone Theatre Company of a new play from Lisa Loomer about the Los Angeles Jewish community. Past collaborators include playwrights Oliver Mayer, Jeffrey Hatcher, and Austin Pendleton, as well as directors Mark Lamos and Kyle Donnelly. He is a graduate of the UCSD MFA Dramaturgy program.

Mallory Catlett is a freelance director and dramaturg based in New York City. Her current projects include Hamlet with the Labyrinth Theater Co, The Juggernaut Theatre Company's THE FIRST 100 YEARS: The Professional Female Playwright Reading & Discussion series, and As You Like It, the inaugural Restless production in NYC. She is an Associate Artist with the Juggernaut and a co-artistic director of Restless and Screaming Flea in Vancouver. In July she returns to complete a new Screaming Flea creation, Beat.

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ACTING LOCALLY THE LYSISTRATA PROJECT

by *Monica A. Cuoco*
and
Benjamin D. Seibert

On Monday, March 3rd, 2003, on the front lawn of Galbraith Hall, home of the Theatre and Dance Department of the University of California at San Diego, as fifty individuals gathered to take part in the largest worldwide theatrical event of all time, we had the pleasure of watching a small dream come true. In a world where time is the least abundant commodity, these fifty gave forty-five minutes — affectionately called “dinner” in the world of theatre — to peacefully protest (what was then an *impending*) war in Iraq. This theatrical act of dissent was echoed around the world through 1,029 readings in 59 countries, and here in the US in all 50 states (North Dakota made a fashionably late entrance.) The play was Aristophanes’s *Lysistrata*.

There were readings five minute “water-cooler” versions in corporate North America; secret gatherings in China or Jerusalem; massive public protests like those in Chicago and Paris; or star-studded events in Los Angeles or New York. People came together, from all cultures, to peacefully and comically voice our opposition to war.

Aristophanes’s play (written circa. 411 BCE) follows the efforts of Lysistrata to band together the wives of two warring city-states, Athens and Sparta. How can these women bring an end to the wars that have plagued their lands and kept their husbands away for so many years, without a voice in the “democracy” of Athens, or the military government of Sparta? The “happy idea” of the play was endlessly noted in international news coverage of the Project: Lysistrata proposes that the women withhold sex from their men, thereby taking from them one of the few things these warring men have in common besides their violent tendencies.

I will have naught to do whether with husband, lover, or even casual acquaintance, albeit he come to me with an erection. [...] I will neither extend my Persian slippers toward the ceiling, nor will I crouch like the carven lions on a knife-handle. And if I keep my oath, may I be suffered to drink of this wine. But if I break it, let my bowl be filled with water.

The Lysistrata Project was initiated by actresses Kathryn Blume and Sharron Brower. Blume and Brower were inspired by Theatres Against War (THAW), an international group of New York City-based theatre artists alarmed by the threat of war in Iraq and the escalating attacks on civil liberties in the US. The premise of THAW is that the most direct form of protest is to use what theatre artists already do: “lots and lots of different kinds of theatre.” Blume and Brower took this approach as the basis of the Lysistrata Project.

Their initial brainstorm, to stage simultaneous readings of Aristophanes’s *Lysistrata*, received immediate and enthusiastic support. What started on January 6, 2003 snowballed into the first-ever, world-wide theatre event for peace. In two short months Blume and Brower, with the help of countless volunteers, realized an international anti-war theatre movement.

On Monday March 3, the local coordinators spearheading the Lysistrata Project checked the website and were greeted with a video “thanks” from Blume and Brower. They recalled “countless hours, goofiness, insane drama, 10,000 emails from strangers, gallons of chai latte, huge dreams, joyfully freezing their butts off with 500,000 others, a miracle a day, maxed out credit cards,” and the infamous interview with *Newsweek* from their “office” on Times Square: the Popeye’s Fried

Chicken. As we watched, hours away from a reading of our own, the pulsing energy, excitement, and pride we felt put tears in our eyes.

We first heard word of the proposed event in late January, when National Public Radio broadcast a supportive interview with Kathryn Blume. From a sub-par dial-up connection in our living room, we discovered a website so thorough that a gaggle of geese could have become active theatrical peace protesters. Thanks to the marvels of modern technology (and the work of Lysistrata Project web-manager Mark Greene), we were handed a free, step-by-step guide to organizing our own reading. The tri-lingual website was complete with fill-in-the-blank press releases and programs, information on the play, numerous translations and adaptations of the script (the rights to which were generously donated by many translators), educational resources, anti-war articles, and interviews.

Our reading was scheduled to begin at 5:00PM under a grove of eucalyptus trees, with nothing more than folding chairs and music stands for the company and blankets for any who wished to attend. Our ensemble included undergraduates, MFA students from many arenas of theatrical production, and several doctoral students. There were actors, playwrights, house managers, directors, and stage managers. These willing individuals arrived, unrehearsed, with no costumes, no programs for recognition, and no promises of applause. They had only a forty-five minute adaptation of the script, an elementary pronunciation guide, and a heartfelt letter of thanks.

Nevertheless, they arrived. And so did the spectators. We all gathered with passionate enthusiasm, with the belief in conflict resolution through compassionate negotiation rather than violent domination. We sat together as the sunset over our shoulders and audibly chuckled at Kalonike’s hesitation, the bickering between the leaders of the Choruses of Old Men and Women, and Myrrhine’s scheming. Afterwards, we talked with and hugged those in attendance and then, as life in the theatre goes, the ensemble and audience scurried to their next rehearsal. In the end, we stood on the now empty eucalyptus grove with the same energy, excitement, pride, and few more tears.

Through local events like this, the Lysistrata Project achieved something important. People around the world were able to coordinate their efforts to bring discussion of anti-war sentiments to their communities, using communication technology to facilitate a grass-roots impulse. The largest anti-war movement ever is still taking place, and *Lysistrata* was just one piece of the puzzle. The theatre is reactionary, it always has been, but now our reactions can be much larger and much more expedient. The Lysistrata Project gave a voice to thousands of people around the globe. As Lysistrata herself urged her followers: “Forward, my gallant companions; march forth!”

Monica A. Cuoco is a graduate of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, and is currently pursuing her MFA in stage management at the University of California, San Diego.

Benjamin D. Seibert is a graduate of Barat College in Lake Forest, Illinois and is currently searching through artistic conflicts within himself.

REGIONAL REPORTS

INFO, NEWS, AND PREVIEWS
FROM ALL OVER
COMPILED BY CALENDAR EDITOR LIZ ENGELMAN

SOME FAMILIAR FACES: YOUR 2002 – 2003 REGIONAL VPS

As a reminder, below is the current slate of Regional VPs. They will be contacting you throughout the year with announcements, solicits, news and questions. Please contact them with the same. Please also contact your VP if you move into or out of a region, so we can keep track of you. Feel free to volunteer if you live in a region with no listed VP!

Canada • Brian Quirt

Greater Midwest (*Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin*) • Paul Kosidowski, Amy Wegener

Metro Chicago • Gavin Witt

Homestead (*Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas*) • Kae Koger

Metro Philadelphia • Shannon O'Donnell

Mid-Atlantic (*Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, DC, West Virginia*) • Mary Resing

NYC • Elizabeth Bennett

Northeast (*Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York State, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont*) • Marge Betley, Kelly Miller

Northwest (*Northern California, Idaho, Oregon, Washington*) • Madeleine Oldham, Lue Douthit

Plains States (*Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska*) • Susan Gregg, Carter Lewis

Southeast (*Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee*) • Freddie Ashley, Gwen Orel

Southwest (*Arizona, Southern California, Nevada, New Mexico*) • Carrie Ryan

Butte (*Montana, N. Dakota, S. Dakota*)

Rockies (*Colorado, Utah, Wyoming*)

There are vacuums waiting to be filled in these last two regions...

Regional News

CANADA

LMDA Canada is holding its annual meeting on Friday March 1 in Calgary during Alberta Theatre Projects playRites Festival. With a total of 95 members (a very substantial increase over last year), LMDA Canada is flourishing and looking forward to a great discussion of current issues in Canadian theatre. Our other upcoming event is the Mini-Conference on Dramaturgy, co-hosted by the Theatre Centre and LMDA Canada in Toronto on July 7 and 8, 2003. This unique event features seven case studies of dramaturgical process and is free of charge. This year we'll be featuring artists from Vancouver and Edmonton as well as Toronto. If you're in Toronto this summer, plan to join us for a stimulating two days of conversation about making theatre. The Mini-Conference takes place during the Toronto Fringe Festival, and many summer theatres will also have productions running at that time, so it's a great time to visit the city.

GREATER MIDWEST

LMDA Meetings scheduled during the 2003 Humana Festival of New American Plays

If you are traveling to Louisville to attend the 2003 Humana Festival on the last weekend in March or first weekend in April, then you're invited to join us for an informal, hour-long LMDA gathering. Watch for this information to appear on your Humana Festival schedules and in your visitor welcome packets!

On Theatre Professionals Weekend (March 28 – 30, 2003):
LMDA Meeting on Sunday, March 30 from 10:00 – 11:00 am.
Breakfast munchies provided

On Special Visitors Weekend (April 4 – 6, 2003):
LMDA Meeting on Friday, April 4 from 5:00 – 6:00 pm.
Late-afternoon munchies provided

The Playwrights' Center's Hothouse Festival of New Plays by Minnesota writers. April 7-12, 2003, the festival includes readings of six new plays, one nightly. Participating playwrights are: Buffy Sedlachek, *Stone Lilies*; Mark Steven Jensen, *Runestone*; Bill Corbett, *Hungry Ghosts*; W. David Hancock, *The Incubus Archives*; Kira Obolensky, *A New House*; and Roy Close, *The Devil You Know*.

The Playwrights' Center's PlayLabs Festival runs July 7 – 20, 2003; reading performance dates are July 17 – 19. Participating playwrights so far are Janet Allard, Julie Marie Myatt, Kira Obolensky,

and Laurie Carlos, with three others TBA. There will be a LMDA breakout session during the reading performance weekend.

The Cleveland Play House is very excited to announce that Eric Coble has been named a resident playwright via a Residency Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and Theatre Communications Group, with support from Vivendi/Universal. Eric will write a new play and work on one read last year in our Next Stage Festival of New Plays, called *T.I.D.Y.* He will also interact with our audiences at pre-curtain dialogues and post-performance talk-backs, and he will work with high school students from the Cleveland School of the Arts on their new play festival. Eric's play *Bright Ideas*, whose world premiere was produced here earlier this season with support from AT&T: OnStage, will be produced by the Contemporary American Theatre Festival.

METRO CHICAGO

Typically for such a rich and varied theater scene, with such vibrant dramaturgy at its core, there is much activity in Chicago. A mere sampling of the recent doings includes:

1. Comings and Goings

Rick DeRochers has joined the staff at the Goodman Theatre to handle literary affairs and new play development, at long last filling the void created by the departure of Susan Booth sometime ago. Lenora Inez Brown has arrived in Chicago to join Rachel Shteir on the Dramaturgy faculty at DePaul University. Gavin Witt has left Northlight Theatre to assume Dramaturgy duties at Baltimore's Center Stage; replacing him at Northlight is Rosie Forrest, erstwhile Literary Assistant at Steppenwolf.

2. Commissioning, Development, New Work

Rick DeRochers dove in headfirst as production dramaturg on a recent commission premiering at Goodman, *By the Music of the Spheres* by Carson Grace Becker and David Barr. Sarah Gubbins went on the road to the Humana festival to dramaturg *Omnium-Gatherum* by Theresa Rebeck and Alexandra Gersten, following up on a productive stint at the New Harmony festival as dramaturg for Rebeck's adaptation *The Bells*.

Gavin Witt also retreated to New Harmony, to dramaturg Jenny Laird's new commission *Sky Girls*, which recently premiered at Northlight; also a stint workshopping Richard Dresser's latest, *Rounding Third*, at the Contemporary American Theatre Festival in West Virginia.

Celise Kalke at Court Theatre continues to be part of that theater's continuing relationship with JoAnne Akalaitis, including the recent *Phedre* and upcoming projects, as well as Court's continuing evolution into a Center for Classical Theatre.

3. Other

This March 19th featured another in the annual Dramaturgy Days at DePaul, during which area professionals are invited to view and critique the portfolios of undergraduate dramaturgs.

HOMESTEAD

The Alley Theatre, Houston: Amy Steele, resident dramaturg, reports that The Alley Theatre celebrated the upcoming 75th birthday of Alley Associate Artist Edward Albee with a 40th anniversary production of Albee's first Tony winner, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and with the regional premiere of his most recent Tony honor, *The Goat*

or Who is Sylvia? Virginia Woolf—which was directed by Alley Artistic Director Gregory Boyd and featured Judith Ivey as Martha, James Black as George, Elizabeth Bunch as Honey, and Ty Mayberry as Nick — ran January 10 – February 8 on the Large Stage. *The Goat* — which was directed by Pam MacKinnon and featured Todd Waite as Martin, Elizabeth Heflin as Stevie, James Belcher as Ross, and Matt Hune as Billy — ran January 17 – February 16 on the Neuhaus Stage.

The Susan Smith Blackburn Prize ceremony was held at the Alley on February 24. Now in its 25th year, the Houston-based prize is awarded annually to an outstanding new English-language play written by a woman. American playwright Dael Orlandersmith won this year's award for *Yellowman*, a drama that explores the lifelong friendship of an African-American man and woman and the effect intraracial prejudice has on them as they try to re-create their lives. An honorable mentioned was also awarded to British playwright Bryony Lavery for her drama *Frozen*, an investigation of a serial killer of children, the mother of one of the killer's victims, and a criminal psychologist's attempts to understand the killer's behavior. A panel discussion was also held on February 23 as part of the award celebration. Titled "Women in Theatre: Expanding the Creative Influence," the discussion was moderated by Mel Gussow of the *New York Times*, and the participants were Dael Orlandersmith, Bryony Lavery, Helen Cooper (British playwright and award finalist for *Three Women and a Piano Tuner*), Peter Eyre (British actor and award judge), and Anne Ludlum (American playwright and finalist for *Cover Shot*).

Other Blackburn finalists were Claudia Allen (U.S.) for *Unspoken Prayers*, Charlotte Eilenberg (U.K.) for *The Lucky Ones*, Kate Fodor (U.S.) for *Hannah and Martin*, Debbie Tucker Green (U.K.) for *Born Bad*, Rinne Groff (U.S.) for *Orange Lemon Egg Canary*, Heather McDonald (U.S.) for *When Grace Comes In*, Theresa Rebeck and Alexandra Gersten (U.S.) for *Ominum Gatherum*, and Judith Thompson (Canada) for *Habitat*. Judges were actress Ellen Burstyn; Sue Higginson, head of London's Royal National Theatre Studio; Felix Cross, artistic director of Nitro, Britain's leading black theatre; Peter Eyre; playwright Tony Kushner; and Carole Rothman, artistic director of New York's Second Stage Theatre.

Upcoming Events

The Alley Theatre Education and Community Outreach Department's annual summer event, the Houston Young Playwrights Exchange (HYPE), will begin in June. HYPE is new-play festival during which teenagers from the Houston area work with theatre professionals to develop their selected plays. Finalists are chosen in June, weekly workshops run through July, and staged readings will be presented August 14 – 16.

University of Oklahoma School of Drama: LMDA Members Allison Horsley and Jaynie Saunders of the Dallas Theater Center shared their expertise and experience with student dramaturgs at the University of Oklahoma School of Drama in February. During their visit to the Norman campus, the DTC Dramaturg and Directing Intern discussed their training, their work on the current season and the rigors of professional dramaturgy. This meeting is believed to have been the largest meeting of dramaturgs (10!) in Oklahoma history.

Dallas Theater Center: Allison reports that she's been the production dramaturg on all of the

Dallas Theater Center shows this season (*Of Mice and Men*, *Be Aggressive*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Real Thing*) and she is currently revamping the literary department to run more smoothly and accommodate more scripts. In April, she'll attend her second Russian Case, an international program in conjunction with the

Russian national theater festival — the Golden Mask Festival — held this year in St. Petersburg.

Here are the shows that will be playing at Dallas Theater Center through the end of the season:

Big Love by Charles L. Mee runs Feb. 26 – March 23

Fully Committed by Becky Mode runs April 4 – May 4

Cotton Patch Gospel, with music, lyrics, and score by Harry Chapin; book by Tom Key and Russel Treyz; and starring Tom Key runs April 22 – May 18

Jennifer Pickard-Criswell, a Master of Arts Candidate at the University of Oklahoma, will be conducting a dramaturgy workshop this summer in South America. Working in conjunction with the American/Paraguayan Cultural Center, Jennifer will work with Paraguayan students in researching myth and artifacts of the Paraguayan and American cultures to produce an intercultural theatrical piece. Besides introducing the dramaturg's role into Paraguay's theatrical scene, Jennifer and her husband Brad will hold workshops on stage management, lighting design, acting and directing.

THE PHILLY FILL-IN

Metro Philadelphia

Literary Manager Larry Loebell is still recovering from the InterAct Theatre Company's annual National Showcase of New Plays. "So far, as a direct result of the Showcase, we've had nearly 90 requests for Showcase plays!" Larry is also gearing up for a season in which playwrights Lee Blessing and Tom Coash will be visiting rehearsals for their respective plays *Going to St. Ives* and *Cry Havoc*.

Julie Felise Dubiner, Dramaturg at the Prince Music Theater, reports the kick off of the Greenhouse Project, a program to push the form of music theater. First up is *Striking 12* by GrooveLily, a folksy rock band that has written their own version of "The Little Match Girl" by Hans Christian Anderson, creating a hybrid form of concert and story-theater for the holiday season. Also up for the Prince this fall is a workshop/reading of *Green Violin* by Elise Thoron, about Marc Chagall, actor Solomon Mikhoels, and the Moscow State Yiddish Theater.

Marina Carr, one of Ireland's noted contemporary playwrights, will be in residence at Villanova University for the spring semester. Harriet Power will be directing Carr's play *By the Bog of Cats*, a surreal, very dark version of the Medea legend set in the Irish Midlands. Harriet reports, "Graduate student dramaturg, Mike Kleba, and I have been delving into Carr's world with gusto and awe (always a promising combo, yes?). We hope, as well, to work with Carr on her newest play."

Nakissa Etemad, Dramaturg and Literary Manager at the Wilma Theater just returned from a London theatre trip with Wilma patrons to see Tom Stoppard's trilogy, *The Coast of Utopia*, at the National. "9 hours, 32 actors, and 450 costumes, phew," she exclaims. "I'll be diving into Soviet history of the 1970s for our November co-production with The Philadelphia Orchestra of Stoppard and Andre Previn's *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor*. I am looking for experts on this subject in history, so contact me if you'd like to get involved!"

Due to a generous grant from the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, the Philadelphia Theatre Company has commissioned three writers to develop plays exclusively for PTC during the 2002-

2003 Season. These three writers—Stephen Belber (co-author, *The Laramie Project*), Gina Gionfriddo (*Guinevere*), and Bruce Norris (*The Infield*) — have all had previous associations with PTC and will work with Dramaturg Michele Volansky on their newest work, as they spend the year writing, hearing readings of their plays and participating in the artistic life of the Theater.

The People's Light and Theatre Company received a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and Pennsylvania Humanities Council to fund "America on Stage: Exploring our National Identity" a new audience connections program that complements a 2002-2003 season of plays by American playwrights. Envisioning the Theatre as a gathering place for community conversation, resident artists, humanists and community members will engage in panel discussions, workshops and the ongoing creation of a piece of public art which will reflect responses to the plays and questions of American identity which they pose.

Shannon O'Donnell, Regional VP Metro Philadelphia: On February 8th dramaturgs, family, friends, students and colleagues gathered to participate in a symposium in honor of Professor Lee Devin's retirement from Swarthmore College. The symposium, titled *The Invisible Art: Dramaturgy in American Theater*, featured speakers Michael Lupu, Michele Volansky, Geoff Proehl, Cary Mazer, Oliver Gerland, James MacGruder, Kristin Johnsen-Neshati. Congratulations Lee!

Lee Devin, Dramaturg: *Artful Making*, a book that uses rehearsal as a guide for creativity in business work, written with Rob Austin, published by Financial Times - Prentice Hall, will be out in May 2003.

Michele Volansky, Dramaturg: Philadelphia Theatre Company is doing a new play by Jeffrey Hatcher from May 28 – June 22 called *A Picasso*, directed by Joey Tillinger, that I am VERY excited about. I get to work again with a writer I love and respect. And it's a world premiere! Go team!

Amy Dugas Brown, Associate Artistic Director: In February the Arden Theatre Company wrapped up a workshop / public reading of Michael Hollinger's latest play *Tooth & Claw*, which we plan to produce in the 2003 – 2004 season. It will be our fifth world premiere of Hollinger's work. *Tooth & Claw* takes us to the ecological wonderland of the Galapagos Islands for a provocative and dynamic look at evolution, emotion and politics. A team of scientists at the Charles Darwin Research Center struggle to save endangered species and find themselves up against law-breaking local fishermen who are struggling to survive themselves. The play asks thought-provoking questions about humankind and its relationship with nature. *Tooth & Claw* was the recipient of Ensemble Studio Theatre's Sloan Project commission. EST's Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project is designed to stimulate artists to create credible and compelling work exploring the worlds of science and technology and to challenge the existing stereotypes of scientists and engineers in the popular imagination.

Larry Loebell, Literary Manager: InterAct Theatre Company's world premiere run of Tom Coash's *Cry Havoc* closed in February. Lots of dramaturgical fun — Egyptian and British gay pick-up locations, foods, and phrases. Coming up for spring 2003, Jim O'Connor's Citation Award-winning *Rosemary* about Joe Kennedy Senior's decision to have his eldest daughter lobotomized. Can you say, "trepanning?" Did you know that there is a Lobotomy Hall of Shame website: <<http://www.epub.org.br/cm/n02/historia/important.htm>>? Weird and interesting dramaturgy, but a good and serious play.

MID-ATLANTIC

In August, Julianne Homokay was hired as the Literary Coordinator/Resident Dramaturg of Mill Mountain Theatre in Roanoke, Virginia.

“ScriptTease”, Mill Mountain Theatre’s new play development program, mounted in conjunction with Hollins University, will be producing a staged reading of *IceSPEAK*, by Jeanette D. Farr, directed by Robert Barossi. Performances will be held May 4, 7:30 PM, at Hollins University, and May 5, 7:30 PM, on Mill Mountain Theatre’s Waldron Stage.

Michelle T. Hall was recently entertained by (and participated in) MadCap Players 2nd Annual Winter Festival, a collection of ten minute plays by local writers. Local writers should know its a good venue for their excellent, eclectic short plays. Also a place for LMDs to submit such work. Check out their website at <www.madcapplayers.com> for more information.

Michelle T. Hall and A. Lorraine Robinson have founded a new not-for-profit theater and film company MuseFire Productions (www.musefire.org). MuseFire’s debut production *Busybodies* (an evening of one-acts) will run August 17 – Sept 10, 2003 at the H Street Playhouse, NE. It will include a world premiere play, *Citizen Patrol*, by local writer Merideth Taylor.

Arena Stage is preparing for the Spring 2003 Downstairs, Arena Stage’s dynamic reading series for new plays.

Discovering the Future

A weekend of readings from MFA students and their mentors

April 3: *Arrangements* by Ken Weitzman (UC San Diego)

April 4: *The Quick* by Tanya Barfield (The Juilliard School)

April 5: *Mrs. Bob Cratchit’s Wild Christmas Binge* by Christopher Durang

In the Works:

Top playwriting talents present new and commissioned pieces

April 10: *Paw Paw Patch* by Kathleen McGee Anderson

April 11: *Columbine Project* by PJ Paperelli

April 12: *Exposed* by Beth Henley

April 13: *Shakespeare in Hollywood* by Ken Ludwig

Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company Director of New Play Development Mary Resing is pleased to announce two plays commissioned by Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in partnership with A.S.K. Theatre Projects. The first is *Radiant Abyss* by Angus MacLachlan (*The Dead Eye Boy*) and the second is *Grace* by Craig Wright (*Recent Tragic Events*). *Radiant Abyss* will be produced by Woolly during the 2003/2004 season and *Grace* will be produced during the 2004/2005 season.

Jump/Cut by Neena Beber, the first play developed by Woolly Mammoth in partnership with A.S.K. Theatre Projects is currently receiving its world premiere in a co-production between Woolly Mammoth and Theatre J. *Jump/Cut* runs February 24 through March 20th at the Goldman Theatre at the DCJCC. For tickets call 800-494-8497.

METRO NEW YORK CITY

The NY area branch of LMDA held a successful holiday-time co-production that brought together about one hundred LMDA members, NY agents, playwrights, and a few stray actors. Emily Morse generously provided the library space at New Dramatists for the

shindig, and it proved to be a central location for everyone. The party provided many attendees with the chance to put a face to the names on the letters, theater programmes, LMDA *Review* issues, or the voices on the phone; next year, we’ll know to provide name tags to make it easier. And while a lot of script-swapping and submitting undoubtedly went on after the party was over, an air of friendship prevailed as people got to know each other or revisit with old friends. Many thanks to Emily and to Liz Engelman for making the event a lot of fun.

We’re now gearing up for spring. For most literary managers, that means attending a lot of the various reading series that go on in our area. At my place of work and worship, Manhattan Theatre Club, we have a developmental series called 6@6. If you’d like to be added to the mailing list for it, please contact me at ebennett@mtc-nyc.org.

See you all in Chicago this summer!

NORTHEAST

Freelancer Branden Kornell recently served as production dramaturg for Oberon Theatre Ensemble’s *Of Mice and Men*, and is associate dramaturg for Rebecca Fletcher’s one-woman show, *The Kabaret Home*, opening at the Conolly Theatre in May. He continues collaboration with the Juggernaut Theatre’s year-long project *The First 100 Years: The Professional Female Playwright*, and will be assisting with a spring reading series of plays by Hannah Cowley. Still on the hunt for a full-time job in literary work or theatre administration, Branden will be relocating from Providence to New York City in June.

RJ McComish reports that the week of April the 21st Portland Stage Company will be holding its 14th annual new play festival, the Little Festival of the Unexpected; watch the website for details. (www.portlandstage.com/NewWorks.html) The centerpiece of this year’s festival is *Women and the Sea*, the culmination of a two year collaboration with playwright Shelly Berc to document the lives and culture of working-class Maine women who make their livelihoods through the sea. Also in the works at PSC is the Clauder, a competition for New England playwrights. Entries will be accepted through April 1st, 2003. The Clauder winner will receive a cash award of \$3,000 and a fully staged production at PSC during the 2004 season. Clauder finalists receive \$500 cash prize and will be invited to workshop their plays as part of the Little Festival of the Unexpected. To submit, and for a list of complete Clauder guidelines, contact: Literary Manager, Portland Stage Company, PO Box 1458, Portland ME, 04104, or email <info@portlandstage.com>.

Marge Betley writes that the premiere production of *Theophilus North* by Matthew Burnett (from the novel by Thornton Wilder) and directed by Mark Cuddy will be on the Geva Theatre mainstage April 1 – May 4. It is a co-production with Arena Stage, Washington, DC. Also, the premiere production of *September Shoes* by Jose Cruz Gonzalez, directed by Michael John Garces, will be part of Geva Theatre Nextstage, June 3 – 22.

Mark Bly at Yale Rep writes that *Taming of the Shrew*, directed by Mark Lamos, boasts an all-male cast. The play’s themes of role-playing, transformation, and charged sexuality will be set in the social milieu of contemporary Latino culture, and will combine multimedia arts with traditional theatrical conventions, March 21 – April 12. *The Black Monk*, a new play by David Rabe (based on the novella by Anton Chekhov), will be directed by Daniel Fish, and features Yale alum Sam Waterston, May 9 – May 31.

Craig Watson reports that Trinity Rep's Theater From the Four Directions, a readings series of plays by Native Americans and First Nations Peoples, was a success. This year's series featured Canadian Ojibway author Drew Hayden Taylor's *Buzz' Gem Blues*, as well as *Grandchildren of the Buffalo Soldiers* by Assiniboine playwright William S. Yellow Robe, Jr., who is in residence at Trinity Rep over the next season.

Kyle Brenton at Pittsburgh Public Theater reports that next season has just been announced, and includes two world premieres: Rob Zellers' and Gene Collie's *The Chief*, a one-man-show about Pittsburgh sports legend Art Rooney; and Naomi Wallace's new play, *Things of Dry Hours*, set in Depression-era Alabama. Additionally, the season features Ron Jenkins' brand new translation of Nobel Laureate Dario Fo's play, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*.

Ilana Brownstein at the Huntington Theatre is thrilled with this season's Breaking Ground new play readings series (scheduled through April). Playwrights featured include Stephen Belber, Etan Frankel, Lisa Dillman, Tommy Smith, and Michael Louis Wells. HTC is looking toward developing Breaking Ground into a two week festival with a national profile within two years. Coming this summer will be workshops of new plays by Jon Robin Baitz and Christopher Denham, commissioned through the Stanford Calderwood Fund for New American Plays. HTC expects to open two new performance venues in Boston's South End in the fall of 2004, and is excited about the prospect of having spaces dedicated to the production of new plays. Next up on the mainstage: Kia Corthron's *Breath, Boom*, directed by Michael John Garces, March 7 – April 6.

NORTHWEST

The Northwest is alive and hopping despite recent events! The region held an LMDA regional meeting in Seattle on March 8 during the 2nd annual FringeACT Festival. This was a swell opportunity to meet other LMDA folks face to face, and then stay for a very fun day of fabulous readings. FringeACT, a weekend-long reading festival, infuses some pretty great energy and life into the Seattle theatre community. It's collaboration between Seattle Fringe Theatre Productions and ACT Theatre that we hope will be around for a very long time. Speaking of which, I hope by the time you are reading this that ACT Theatre is on the upswing. Hard times have the theatre taking desperate measures and laying off most of its staff. ACT decided to move their season to have the sunny Seattle summer (yes, really!) as their off-season. Performances are slated to begin again in September with a newly-restructured company and new Artistic Director Robert Egan. Other NW region theatres are no stranger to layoffs — Berkeley Rep, Seattle Children's Theatre, and the Empty Space Theatre have downsized, to name but a few. That said, there are still fantastic things happening all the time. In addition to the fabu FringeACT, we've recently seen the world premiere of David Adjmi's *Strange Attractors* at the Empty Space, the West Coast premiere of Itamar Moses' *Outrage* at Portland Center Stage, Seattle Rep's Hot Type May reading series, and are looking forward to the Seattle Fringe Festival in September. Puppets are also running wild on the stages of the Nippon Kan Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, and the Re-Bar — what more can one ask?

SOUTHEAST

From Gwen Orel: At Alabama Shakespeare Festival, we just completed our first Southern Writers' Project Festival of New Plays — two

world premieres; Linda Byrd Kilian's *Aaronville Dawning* and Kia Corthron's *The Venus de Milo Is Armed* — a "platform performance" of Carlyle Brown's *The Fula from America* — and five staged readings: "Southern Seeds," with excerpts from *Dead Towns of Alabama* by Barry Bradford and *The Visit* by Judy Tucker; encore readings of the winners of the Young Southern Writers' Project Competition ("Perpetual Motion" by Michael Griffith; "A Killer in the Trailer Park" by Adam Andrianopolous; "All Four Feet: A Tale Exploring Tolerance" by Kelly Lambert); *The Dreams of Sarah Breedlove* by Regina Taylor, *Disguises* by Craig Warner, *Sketches of Yucca* by Keith Josef Adkins and *The Robeson Tape* by Vincent Delaney. Also on the bill: critics/playwrights panel with *New York Times* critic Bruce Weber, *Variety* critic Chris Jones, *Birmingham News* critic Alec Harvey, and playwrights James McLure (whose play *Iago* will premiere at ASF later in the season), Linda Byrd Kilian, Kia Corthron, Carlyle Brown, moderated by Literary Manager Gwen Orel, and a "playwrights slam" where all visiting playwrights read from their own work.

We also held an LMDA meeting, which was attended by Valetta Anderson (Playwright/dramaturg; Southeast Playwrights Project), Mary Resing (Woolly Mammoth and National New Play Network), Bruce Sevy (ASF), Lenora Inez-Brown (DePaul and Madison Rep), Freddie Ashley (Alliance Theatre), Matt di Cintio (Guthrie Theatre), Emilyya Cachpero, James McLure (Playwright), Amy Mueller (Playwrights Foundation), Lisa Adler (Horizon Theatre) and Gwen Orel (ASF). Some of the topics discussed: the National New Play Network, by Mary; Lenora is (in addition to teaching at DePaul) the literary manager for Madison Repertory Theatre, where she is working on a New Play Festival called "F cubed" — Fall Festival Future, tentatively scheduled for Labor Day weekend; Amy told us about the Playwrights' Foundation's beginning to commission new work, working with a small theatre called Crowded Fire; Emilyya caught us up on what's going on with TCG.

From Valetta Anderson: The Southeast Playwrights Project (SEPP) provides programs and opportunities for artistic excellence and professional development of member playwrights and maintains a network for information towards production of new plays. We seek to reach out to theatre communities and foster productions through twice monthly Playwrights Labs, public full reading weekends and the newly initiated (August 2003) Playwright's Repertory (The Rep). The Rep provides three "bare bones" workshop productions of plays that have gone through the Lab's development process and have received full readings at SEPP's public readings. For further information, contact Bill Gibson, Membership Director, c/o Theatre Emory, Emory University, 218 Rich Building, Atlanta, Georgia 30322 or 770.569.9073 or BGibson@eCompanyStore.com.

From Jaz Dorsey: The historic Gas Lite Lounge in Nashville, Tennessee, in collaboration with the Southern Writer's Theatre and New Day Productions will be presenting the Gas Lite's fifth in a string of recent theatrical productions for one weekend at the end of February. *Café Escargot* is the creation of local playwright and director Jaz Dorsey — a native of Atlanta, Georgia where the musical comedy is set. *Café Escargot* follows the hilarious antics of a truly Southern lady Mary Augusta DeWill who is following her lifelong dream of opening the first ever (and only) sidewalk café in Atlanta — in the middle of February. Dorsey describes the piece as "Designing Women" meets "Rocky Horror." Contact jazmn47@aol.com for more information.

From Tamerin Dygert: Hippodrome State Theatre in Gainesville, Florida is doing its second annual One City, One Story project (started by Tammy last year), in which an entire city is encouraged to read

the same book at the same time. This year they're focusing on *Romeo and Juliet*. 28 actors of all ages were "cast" in several scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* and will perform at local coffee shops, libraries, community centers, college campuses, and at the Harn Museum. There are many interesting events scheduled around the project, including showings of Baz Luhrman's film of *Romeo and Juliet* and of *West Side Story*, library talks and book discussions, and forums on violence and youth issues. In Youth Works at the Harn Museum of Art, area high school age students will use various forms of creativity to examine violence in their lives; the program includes scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*. One City, One Story has a closing weekend concert: "Shakespeare in Music" with Becky Micha as Master of Ceremonies. Contact Tammy for more info! Dtamerin@hotmail.com.

From James Ashford at Florida Studio Theatre: Florida Studio Theatre has an upcoming premiere, *The Next Marilyn* by Lynne Kaufman (a San Francisco-based writer) which came out of their 2002 National Play Festival. This production is part of the Sarasota Festival of New Plays. Planning for the 2003 Festival is under way, and will consist of 3 workshop productions of 3 new plays, fully staged but with script in hand. The Festival will take place in May. Contact James for details! ajems@fst2000.org

From Elisa M. Elisa M. Golden received her second consecutive \$750. Individual Artist's MAC (Metropolitan Arts Commission) grant for her work as a dramaturg for the 2003 – 2004 season. Playwrights: In April, we welcome Greg Owens, who will be a directing his play, *The Life and Times of Tulsa Lovechild* at the Warehouse Theatre in Greenville, SC.

From Michael Aman: Here's what's happening at Charlotte Repertory Theatre. A new musical *Let Me Sing* starring Andre DeShields and Marla Schaffel just closed the beginning of this month. Hilary Swank is coming to town with *Miracle Worker* in March and we close our season in April with our new works festival (April 21 – 30). The works being presented are: *Calvary* by James McLure, set in a small Southern town in the 50s and dealing with guilt and racism; *The Succulent Walk* by John Love, a one-man performance poetically and comically telling the story of a man losing his mind; *Absence* by Wendy Hammond, a love story dealing with Mormonism, espionage, and cooking; *Will's Women* by Amanda McBroom and Joel Silberman, a musical about a woman with writer's block who turns to Will Shakespeare's women for advice; *All of the People, All the Time* by Patrick Cook, a piece tailor-made for two of the world's best close-up magicians, Darwin Ortiz and David Roth; and *Bonnie and Clyde* by Michael Aman, Oscar E. Moore, and Dana P. Rowe, which uses contemporary line dancing and the sound of modern country music to follow the legend of the notorious duo and their Barrow gang as they commit their 4-year long crime spree.

The Alliance Theatre Company will be hosting the first-ever City Series, a festival celebrating the diversity and energy of the Atlanta theatre scene. Companies presenting their work include 7 Stages, Horizon Theatre Company, Actor's Express, Dad's Garage Theatre Company, and Theatrical Outfit. The City Series is ongoing from March 27 through June 22. For more information about the City Series, contact the Alliance Theatre at 404.733.4650.

Horizon Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia will be hosting the annual New South for a New Century new play festival this summer. The festival stretches from May 30 to August 10 and includes two world premiere productions: *Wishful Thinking* by Janiece Shaffer and *Runaway Home* by Javon Johnson. Also included is a Young Playwrights Workshop and eight readings in the PlayWorks workshop process.

For more information, contact Horizon's Literary Manager Addae Moon at 404.523.1477 or log on to <www.horizontheatre.com>. They are still soliciting for writers with roots in the South! Also contact Lisa Adler for more info: lisahorizon@mindspring.com.

SOUTHWEST

Hello to all from the lower-left-hand corner of the country. Although we haven't had to endure blizzards and bone-chilling cold snaps, it does look a bit cloudy outside my window right now. We might get some rain! But precipitation or no, we won't let it rain on our parade — or our work, either, here in the Southwest. I've heard from a number of members about goings-on, and it looks like the summer's going to be busy out here.

LA-based freelance dramaturg Scott Horstein writes that he'll be working at San Diego's Globe Theatres this summer, dramaturging David Edgar's *Pentecost* in a production directed by Mark Lamos, running from May 31 to July 5. Scott dramaturged the same play in a separate production, its critically-acclaimed Los Angeles premiere at the Evidence Room, so I'm sure he'll bring both experience and fresh eyes to his engagement at the Globe.

Simon Levy of the Fountain Theatre in LA shares his theatres summer offerings. From May 8 to June 25, they're producing *The Song of Songs*, directed by Deborah Lawlor and choreographed by Aileen Pasloff, with music by Al Carmines. Simon directs their next offering, which runs from May 30 to July 6, the topical play from the father of dramaturgy himself, Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*. He'll be using Paul D'Andrea's new adaptation. Finally, the Fountain is producing the LA premiere of Matt Crowley's sequel to *The Boys in the Band* (which was a hit at the theatre in 1993), *The Men From the Boys*.

A local playwright member, Christina Ham, shares some good news of her own: she's just received an Alfred P. Sloan Commission from the Ensemble Studio Theatre.

Finally, I'd like to take a moment to share a particularly rewarding dramaturgical experience I recently had. Here at La Jolla Playhouse, we commissioned Hilly Hicks, Jr. to write a play for our POP (Performance Outreach Project) Tour. Hilly and I worked together quite a bit when we were at Columbia, and it proved a rewarding reunion. The play he wrote for us, *The Breeze, The Gust, The Gale and The Wind*, is the witty, powerful story of two step-brothers who can't find a way to get along. Their fighting generates so much hot air that their tree house inflates like a hot-air balloon and they're sent flying around the world. Through the intervention of the wind herself, Gail Force, and a close encounter with the ages-old conflict in the fictional land of Yolla, Ray and Barton finally learn to compromise. Hilly was a wonderful collaborator, eager to make the play work for a young audience — for which he hadn't written before. And together we worked so well with director Dan Fields to bring this delightful play to life. It's ending its run next week as I write this, and I'm going to be sad to see this one go.

Here's hoping the good work goes on and on!

