

WT

WRITERS' THEATRE
THE BRIEF CHRONICLE
ISSUE EIGHTEEN SEPTEMBER 2007



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\$2.00

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Michael Halberstam
Artistic Director

Kathryn M. Lipuma
Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Having thoroughly celebrated our 15th Anniversary, we can now look forward to 15 more years of exciting programs and continued growth. This season in particular brings many new adventures. We have an amazing selection of plays and world-class artists and, of course, the return of *A Christmas Carol*, a holiday tradition! This year will bring many firsts to Writers' Theatre, including our first world-premiere play, *The Savannah Disputation*, our New York premiere with *Crime and Punishment* in November 2007 and the debut of our Family Program scheduled to begin in February 2008.

Information about all these programs can be found in the pages of this magazine. Remember, as a subscriber or member, you are among the first to receive insiders' access to what's happening at the Theatre, including special behind-the-scenes information. If you would like to delve even deeper into your Writers' Theatre experience, we suggest you turn to page 25 to learn more about value-added performances such as our Afternoon Tea and Wine Series or page 19 to find out what it means to become a Director's Society Member.

We are very pleased to welcome Evan Smith back to Writers' Theatre for the world premiere of *The Savannah Disputation*. As we have been cultivating the process of creating new work under the auspices of our Literary Development Initiative for three seasons, we are delighted Evan Smith, the author of *The Uneasy Chair*, returns to Glencoe to launch what we hope will be a long line of sparkling new plays finding their first voice upon our intimate stages.

Yours Sincerely,

Michael

Michael

Kate

Kate

THE BRIEF CHRONICLE

ISSUE EIGHTEEN SEPTEMBER 2007

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Kathryn M. Lipuma
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September 18 – November 25, 2007

Performed at 325 Tudor Court

Two elderly sisters forget all about southern charm when a young door-to-door evangelist comes knocking. This world-premiere comedy by the playwright of our smash-hit production, *The Uneasy Chair*, beautifully blends Smith's trademark sharpness of wit and depth of character, while telling a story in which a crisis of faith arises when seemingly similar beliefs are discovered to be worlds apart.

THE WORLD PREMIERE OF THE SAVANNAH DISPUTATION

BY EVAN SMITH DIRECTED BY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL HALBERSTAM

THE CAST

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David Castellanos

*I just smiled
and said the
meanest thing
I could think of –
“I forgive you.”*

– MARY,
THE SAVANNAH DISPUTATION



PLAYWRIGHT'S INSIGHTS

*Over the past several months, playwright Evan Smith has continued to share some of his musings via email with director Michael Halberstam on the characters, environment and background for *The Savannah Disputation*. His writing is as funny and insightful in cyberspace as it is on stage. Here are a few excerpts from the author about bringing his characters and the world of the play to life for the very first time.*

ON THE HOUSE

My thinking is 100% as realistic as possible. Nothing stylized, nothing jokey. A very real environment to ground everything.

I don't think I necessarily need walls to feel like I'm seeing a realistic set. If the furniture is spot on, and the floor and rugs, then walls are not so essential.

You've basically got one wall to deal with, your back wall. I always picture it as the most prominent aspect of a set for *The Savannah Disputation* with the front door, windows, a screened porch and through them the sense (or actuality) of a Southern landscape — at any rate, some oak trees with Spanish moss.

Now that I'm thinking about it, when I think of the set of *The Savannah Disputation*, I don't really picture the set (which I guess I do see as wooden floors, off-white walls and little furniture, with various Catholic imagery here and there). What I picture is the light. The light I think is the most important thing. During the daytime scenes, the windows should have a strong effect of bright, bright hot southern daytime filtering first through oak trees, then a front porch, then through Venetian blinds. The overall effect should be that it's cool and dark inside, bright and hot outside.

The accompanying photos are inspirational images to help visualize the world, but do not represent the actual characters or environment of the show.

ON THE DECOR

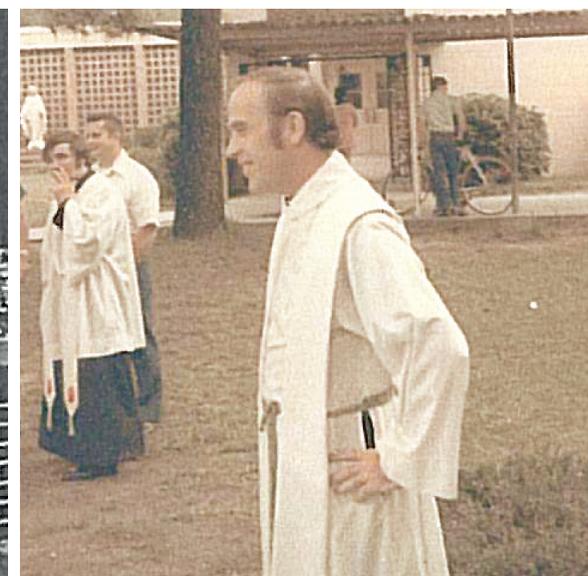
I think care needs to be taken in the presentation of socioeconomic class. It's true these people are non-rich Southerners, but there's nothing trashy, camp or kitschy (except maybe some discreet Catholic things — a statue of Mary, a crucifix on the wall. No pictures of the Pope — too on-the-nose, if you know what I mean, and these women never thought too much about the Pope. The day they elect an Irish pope will be a different matter). Things tend to pile up on tables or on the sideboards. They have more dishes than anything else. Doilies. Practical things that they rarely use — a sewing machine, a vacuum cleaner — maybe TWO vacuum cleaners: the old one they still use and a new one that waits its turn. Wide Venetian blinds — not minis. Margaret does a lot of crosswords and they find it difficult to throw out newspapers. The only magazine they get is *TV Guide*. Or they might have 50 years worth of *National*

Geographic. Margaret serves Father Murphy with the sterling silver, which she carefully counts before she puts away. The only really new looking stuff would be the TV, VCR, etc., which might not even be seen.

As for the kitchen — yes, they would have upgraded every now and then. It would be a mixture of old and new. They might have a microwave, but maybe it's still in the box. Definitely a toaster oven. Like many people, they have more than they use every day.

ON THE ATTIRE

As for Melissa's clothes, don't go by what Mary says. Mary is an untrustworthy narrator when it comes to clothes, hair and makeup. Stick to the description in the character breakdown. Ordinary summer clothes. I picture — for what it's worth — pedal-pushers, cute sandals, and a sleeveless button-down. And ordinary, normal hair. Suzanne Lang's own hair,



really. I wonder if you might have to wig Mary and Margaret. I'm not a big fan of wigs, but if you have to, you have to.

Basically, I don't see any jokes arising out of decor or costume.

Mary could certainly have a big purse. (She and Margaret) are both capable of wearing hose, but don't have to. I can't picture either of them in pants. Mary

maybe, if she were planning on doing outdoor work.

ON FATHER MURPHY

I know that many of these things I describe as "Father Murphy" are not necessarily on the page. The only characteristics that are written into the role and essential to the plot are loneliness and authority, and so those are what I want most of all. Who, I

ask myself, looks both lonely and authoritative?

He is not the parish priest that women get a crush on. There is a real bond between he and Mary, and in a different world he would make perfect sense as her husband, and she as is wife. It's their FAITH that keeps them apart and nothing else.

ON GEORGIA

For some reason I can't quite fathom, the city of Atlanta shows up every now and then in questions y'all have

about *The Savannah Disputation*. Let me state right now, unequivocally and for all time, that the city of ATLANTA has no bearing WHATSOEVER on the events of *The Savannah Disputation*. Father Murphy has never been there, Mary has never been there, Margaret has never been there and Melissa has never been there. In fact, for reasons too complicated to go into here, Mary, Margaret and Father Murphy have a SECRET PACT between them to NEVER, EVER mention the word ATLANTA. It is as if that city had never existed.



Evan Smith was born and raised in Savannah, Georgia, where he attended Benedictine Military School. He has a BA in English from Vassar College and an MFA in playwriting from the Yale School of Drama. His play *Servicemen* was produced by the New Group in New York City and New York Stage and Film in Poughkeepsie, New York. Both *The Uneasy Chair* and *Psych* were produced by Playwrights Horizons in New York City. *The Uneasy Chair* was recently revived in a new and improved version by 1812 Productions in Philadelphia. 1812 Productions also produced his play *Daughters of Genius* in 2006. His television pilot *Debs* was produced onstage in Los Angeles by Naked TV, a joint venture of Fox Television and Naked Angels. His plays have been published by the Grove Press, the Dramatists Play Service, Smith & Kraus, Dell Books and soon by Playscripts.com. He is a recipient of a 2002 Whiting Award. He was resident at the William Inge Center in 2005.

SETTING THE STAGE: THE PLAYWRIGHT'S PERSPECTIVE

TOPICAL MUSING FROM EVAN SMITH

I was very late in coming to the awareness that there were people who belonged to different religious denominations than the one my family belonged to. (Note how I use the phrase "belonged to" rather than "believed in" – telling, I think.) The first time the issue became more than abstract for me was when I was appearing in a small but crucial role in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at a community theatre in my hometown of Savannah, Georgia. (I was 16 at the time.) I was describing the wonderful performance Julia Cohen was giving as Potiphar's Wife when my mother asked if Julia did the Friday night shows. Mystified, I said that she did, and why did she ask? My mother said that she was curious because Julia was Jewish. I didn't understand how my mother knew this, and she didn't explain. It would be years before I learned that it is sometimes possible to guess someone's religion based on only a last name.

Some children are raised to hate. My family utterly ignored other denominations. My mother, an Irish Catholic, seemed to look upon Southern Protestants with the sort of benign contempt I imagine English nobility reserve for drunken American tourists; she said nothing and looked the other way. It was all very clear.

Those of you reading this who have done community theatre in Savannah (raise your hands) know it is dominated by two groups – the fundamentalist Christians and the Gays. (There is some interesting overlap.) After all, who else loves *Hello, Dolly!*? Classic American musicals seem to be the only point of agreement these two groups have. The first fundamentalist Christians I ever became good friends with I met doing community theatre. (Please don't look down on community theatre. The girl who played the Narrator in my teen production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Isabel Keating, was recently nominated for a Tony Award playing Judy Garland in *The Boy from Oz* with Hugh Jackman.)

The fundamentalist Christian of my acquaintance was directing a production of *Guys and Dolls*, and the actor playing Nathan Detroit, a Latino man raised by adoptive parents in Wisconsin (with vocal patterns as flat as the Great Plains), just wasn't getting the laughs. I suggested to the director that the actor needed a bit more Borsht Belt timing. The director looked at me blankly. "You know," I said, "like Nathan Lane. Or Phil Silvers." No response. "After all," I said, "Nathan Detroit is Jewish." This got a response. He was stunned and utterly disbelieving. "But he uses Yiddish words," I pointed out. "Like 'nu.'" He explained that he had thought that it was a typo for "new." Here was an Irish-Catholic explaining to a fundamentalist Christian that a Latino-Lutheran from the Midwest needed to be more "Jewish." Only in America, you say? No, only in the theatre.

TALES FROM THE PULPIT



When I was seven years old, I made my first Holy Communion in the Roman Catholic Church. After the Mass, all the communicants returned to the classroom to receive our very own newly blessed rosary and a holy card signed on the back by our classroom Sister. When it was my turn I told her, “Jesus tastes like newspaper.” She laughed heartily — maybe it was a guffaw — and kissed me on the cheek. I’m pretty sure the way I think and feel about religion today was formed in that moment. Thanks, Sister...damn, I can’t remember her name.

MARILYNN BOGETICH, ACTOR,
THE SAVANNAH DISPUTATION



Father Grassi of St. Josaphat in Chicago who married my husband Arnold and me loves food — especially lasagna. So during the ceremony when he was explaining to everyone the virtues of a lasting marriage and the importance of forgiveness, he said that a good piece of lasagna was as good of an “I’m sorry” as anyone can get. And I can’t cook to save my life. I thought “Uh oh.” Fortunately, in times of stress, the words work just as well for Arnold. Otherwise, “I’m sorry” would be a bowl of cereal or Kraft mac and cheese.

SUZANNE LANG, ACTOR,
THE SAVANNAH DISPUTATION

For our wedding, my bride’s parents arranged for her to be married in her childhood parish. Their former pastor and long-time family friend was to come out of retirement to officiate. Ten minutes before the ceremony was to begin, he had not yet arrived to the church. I was concerned, but this was New Mexico and no one is ever in much of a hurry there. Ten minutes after the ceremony was to begin, there was still no sign of him. I was in a panic. Frantic phone calls couldn’t reach a soul. My best man and brother-in-law-to-be sped off to a neighboring parish to find a priest. Any priest. They burst through the doors (nearly 13 feet and 600 pounds between them stuffed into two cheap tuxedos) and said, “Father, get in the car.” The priest on duty responded that he could not leave his post as he was there to hear Saturday afternoon confession. “No one goes to confession anymore, Father,” said my brother-almost-in-law, “get in the car.” But no amount of plying or bribery could move the holy man.

Eventually, someone in the wedding party reached a deacon who married us two hours after the fact. We were the happiest couple on earth. Who cares if the chicken at the reception went cold?

JIMMY MCDERMOTT, ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE

I was the youngest of three boys. I, of course, did everything my older brothers did, including becoming an altar boy for the Our Lady of Mercy parish in Chicago. On Sundays upon rare occasion, it was our mother’s pride and joy to have all of us on the altar for service at one time (as no other family in the Parish could boast such a distinction as there were no other families with three sons as altar boys at one time).

My mother, who always wanted to direct, would watch the service very closely and give us performance notes immediately after the Mass ended. Notes included (but were not limited to) “Rick, you yawned during the homily,” “David, you were talking to your brother,” and “Rafael, you let the processional cross lean forward.”

Directors will be directors!

DAVID CASTELLANOS, PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

During each church service, my minister would have a “Moment for the Young at Heart,” during which his two puppets, one that was a traditional Howdy Doody style puppet and one that was some sort of fuzzy monster (they were also sister and brother) would try to teach kids lessons about God. Most sessions were instead filled with what my minister saw as humorous puppet bickering that generally confused and disoriented the children. During one Christmas-season service, when the minister asked whose birthday was coming up, one child announced that his birthday was fast approaching — he was born on Christmas Eve. To this, one of the puppets responded, “If you were born one day later, you could have been Jesus!” The kid sat down in a confused daze, wondering how he had just missed being the Christ child, what life would have been like as the Savior and what on earth he had done wrong to lose out on that life!

KALENA DICKERSON, DEVELOPMENT GRANTS MANAGER



WRITERS' THEATRE NEW YORK PREMIERE: **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

Writers' Theatre is very excited to be making its debut in New York City this fall with a reinvention of our highly acclaimed, award-winning production of *Crime and Punishment* adapted from the Fyodor Dostoevsky novel by Marilyn Campbell and Curt Columbus.

Crime and Punishment, which had its world premiere at Books on Vernon during our 2003 Season, is a quintessential Writers' Theatre calling card. Brilliantly literary and yet inherently theatrical, it manages to compress the essence of one of the world's greatest novels into a three-actor, 90-minute performance without sacrificing the heart of the source material. In fact, it stands alongside the novel as an homage to the original while living on its own as a gripping and exhilarating theatrical adventure. We can't think of a better way to introduce ourselves to the vigor and energy of New York!

We are very fortunate to enjoy the return of the original Writers' Theatre cast. Susan Bennett and Scott Parkinson moved to New York shortly after our production closed.

Both have been very busy — Susan returns from Washington, D.C., where she recently appeared at the Shakespeare Theatre, and Scott Parkinson joins us fresh from understudying for Billy Crudup (and indeed performing several times) in The Lincoln Center production of *The Coast of Utopia*. John Judd, who completes the cast, closed our 2006/07 Season playing Iago to sold-out houses in our production of *Othello*.

To this cast, we will add an amazing team of designers. Eugene Lee (*Saturday Night Live*, *Wicked*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Ragtime*) will design sets; Theresa Squire (*Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Orson's Shadow*) will design costumes; Josh Schmidt (*The Savannah Disputation*, *Othello*, *The Chosen*, *The Doctor's Dilemma*) will compose the soundscape; and Keith Parham (*The Savannah Disputation*, *Bach at Leipzig*) will design lights.

Performances will run November 1 through December 2, 2007 at 59E59 Theaters in New York. For more information visit www.59e59.org. To purchase tickets, contact Ticket Central at 212-279-4200 or www.ticketcentral.com.

Please join us for a weekend in New York to celebrate the opening of *Crime and Punishment*.

November 10, 2007, 59E59 Theaters

WEEKEND PACKAGE (\$300 PER PERSON)

Saturday, November 10th, 2 p.m. – One Ticket to Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein*
Saturday, November 10th at 8:15 p.m. – One Ticket to *Crime and Punishment*
Saturday, November 10th at 10 p.m. – Post-show Celebration with the Cast

OPENING NIGHT PACKAGE (\$150 PER PERSON)

Saturday, November 10th at 8:15 p.m. – One Ticket to *Crime and Punishment*
Saturday, November 10th at 10 p.m. – Post-show Celebration with the Cast

To reserve your tickets, contact Jon Faris at 847-441-8940.
Availability is limited and reservations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

We invite you to join us as Artistic Director Michael Halberstam gives another solo tour-de-force performance of the greatest ghost story ever written. Available for four performances only, our 12th annual reading of Ebenezer Scrooge's journey over the course of one magical Christmas Eve has become a holiday tradition!

Performances will take place at 325 Tudor Court on the following dates:

Wednesday, December 19, 8 p.m.

Thursday, December 20, 8 p.m.

Saturday, December 22, 2 p.m.

Sunday, December 23, 2 p.m.

Tickets to all performances are \$30. To make your reservations, please contact the Box Office at 847-242-6000.

We look forward to sharing this holiday classic with you!



WT FOR THE FAMILY

Last season's production of *The Puppetmaster of Lodz* featured the memorably eloquent designs from the master puppeteer Michael Montenegro. Writers' Theatre will reunite Montenegro with director and Writers' Theatre Artistic Associate Jimmy McDermott to debut the first ever Writers' Theatre Family Program. Joining this team is playwright Emily Schwartz, whose most recent work *Mr. Spacky: The Man Who Was Continuously Followed by Wolves* played to critical raves and packed houses for The Strange Tree Group. Her intelligent and uniquely humorous voice perfectly complements Montenegro's incomparable, rough-hewn visual style. This exciting new piece is now in development under the working title *The Last Elephant*. The story's topics will touch on themes of conservation, responsibility, change and acceptance.

Performances will run Saturday mornings at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. from February 23 through March 29, 2008 at 325 Tudor Court. Tickets are \$20 and can be ordered by contacting the Box Office at 847-242-6000 or online at www.writers theatre.org.

WHAT'S HAPPENING
BACKSTAGE
AT WRITERS' THEATRE

EDUCATION

THE MLK JOURNAL

BY MICA COLE, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Director of Education Mica Cole joined Writers' Theatre after serving as the liaison for The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights during its premiere tour in schools throughout the Chicago Metropolitan area in winter 2007. The impact of the program on the students who participated was significant, as was the impact on Mica. What follows is a brief excerpt from a journal kept by Mica during the journey taken by everyone involved.

Not all moths are white.

A teacher, a white woman, came up to me and thanked me for the performance. She was smiling, earnest, warm. She even touched my shoulders lightly as if to stifle a hug and I felt appreciative of her gratitude. Then, with deep and sudden concern, she pulled me aside, conspicuously leaned in — her head lowered — and, as if we were old confidantes, whispered, “I get so disappointed in the parents and grandparents of my black students. They don't tell their kids about their own history or about the Civil Rights Movement and how important it was... why is that?”

I had hoped before she finished the question that it was rhetorical. But before I had finished hoping, I could tell in her honest stare that she wanted an answer. And the truth.

Now before I continue, I must admit that the details of what followed are fractured in my mind, like a slow movie picture book — like old black and whites where the images skip from one to the next — I did not know what to do but I knew I could not do the following:

- check her with my angry black woman voice
- not know the answer
- walk away

But words have a way of escaping me and before I knew it there they were, as fluent and unconscious as my breaths.

I, Mica, flew up to the overhead lights and watched below where words were echoing and swarming about the room. I imagine that I felt like the first black presidential candidate might feel — prompted to answer on behalf of his people...knowing his words were so vital. My heart was racing and the words were coming...and I came back down to gather a thought.

I reminded her that the Civil Rights Movement was a part of American history, not just black history, and therefore it was not only the job of black parents, grandparents and teachers to educate their own children about it, but it was equally the responsibility of any American to share stories with their children about the Movement — including herself. After all, it did last longer than the Revolutionary War.

I knew in the silence after I spoke that she had never considered it. That it is a part of everyone's history. She was so earnest though, and I knew that in the future she would.

But something had happened...something had changed, I had changed. I didn't give up on her like I might have done otherwise.

I began to cry. I cried because I was tired of defending myself, tired of having to leave my body when things like that happened.

Tired of flying up to the lights like a moth... leaving my black face and my black eyes and my black body there...empty.

Cried because this time I clung to the truth and light that beams beneath my ribcage.

I answered her with the truth and not out of dignity or intellectual superiority or black power..

But out of love. Because I needed, we needed to get beyond this idea that we are separate.

I thought that this show was developing young audiences.

And it is.

Young, old and somewhere in the middle too.

It is bringing us to our inner truth and love and light. One moth at a time.



The MLK Project will tour again in winter 2008. To learn how to bring the program to your child's school, contact Mica Cole at 847-242-6007.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

MACARTHUR

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Writers' Theatre is a proud recipient of a \$200,000, five-year gift from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The MacArthur Foundation is a private Chicago-based grant-making institution that is dedicated to large, long-term gifts that can deeply impact and strengthen organizations. Most of these gifts are for general operating support, which allows the leadership of the recipient organizations to allocate the funds as beneficially as possible.

"Writers' Theatre is honored and privileged to be funded by the MacArthur Foundation," said Artistic Director Michael Halberstam. "This recognition is very validating and the unrestricted financial support gives us flexibility and confidence as we look forward towards our 20th Anniversary."

One of the MacArthur Foundation's primary focuses is the nourishment of creativity, and it therefore lends a significant portion of its support to arts and cultural organizations, funding 180 locally each year. This year, the foundation will raise its annual arts and culture grantmaking to \$5.5 million, a \$1 million increase.

"By supporting creative and artistic development amongst cultural institutions like Writers' Theatre, we create an enriching and appealing environment for tourists and local residents alike," said Ali Kassam-Remtulla, Program Officer for the MacArthur Foundation's General Program. "This generates local economic prosperity and lively cultural dialogue in our communities."

Last year, the generous foundation gave out \$235 million, with \$39 million going to Chicago-area organizations.

INTRODUCING THE NEW WRITERS' THEATRE GIVING PROGRAM!

At Writers' Theatre, contributions are absolutely critical to fulfilling our mission and are vital to our financial well-being. Less than 50% of our annual budget comes from donations, so we can't do it without you! Please take a look at the array of the new benefits designed specifically to give you the insider's perspective; connect with our work; staff and artists; and most importantly, make your theatergoing experience as gratifying and as enjoyable as possible all season long. Join us today!

The Benefits of Giving

SUPPORTER (UP TO \$149)

- 100% tax deductibility

PATRON (\$150 – \$499)

All the benefits at the Supporter level, plus:

- Recognition of your gift in the *Footlights* program
- A subscription to *The Brief Chronicle*, the Writers' Theatre magazine **(NEW!)**
- An invitation to an exclusive backstage event **(NEW!)**

FRIEND (\$500 – \$999)

All the benefits at the Patron level, plus:

- An autographed production script from the 2007/08 Season **(NEW!)**
- An invitation to Open Rehearsal, one of our most popular events

Director's Society



With an annual gift of \$1,000 or more, you will be welcomed into the exclusive Director's Society. Members enjoy unprecedented access to the art, including unique opportunities to share in our creative process with invitations to behind-the-scenes events featuring Writers' Theatre artists.

PARTNER (\$1,000 – \$2,499)

All the benefits at the Friend level, plus:

- A private phone line dedicated to priority ticket orders and exchanges
- Advanced ticket reservations for membership holders **(NEW!)**
- Priority membership or subscription renewal
- Priority reservation service for Writers' Theatre Tours
- An invitation to the exclusive annual Garden Party
- An invitation to Caviar & Conversation

BENEFACTOR (\$2,500 – \$4,999)

All the benefits at the Partner level, plus:

- A pair of guest passes for the 2007/08 Series **(NEW!)**
- Two tickets to one Opening Night performance and celebration

LEADER (\$5,000 – \$9,999)

All the benefits at the Benefactor level, plus:

- An Opening Night subscription to all three series productions at the Tudor Court theatre **(NEW!)**

VISIONARY (\$10,000+)

All the benefits at the Leader level, plus:

- An invitation to the First Rehearsal for each of the 2007/08 Season productions **(NEW!)**
- A private event with Artistic Director Michael Halberstam



DIRECTOR'S SOCIETY

Garden Party

JULY 15, 2007

THE HOME OF AVY & MARCIE STEIN



On a beautiful summer afternoon in July, more than 100 members and friends of the Director's Society gathered at the home of long-time supporters Avy & Marcie Stein for the annual Writers' Theatre Garden Party. With stunning views of Lake Michigan, the Stein's home was the perfect setting for the event.

It was a lovely afternoon of scrumptious hors d'oeuvres, refreshing cocktails and a sneak preview of the upcoming 2007/08 Season. Compiled and directed by Artistic Associate Jimmy McDermott, the season sampler of cliffhanger scenes had the audience enthralled. The program featured Writers' Theatre actors Alyson Green, Susan Hart and Larry Yando.

Writers' Theatre thanks members of the Director's Society for their annual gifts of \$1,000 or more in support of the work on our stages. If you are interested in learning more about making a donation to Writers' Theatre or becoming a member of the Director's Society please call Development Manager Lindsey Becker at 847-242-6012.



1. Writers' Theater's Co-founder Marilyn Campbell, Larry Becker & Nicole Williams
2. Trustee Bill Taylor and his wife Dian
3. Sonia & Ted Bloch
4. Stephanie & Bill Sick
5. Board of Trustees President Chris Knight and hosts Marcie & Avy Stein
6. Executive Director Kate Lipuma & Artistic Director Michael Halberstam
7. Jean & Jordan Nerenberg
8. Nick Kokonas and his wife Trustee Dagmara Kokonas

EVENTS

WT ARTS TOURS

2007/08 Events Preview

Each season, Writers' Theatre offers our patrons many opportunities to go behind the scenes and gain insider access to the art on our stages. Many of these events are offered exclusively to donors at certain levels, which are indicated below. If no donor level is indicated, the event is open to the public. To learn more about an event or for more information on our donor programs please contact Development Manager Lindsey Becker at 847-242-6012.

In Conversation:

The Savannah Disputation

(Donors of \$150 level or greater)

Tuesday, September 25, 2007

Guests are invited to listen in as Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and the cast of *The Savannah Disputation* discuss this world premiere play.

2007/08 London Tour

December 30, 2007 – January 6, 2008

Join Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and Richard Christiansen, former Chief Theatre Critic of the *Chicago Tribune*, for this exciting trip to London. The trip includes tickets to six theatre performances, accommodations at a luxury hotel and much more!

Open Rehearsal:

As You Like It

(Donors of \$500 level or greater)

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Writers' Theatre favorite Bill Brown returns to direct this Shakespearean comedy and is inviting our donors along for the ride. Guests will get true insider access as they are invited to sit in during a rehearsal session.

2007/08 Gala

Friday, April 4, 2008

The Peninsula, Chicago

Writers' Theatre will celebrate another exhilarating season of theatre with what promises to be an exciting and elegant party. Attendees of our annual fundraising Gala will be treated to a gourmet meal and world-class entertainment from Writers' Theatre.

Caviar & Conversation:

The Lion in Winter

(Director's Society Members)

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Guests will enjoy a lively conversation between Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and the artists of *The Lion in Winter*. This popular event also features a reception where attendees will have a chance to mingle with the artists.

The Director's Society Garden Party

(Director's Society Members)

Date to be announced

Hosted at one of the beautiful private gardens on the North Shore, this event gives guests an exclusive opportunity to sample the excitement of our next season of programming and meet other Writers' Theatre enthusiasts.

All dates and programming are subject to change.

Writers' Theatre London Tour

December 30, 2007 – January 6, 2008

Ring in the New Year with an exciting theatre trip to London. Michael Halberstam and Richard Christiansen will once again host a tour to experience all the cultural delights that London has to offer.

The popular and highly anticipated trip includes:

- Best available seats to six world-class productions
- Exclusive visits with London theatre artists
- A meeting with Michael Billington, Chief Drama Critic for *The Guardian*
- Post-performance seminars and discussions held by Michael Halberstam and Richard Christensen
- Seven nights at the luxurious Royal Horseguards Hotel
- Two gourmet dinners, including a five-course New Year's celebration with a private view of the fireworks at midnight
- Full English breakfast each morning
- Luxury motor coach transfers

Limited spaces are available and last year's tour was sold out! Reserve your place today by calling Development Manager Lindsey Becker at 847-242-6012.

Stratford Recap

Richard Christiansen, former Chief Theatre Critic for the *Chicago Tribune*, takes on the role of King as he dresses up in the Stratford Festival's costume warehouse. The sold-out Writers' Theatre tour to the Stratford Festival in Ontario included performances of *Shakespeare's Will*; *The Blonde, Brunette and Vengeful Redhead*; *King Lear*; and *The Merchant of Venice*; fabulous meals at Rundles, The Church and The Old Prune; pre- and post-show discussions with Writers' Theatre's Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and Richard Christiansen; and a private meeting with Lucy Peacock, the star of the one-woman show *The Blonde, Brunette and Vengeful Redhead*. A good time was had by all.



WT IN NYC

Join us in the Big Apple for the New York Writers' Theatre Premiere with our original adaptation of *Crime and Punishment*. For more information on this trip, please turn to page 13.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE: THE SAVANNAH DISPUTATION

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		18 7:30	19 7:30	20 8:00	21 8:00	22 4:00/8:00
23 2:00/6:00	24	25 7:30 ☆	26 Sold Out!	27 Sold Out!	28 8:00	29 4:00/8:00
30 2:00/6:00						

OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2 7:30**	3 7:30**	4 8:00	5 8:00	6 4:00/8:00
7 2:00/6:00*	8	9 7:30	10 2:00/7:30	11 8:00 †	12 8:00	13 4:00/8:00
14 2:00	15	16 7:30	17 7:30	18 8:00	19 8:00	20 4:00/8:00
21 2:00/6:00*	22	23 7:30	24 2:00/7:30	25 8:00	26 8:00	27 4:00/8:00
28 2:00	29	30 7:30	31 7:30			

NOVEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 8:00	2 8:00	3 4:00/8:00
4 2:00/6:00	5	6 7:30**	7 7:30**	8 8:00	9 8:00	10 4:00/8:00
11 2:00/6:00	12	13 7:30	14 2:00/7:30 †	15 8:00	16 8:00	17 4:00/8:00
18 2:00	19	20 7:30	21 7:30	22 No Show	23 8:00	24 4:00/8:00
25 2:00/6:00						

- ☆ New Member Welcome Reception † Afternoon Tea
- * Pre-Show Lectures ‡ Wine Series
- ** Post-Show Discussions

Value-Added Performances

Post-Show Discussion Series

October 2, 3, November 6, 7, Directly Following the Evening Performances

Writers' Theatre artistic staff and cast members will host lively post-show discussions. Audience members will have the opportunity to ask questions about the process, the characters and the production.

Price*: Free

Wine Series

Thursday, October 11, 7 p.m.

Join other Writers' Theatre fans before the show and explore wines from the world of the play complemented by savory hors d'oeuvres.

Price*:

- \$65 Reception and Performance
- \$20 Reception Only
- \$15 Member/Subscriber Price (Reception Add-on)



Pre-Show Lecture Series

Sunday, October 7 and 21, 5 p.m.

Writers' Theatre guest artists will guide patrons through the inner workings of each production. By providing details that enhance the Writers' Theatre experience, each lecture will increase audience appreciation for the production to follow.

Price*: Free

NEW! Afternoon Tea Series

Wednesday, November 14, 4:30 p.m.

Celebrate exhilarating theatre and exceptional tea as Writers' Theatre and The Celtic Knot partner in this exciting new event. Afternoon Tea Series Tickets can be purchased inclusive of the tea and either the matinee performance or evening performance.

Price*:

- \$65 Performance and Afternoon Tea
- \$20 Afternoon Tea Only
- \$15 Member/Subscriber Price (Tea Add-on)



*Applicable upgrade fees may apply if exchanging tickets into a higher-priced series.

Special Offer To Subscribers/Members

Dinner Theatre

For this production, Writers' Theatre subscribers and members may purchase a meal at Di Pescara consisting of a salad, entrée, dessert and a glass of wine for only \$35, including tax! For more details, or to purchase your meal, please call the Writers' Theatre Box Office at 847-242-6000. (Once you have purchased your dinner theatre package, please call Di Pescara to make your reservation.)



2124 Northbrook
Northbrook, IL 60062
847-498-4321

Di Pescara, a Lettuce Entertain You® restaurant, is the official restaurant partner of Writers' Theatre's production, The Savannah Disputation.

IN BRIEF

Did you know?

- The operating budget for Writers' Theatre during the 2007/08 Season is \$3.2 million — a growth of 714% in the last eight years.
- We have more than 5,000 subscribers — a growth of more than 250% in the last seven years.
- Our subscribers are very loyal. 89% renewed their subscriptions for the 15th Anniversary Season. (The industry average is 65%.*) Thank you!
- Subscribers comprise 61% of our audience. (The industry average is 28%.*)
- We receive donations from 27% of our subscribers. (The industry average is less than 12%.*)
- Writers' Theatre operates at 97% capacity. (The industry average is 67%.*)
- We have operated in the black for all of our 15 seasons.
- We worked with 149 actors, designers, staff members, trustees and volunteers last season.

* *Theatre Facts, 2006 - TCG*

15th Anniversary Season Achievements

- We performed our plays during 38 weeks of the year for more than 30,400 audience members.
- Through the Literary Development Initiative, we commissioned four playwrights to create new works for the theater: Brett Neveu; Chay Yew; Marilyn Campbell; and a musical adaptation of *Candida* by Josh Schmidt, Jan Tranen and Michael Halberstam.
- Writers' Theatre hired our new Executive Director Kate Lipuma after a national search. Kate comes to us from nine seasons with the Signature Theatre Company in New York City.
- The Theatre successfully introduced the 100% Club, a unique subscription/donation hybrid, which allows our patrons to cover the full cost of the plays we produce.
- We launched *The MLK Project*, a one-actor play about the Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, which played to nearly 10,000 students in January – February, 2007.

Updates to Subscriber/Member Benefits and Ticket Policies

In order to enhance the Writers' Theatre experience and allow for added flexibility, we have expanded many of our subscription/membership benefits and policies. Please note that these benefits and policies will vary depending upon whether you are a regular WT subscriber/member, a 100% Club subscriber/member or a Director's Society subscriber/member.

Below is a brief summary of those benefits and policies that have changed for the 2007/08 Season. If you would like to receive the *2007/08 Subscriber/Member Benefits and Policies* brochure, which contains all necessary information about your season package and answers to your frequently asked questions, please contact the Box Office at 847-242-6000 or boxoffice@writerstheatre.org.

	WT SUBSCRIPTION/ MEMBERSHIP	100% CLUB	DIRECTOR'S SOCIETY
TICKET EXCHANGES BY TELEPHONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call the Box Office at 847-242-6000 to select a new date/time. • A \$5 convenience fee will apply on all phone exchanges.* • Your new tickets will be held for pick up at Will Call and original tickets must be turned in at that time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call the Box Office at 847-242-6000 to select a new date/time. • No convenience fee will apply.* • Tickets may be mailed (for performances more than two weeks away) or held for pick up at Will Call. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call the Director's Society Dedicated Exchange Line at 847-242-6012. • No convenience fee will apply.* • Tickets may be mailed (for performances more than two weeks away) or held for pick up at Will Call.
REQUIRED NOTIFICATION FOR TICKET EXCHANGES	Exchanges must be completed 24 hours prior to your scheduled performance.	Exchanges must be completed one hour prior to your scheduled performance.	
ADDITIONAL GUEST TICKET PURCHASES	Purchase up to four guest tickets for each production at the discounted subscription ticket price before they go on sale to the public.	Purchase unlimited guest tickets for each production at the discounted subscription ticket price before they go on sale to the public.	
BEHIND-THE-SCENES ACCESS	Receive advanced access to special discussions and lecture series throughout the season.	Receive an invitation to join Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and select cast members for a 2007/08 special event.	Receive invitations to numerous exclusive events throughout the 2007/08 Season, including Caviar & Conversation, the Open Rehearsal and our annual Garden Party.
COMPLIMENTARY BEVERAGES		Receive one free drink per subscription/membership at each performance.	
ACCESS TO A SCRIPT LIBRARY		Check out a copy of the script from the Box Office and read the play before attending the production.	

*Tickets may still be exchanged by mail, fax or in person with no convenience charge. Applicable upgrade fees will apply on all exchanges into higher-priced performance (e.g., from a Tuesday to a Saturday).

IN BRIEF

New Staff

Mica Cole

Director of Education

Mica comes to Writers' Theatre from the Southside of Chicago. Since graduating from the Theatre School at DePaul University, she has become the co-founder of *The Poetry Project*, an urban creative writing initiative for young women, co-founder of Cursed With Words Theatre Company and founder of *The Truth About Us*, a performance-based educational program. She has worked in arts-in-education for seven years and has taught in collaboration with Free Street Programs, Chicago Public Schools, Columbia College and After School Matters. She is an Artistic Associate at Free Street Programs.

Kalena Dickerson

Development Grants Manager

Kalena comes to Writers' Theatre from Goodman Theatre, where she worked in a variety of areas over four years, most recently in development. Kalena is a Chicagoland native and graduated from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 2003 with a Bachelor of Arts in Dramatic Writing and History and a Bachelor of Theatre Arts. Since graduating, she has worked with several Chicago-area theaters in the areas of fundraising, script evaluation, dramaturgy, public relations and audience services. As a playwright, she has had two plays, as well as several monologues and scenes, produced and staged in Chicago. She is thrilled to be raising money for the esteemed Writers' Theatre.

Staff Changes

Please join the Writers' Theatre Board of Trustees in congratulating the following employees for their recent promotions:

Lindsey Becker, *Development Manager, Director's Society Liaison and Special Events*

Jon Faris, *General Manager*

Jimmy McDermott, *Artistic Associate*

Sara M. Poorman, *Full-time Marketing Associate*

New Trustee

Dagmara Kakonas

Dagmara is a compulsive entrepreneur. Her businesses have included a summer craft workshop for neighborhood kids, a poster and art consulting service and a couture millinery shop. She currently has a made-to-order millinery business and helps her husband Nick with varied venture capital projects.

She was raised in Kenilworth and attended New Trier and the Latin School of Chicago. She majored in Asian Studies at Colgate University and was an exchange student in Kyoto, Japan. Her parents immigrated to the United States from Latvia and she maintains strong ties to their homeland. Dagmara loves to travel with her husband and two young sons, James and Theodore. Her hobbies include cooking and golf.

She is very excited to be joining the Writers' Theatre Board. "Working with such a talented and successful group has already been motivating and inspirational."

Tell Them We Sent You!

Join Writers' Theatre artists, staff and Board of Trustees in thanking our community partners for their continued support. Please visit their establishments and let them know how much their support of us means to you.



Restaurant Partner
www.leye.com



Wine Tasting Series Partner
www.yalumba.com



Afternoon Tea Series Partner
www.celticknotpub.com



Production Sponsor

www.urbaninnovations.com

Writers' Theatre is honored to be partnering with **Urban Innovations (UI)** to bring this world premiere production of Evan Smith's *The Savannah Disputation* to you. UI is a fully integrated real estate investment firm that provides complete management services to commercial and residential tenants. UI prides itself on providing personal service to customers in order to create supportive environments that suit each individual tenant's needs.

UI was recently named one of the top 25 Best Small Companies to Work for in America by the Society for Human Resource Management. We are grateful for UI's dedication to our communities.



Glencoe Performance Venues

325 Tudor Court
664 Vernon Avenue

Box Office & Administration

376 Park Avenue
Glencoe, IL 60022

Box Office 847-242-6000

Office 847-242-6001

Fax 847-242-6011

www.writerstheatre.org



Production Sponsor



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Production Partners

Writers' Theatre is going green!
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