

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF  
**WRITERS' THEATRE**

ISSUE TWENTY-THREE  
NOVEMBER 2008

\$2.00

# THE BRIEF CHRONICLE



**WT**  
WRITERS'  
THEATRE

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dear Friends .....03

### ON STAGE:

*The Maids* .....05

The Truth Behind the Tale .....06

Director's Sidebar: Jimmy McDermott .....09

Artistic Conversation: Playing the Role of Jean Genet....12

The Mystery of a Thriller .....16

The Cast .....17

### BACKSTAGE:

*The MLK Project* .....19

Open Rehearsal: *Picnic*.....22

Sponsor Salutes .....24

Comings and Goings .....26

Next Up: *Old Glory*.....27

*The Maids* Performance Calendar .....29

WHEN THE MISTRESS  
IS AWAY,  
THE MAIDS'  
WILL PLAY.



# THE BRIEF CHRONICLE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF WRITERS' THEATRE

ISSUE TWENTY-THREE NOVEMBER 2008

**Michael Halberstam**  
*Artistic Director*

**Kathryn M. Lipuma**  
*Executive Director*

## EDITOR

**Eleanor Berman**  
*Director of Marketing & Communications*

## THE BRIEF CHRONICLE TEAM

**Justin Ball**  
*Development Manager*

**Bobby Kennedy**  
*Artistic Assistant/Literary Associate*

**Mica Cole**  
*Director of Education*

**Jimmy McDermott**  
*Associate Artistic Director*

**Sherre Jennings Cullen**  
*Director of Development*

**Sara M. Poorman**  
*Marketing Associate*

**Kalena Dickerson**  
*Development Manager*

**Margaret Reeder**  
*Director of Audience Services*

**Jon Faris**  
*General Manager*

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Dr. Gene A. Plunka**

## DESIGN

LOWERCASE, INC.

## THE WRITERS' THEATRE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Officers

**Christopher Knight**, *President*  
**Gillian Goodman**, *Vice-President*  
**Bruce Tranen**, *Vice-President*  
**Rachel Weinstein**, *Vice-President, President Elect*  
**Dave McGranahan**, *Treasurer*  
**Mary Pat Studdert**, *Secretary*

### Trustees

**Lawrence Adelman**  
**Arthur Anderson, Jr.**  
**Janice Beck**  
**Susan Belgrad**  
**Lorry Borowitz**  
**Sara Cohan**  
**Howard Conant, Jr.**  
**Judy Cottle**  
**Norman Cutler**  
**Carol Dawley**  
**Linda Havlin**

**Dagmara Kokonas**  
**Larry B. Kugler**  
**Jennifer Litowitz**  
**Thomas Mann**  
**Lorel McMillan**  
**Barbara Melcher**  
**Pam Phillips Weston**  
**Stanford Slovin**  
**William E. Taylor**  
**Yalena Vayner**  
**Pam Zdunek**



**Michael Halberstam**  
*Artistic Director*

**Kathryn M. Lipuma**  
*Executive Director*

Dear Friends:

We are frequently asked how we come to choose a season. One of our greatest attractions to any possible production is the passion and desire of the artists to bring a particular script to life. Writers' Theatre Associate Artistic Director, Jimmy McDermott (director of *The Puppetmaster of Lodz*) has held a life-long fascination with Jean Genet's *The Maids*.

For those of you not familiar with the background of *The Maids*, this issue of *The Brief Chronicle* will take you through the dark and incredible true story that inspired the playwright. We delve into the playwright's background; a contemporary of the mid-twentieth century French intelligentsia and friend to philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. We discover how Genet came to write a piece as complex as *The Maids* so early in his career and walk through key directorial decisions with Jimmy McDermott.

Meanwhile, backstage at Writers' Theatre, we have been busily celebrating our many generous sponsors who have made the 2008/09 Season possible. It is because of their openhanded support that we are able to bring these exceptional words and artists to the stage. This generosity also allows us to facilitate educational programs, giving children and families the opportunity to experience live theater (often for the first time), hopefully planting the seed for a life-long appreciation for the arts.

It is with great excitement that we welcome you back to the bookstore, and as always, we're privileged to be part of your theater-going experience.

Yours Sincerely,

Michael

Kate



**“THE SLIGHTEST  
MISTAKE COULD  
GIVE US  
AWAY.”**

- CLAIRE, *The Maids*

**ON STAGE: THE MAIDS**  
BY JEAN GENET TRANSLATED BY MARTIN CRIMP  
DIRECTED BY JIMMY McDERMOTT

THE CAST

ELIZABETH LAIDLAW, NIKI LINDGREN AND HELEN SADLER

SCENIC DESIGN: **BRIAN SIDNEY BEMBRIDGE**

COSTUME DESIGN: **RACHEL ANNE HEALY**

LIGHTING DESIGN: **PETE DULLY**

SOUND DESIGN: **JOSH SCHMIDT**

PROPERTIES DESIGN: **SARAH BENDIX**

STAGE MANAGEMENT: **RICHARD LUNDY**

Two women in service to a younger socialite pass the moments of their day in playacting and fantasy. As the line between fantasy and reality begins to disintegrate, their games take a deadly turn. Jealousy, resentment, sexual tension and murder converge in this 1947 classic French thriller. Writers' Theatre Associate Artistic Director Jimmy McDermott, one of the city's most exciting young directors, brings his trademark edginess to this seminally rebellious play.

**November 18, 2008 – April 5, 2009**

*Performed at 664 Vernon Avenue*

# THE TRUTH BEHIND THE TALE

BY **BOBBY KENNEDY**, WRITERS' THEATRE ARTISTIC ASSISTANT/LITERARY ASSOCIATE

The supposed inspiration for Jean Genet's *The Maids* was the infamous case of the Papin sisters. Employed as maids for the Lancelin family, Christine and Lea Papin's disrepute stemmed from the brutal murder of the family's mistress and daughter. Their trial and eventual convictions for the crime launched them into an unwelcome limelight for the better half of the 20th century.

Christine (b. 1905) and Lea (b. 1911) were products of a dysfunctional family in rural France. The girls' parents divorced in 1913 as a result of their father's sexual abuse of their older sister, Emilia. After the divorce, Emilia entered a convent and Christine and Lea were placed into state-run institutions.

As adults, the sisters' strongest desire was to live and work together. Christine became a maid in 1920 and Lea followed suit four years later. The Lancelin family of Le Mans, France fulfilled the sisters' wish by hiring both of the Papins as live-in maids in 1927.

With an absent father, an estranged sister and an indifferent mother, the Papin sisters had only each other for support. The intense emotional bond between the two girls developed in large part because of their isolation from the world. The Lancelin family provided the girls with food and housing, but beyond the company of each other, Christine and Lea sought no social or cultural indulgences. Any desire for additional friends, family or lovers simply did not exist. It was this extreme self-imposed social ostracism that is believed to have been a key factor leading to Christine and Lea's extremely violent behavior.

On February 2, 1933, Mr. Lancelin returned home from an afternoon of bridge to collect his wife and daughter for dinner at his brother-in-law's house. Much to his surprise, the door to his house was locked and he could not get the attention of anyone inside, despite seeing a light in the

“THE PAPIN SISTERS  
HAD ONLY  
EACH OTHER  
FOR SUPPORT.”

maids' attic room. The police were able to enter the house through an open window and inside they found the bodies of Mrs. Lancelin and her adult daughter Genevieve brutally beaten and mutilated. Christine and Lea Papin were found locked in their attic room lying in bed together naked with a bloody hammer on the floor next to them.

**“NO CLEAR  
MOTIVE  
FOR THE CRIME  
WAS EVER FOUND.”**

The incident was apparently provoked by a blown electrical fuse. The family's iron had just been repaired—the cost of which was taken from the maids' salaries—when the appliance broke again, causing the lights to go out. Upon returning to a darkened house, Mrs. Lancelin grew angry and Christine and Lea responded violently. No clear motive for the crime was ever found and the girls were adamant about sharing the blame.

The Papin sisters became an overnight media sensation. Debates raged about the psychology of the two maids and if there were any political or social agenda behind their violent outburst. The notion of the murders being an act of class warfare was helped by Christine, who after being arrested proclaimed, “I'd rather have had our bosses' hides than for them to have had ours.” To this day, the crime remains on record the most violent non-war crime committed by women against women.

While awaiting trial, the sisters were imprisoned separately. The isolation drove Christine to the brink of madness and she had to be straitjacketed to prevent her from gouging her own eyes out. Medical experts concluded that Christine, the more intelligent of the two, had complete dominance over her sister. Because of this testimony, Christine was awarded the death penalty while Lea was only given ten years of imprisonment. Christine's sentence was later commuted to lifetime imprisonment but she died of cachexia in 1937. Lea was released from prison in 1941 and worked as a hotel maid under a false name until her death in 1982.

The case of the Papin sisters undeniably changed the social consciousness of Jean Genet and his contemporaries. Numerous pieces of art and literature were developed while trying to comprehend this heinous crime and its effect on society. Genet was, no doubt, aware of the Papin sisters when he wrote *The Maids*. However, he would continuously deny their influence on the play until much later in life. ■



**JIMMY MCDERMOTT**

**SIDEBAR  
DIRECTOR'S**

*Associate Artistic Director Jimmy McDermott returns to the intimate bookstore space where he last directed The Puppetmaster of Lodz. Other Writers' Theatre credits include the inaugural family programming production of The Frog Prince by David Mamet and the experimental staging of Suzan Lori Parks' 365 Days/365 Plays: Week # 49. Here in his own words, he describes his initiation to the work of Jean Genet and the devilish little play called The Maids.*

Whenever I tell a friend that I am preparing to direct Genet's *The Maids*, I inevitably get the question, “Well, what do you plan to do with it?” I hesitate a moment for fear I've somehow missed something. Then I simply state, “Stage it.”

This is an educated, well-meant question and I don't mean to belittle it. When taking on Genet, there's surely no shortage of choices to be made, and with *The Maids*, he presents especially compelling challenges. The play hinges on the audience's awareness of two performers representing sisters who are servants engaged in a decidedly sophisticated role-playing ritual. The roles are reversible both between the siblings and even within their initially established, yet consistently shifting dynamic.

Genet dresses this device in richly exalted prose, a plethora of peculiar sexual implications, an examination of the criminal element, envy, resentment, rivalry, catharsis and a murder plot. I never felt the need to apply further conceit or burden the work with radical re-contextualization. The complexity of the piece is implicit.

Still, even a faithful staging of *The Maids* is fraught with relativity, especially when left to contend with the legend of Jean Genet. His contemporary (and rabid fan) Jean-Paul Sartre, through an apotheosis entitled *Saint Genet*, popularized the notion that the playwright intended the three characters of Claire, Solange and The Mistress to be performed by men. This is rather easily construed from the novel *Our Lady of the Flowers*, where Genet plainly claims that he would appoint adolescent boys in any women's roles for the stage. It is largely believed that Genet conceded to

casting women in the original 1947 Paris production in order to get *The Maids* produced under the direction of marquee star Louis Jouvet. Apart from an epistolary complaint on the matter to a friend, the details of any such negotiations between director and playwright remain conjecture.

I first read and fell in love with the play back in school prior to being aware of the lore surrounding it. The work struck me with its three rare, meaty parts for women in the direst circumstances set to Genet's gorgeous language. I had been seduced. Nothing would deter me from directing it. I hurriedly turned back to the front of the script to reread Bernard Frechtman's original translation of the play. There I discovered a preface which excerpted Sartre's articulate argument for rendering the roles in drag. I was disheartened. Not for fear or prejudice per se. I merely felt that the ferocity I encountered in the text was exceptionally

feminine. Temporarily stumped, I curbed my aspirations, but swore I'd return to the play in the future as it purely occurred to me. After all, nowhere in the artifact of his manuscript did Genet himself write that these particular roles required the presence of men. I would later hear rumor that Genet had either recanted or contradicted Sartre's assertion in response to several prominent avant garde productions adhering to the philosopher's doctrine; a report corroborated by the author's biographer. This information reinvigorated my purpose. I returned to the shelf and pulled down the play.

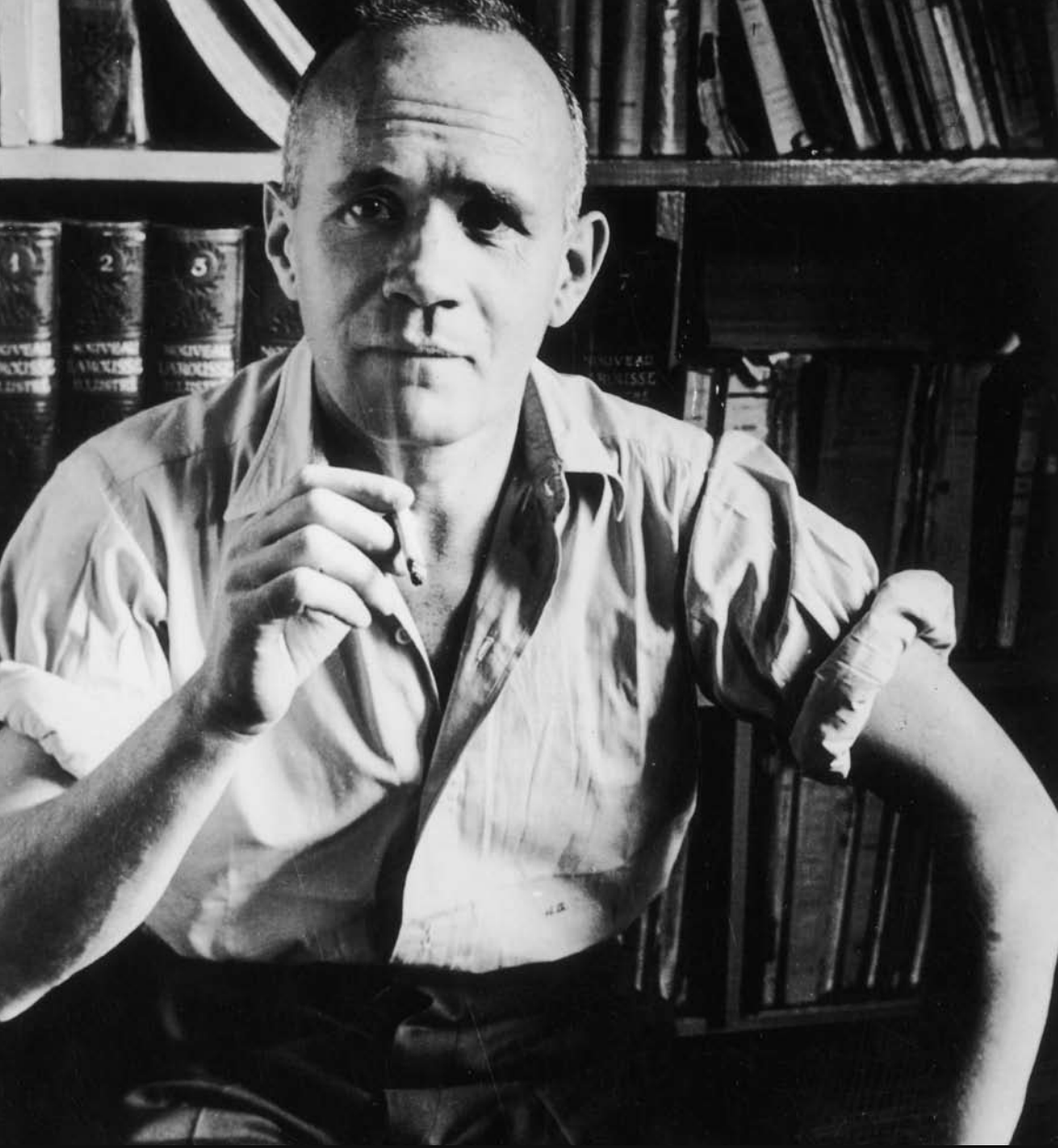
My intention was to work from the aforementioned American translation from 1954. For the sake of diligence and clarity, I decided to collect as many other translations as I could in order to cross reference the Bernard Frechtman version. While the flowery excesses of his translation were very attractive to the ear, I was pleasantly surprised to find the British Martin Crimp's pointed interpretation far more pressing and playable. His blistering 1999 take on the text was definitely better fitted for contemporary practitioners and spectators alike. I determined this was clearly the one to bring to our stage. Upon closer comparison of the Frechtman and Crimp translations, I noticed some discrepancies between the respective editions regarding certain events in the last third of the play. Further research into

these divergences would reveal just how characteristically erratic Genet could be.

Genet and Jouvet had difficulty collaborating in rehearsal for the play's premiere. The fledgling playwright had never before worked in the theatre. His profession as poet and novelist up to that point was necessarily solitary. So, when Jouvet took an aggressive approach towards shaping the piece, imposing and possibly composing revisions to the ending, Genet walked away from the production insulted. He would then go on to disown *The Maids* for several spiteful years. This eventually subsided and Genet agreed to release an English translation by his friend Bernard Frechtman. Out of revenge for Jouvet's changes, Genet insisted on the reinstatement of his desired conclusion. Frechtman begrudgingly obeyed, despite making a case for the ending as tailored for the original production. Genet had his satisfaction at last, but would make a typical reversal decades later. Long after writing several plays of great consequence, he confessed that the amendments made by Jouvet were indeed superior, referring to them as "definitive." Martin Crimp's translation observes Jouvet.

Without aforethought, I've arrived ultimately at the same conclusions regarding ending and gender as Genet. Now I can't take credit for making the most informed choice at every event, but I do take comfort in my instincts. ■

**“THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PIECE IS IMPLICIT.”**



# ARTISTIC CONVERSATION: PLAYING THE ROLE OF JEAN GENET

“GENET’S LIFE WAS BASED ON PLAYING ROLES -  
HE WAS A NOMAD,  
A LONER, A TRANSIENT.”

*Jean Genet is one of the most controversial, elusive and unique writers in the history of the profession. He wrote openly about his homosexuality and life as a thief. His theatre challenged both the form and the purpose of the medium like nothing before and little since. In studying the life and work of this most notorious dramatist, Associate Artistic Director Jimmy McDermott encountered the text *The Rites of Passage of Jean Genet: The Art and Aesthetics of Risk Taking* by Dr. Gene A. Plunka, professor of English at The University of Memphis. Dr. Plunka’s other works include books on Antonin Artaud, John Guare, Jean Claude van Itallie and Peter Shaffer. Here, McDermott and Plunka discuss Genet’s place in modern drama, his influential friends and his unlikely sources of inspiration.*

**JIMMY MCDERMOTT:** How did you first encounter the work of Jean Genet and what led you to study him?

**GENE PLUNKA:** I began reading Genet when I was an undergraduate student taking French literature courses. Genet, of course, was covered in modern drama courses that I took in graduate school. My doctoral dissertation was on the ritualistic theater of Jean Genet, Peter Shaffer, and Edward Albee.

**JM:** Genet was certainly a contemporary of the existentialist writers and is often mentioned in the same breath with Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Did his writing contribute to this movement or did he stand on his own?

**GP:** Genet was never influenced by Camus. Camusian existentialism forms the basis for the theater of the absurd, which centers on the playwrights who changed the language, content, and structure of traditional theater after World War II (Beckett, Ionesco, Pinter, Stoppard, etc.). These playwrights shared a metaphysical search for answers in an absurd universe. Genet, virtually oblivious to the effects of the War, was not in this category.



In the late 1940s, Genet and Sartre became close friends. Conversations they had together, many of which were based upon lies that Genet told Sartre, resulted in the publication of *Saint Genet*, Sartre's mammoth study of Genet's early works. Genet was intrigued by Sartre's intellect but despised (and feared) being pigeonholed by Sartre's book. Sartre's brand of existentialism deals with humans taking responsibility for their actions. Genet was not interested in this at all. However, he was intrigued by Sartre's notion of the "Other" and how humans were defined by the "Other" who judged us, by the actions we take and the roles we choose to adopt. Throughout his life, Genet, a career criminal and an unprosecuted deserter from the French army, feared being judged by the "Other," which is a dominant theme in all of his plays.

**JM:** *The Maids*, written in 1947 and Genet's first produced theatrical work, begins and ends with an intricate role-playing ritual. How does this notion of a play-within-a-play surface in his later offerings for the stage?

**GP:** Genet despised the contemporary theater and modern audiences, which mainly consisted of the bourgeoisie that he had so much contempt for. Thus, the play-within-the-play device was a means to fool the audience,

## “THE MAIDS IS ONE OF THE GREAT PLAYS OF THE MODERN THEATER.”

and he used it in his later plays, particularly in *The Balcony* and *The Blacks*. *The Balcony* begins as if we are in a church, with a bishop hearing the confessions of a penitent. That church turns out to be a bordello. In *The Blacks*, the audience watches a trial of a black man who raped a white woman. When in reality, this play-within-the-play, ostensibly a harmless clown show, is a ruse for the real trial happening offstage.

**JM:** Are there any seeds for this ritual of role-playing in his earlier, non-dramatic work?

**GP:** Genet's life was based on playing roles—he was a nomad, a loner, a transient. He had no home, no bank account and no social security number. When he became well known through his writings, his main obsession became how humans were influenced by the roles they play. Genet, the nomad, now had to play the role of the writer. In his novels and plays he constantly wrote about this need to play roles and how doing so became ritualistic.

**JM:** The late 1950s to early 1960s was a particularly prolific playwriting phase for Genet with *The Balcony*, *The Blacks* and *The Screens*. These are widely considered to be his major plays and *The Maids* is often excluded from this list. How fair an assertion do you think that is?

**GP:** *The Maids* is one of the great plays of the modern theater and should be treated on the same level as his later plays. Genet referred to his theatre as beginning with the late plays, those dramas that broke from Sartre's influence. When Genet wrote *The Maids*, he was under Sartre's inspiration and tutelage, so he didn't consider that play to be his own ideology. Nevertheless, the play contains some of Genet's major themes concerning identity formation, being defined by the "Other," role playing and the significance of rites of passage to form a sense of self-worth. ■

**1947** – Original production at the Théâtre de l'Athénée in Paris. Director Louis Jouvet changes much of the script. This production receives mostly negative reviews but runs for 92 performances.

**1952** – First London production at the Royal Court Theatre, directed in French by Peter Zadek. Genet attends and is impressed.

**1954** – Produced at the Théâtre de la Huchette in Paris. Director Tania Balachova uses Genet's original script and receives mixed reviews.

**1955** – English language version premieres at the Off-Broadway Tempo Playhouse, St. Mark's Place, New York.

**1956** – London production (performed in English) at the New Lindsay Theatre Club, directed by Peter Zadek receiving mostly positive reviews.

**1957** – *The Maids* is adapted into an all-male ballet.

**1963** – The BBC performs *The Maids* as a live radio play.

**1963** – The first production featuring an all-black cast at the Théâtre Montparnasse.

**1964** – First production where the characters of Claire and Solange are played by men, debuts at the La Mama Experimental Theatre in New York.

**1965** – An unauthorized all-male production by the Living Theatre debuts at Berlin's Forum Theatre. Genet attempts to shut down the performance.

**1974** – A film version of *The Maids*, directed by Christopher Miles, is released.

# THE MYSTERY OF A THRILLER

BY BRETT NEVEU

The Maids relies heavily on the structure of a classic thriller. However, it ultimately defies and transcends this label to form its own genre entirely. The upcoming world premiere of Brett Neveu's Old Glory operates initially as a mystery. Though, it, too, finds its way into much richer territory. Here, Old Glory playwright Brett Neveu muses on the thriller versus mystery and how the two intersect.

"A mystery concerns itself with a puzzle. Suspense presents the reader with a nightmare." This quote, from *How to Write a Thriller* by Trish McDonald, is a good take on the genres, but doesn't rightly capture either completely. While the puzzle is the mystery's centerpiece, it often contains nightmarish elements or lives outside of its pace in such a way that it creates a jarring effect that twists the format. The same can be said for suspense, whereas the story can feel as jagged as a serrated blade, but take two or three steps back from the chaos and plot is as clear as 1-2-3. The emotional quotient is the main divider for these two ways of telling a story. Emotion often takes second place with a mystery, letting clues and information be discovered rather than jumping out and grabbing characters. With suspense, exposition pops from anywhere and everywhere and our clues

for reaction lie in the character's faces and actions as story elements collide with them from all directions.

I do believe that *Old Glory* has elements of both suspense and mystery, but does lean further into mystery as its story begins and unfolds. The play could possibly be classified as a mystery with elements of suspense; the story of who, what and why unfolding as names and ideas are dropped as the characters converse. The emotional quotient does shift the play toward suspense as characters talk about their attachment to each other, their emotional journeys and their own places in life. It does feel that the modern mystery can not rely on the staid "who done it" model any longer, and must steal from suspense in order to make a personal connection with an audience. If not, the characters' ability to connect with those out in the seats will suffer from the start. ■



**"THE STORY CAN FEEL AS JAGGED AS A SERRATED BLADE."**

# THE CAST:

Claire and Solange are so stifled and humiliated in their roles as maids, they nightly enact an effigial revenge fantasy against their mistress. We decided to turn to this fascinating cast of Writers' Theatre newcomers to share their most unsavory experiences in the working world.



Well—my worst job was also my first job. I was 15 years old working as a cashier in the little grocery store in my hometown. My boss—the store manager—suffered from (in my youthful opinion) delusions of grandeur. Two days in a row, my drawer came up short by a few nickels—I mean it, NICKELS!—so every day for a month afterward the manager would stand behind me while I counted my cash drawer, tsksksing with pursed lips. I imagine though it could have been worse—my best friend worked in the deli and has some terrifying ham salad stories.

-ELIZABETH LAIDLAW



When I was 17 years old I worked in a rickety old Dickensian jewelry and watchmaker store that stood in the shadow of Canterbury Cathedral. I was paid a pittance. I wasn't allowed to touch the watches because I was a girl. My dusting skills were highly scrutinized and I would spend hours hiding in the pokey cellar amongst cobwebs and mice parceling the repairs. I lived for errands, which sent me into the glorious outside world and when my petty little rat-like boss went out, I slept under the desk. Six long months of menial despair paid for six months in the Indonesian jungle. When I saw my first wild orangutan I figured it was worth it.

-HELEN SADLER



I spent most of my 15th year going to the swimming pool everyday to practice the skills needed to pass the physical tests of being a lifeguard. My hard work paid off and the day I turned 16 I had my dream job. There were a lot of perks to being a lifeguard. I was the overseer of the swimming pool, twirling my whistle like nobody's business and in the five years that I was perched on my chair I saved three lives. But to every high there is a low and bathroom duty was part of the job. To this day I don't understand how a toilet can be such a hard target to hit in EVERY capacity.

-NIKI LINDGREN

**WHAT'S  
HAPPENING**

**AT WRITERS' THEATRE  
BACKSTAGE**

**“WHAT DO WE WANT?  
FREEDOM!”**



***THE MLK PROJECT:  
THE FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS***

**BY YOLANDA ANDROZZO**

**TOURING SCHOOLS: JANUARY 19 – FEBRUARY 27, 2009**

# “WHEN DO WE WANT IT? NOW!”

- THE MLK PROJECT

Weaving together poetry, songs, interviews, and storytelling, *The MLK Project* is a one-woman show that challenges students to consider the cultural and contemporary relevance of the civil rights movement. For a third and final year, Writers' Theatre takes *The MLK Project* on the road to schools throughout the Chicago-land area. Participating schools receive a 45-minute performance, a post-show discussion forum, a comprehensive teacher guide and access to our online resources for exploring the continuing fight for civil rights.

**BRING THIS INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE  
TO A SCHOOL NEAR YOU!**

Go to [writerstheatre.org/mlkproject](http://writerstheatre.org/mlkproject)  
or call 847.441.6840 for more information.



TARGET  
Production Sponsor



## DID YOU KNOW?



Members of our Director's Society, who give an annual gift of \$1,000 or more, receive exclusive perks throughout the season with invitations to a private behind-the-scenes event and our Annual Garden Party. Plus, Director's Society members receive advance notice of theater tours and access to our donor-only ticket hotline for reservations and exchanges. Become a Director's Society member today. Contact Sarah Leahy at 847-242-6012 or [sleahy@writerstheatre.org](mailto:sleahy@writerstheatre.org).

Director's Society members should mark their calendars for Tuesday, March 9, 2009. Writers' Theatre will host an exclusive event to introduce the creative team behind the world premiere of our first musical, *A Minister's Wife*, an adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's *Candida*. The event promises to be an enlightening look into the artistic process.

## WORDPLAY

**Save the Date: April 24, 2009**

Writers' Theatre is pleased to announce that our Annual Gala will take place on Friday, April 24, 2009 at the luxurious Peninsula Chicago Grand Ballroom. We are also thrilled to announce Christine Pompizzi and Amalia Mahoney will serve as this year's Gala Co-chairs!

We will celebrate another exciting season of theatre with what promises to be a fun and elegant evening. With sumptuous cuisine, world-class entertainment and our thrilling live auction, this event is not to be missed! Please mark your calendar and watch your mail for more details.

**THIS EVENT SOLD OUT LAST YEAR, SO BE SURE TO MAKE  
YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY BY CALLING 847-242-6012.**

# OPEN REHEARSAL: PICNIC

Members of the Director's Society and donors giving \$500 or more were given an authentic behind-the-scenes look at our production of *Picnic*. Director David Cromer offered donors the chance to watch the cast's first working rehearsal on stage and gave a sneak peek into the first Tudor Court production to be staged in the round!



**1.** Bruce & Jan Tranen with "Aunt" Jean London **2.** Cast members Bubba Weiler, Hanna Dworkin, Annabel Armour with former bookstore owner Pat Rahmann **3.** Ted & Sonia Bloch alongside Executive Director Kate Lipuma **4.** Sonia Marschak with cast member Boyd Harris **5.** Hillary Clemens, Bridgette Pechman, and Director's Society Member Roslyn Marks

# SPONSOR SALUTE:

## 2008/09 SEASON SPONSOR: MARY WINTON GREEN



Writers' Theatre is proud and privileged to salute Mary Winton Green, Sponsor of the 2008/09 Season. Mary is the first individual to sponsor a season in Writers' Theatre's 17-year history. "All of us at Writers' Theatre owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Mary. For many years, Mary has been a constant source of inspiration and support. She, along with her late husband David, saw the value in new work and initially

funded our *Literary Development Initiative* to nurture that work. The results of this visionary support can be seen on our stage this season with the world premieres of *Old Glory* and our first musical *A Minister's Wife*," said Artistic Director Michael Halberstam. "Given that Writers' Theatre is presenting two world premieres this season—both as a result of the *Literary Development Initiative* David and I started—it seemed only natural that I should sponsor this exciting season," said Mary when asked what prompted her generous gift. "I am amazed by the productions at Writers' Theatre and I am happy to play a role in its success," added Mary.

**"I AM AMAZED BY  
THE PRODUCTIONS AT  
WRITERS' THEATRE AND  
I AM HAPPY TO PLAY A  
ROLE IN ITS SUCCESS."**

**- MARY WINTON GREEN  
2008/09 SEASON SPONSOR**

## NIXON'S NIXON PRODUCTION SPONSORS: PHILIP & JANICE BECK



Long-time supporters of Writers' Theatre, Philip and Janice Beck were the generous sponsors of this season's lauded revival of *Nixon's Nixon* starring William Brown and Larry Yando. "Their generous support made doing a fifth show this season possible. As one of our newest board members, Janice is a wonderful advocate for the theatre and we are very grateful to both Janice and Philip for their sponsorship of *Nixon's Nixon*,"

said Executive Director Kate Lipuma. "Michael felt that this play was as relevant today as it was when it was originally staged at Writers' Theatre in 2000. Judging from the play's achievements, he was right," she added. *Nixon's Nixon* was one of the most successful plays ever produced at Writers' Theatre. It was well-received by audiences and critics alike and had the highest ticket pre-sale in the theatre's history. Ticket sales exceeded 80% of goal before going on sale to the general public. The production was extended three times and performances were virtually sold out. "Phil and I were very proud to support *Nixon's Nixon*. We loved the production and marveled at Bill and Larry's performances. We both feel very fortunate to have Writers' Theatre in our community and this was one way we could show our commitment to the Theatre and the great work it does," said Janice.

# SUPPORT WRITERS' THEATRE!

Contributions from individuals like you enable Writers' Theatre to maintain the high quality, intimate productions for which we are renowned. The cost of your ticket covers less than half of what it takes to produce the world class theatre you see on our stages. We hope our work inspires you to make a gift today! Your support truly makes this work possible.

With an annual gift of \$1,000 or more, you will be welcomed into the exclusive **Director's Society**. Members are offered an inside look at the creative process, including invitations to private behind-the-scenes events and unprecedented access to the art and artists at Writers' Theatre.

To learn more, or to make a donation contact Sarah Leahy at 847-242-6012 or email: [sleahy@writerstheatre.org](mailto:sleahy@writerstheatre.org). Visit us on the web at [writerstheatre.org/donations](http://writerstheatre.org/donations).

**"IT IS AN ONGOING JOURNEY AND THE PEOPLE INVOLVED, INCLUDING NOT JUST THE ARTISTS, BUT ALSO THE STAFF, THE BOARD, THE SUPPORTERS, AND THE AUDIENCE—I FEEL WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER."**

**-WILLIAM BROWN, ACTOR & DIRECTOR**

## COMINGS AND GOINGS

**SARAH LEAHY**, the new Development Assistant, comes to Writers' Theatre with experience at Redmoon Theater, the Fine and Performing Arts Center at Moraine Valley Community College and Trap Door Theatre. She is a recent graduate of the Arts, Entertainment and Media Management program at Columbia College Chicago.

**MEGAN SIMONSON**, a Glencoe native, joins Writers' Theatre as the new Finance Assistant. Megan is a 2006 graduate of Boston College and has most recently been working with Collaboraction Theatre.

## DINNER & THEATRE

Enjoy dinner before the show at Di Pescara, one of the North Shore's top restaurants, named among the city's best new restaurants by Chicago magazine. This Lettuce Entertain You® restaurant, conveniently located at Northbrook Court (just five minutes from the theatre), is offering a three-course pre-theatre meal for \$29.95\*, featuring signature dishes such as artichoke ala marco, hot & crunchy tilapia and homemade lemon meringue pie. Contact Di Pescara to make your reservation and mention Writers' Theatre to receive your special offer.

**DI PESCARA™**  
FRESH SEAFOOD, HOMEMADE ITALIAN & STEAKS

2124 Northbrook Court  
Northbrook, IL 60062  
847-498-4321  
www.leye.com

# NEXT UP: OLD GLORY

BY BRETT NEVEU DIRECTED BY WILLIAM BROWN

**February 3 – March 29, 2009**

*Performed at 325 Tudor Court*

### WORLD PREMIERE

Shrouded in mystery, the circumstances surrounding six ordinary people grappling with the emotional casualties of war unfold in the latest work from Brett Neveu, one of Chicago's hottest young playwrights. Fluidly moving through space and time, William Brown, director of last season's triumphant *As You Like It*, explores with fierce wit and gritty honesty what happens when you play by the rules — and lose.

Sponsored by Urban Innovations

# THE MAIDS PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		<b>18</b> 7:30	<b>19</b> 7:30	<b>20</b> 8:00	<b>21</b> 8:00	<b>22</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>23</b> 2:00/6:00	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 7:30	<b>26</b> 7:30	<b>27</b> No Show	<b>28</b> 8:00	<b>29</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>30</b> 2:00/6:00						

## DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 7:30	<b>3</b> 7:30	<b>4</b> 7:30	<b>5</b> Private Event	<b>6</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>7</b> 2:00/6:00*	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 7:30	<b>10</b> 2:00/7:30	<b>11</b> 8:00	<b>12</b> 8:00	<b>13</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>14</b> 2:00	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 7:30**	<b>17</b> 7:30	<b>18</b> 8:00	<b>19</b> 8:00	<b>20</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>21</b> 2:00/6:00	<b>22</b> 7:30	<b>23</b> 7:30**	<b>24</b> No Show	<b>25</b> No Show	<b>26</b> 8:00	<b>27</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>28</b> 2:00/6:00	<b>29</b> 7:30	<b>30</b> 7:30	<b>31</b> No Show			

## JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				<b>1</b> No Show	<b>2</b> 8:00	<b>3</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>4</b> 2:00/6:00*	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 7:30	<b>7</b> 2:00/7:30**	<b>8</b> 8:00	<b>9</b> 8:00	<b>10</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>11</b> 2:00	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 7:30	<b>14</b> 7:30	<b>15</b> 8:00	<b>16</b> 8:00	<b>17</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>18</b> 2:00/6:00*	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 7:30	<b>21</b> 7:30	<b>22</b> 8:00	<b>23</b> 8:00	<b>24</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>25</b> 2:00/6:00*	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 7:30	<b>28</b> 7:30**	<b>29</b> 8:00	<b>30</b> 8:00	<b>31</b> 4:00/8:00

## FEBRUARY

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

## MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>1</b> 2:00/6:00	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 7:30	<b>4</b> 7:30	<b>5</b> 8:00	<b>6</b> 8:00	<b>7</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>8</b> 2:00/6:00	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> No Show	<b>11</b> 2:00/7:30	<b>12</b> 8:00	<b>13</b> 8:00	<b>14</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>15</b> 2:00/6:00	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> No Show	<b>18</b> 2:00/7:30	<b>19</b> 8:00	<b>20</b> 8:00	<b>21</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>22</b> 2:00/6:00	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 7:30**	<b>25</b> 7:30**	<b>26</b> 8:00	<b>27</b> 8:00	<b>28</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>29</b> 2:00/6:00	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 7:30**				

## APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			<b>1</b> 2:00/7:30**	<b>2</b> 8:00	<b>3</b> 8:00	<b>4</b> 4:00/8:00
<b>5</b> 2:00						

\* Pre-Show Lectures \*\* Post-Show Discussions





**Box Office & Administration**

376 Park Avenue  
Glencoe, Illinois 60022

*Artistic Director*

Michael Halberstam

*Executive Director*

Kathryn M. Lipuma

With only 50 seats in our intimate Books on Vernon  
venue, productions at Writers' Theatre sell out quickly!

**847-242-6000**  
**WRITERSTHEATRE.ORG**

**GROUP TIX**

Discounts available for groups of  
10 or more. Call 877-447-7849.

**DI PESCARA**

FRESH SEAFOOD, HONORABLE ITALIAN & STEAKS

Preshow dining available, call the Box Office for  
more information! 847-242-6000

**Mary Winton Green**

**2008/09 Season Sponsor**

This program is partially supported by a grant from the *Illinois Arts Council*, a state agency.



Writers' Theatre has gone green! Printed with soy ink on 10% PCW paper.