

NETC News

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Bronislaw J. Sammler to be Honored as NETC's Educator of the Year!



T. Charles Erickson

Ben Sammler

NETC is honored to announce that the 2006 Leonides A. Nickole Theatre Educator of the Year Award will be presented to Bronislaw J. Sammler, Chair of the Department of Technical Design and Production at Yale School of Drama. Sammler's professional credits include working as production supervisor on over 150 productions at

Yale Repertory Theatre, as well as technical director on over 50 productions. Other credits include lighting designer and technical director at the Playhouse Theatre (NY), and Ford's Theatre (Washington, D.C.). His publications include: co-editor, *The Technical Brief Collection—Ten Years of Solutions to Recurring Problems in Technical Theatre*, co-author, *Structural Design for the Stage*, author, *Stressed Skin Platform Units*, author, *A Platform System* and editor, *Technical Briefs* published by the Yale School of Drama from 1981 to present. Sammler is the founder and co-chair of the National Theatre Technology Exhibit, an ongoing biennial event of USITT, and was also vice-commissioner (1987–1988) and co-commissioner (1989–1991) of the Technical Directing Commission on the USITT Board of Directors.

NETC established The Educator of the Year Award to recognize excellence in theatre education. In a letter of nomination for Ben Sammler, one of his students writes:

"Ben's love of theatre and his energy for the program (Design and Production at Yale) are unequivocal... indeed Ben is the very momentum of the school. Ben is a manager, leader, engineer, and creator, but above all other things, he is a teacher. Ben's ability to break down ideas and clearly explain

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3...2...1...Countdown to the 55th Annual NETC Convention in New Haven

by *Tim Fitzgerald*,
2006 NETC Convention Chairperson

Check your mailboxes...check our website...and check into the 55th Annual NETC Convention being held at the Yale Omni New Haven Hotel from November 17 through 19. Our theme this year, *The Future Is Now*, is truly evident in this year's programming, thanks to many gracious people giving their time to make the future a reality. This will feature the best and the brightest of theatre from not only New England but New York City and beyond. Plans are fully underway and we have some collected some amazing workshops, speakers and events including:

- **The Ever-Popular 5th Annual NETC Theatre Olympiad**
- **Kicking Back with Stephen Schwartz**, featuring Stephen Schwartz, composer/lyricist (*Wicked*, *Pippin*, *Children Of Eden*), interviewed by TJ Fitzgerald, *BroadwayWorld.com*
- **Special Master Class with Joanna Gleason**, Tony Award winning actress (*Into The Woods*), 2006 NETC Special Award Winner
- **The Audition: Elements within the Actors Control** presented by Gregory Jbara, (*Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*), 2006 NETC Special Award winner
- **Broadway: The Golden Age**, presented by Rick McKay, writer/director *Broadway: The Golden Age*, 2006 NETC Special Award winner
- **Finding Nemo: From Animation to Live Theatre**, presented by Paulo Seixas, assistant designer and project manager for *Finding Nemo* at Walt Disney World.
- **Sweet Disaster: A Performance Text Reading**

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new england
NETC
theatre conference



The Artist as Citizen

Stage Source's Boston Theatre Conference 2006

On Saturday, August 5, 2006, over one hundred actors, directors, designers, playwrights, production and administrative personnel throughout the New England theatre community convened at Spingold Theatre, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA to explore the issue of social responsibility on Boston-area stages. Included were local and national artists who create innovative work, challenging and energized discussions, thoughtful breakout sessions, and opportunities to network.

Following performed excerpts from Wes Savick's *Shouting Theatre in a Crowded Fire* and Whistler in the Dark's *The Possibilities* by Howard Barker, the first panel of the day, "On Our Stages," explored the backgrounds of these production choices. Panelists included Savick, Whistler In the Dark co-artistic director Meg Taintor, and WBUR commentator Bill Marx.

The next panel, "Citizens Creating Art," featured New York-based playwright Catherine Filloux, (*Lemkin's House*, 2006 PeaceWriting Award; *The Beauty Inside*), who writes on themes of genocide; Laura Kepley and D. Salem Smith, co-creators of Trinity Rep's *Boots on the Ground*, a community-based documentary about the effects of the Iraq war; and Emerson College's Melia Bensussen and Robbie McCauley, collaborators for Emerson Stage and Roxbury Community College on *Alice*.

Informal, round-table picnic lunches were followed by a panel on implicit and explicit social themes on stage. Contributors included New Repertory Theatre's Rick Lombardo, Actors' Shakespeare Project's Ben Evett, playwright Mary McCullough, Zeitgeist Stage's David Miller and Underground Railway Theater's Debra Wise.

Participants then broke into discussion circles to explore specific themes of the day, with a plenary recap session and remarks from Jeff Poulos, executive director of Stage Source concluding the formal program.

Referring to a recent issue of *American Theatre* magazine, Poulos cited the polarization and feeling of isolation in our country, the financial necessity of producing hits, escalating costs matched with dwindling philanthropy as challenges to the theatre. However, he also noted that in times of crisis (e.g. war, terrorism, threats to our national security, high crime), people want to be part of something more, speaking out, voicing their opinion. Artists take risks, put forward bold ideas. Artistic focus can sharpen and become more directed when faced with a polarization. But, he concluded, "We are needed now more than ever. In an ever-polarizing red versus blue nation...where you might never see or speak to your neighbor, where there are now millions of sources of information...our theatres are essential."

Participants unwound at a reception following the programmed activities. Sponsors for Stage Source's Boston Theatre Conference the event included Bank of America, Theater Mania, and Kennison Staffing.

A complete report of the event can be found at the Stage Source website: www.stagesource.org, from which this article was taken, with permission.

We'd like to hear from you!

The deadline for the next issue of NETC NEWS is November 15!

Send all items to ashea@worchester.edu (Word text, jpeg photos)

There may be as much as a six-week turnaround between deadline and actual publication. Please prepare time-sensitive material accordingly.



Bronislaw J. Sammler Honored as NETC's Educator of the Year

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concepts is rarely matched. He is demanding, challenging, and strict, while at the same time, understanding, fair and patient."

NETC looks forward to congratulating Ben Sammler, Educator of the Year, at the 55th Annual Convention in New Haven, November 17-19.



Lisa Barnett

Lisa Barnett

May 2, 2006

Although many readers may not immediately recognize the name of Lisa Barnett, long-time NETC convention attendees will immediately recognize and miss her friendly face, warm smile, and her charming, caring demeanor, which graced the Heinemann publishing company's (Portsmouth, NH) table in the vendors' room at many of our conventions, as well as those of the ATHE and AATE. Considered an "editor extraordinaire" by her colleagues, Lisa was responsible for Heinemann's award-winning drama books line. She was passionate about helping professionals in the business and art of theatre pass along their knowledge and expertise—editing plays, collections of monologues and numerous practical guides to the professional world of theatre. Her prolific record includes books on acting for the camera, acting for the stage, acting as a profession, as well as books on improvisation, playwriting, animation, musical theatre, directing, voice for the actor and much, much more. Through her convention work, she "discovered" and encouraged many writers, the NETC conventions being no exception. In 1999, she approached me (and kept after me until completion) to write a book on performing Restoration comedy; more recently she worked with another long-time NETC member and former board member, Wendy Lement, editing her book, *And Justice For Some*.

Lisa's success with the Heinemann line is thoroughly documented and celebrated by the many awards she

received. Her authors have won the American Alliance for Theatre and Education's Distinguished Book Award ten times. Due to her impressive record, in 2001 Heinemann received a Lin Wright Special Recognition Award, which honors "persons who have established special programs, developed experimental works, made distinctive educational contributions or provided meritorious service thus furthering theatre and drama for young people."

A Dorchester, MA, native, Lisa, after attending Girls' Latin School, graduated from the University of Massachusetts at Boston with a bachelor's degree in English. She then went to work for Baker's Plays prior to going to Heinemann. What may be surprising to many, even to her writers, is that Lisa was also a widely-acclaimed writer of fiction. With her long-time partner, Melissa Scott, she penned three fantasy novels, one receiving a Lambda Literary Award in 2002. In the last year of her life, Lisa's own writing was channeled into her blog, in which she documented her struggle with breast cancer and a metastatic brain tumor in a forthright, courageous, positive, intelligent, even humorous, manner.

Lisa passed peacefully in her sleep early this past May, leaving the wonderful gift and legacy of her numerous theatre books to theatre practitioners and educators in the field presently and for generations to come. Her passing represents not only a keen personal loss to all those who worked with, loved and admired her, but also a major loss to the world of drama books publication.

Suzanne Ramczyk, Ph.D.
NETC Board Member-at-Large



Countdown to the 2006 Convention

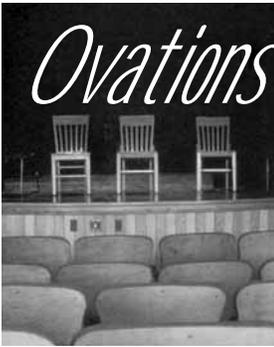
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- **ShowTix/Behind the Scenes Broadway Present The Fight Guys—Stage Combat**
- **Wired and Wireless Microphones Techniques for Theatre** presented by Kevin Spiegel of Shure, Inc.
- **Talent, Persistence and Luck: The Reality of a Career in the Performing Arts** presented by Sherry Eaker, editor-at-large of *Backstage*
- **Theatre Trade Show**, featuring some of today's theatre exhibitors showcasing their products to help enhance your theatre experience.
- **College Fair**, a chance to talk to college representatives about your future theatre education

- **Performance at the famous Yale Repertory Theatre!**

And this is just a sampling of what to expect at this year's extravaganza. There is the Awards Banquet on Saturday night, where we will be sharing some great food and honoring some very special people. It's a great opportunity to network with other theatre folk from all aspects of the genre. I could go on and on because there is so much more. You need to be there so you can be there to be a part of the excitement.

The buzz is already generating phone calls and e-mails from people in New England and beyond, so don't miss your chance to join us. Check out our website at www.netconline.org or e-mail me at disneytim@msn.com and I will get you the information as it becomes available. Be well and be at the convention in November. See you there!



Holes Follows Successful *42nd Street* at Acton Boxborough High School

On May 15, Acton-Boxborough Regional High School's production of *42nd Street* was honored five times at North Shore Music Theatre's new Spotlight Awards competition. Directed by Linda Potter, the show received the highest honors as Best Musical, Best Director, Best Ensemble, Best Choreography, and Best Costumes. The judges reviewed 26 high school musicals in the Greater Boston area.

"North Shore Music Theatre is honored to recognize the immense skill and hard work of these tremendously talented high school students," said Jon Kimbell, NSMT Artistic Director and Executive Producer. "We commend them and their schools for their dedication to the arts."

In addition to her work as a director, Linda Potter is the advisor to Proscenium Circus, the drama club at ABRHS and head of the drama department at the high school.

Holes, based on the award-winning story by Louis Sachar, will be presented by Acton-Boxborough

Regional High School on November 3–11. Directed by Linda Potter, the play weaves stories from three different time periods around Stanley Yelnats IV, a boy who has landed at Camp Green Lake, a juvenile corrections facility, after being accused of stealing a pair of expensive sneakers. Family folklore, gypsy curses, and stolen loot hidden by Kissin' Kate Barlow, an outlaw from the Wild West, come together when two boys meet by chance and take fate into their own hands. Adapted by the author, the play follows the book and the movie very closely to tell this exciting story that takes place during three different time periods in history.

Evening shows are at 7:30 p.m. on November 3, 4, 11. Matinees are at 3:00 on November 5 and 11. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students. They can be purchased starting in late September via credit card at MKTix.com. Seating is not reserved and doors open one-half hour before the show. Special group rates that include a talk-back with the cast are available for certain shows. For more information, contact Susan Williams at susanpwilliams@comcast.net or 978-263-3143, or at the website: www.ABDrama.org.

North Shore Music Theatre Receives \$70,000 Donation to Kick Off State Funding Match

As part of a recently passed state-wide economic stimulus package, North Shore Music Theatre of Beverly, MA, was allocated \$500,000 to help recover from a devastating 2005 fire. Under the conditions of the funding, NSMT is required to match the \$500,000 grant dollar for dollar from individual, corporate and foundation donations. In an extraordinary gesture of support for the area's largest non-profit theater, John Kavanagh, owner of William A. Berry and Son in Danvers, MA, presented NSMT with a private donation of \$70,000 to jump start the match campaign.

"North Shore Music Theatre is a tremendous asset to our community, both from an artistic perspective and from an economic standpoint," said John Kavanagh. "The theater has a profound impact on the health of the local business community. I am proud to support North Shore Music Theatre and I challenge the community to join me in helping the theater meet their state matching goal which will allow them to continue to provide outstanding entertainment and educational programs for our entire region."

The matching grant will help NSMT continue to provide crucial arts and education programs to the 350,000 patrons and 90,000 students the theatre reaches each year. Matching donations can be sent to North Shore Music Theatre, The Development Department, P.O. Box 62, Beverly, MA 01915.

Operating since 1955, North Shore Music Theatre's mission is to increase the awareness, significance and celebration of musical theater and the performing arts through superb entertainment and education programs. Their fall season features two classics of the modern musical theatre.

Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* will run at NSMT through September 10, Andrew Lloyd Webber's classic rock opera that changed the face of musical theatre forever, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, will play Sept. 19 through Oct. 8. Schedules for both shows are Tuesdays through Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and

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EMACT DASH Awards Nominations Announced

Your Theatre, Inc. (New Bedford, MA) and members of its staff have been nominated by EMACT (Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatres) for the following DASH (Distinguished Achievement and Special Honors) awards. EMACT is committed to encouraging and promoting Community Theater in Eastern Massachusetts through educational programming, supportive services, and the recognition of excellence. There were a total of 75 nominations in 25 categories for non-musical plays. Your Theatre, Inc. had the second largest number of nominations at 16. The top four were: Encore—17; Your Theatre, Inc.—16; Burlington Players—14; Marblehead Little Theatre—9. The balance of 8 groups receive 7 or fewer nominations each. The reviewers of the plays were not from the New Bedford area and had no connections with Your Theatre, Inc. or any of its members. Winners will be announced at the Annual Awards Gala to be held September 28, 2006 in Natick, MA.

The Importance of Being Ernest earned recognition in many areas, including Production—Straight Play. And Ensemble/Full Cast. Individual artists cited were Actor, Eric Paradis (New Bedford); costumer Ann Marie Couto (Acushnet); Director—Straight Play, Edward J. Maguire (Fairhaven); Lighting Design—Straight Play, Lawrence R. Houbre, Jr (New Bedford); Make-Up and Hair Design—Straight Play, Suzanne Bergeron (Fairhaven) (Hair); Set Design—Straight Play, Clifford Wood (Assonet); Supporting Actress—Straight Play, Danielle Gelleherte (New Bedford).

North Shore Music Theatre Receives \$70,000 Donation

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Saturdays at 8 p.m., with matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 1:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets may be ordered at : www.nsmt.org, 978-232-7200, or in person at 62 Dunham Rd. Beverly, MA 01915

Related free events are: on Sept. 26, *Meet the Theatre*, post show audience discussion with the artists; on Oct. 1: *Spotlight on History*, a free pre-show discussion focusing on historical issues related to the performance; on Oct. 5, *Out at the North Shore*, an evening for the Gay and Lesbian Community with a post show reception; and on Oct. 7, *Meet the Theatre* after the 2 p.m. performance, post-show audience discussion with the artists.

The Cemetery Club was singled out for costumes (Eddie Camara, of Acushnet). *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* distinguished itself in Sound Design—Straight Play (William C. Smith of Dartmouth) and Supporting Actor—Straight Play (Eric Paradis). Robert Duquette of Somerset was also cited for his contribution to *Beauty Queen*.

William C. Smith's sound design for *Proof* was also recognized, and also from that production Actress—Straight Play, Heidi McNeil of Rochester, and the entire cast for its ensemble work.

EMACT members are composed of community theatre artists from Eastern Mass as far west as Worcester.

Riding on that success, Your Theatre announces the cast of its upcoming production of Lanford Wilson's Obie Award-winning play, *Hot L Baltimore*. The thirteen-member cast will include: Tim Goff of Fall River, Sandra Lee of Wareham, Clifford Wood of Assonet, Donna T. Dever, Dawn A Moquin of Fairhaven and Gil Cardona-Erazo, Jeanne M Costa, Caroline Cuccia, Danielle Gelehrter, Eric Paradis, Valerie J. Reynolds, Evan B. Rousseau and Harvey B. Ussach of New Bedford. Robin Richard of New Bedford will direct, with Judy Lemay of New Bedford as stage manager. The production will run Wednesdays through Saturdays Sept. 13–16 and 20–23 with a matinee on Sunday, September 17.

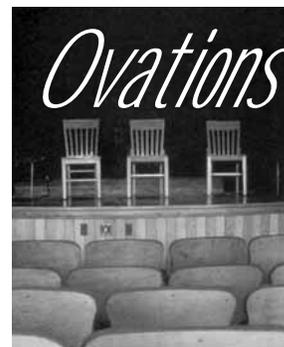
Hot L Baltimore takes place in the lobby of a rundown hotel so seedy that it has lost the "E" in the marquee. The play follows the story of a diverse group of eccentrics, hookers, and clerks as they search for a means of survival and meaning under the shadow of the wrecking ball. The witty and moving dialogue of this poignant adult comedy is intended for mature audiences.

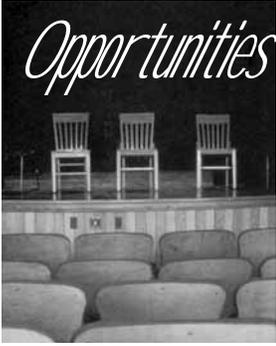
Ticket and other information about the production is available by calling YTI at 508-993-0772. The theatre is located at 136 Rivet St. (at County St.), New Bedford, in the auditorium of St. Martin's Episcopal Church.

136 Rivet St., New Bedford MA 02744-1814
Telephone: 508-993-0772
Fax: 508-993-1396

For information contact:

Dawn A. Moquin, Publicity Manager
E-mail: ytinews@comcast.net





Opportunities and Openings

With the start of a new theatre season the region is hopping with opportunities for actors, writers, choreographers and crews. Here's a sample of what's out there.

Bedford Youth Performing Company Seeks Choreographer

Bedford Youth Performing Company (Bedford, NH), a growing performing arts school, seeks dance instructors with a musical theatre focus with musical theatre choreographic experience, primarily tap and jazz. This position is part-time and may also include the opportunity to assistant direct productions for the right candidate.

Interested candidates, please contact (or send resume) to orvanic@comcast.net. The website is www.bypc.org.

Nashua YMCA Needs A&H Teachers

The YMCA of Greater Nashua, NH, seeks creative individuals to run various Art and Humanities classes starting this September.

Classes may include various theatre courses, as well as studio arts and creative writing.

Merrimack has a brand new room for these activities in Merrimack, and Nashua has a large, quiet space. Instruction can be paid or volunteered. YMCA is looking for individuals to teach every week or to run workshops. Please contact Lynne Boyer, at lboyer@nmymca.org, or 603-881-7778 or 603-882-2011.

Hull Performing Arts Playwriting Contest

Aspiring high school playwrights from the towns of Hull, Hingham, Cohasset, Scituate, and Norwell are invited to submit scripts for Hull Performing Arts' first playwriting contest.

Rules:

- all plays submitted must be the original work by a single author;
- plays must be appropriate for all audiences;
- all plays must be submitted only to this contest;
- playwrights maintain all literary rights to their own material;
- screenplays, musicals and adaptations are not eligible;

- scripts should be typed and stapled, and pages must be numbered;
- cover page is necessary with: title of play, playwright's name, home address (with apartment # and zip code), phone number, e-mail, school, and grade;
- submit two copies of your play. Please keep the original as scripts will not be returned.

HPA's Board of Directors and Artistic Director will judge the entries. Winners will be notified by letter in April 2007.

The winner will receive:

- a \$100 cash prize; and
- the winning play will be presented on the amphitheater at Fort Revere the last weekend in July and the first weekend in August 2007.
- the playwright may co-direct his or her own play. Playwright directors will be assisted by committee members; and
- a video tape or DVD or the production of the winning play(s).

Guidelines:

- No special effects, or elaborate lighting. Keep in mind that lighting at Fort Revere is either on or off (i.e. no fades, flashes, colors, etc.) and that at least one performance may be during daylight hours.
- Play must have a single set. Sets should be simple and easy to install within 15 minutes. Storage is limited at Fort Revere, so all sets, props, costumes, and lighting has to fit into 1 or 2 loads of a pickup truck.
- Production time should be at least 45 minutes, but should not exceed 1 hour and 45 minutes (including a 15 minute intermission).
- There should be no more than three scenes.
- Author must be currently enrolled in High School, specifically grades 9, 10, 11, or 12;
- All set, prop and costume items should be easy to obtain.
- Play needs to use at least two actors, but no more than eight. You may allow one actor to play additional characters if you wish.

Submit entries to: P.O. Box 236, Hull, MA 02045. 781-925-2406.

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Opportunities and Openings continued from previous page

Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre First Annual Nor'Eastern Playwriting Contest

The Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre in its exciting second season is sponsoring the first Northeastern Playwriting Contest. World premieres of the three winning one-act plays will be presented at beautiful Paramount Theatre in downtown Rutland, Vermont on May 11 and 12. With this contest Vermont Actors' Repertory plan to begin a tradition featuring the work of outstanding regional playwrights. Each script will go through a rigorous screening process of three readers. The scripts with the highest scores will be submitted to the final reader who will select the three scripts to be produced.

Guidelines:

This contest is open only to residents of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey & Pennsylvania. Submissions must be original, unpublished, unproduced one-act plays. Plays that have had staged readings may be submitted, plays that have received productions are not. Legal clearance of materials not in the public domain is the full responsibility of the playwright.

All submissions are judged blind. We require four cover pages: one with title, your name, address, e-mail & phone number; the other three with title only. There should be no identifying information on the script itself except the title.

If you would like your script returned, include an S.A.S.E. with submission. If no S.A.S.E. is included, your script will be recycled.

Plays must be typed/word-processed, numbered, & securely bound in a soft cover, in standard professional play format. Write to Samuel French Inc. for their format guidelines, or copy from www.vcu.edu/artweb/playwriting/format.html on the internet.

All submissions will be handled with care. However, Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre assumes no responsibility for lost or damaged scripts.

Submission fee: \$20 per play. Mail four copies of your script & your fee to: Nor'Eastern Playwriting Contest, Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre, PO Box 580, Rutland, Vermont 05702-0580.

Deadline for submission: November 15, 2006, notification of winners will be February 15, 2007 and the staged readings will be in May 11 & 12, 2007.

Entry information can be requested by writing to:
The Nor'Eastern Playwriting Contest
Vermont Actors' Repertory theatre
PO Box 580
Rutland, Vermont 05702
E-mail: actorsrepvt@aol.com

Christmas Carol Auditions by New Rep, Watertown Children's Theatre and Arsenal Center

New Rep, WCT, and the Arsenal Center to once again bring audiences a lavish staging of this beloved holiday story. The production offers a feast for the senses, from a pre-show caroling concert to luxurious period costumes, from singing and dancing to ghosts that fly through the air and evaporate into the London fog! For audience members of all ages, *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol* is the perfect holiday celebration and a thrilling, professional opportunity for young actors!

Please call WCT at 617-926-2787 for additional information.

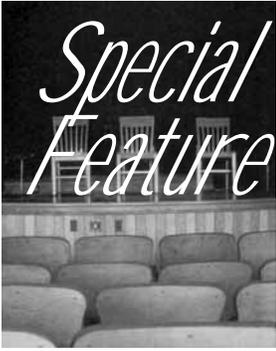
Winchester Players Seek Crews

The Winchester (MA) Players are seeking volunteers for various crews on their fall production of the classic comedy *Arsenic and Old Lace*, by Joseph Kesselring. Eager people are needed to help with aspects including lights, sound, set décor, running crews, refreshments, ushering, set construction, and painting. Experience is not required, but enthusiasm is a must. For more information, please go to www.WinchesterPlayers.org or call 781-646-8538.

The classic comedy about a New York Drama critic Mortimer Brewster, whose plans to marry the girl next door become complicated by his discovery that his elderly aunts are poisoning lonely gentlemen. With his Jonathan running from the law and stashing dead bodies in the house, Mortimer must try to preserve his family and his own sanity as the police seem poised to uncover the skeletons.



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"The Forum" Twelfth Edition:

by *Suzanne M. Ramczyk, Ph.D.*

Professor of Theatre Arts, Bridgewater State College and NETC Executive Secretary

A topic of keen concern to organizations and playwrights alike is the necessity of charging playwrights to enter playwriting competitions. As a very active member of this organization for quite a number of years now, I have heard this issue tossed around several times. It's easy for those of us steering any organization to offer compelling reasons as to why we must charge struggling playwrights to enter our various competitions, justifying these charges through comparison with fees charged actors to audition at our and other similar mass auditions, for example. But playwright Jon Potter offers

a different "take" on the affair, one from the other side of the table. Hopefully, this brief piece will spawn further discussion at the NETC and other organizations alike. Further, we would love to hear other takes on this issue from you, the readers. Again, to get your voice heard, please respond to sramczyk@bridgew.edu in 250 words or less. And if you have any other concern, gripe, rant, or rave about any aspect of theatre and would like to offer your own "Forum" piece, please also contact me at the above address.

—Suzanne Ramczyk, Editor, "The Forum"

*In this edition of
the Forum*

"Pay to Play"

by *Jon Potter, playwright*

BOB

Frieda! A good idea! Let's run a play contest. We'll select the best few that come in, and produce them—all new work, and experimental. And we'll offer a prize for the best one—say fifty dollars. And we'll finance the prize, and the production, by requiring a submission fee from all the playwrights who submit plays. But! Get this, Frieda...we won't tell these morons up front that we're going to charge them. By the time they find out, they'll be so excited, they'll send it in anyway. There are hundreds of playwrights out there desperate to get their work produced. This will be easy—a few notices in the right places on the internet. This could even kick-start our finances for the whole season!

FRIEDA

But Bob, won't we have to read all those plays? What if they're awful?

BOB

Frieda, we'll just skim. Skim and dump. Make up a "Thanks but no thanks" reply for the ones we don't want or don't have time to read. Sound good?

FRIEDA

Hey? What can we lose?

Sound familiar? To playwrights it does. Despite the "we read everything at least once, sometimes two and three times," "it's for postage and handling," and the dubious "readers are expensive," and "it's a contest," and "support

a good cause—us," there's a scent of decaying fish, here. There are very few instances in which skilled and experienced techies, front-office folks, directors, actors, are asked to put up some cash for a chance at a job in theatre. The exceptions, such as the NETC registration fee for annual auditions, are generally openings for a host of jobs, not just a single one. They are also most often, though not always, openings for the young, the ambitious and the least experienced. Exceptions such as these, including the grinding scut-work offered by "internships" can be charitably explained as "educational."

You might argue that while famous playwrights aren't charged (astonishingly, they're actually paid!), lesser known or those early in their careers should have to pay. There might need to be extensive rewriting, and extra rehearsal time due to that lack of experience, for instance. This is probably true in the case of Broadway musicals, whose pre-show rewrites have become legendary. I'm not talking about those. The bulk of the "let's charge a fee" contests are for 15-minute plays, or one-acts. A theatre director or a dramaturge who cannot read and visualize a production of a 15-minute play needs to find a new job.

Don't "see" it? Don't like it? Don't do it.

There are theatres interested in new plays which do not charge fees to read them just as they do not charge

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Opportunities and Openings

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Under the direction of John Pease, the comedy will be performed in Metcalf Hall of the Winchester Unitarian Church. on Saturday, Oct. 28, Friday and Saturday Nov. 3, 4, 10 and 11 at 8 p.m. and Sunday Oct. 29 and Nov. 5 at 4 p.m. Admission is \$15 for adults and \$12 for students and seniors.

New USITT Lighting Award Joins Young Designer & Technician Lineup

A new lighting design award for undergraduate students has been added to the array of USITT Awards for Young Designers & Technicians in the Performing Arts. The award is made possible with support from Minnesota-based Stage Technology, and will be presented for the first time in 2007.

In creating the award Niles Sayre, President of Stage Technology, said "Other USITT awards focus on graduate students. There is so much talent on both the undergraduate and graduate levels, Stage Technology wishes to reward talent coming from an undergraduate program. An award limited to undergraduate students may recognize a student from one of the active smaller college theatre programs."

Undergraduate students must be nominated for the award by a USITT member. Applications, which will be available soon on the USITT website, must include letters of recommendation, the candidate's working philosophy, and examples of work including those showing compositional skill and a light plot, among other requirements. The award includes a cash prize, complimentary registration for the USITT

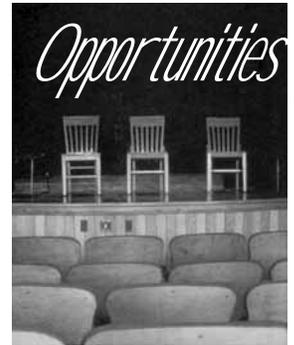
Annual Conference & Stage Expo to be held in Phoenix, Arizona March 14 to 17, 2007, and an opportunity to meet with Stage Technology representatives.

Lisa Westkaemper, USITT's Acting Vice-President for Promotion & Development, praised Mr. Sayre and Stage Technology for seeing and moving to fill a gap in the Awards for Young Designers & Technicians in the Performing Arts. "By creating this award, Stage Technology recognizes the innovative and creative work being done in undergraduate programs across the nation. Our panel of adjudicators look forward to reviewing the submissions for this award," she said.

Stage Technology, based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, provides lighting, sound, drapery, track, and scenic materials plus a whole range of supplies and expendables through its catalog and web site. The company is a strong supporter of the industry, Ms. Westkaemper noted.

The new Stage Technology award joins an impressive lineup of awards for those starting their careers offered through USITT, including nine current Awards for Young Designers & Technicians and the USITT Rising Star Award established by LDI Show 2006/Live Design. All of the awards support the mission of USITT, the United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc., to recognize excellence in the performing arts and entertainment industry.

For more information about the awards, or USITT, visit www.usitt.org. Applications, including specific criteria for the new USITT Stage Technology Undergraduate Award in Lighting Design, and all the YD&T awards will be available for download on the website.



The Forum

continued from previous page

fees to look at the portfolios of designers, costumers, and resumes or auditions of actors. If you as a playwright do not have any success sending your work to these theatres, consider creating your own production, or at least a staged reading. Cast your acting friends. There are lots of places you can produce a play outside a traditional venue, and you can often secure these spaces without cost.

If you do your own production, or staged reading, you'll quickly be able to tell if your play is weak; if it's good, word will spread. The theatre community is small enough still so that others notice good work well done.

There will always be those who depend on the kindness of strangers but you really are not *obligated* to pay a fee to them. The fewer checks these fee-assessors get, the better. Maybe they'll reconsider, though I doubt it.



Kids Coop Theatre, Inc.'s 10th Anniversary Season Features *Oliver!* and the Disney Teen Sensation *High School Musical*

Kids Coop Theatre, Inc. (KCT) of Londonderry, NH, announce that Disney's blockbuster sensation, *High School Musical*, will complete the company's 2006–07 season as the company's spring show. *High School Musical* joins KCT's fall production of *Oliver!* in rounding out the group's landmark 10th anniversary season of youth theatre.

High School Musical debuted as a Disney channel original movie in early 2006, gaining instant status as an American pop culture phenomenon. Written for film by Peter Barsocchini and adapted for the stage by David Simpatico, the upbeat story follows two teens who suddenly discover not only their talent for singing but also their love for one another. Dubbed by some as "the *Fame* of the 00's," the play is filled with songs, music, and choreography from some of the brightest young composers and choreographers in musical theatre.

Founded in 1997, KCT has staged 25 shows and over 85 performances at Derry's Adams Memorial Opera House. "We've worked with hundreds of young actors from throughout Southern New Hampshire," commented Barth, "and almost 20,000 people have attended our shows. This season's *Oliver!* and *High School Musical* are likely to make this our biggest year yet!"

KCT's unique approach to youth theatre has earned the loyalty of actors and parents alike. According to KCT Board Member Ken Neu of Derry, "First of all we emphasize the involvement of the entire family—



Photos by Nora Colliton

Mrs. Peroo (Cassie Krupp of Londonderry), Winthrop (Amanda Stancik of Derry) and Marcellus (Dan Mullins of Derry) lead the cast of Kids Coop Theatre's November 19, 2005 production of *The Music Man* at Derry's Adams Memorial Opera House. Directed by Christine Frydenborg.



Photos by Nora Colliton

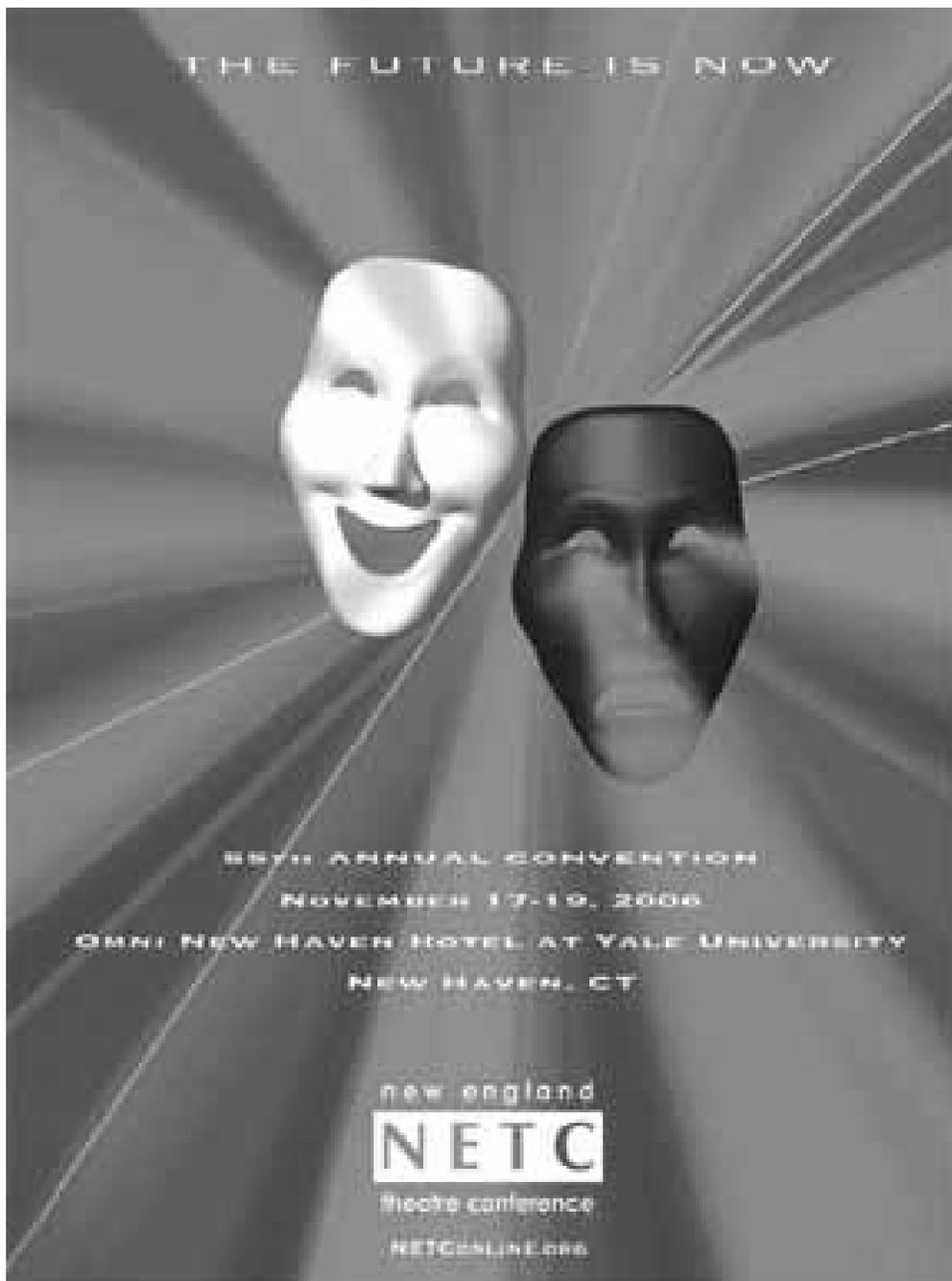
Dr. Seuss' "Sour Kangaroo" (played by Emilie Richards of Londonderry) leads the cast in a musical number from Kids Coop Theatre's production of *Seussical the Musical*, May 13, 2006. Directed by Scott Severance.

between planning, preparations, chaperoning, back-stage work and many other areas, there's always much more to be done than just the acting and singing. Second, by offering a role to every actor who auditions for our shows, we de-emphasize competitiveness and encourage team-work right from the start."

Currently the group is hard at work recruiting new actors and families for their Fall production of the Broadway smash hit *Oliver!* KCT's professional production team for *Oliver!* is led by Jude Bascom of Bow and Blake Leister of Manchester. Ms. Bascom is one of the area's most highly-respected youth theatre Directors, having worked many seasons at both the Palace Theatre and the Majestic Theatre Trust. Mr. Leister is a music educator in the Derry School District and he brings extensive musical theatre experience to the show. Numerous other professionals and volunteers complete the team.

Oliver! is filled with some of Broadway's most memorable music and characters, including the rousing "Food, Glorious Food" (sung by the young Oliver and his fellow workhouse children), the Artful Dodger's famous "Consider Yourself (At Home)," and the hilarious "You've Got to Pick a Pocket or Two" (featuring Fagin and his gang of youthful pick-pockets). *Oliver!*'s journey and his up-and-down (and up again) fortunes on the streets of London in the 1800's are a wonderful story for the Thanksgiving/Christmas season!

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Kids Coop Theatre

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According KCT Board member Sue Honeywell, “*Oliver!* is perfect for both theatre newcomers and those already experienced in acting, singing and theatre movement. Team-building, fun, and quality shows are our goals. As a parent I know that kids who participate in musical theatre benefit from increased self-confidence and improved self-image—and that’s what KCT is all about.”

Both shows in KCT’s 2006-07 season will be staged at the Adams Memorial Opera House in Derry. *Oliver!* will be performed November 17, 18 & 19, and *High School Musical* takes place May 18, 19 & 20, 2007. Please visit the KCT website, www.kids-coop-theatre.org, for information on membership, past shows, and the group’s unique, non-competitive approach to family theatre.



Devanaughn Theatre Announces 2006–07 Season

The Fifth Anniversary Season of Devanaughn Theatre in Boston's (MA) South End explodes with a courageous work by one of Ireland's most provocative and haunting young writers, Marina Carr. *By The Bog Of Cats...* boasts the stunning language of Irish tragicomedy, woven into the harsh reality of a truly complicated family. Underscoring this timely and modern tragedy is the cadence of the ancient Greek myth Medea, evoking a violent heroine who makes no apologies for her reaction against those who betray her, Devanaughn's production features Dani Duggan, a veteran of the Abbey Theatre, in the role of Hester Swane, under the direction of Rose Carlson, co-founder of Devanaughn Theatre. Set in the Irish midlands, the play explores powerful themes surrounding the "traveller community," also known as the "tinkers" or "gypsies" of Ireland.

The production runs Thursday through Friday evenings at 8 p.m., and Sundays afternoons at 3 p.m., October 12–29.

Playwright Marina Carr is a celebrated artist at the Abbey Theatre, the National Theatre of Ireland, as well as a member of the esteemed Irish literary society *Aosdána*. Carr is unflinching in her dissection of what it means to call a place "home" and the clashing rivalries between those who have claimed sovereignty of a region and those who belong to it in their bones.

Devanaughn will continue to champion the female playwright and explore human interconnections through themes of desire, despair, betrayal and courage in their second play of the season, *How I Learned To Drive*, by Paula Vogel. Directed by Dani Duggan, *How I Learned...* will run from February 1 through 18, 2007. *The Boston Globe* hailed Ms. Duggan's production of Patrick Marber's *Closer* last fall as "one of Boston's most enthralling performances this year" and *The Boston Phoenix* calls her work "unflinching... whip-tight direction." Vogel's masterpiece is a wildly funny, surprising and devastating tale of survival as seen through the lens of a troubling relationship between a young girl and an older man, the story of a woman who learns the rules of the road and of life from behind the wheel.

The third installment in the season is *[SIC]*, an explosive new play by Melissa James Gibson, from April 19–May 6, 2007. *The Times* calls it "the most alluring new play to open in New York this season." An exciting contemporary work, a modern-day tale of friendship and relationship, set in a disjointed urban life.

The finale to another glorious season is Devanaughn's 19th production and their trademark, the *Fifth Annual*



Dani Duggan and Charles Hess are featured as doomed lovers in in Devanughn's *By the Bog of Cats...* by Marina Carr.

Dragonfly Festival from May 10–20, 2007. This glorious annual event celebrates playwrights of extraordinary talent and their inventive new works: dark to delirious, hilarious to sublime. Over 60 playwrights, directors, and actors come together to present a professional and diverse festival, unlike anything else on the Boston theatre scene.

Season subscribers can see all three mainstage productions plus both weeks of the *Dragonfly Festival* for one low price. For details and subscription purchases go to: www.devtheatre.com.

Devanaughn Theatre is the resident company in the Piano Factory, 791 (Rear) Tremont Street in Boston's historic South End. Devanaughn's intimate space provides a unique and reasonably priced venue for vibrant theatre performances, rehearsals, and workshops in the heart of downtown Boston, and is proud to host a dozen guest companies each year, including SouthCity Theatre, Mill 6 Collaborative, Another Country Productions, and AYTB Theatre.

**Deadline for Fall issue of
NETC NEWS is November 15!**

Send all items (Word text—jpeg photos)
to ashea@worchester.edu

Valley Players Celebrates 36th Annual Fair to Kick Off Season of New Plays

The Valley Players of Waitsfield, Vermont will open their theatrical season with *Dearly Beloved*, a new comedy by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope, Jamie Wooten. It is a story of a completely dysfunctional but loveable Texas family in the throes of a series of life-changing events. *Dearly Beloved* will be shown at the Valley Players Theater on Route over three weekends, Fridays–Sundays: Sept. 29 through Oct. 1, Oct. 6 through 9, and Oct. 13 through 15. Curtain is 8 p.m. except Sunday, October 15, when a 2 p.m. matinee is offered. Tickets are \$12. Advance Sales: 802-583-1674 by credit card or purchase tickets at the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce on Rte 100 with cash or check. For more information and directions: www.valleyplayers@madriver.com.

“You only go round once, kiddo, and if you screw it up, you only got yourself to blame.” So says Mimi, an outspoken ninety-year-old nursing home resident in the delightfully optimistic short play, *Mimi and Me*, by award-winning playwright and playwriting professor Kitty Dubin. Along with five other short plays directed specifically at the issue of aging American women, Dubin’s work is part of the unique traveling drama festival called “6 Women @ 60 in 2006.” Previous festivals held in Florida, Kentucky, Colorado, California and New York met with rave reviews.

When Donna Guthrie of California and Colorado and her sister playwright, Nancy Gall-Clayton of Kentucky, invited four other female playwrights, all celebrating their sixtieth birthdays this year, to help create a blockbuster sixtieth-birthday celebration, “6@60 in 2006” was conceived. Each woman submitted a short play that reveals her take on the issues related to women’s aging in America. The series was staged in five other states 2006, their birthday year, along with birthday cake and discussion with the playwrights.

“6@60 in 2006” is an artistic response to the lack of progress in the portrayal of older women on stage and screen. Answering subtle sexism and marketing myopia with candid humor and pointed dialog, the six authors have created remarkably brilliant plays that are sure to draw both laughter and sighs. All are simply staged and, in the hands of gifted local actors, ready to pierce to the bone in spite of the laughs. Donna Guthrie, the creative force behind the project, explained that this is a grassroots production,

purposely done on a small budget. She is particularly excited about working with local directors and actors in small theaters across the nation.

Gall-Clayton, who was a winner of the Streisand Festival of New Jewish Plays and whose work has been seen across the country, created a poignant story of an elderly woman who dotes on a family she has

“6@60 in 2006” is an artistic response to the lack of progress in the portrayal of older women on stage and screen. Answering subtle sexism and marketing myopia with candid humor and pointed dialog, the six authors have created remarkably brilliant plays that are sure to draw both laughter and sighs.

had to scrounge and steal, literally. The play, with a surprising twist at the end, is called *Felicity’s Family Tree*. On the subject of turning 60, Gall-Clayton says, “I’m fortunate to know several women in their 80s who are active and vibrant and productive, and I see no reason why I can’t be just like them when I grow up.”

Judith Estrine of New York has already celebrated the big “6-oh.” She says, I am finding the quintessential ‘me’ and that’s a lot of fun.” Executive Editor at the International Longevity-USA nonprofit research center, Estrine has won countless awards for her dramatic work. For the birthday gala, she created *She/He*, a brilliantly concise, fast-paced dialog between a man and a woman tracing the happy/sad trajectory of a marriage.

Donna Guthrie, author of 23 published children’s books, has seen her drama produced across the country. For the 60th birthday extravaganza, she has produced *The Missing Zygote*, a fun glance back through the past 60 years, mixing social commentary with wry humor and featuring one little girl who bears a striking resemblance to Guthrie herself. About turning 60 she says, “I feel enthusiastic, curious and hopeful. I have more plans now than I did when I was twenty. When I look in the mirror and see the wrinkles and



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The Longwood Players Announces 2006–07 Season

The Longwood Players announces its 2006–2007 Season, which will open in November with Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine*, a mind-bending, truly unique work that challenges concepts of gender and race. *Cloud Nine* will Nov. 10 through Nov.18. Marc S. Miller directs.

On January 20, the group will offer an evening of cabaret, *A Night at the Cabaret*, an evening of song from Broadway and beyond.

April 2007 brings *A New Brain*, with music and lyrics by William Finn, book by William Finn and James Lapine. Running April 20–28, the production is under the direction of Daniel J. Rabone.

All performances are scheduled for Cambridge Family YMCA Theatre, 820 Massachusetts Avenue, Central Square, Cambridge MA. For further information, go to: www.longwoodplayers.org.



Valley Players Celebrates 36th Annual Fair to Kick Off Season of New Plays

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gray hair, I'm a bit surprised. I feel young. There's still so much to experience."

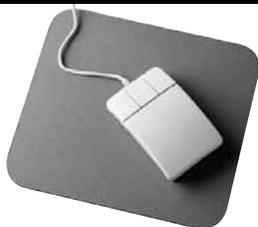
Linda Holland Rathkopf of New York is a bit more apprehensive about the looming birthday. "I feel challenged. I would love to think that I will become more self assured and confident. Without my 'dewiness' to hide behind, I know I'll need my inner strength to keep me sane. It is in nourishing my 'authentic self' that I will be able to age with grace." Rathkopf has taken a very different approach from the others in *The Airport Encounter*. "Miriam" encounters her former therapist and proceeds to grill him about his misguided therapy, exposing the pain and loneliness that have been the results. Through an increasingly tense and accusatory dialog, one wonders which is the patient and which the healer. Rathkopf is an artist/illustrator and cabaret singer as well as a highly respected playwright whose dramatic work is archived in the Louvre.

Sadie and Ida, by Susan Shafer of New York, rounds out the festival. These two elderly women, who have been roommates for thirty years and yet are strikingly different in every way, gradually discover within each other a depth and goodness they had never suspected. Shafer's witty dialog combines subtle humor

and outrageous visual comedy with a touching record of suffering on both sides. A writer, editor and educational consultant, Shafer was thrilled to see this, her first play, win regional competition in 2003.

In addition, the Valley Players is planning a Brown Bag Lunch Playwrights' Conversation on Saturday, October 21. This is an opportunity to discuss the art and business of playwrighting. Playwrights are strongly encouraged to participate and welcome to e-mail suggested questions and topics for discussion. On Sunday, there will be a Forum on "Women and Aging" before the final show featuring a number of prominent women in the fields of health, business and government. Other plans include library discussions and a fundraiser for a charity.

The shows and forums will be held in The Valley Players theater in the beautiful Mad River Valley on Route 100 in Waitsfield, VT. Performances are scheduled for Thursday through Saturday, October 19–21, with a 7:30 p.m. curtain, and a 2 p.m. matinee on Sunday, October 21. To reserve tickets or for more information about times for the Playwrights Dialogue or the Women and Aging Forum, call 802-583-1674 or go online www.valleyplayers.com.



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