

DEVELOPMENTS

News from Playwrights Theatre

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THE NATURE OF CREATIVITY AND THE HUMAN IMAGINATION

A Director's Thoughts on *Where the Sun Never Sets*

When I am speaking to my college students about the nature of creativity and the human imagination, I like to present an unusual (and wholly unscientific) scenario that has to do with saber tooth tigers. The scenario goes something like this: Place yourself in the position of a resourceful and lucky cave person. You go out into your surrounding world to hunt and gather, and every day one of these saber tooth tigers appears from behind a big rock and gives you a hard time. You survive it, but you see those who don't. Now there are some days when the tiger does not appear, but because it is not in your best interest to meet this tiger, you have an expectation of it showing up anyway. This expectation involves you picturing in your mind previous meetings and what they looked, sounded and felt like. You have evoked a fictitious event-- an act of imagination-- creating something where something does not exist. And because the tiger is so important to you, and because it did not show up behind the usual rock, you can actually transfer that meeting to the next rock, even if it does not occur. The imaginary event becomes free floating. It could happen anywhere and expand to animals (and people) beyond the range of tigers.

In this scenario, the act of human imagination is an act of survival; you create a dangerous event in your head to protect yourself from the possibility of a real one occurring. We do this all the time, even if actual saber tooth tigers no longer jump out from behind rocks. These days it might involve people talking on cell phones while traveling at high velocities on interstate highways. Our imaginations are very valuable tools for survival. And given that it is necessary to imagine and what it is possible to imagine, and what the repercussions of imagining badly are, isn't it important that we imagine well and wisely? This takes practice and a place to practice. Thanks for coming to practice.

EDUCATION SCOOP...

From Madison to the entire state of NJ

Creative Arts Academy

Playwrights Theatre's Creative Arts Academy teaches over 500 children, teens and adults at the Madison location in acting, playwrighting, musical theatre, private coaching and more. Whether you are looking to develop your dramatic imagination, improve your communication skills or just learn something new, Playwrights Theatre has fun and interesting classes all year long.

The Creative Arts Academy is offering a variety of classes for students age four through eighteen in the Spring 2007 Semester (January 27 – May 24, 2007). Classes for Pre-K through sixth grade include: Creative Play (Pre-K & K), Playmakers (Grades 1-3), Acting Lab (Grades 4-6), Musical Performance (Grades 4-6), Playwriting Lab (Grades 4-6), The 6-week Play (Grades 4-6), Comedy Master Class (Grades 4-6) and Private Coaching in all courses of study.

Teen classes are available for Grades 7-9 and 10-12 in Acting 1, Acting 2, Playwriting 1, Playwriting 2, Musical Performance, Poetry, Masters Classes in Audition Technique and Comedy and Private Coaching in all courses of study.

For adults, the Creative Arts Academy offers: Acting for the Workplace, Playwriting Workshop, Writing Prose Narrative, Acting and Performance Workshop, From Inspiration to Publication: A Poetry Workshop and Advanced Playwriting Workshop: A Structural Approach.

For exact dates and times of each class, descriptions and to register, visit the [education page](#) of our website.

In addition to traditional enrollment where students take one session at a time, the Creative Arts Academy is offering a Creative Arts Academy Degree Program for both children and teens. The Degree Program is

a complete Creative Education where students can matriculate and earn credits towards a Creative Arts Academy Degree. Students will receive a complete creative education with a professional theatre that is nationally recognized for its artist and educational excellence. The Creative Arts Academy Degree Program assists in the artistic, academic and emotional development of its students.

Playwrights Theatre's Creative Arts Academy teaches classes year-round for children, teens and adults. The Creative Arts Academy is committed to nurturing independent thinking, artistic and personal development through the literary and performing arts. At the Creative Arts Academy, students are part of a community where self-expression and creativity thrive and every person is a valuable member of the whole. Playwrights Theatre's Creative Arts Academy strives for artistic excellence while emphasizing the creative process, both of which are vital to the personal, social and academic evolution of students of all ages. Creative Arts Academy instructors are highly experienced professional artists who are perceptive and dynamic in the classroom. Creative Arts Academy teachers are committed to developing their own skills, as well as those of their students, and to refining their artistry through continued practice and education.

Poetry Out Loud

Last year, The National Endowment for the Arts, the nation's largest annual funder of the arts, and the Poetry Foundation, the nation's largest literary nonprofit, partnered with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts to inaugurate Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest.

Poetry Out Loud (POL) builds on the recent resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, as demonstrated by the slam poetry movement and the immense popularity of rap music among our youth. The program encourages the nation's youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance, which help students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about our literary heritage.

Last year the New Jersey State Council on the Arts partnered with Playwrights Theatre to launch NJ's Poetry Out Loud Residency Program. This unique pilot program engaged over 500 students in 7 high schools across the State in a hands-on, process-based arts residency with professional poets and performance artists. The residency was followed by a series of contests—Classroom, School, State and National—that encouraged students to strive for excellence and allowed the broader community to be impacted by the beauty of poetry and reacquaint them to its relevance in so many areas of our lives.

This year, while ten high schools in NJ are being invited to participate in a POL residency with Playwrights Theatre, every high school in the State will be able to organize their own POL contest. Starting at the classroom level, teachers are provided with free multimedia curriculum materials – a poetry anthology, audio guide, teachers' guide, posters, and comprehensive website, www.poetryoutloud.org, all aligned to national standards – to augment their regular poetry curriculum with poetry recitation and a school-level competition. School-level recitation champions advance to regional contests. Those regional finalists advance to state final, then the state champion advances to the national contest in Washington, DC. In 2006, Poetry Out Loud awarded over \$100,000 in prizes to students and schools at the state and national levels.

If you would like your school to participate in New Jersey's regional and state competitions this year, or are interested in further information, please visit <http://www.jerseyarts.com> and click on the Poetry Out Loud link. Please note that the sign up deadline for this year's participation was November 1, 2006. If you are interested in finding out more about the POL residency program contact **Alysia Souder, Director of Education at 973.514.1787 ext. 15**

Madison Young Playwrights Festival

Playwrights Theatre is pleased to announce the 21st Annual Madison Young Playwrights Festival to be held Saturday, March 10 from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. The Madison Young Playwrights Festival brings to life the work of young playwrights who completed a play as part of a 10-week playwriting program conducted by Playwrights Theatre in their schools. Students will have an excerpt of their play presented and professional actors will stage three representative plays from each school in their entirety.

The festival is divided into four sessions. Attendees can attend one session or stay for the entire event. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for students and half-price for additional sessions.

YOU CAN HELP...

Supporting a non-profit theatre company will make you feel all warm and fuzzy

Want a tax break? Want to feel like you made a difference in the world? Want to see your name in our programs? Playwrights Theatre and its many programs cannot operate on ticket sales and corporate giving alone. We rely on the community and individual supporters like you to help sustain our New Play Development and Education programs.

Please consider one of these many ways to support our work. We depend on YOU!

• **Direct Donation**

Make a direct donation to Playwrights Theatre. You can donate by cash, check or credit card. Donations are made even easier by going through our web-site www.ptnj.org. These gifts can be designated towards a certain program or used for general operating expenses.

• **Annual Bowl-a-Thon fundraiser**

Participate in the Playwrights theatre fundraising event "Pins for Playwrights". Be a bowler and gather your own pledges, or be a backer and support another bowler. Enjoy the party!

• **Matching Gifts**

Many corporations/employers will match your donation. You can find a list of participating companies in our playbill or on our web-site. Ask your company if they match, and make your donation a greater gift.

• **Tribute/Memorial Gifts**

Make donations as gifts for weddings, birthdays or any special occasion to support Playwrights Theatre, or make a gift in memory of a departed Playwrights Theatre supporter. The person honored, or their family, will receive a personalized card stating a contribution has been made in their name. These gifts are a wonderful way to honor someone who loves the arts.

• **Estate/Beneficiary Designation**

Consider leaving a legacy gift. What better way to ensure arts and arts education for the next generation than to name Playwrights Theatre as a beneficiary on your life insurance, will or IRA. This is a wonderful way to make a major gift.

• **Gifts of Property, Auto, Boats**

• **Securities**

Convey your stock as a donation. Playwrights Theatre offers many benefits to those who donate. Please check our web-site to see the tiered privileges that are available. Ask your financial advisor to assist you on the best method of donating.

Playwrights Theatre is a 501(c) 3 not for profit organization. All donations are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

STAGE DIRECTIONS...

The playwrights we've worked with continue to do amazing things

Laguna Playhouse in California will produce **Bob Clyman's** play *Tranced* (Roundtable Reading at Playwrights Theatre 11/05) in their next season.

D.W. Gregory's *October 1962* (Roundtable Reading at Playwrights Theatre 11/05) just opened at New Jersey Repertory on January 6 and received a wonderful review from *The Star Ledger*. The show closes on January 28, 2007.

Cherry Lane Theatre did a reading of *The Last Cedar* by **Jennifer Maisel**.

2nd Annual BowL-a-THON...

Bowling rocks when you come to this event

The 2nd Annual PINS FOR PLAYWRIGHTS...Spare a Dime...Bowl-a-Thon to benefit the educational and

new play development efforts for Playwrights Theatre is just around the corner. **SAVE THE DATE!!!**
March 25, 2007 - at Plaza Lanes in Madison from 3:00 - 5:00pm.

All proceeds support will support our efforts in:

- Education-Outreach programs, such as the Madison Young Playwrights Festival, New Jersey Writers Project and Creative Arts Academy
- Productions such as: *The Good German*, *Where the Sun Never Sets* and *When Something Wonderful Ends*
- General operating costs

You can register as an individual or gather some friends to form a team. Information can be found on our website. Check out the [video](#) from last year's event.

ROUNDTABLE READINGS...

Last chance of the season to be part of the process

Be a part of the process! Join us as professional writers, actors and directors present rehearsed readings of a brand new script and then participate in a post-show discussion. Many of the mainstage productions you see at Playwrights Theatre (including this year's *The Good German*) originally began as a roundtable reading.

A weekend full of free readings of new works from some of the country's most exciting writers! The last Roundtable Reading Series for the season will be **May 17-19, 2007**.

MAINSTAGE SEASON...

The final show of the 2006-2007

When Something Wonderful Ends (New Jersey Premiere)

by Sherry Kramer

April 19 - May 6, 2007

Directed by John Pietrowski

In this "one-woman one Barbie play", written specifically for the 1964 Redhead Swirl Ponytail Barbie #850, MC (Mint Condition), Sherry Kramer brilliantly manages to create a character that weaves together the 1964 SOFA (State of Forces Agreement) with Iran, our passion for Barbie dolls and thirst for petroleum with the death of a mother. A humorous and touching tour de force by a writer coming to national prominence.

GIFT CERTIFICATES...

Give the Gift of Theatre!!!

Gift certificates are a wonderful idea for Valentine's Day, birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and thank-yous. Certificates are available for our mainstage performances as well as classes at our Creative Arts Academy. Contact Jennifer DeWitt for more information, 973/514-1787 X20 or jdewitt@ptnj.org