

**27TH SEASON ANNUAL REPORT
2011-12**



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Working Theater is dedicated to producing new plays *for and about* working people.*

Our 27th Season ran from January-June 2012 and featured the development and production of several of new plays, as well as other events aimed specifically at reaching our audience of working men and women.

*working people refers to the wage and salaried workers of modest means working in factories, stores, offices, hospitals, classrooms and other workplaces throughout America.

Cover Photo Credits Clockwise from Top L: Nikki E. Walker in *The Best of TheaterWorks!'s* "The Graveyard Shift" by Bernadette Elstein, Photo © Gustavo Moncada; A union member participates in The Line; Matthew Boston in Rob Ackerman's *Call Me Waldo*, Photo © Lia Chang; Maria Helan and Gabriel Sloyer in *The Best of TheaterWorks!'s* "Silent Song" by Julian Pimiento, Photo © Gustavo Moncada.

A NOTE FROM THE PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR


As I sat in the audience for the final performance of the final production of our season, *Best of TheaterWorks!: Stories from the 99%*, I had a rare moment of feeling actual fulfillment. TheaterWorks! is a playwriting and performance class we teach for unions and community groups in which working people write short plays. They are joined at the end of the 16-week process by professional actors and directors and we present their work in a staged reading format. For years I had talked with Laura Carbonell Smith, Working Theater's Managing Director, about fully producing some of the best work to come out of the program but we never managed to find the time and resources to make it actually happen. Now I was watching 7 of the best actors in New York under the brilliant direction of Tamilla Woodard bring 6 plays by our students to stunning fully-realized life. It was a great way to end a very busy year. Although, actually, it wasn't truly the end, because the next day we began a developmental workshop of a play written by Stefanie Zdravec, directed by Daniella Topol and commissioned by Working Theater about the effects of unemployment on a family in upstate New York. There was no public component to the workshop but on June 30th, the last day of our fiscal year, we held our last session with actors and read the work Stefanie had done with the play over a two-week process. We ended the year with the beginning of a creative process that I know will result in a wonderful new play by the super talented Stefanie Zdravec.

But that just covers June! We began the year in October presenting a commissioned play, *Mongo* by Ed Cardona, Jr., directed by Nicole Watson, at IBEW Local 3's Diversity Conference at their headquarters in Queens. We then went straight into production for the main event of our season, Rob Ackerman's *Call Me Waldo*, directed by Margaret Perry, about an electrician on Long Island who begins channeling the spirit of Ralph Waldo Emerson. It is always a pleasure working with Rob (this is the third play of his we have produced) and it was great to finally get a chance to work with Margaret. The show was a hit with our audiences and I am happy to report that we sold out the final week of the run. I'm looking forward to the next collaboration with Rob.

During our season we also presented readings of new plays by James Bosley, Rebecca Schull and Zakiyyah Alexander. We continued to develop our commissioned plays by Ed Cardona, Jr., Lisa Ramirez and Manny Borrás. We held three sessions of our TheaterWorks! program at DC 37 and 32BJ SEIU and hosted our annual Working People's Open Mic Night. We also did something new for us this year - we presented a poetry reading of the work of Philip Levine, 2011 Poet Laureate of the United States. I must credit my mom, Gloria Plesent, as it was her idea and a great idea it was! Mr. Levine comes from a working class background and his poems speak to the lives of working people, so the connection to Working Theater is an obvious one. We had a terrific group of readers including the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Jeffrey Eugenides and Working Theater artists Lisa Ramirez, Gene Gillette and André De Shields.

This year we also presented the Third Annual Directors Salon. Each year the Salon gets better and better. Our young directors were given some amazing opportunities this year including the "pick-by-lottery" chance to direct a 10-minute play by some of New York's best playwrights. As always, our curators Luke Harlan, Dina Vovsi and Nicole Watson, together with production manager Rebecca Martinez, did an extraordinary job pulling the week of activities together.

Absolutely none of this would be possible without our wonderful supporters and audience and our dedicated board of directors. On behalf of Working Theater's family of artists, a huge thank-you to all of you who work with us to bring great theater to the working people of New York.


-Mark Plesent, Producing Artistic Director



Call Me Waldo

AN OUTRAGEOUS
NEW COMEDY
by ROB ACKERMAN
directed by MARGARETT PERRY

MAINSTAGE PRODUCTION

CALL ME WALDO

by **Rob Ackerman**, directed by **Margarett Perry**

with **Matthew Boston, Brian Dykstra, Rita Rehn & Jennifer Dorr White**

2/14 - 3/11/2012

The June Havoc Theatre at The Abingdon Theatre Arts Complex, 312 West 36th Street

Set & Lighting Design: **David L. Arsenault** | Sound Design: **Don Tindall**

Costume & Props Design: **Hannah Kochman** | Production Stage Manager: **Trisha Henson**

Assistant Stage Manager: **Rebecca Spinac** | Press: **Sam Rudy Media**

Postcard Graphic Design: **Noah Scalin/ Another Limited Rebellion**

An outrageous new comedy from the writer of TABLETOP... Extraordinary things happen when an ordinary electrician begins channeling the spirit of Ralph Waldo Emerson.



"I love that line in the play about how the guys do all this work every day that most people will never understand. Everyone can relate to that. Call Me Waldo sheds light on what we do and shows that even little jobs and simple tasks can embody art and creativity. So thanks for spreading the word and giving the little guy a big day."

- Gifford Meyer, Member, IATSE Local 52

***"Whimsical new comedy" ...
"boisterously funny"
"Call Me Waldo, directed with just the right lightness by Margarett Perry, makes for an engaging 95 minutes"***

- Frank Scheck, *New York Post*



Above Left: Bryan Dykstra, Matthew Boston and Rita Rehn, Above: Matthew Boston and Rita Rehn in *Call Me Waldo*. © Lia Chang, 2012.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGED READINGS

Working Theater presented public developmental readings of 3 new plays:

BROAD CHANNEL

by **James Bosley**

directed by **Nancy Robillard**

with **Tina Benko, Dennis Gagomiro, Jon Krupp, Kate Levy & Evan Maltby**

A working class family comes to blows when they discover a cherished painting brought home by their grandfather during WWII is a valuable work of art...and was stolen from a victim of the Holocaust.

MAMIE AND YVONNE & GUS AND EMILY

by **Rebecca Schull**

directed by **Julia Gibson**

with **Maria Tucci, Brenda Wehle, Stephen Bradbury, Peter Rini & Tim Rush**

Two quirky and endearing one-acts about work, aging, loneliness and sex.

SICK?

by **Zakiyyah Alexander**

directed by **Victor Maog**

with **Mary Bacon, Quincy Tyler Bernstine,**

Ron Cephas Jones, Peter Kim & Nick Lehane

Tasha is experiencing some very unusual symptoms. Could they be related to her dead end job? Her internet affair? Her own father's illness? A lot can happen in one week in New York, especially when you don't have health insurance.



Pictured from left: playwrights James Bosley, Rebecca Schull and Zakiyyah Alexander, director Victor Maog.
On opposite page: playwrights Ed Cardona, Jr., Manuel Borrás, Lisa Ramirez and Stefanie Zdravec

COMMISSIONS

UNTITLED NEW PLAY

by **Stefanie Zdravec**, directed by **Daniella Topol**

Working Theater commissioned Stefanie Zdravec, playwright of 2010's *Honey Brown Eyes*, to write a play about the unemployment crisis in upstate New York. During June 2012, Stefanie worked on developing the piece in a closed 29-hour workshop with actors **Gene Gillette, Nina Hellman, Ted Koch, Nick Lehane & Kelly McAndrew**.

This commission was supported with public funds from the NY State Council on the Arts.

Working Theater also continued developing 3 commissions currently in the works:

LA RUTA

by **Ed Cardona, Jr.**

Ed Cardona, Jr.'s brand new play explores the sacrifices and danger endured by a group of Latinos smuggled across the U.S. border by a band of "coyotes." The audience will join the characters on their journey set entirely in the claustrophobic confines of a truck.

This commission was supported by the 21st Century ILGWU Heritage Fund.

SONG TO A CHILD LIKE ME

by **Manuel Borrás**, directed by **Arin Arbus**

In 2010, Working Theater commissioned this impressive first full-length play by Manuel Borrás Olivera. *Song to a Child Like Me* is a powerful look at the life of a 1st generation Puerto Rican youth coming into his own in the 1980s Bronx.

TO THE BONE

by **Lisa Ramirez**, directed by **Lisa Peterson**

Lisa Ramirez based this gripping play (formerly titled *The Poultry Play*) about immigrant women laboring in chicken processing plants on interviews she conducted with actual poultry plant workers in upstate NY.

This commission was supported by the 21st Century ILGWU Heritage Fund.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EVENTS

• SPECIAL CONSTITUENCIES INITIATIVE (SCI)

Our unique grassroots audience development program aims to make theater affordable and accessible to the working men and women of New York. Over the years we have used SCI to offer theater to a diverse cross-section of the working population, including postal workers, municipal employees, healthcare workers, building service workers, transport workers, domestic workers and taxi drivers.

In addition to engaging a general audience of working people we targeted specific workers' groups connected to the stories and themes of each production. For *Call Me Waldo*, we reached out to unions and community groups that represent workers depicted in the play: electricians, carpenters, hospital workers, doctors and nurses. Groups who attended included the NYC Labor Chorus, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, IATSE (theatrical stagehands), Professional Staff Congress, 1199SEIU (hospital workers) and Communications Workers Local 1180. The United Federation of Teachers and IBEW Local 3 (electricians) each purchased a full house for their members. We hosted a special matinee to retired members of unions Local 1180, 1199SEIU, IBT Local 237, & District Council 37 (municipal workers). We also offered free tickets to members of advocacy groups Domestic Workers United and Taxi Workers Alliance.

In total we offered over 1,500 subsidized (\$9-21) & 500 complimentary tickets to our productions of *Call Me Waldo* and *Best of TheaterWorks*. We also offered 400 free tickets to developmental staged readings & other events in the season. Choosing to make these events donation-based made a huge difference to our audience and we had nearly 100% attendance at all free events.



The cast (Clockwise L to R: Christopher Burris, Peter Bradbury, Paul Kite, Brian D. Coats, Annie Henk & José Joaquin Perez) of Ed Cardona, Jr.'s *Mongo*, directed by Nicole A. Watson at IBEW Local 3's Diversity Conference.

• IBEW Local 3 DIVERSITY CONFERENCE SKITS

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3 commissioned Working Theater playwright **Ed Cardona, Jr.** to write educational plays for their Diversity Conference in October 2011. **Nicole A. Watson** directed professional actors in the pieces.

- **THEATERWORKS!**

In FY12 we hosted 3 sessions of our **16-week playwriting & performance class**, 2 sessions taught by playwright **Joe Roland at 32BJ SEIU** and one taught by director **Joe White at DC 37**.

The classes culminated in free, staged reading style performances where the students were joined by professional actors and directors. We also produced ***The Best of TheaterWorks!: Stories from the 99%***, a mainstage production featuring 6 of the best short plays from the past 10 years of TheaterWorks! classes.



Above: Actors Marilyn Torres, Dawn Evans and Laurine Towler rehearsing plays written by members of DC 37 in their 2012 TheaterWorks! class. Below: TheaterWorks! Students in the 2012 session at District Council 37
Photos © Lia Chang.



- **OPEN MIC NIGHT**

At our 3rd Annual Open Mic Night we invited our constituency of working men and women to take the stage with their original poetry, songs, short stories and plays. Participants in the evening ranged from former TheaterWorks! students, to audience members and first-time theatergoers who had become involved through our Special Constituencies Initiative.

THE BEST OF THEATERWORKS!: **STORIES FROM THE 99%**

by **Gail Baskerville, Mirsada Damms, Bernadette Elstein,
Michael D. O'Hara, Julian Pimiento & Eric Sposito**

Directed by **Tamilla Woodard**

Featuring **Maria Helan, Andrés Munar, Tony Naumovski,
Jens Rasmussen, Jeanine Serralles, Gabriel Sloyer & Nikki E. Walker**

June 14- 17, 2012

at **The Abingdon Theatre Arts Complex's Dorothy Strelsin Theatre, 312 West 36th Street**

Set & Props Design: **Deb O** | Costume Design: **Emily DeAngelis** | Lighting Design: **Christopher Weston** | Sound Design: **Jeremy J. Lee** | Production Stage Manager: **amy francis schott**
Assistant Stage Manager: **Nicholas Betito** | Production Manager: **Zack Moody**

An off-Broadway premiere featuring 6 of the best short plays to come out of Working Theater's playwriting and performance classes TheaterWorks! over the past 10 years. Featuring plays by members of DC37, 32BJ SEIU & Cornell ILR.

"It seems fitting that the final event of our 27th season showcases the best work from the past ten years of TheaterWorks! classes, work that has been created by the working people whose stories we are so dedicated to telling – today, they get to tell you their stories themselves."

- Producing Artistic Director
Mark Plesent





Opposite page: Jeanine Serralles, Maria Helan & Nikki E. Walker in “Locker Room Talk” by Mirsada Damms.
Above: Tony Naumovski, Gabriel Sloyer, Andrés Munar, Jens Rasmussen in “Luxury Life” by Michael D. O’Hara.
Jeanine Serralles in “The Hypochondriac” by Gail Baskerville.
The Best of TheaterWorks! Photos © Gustavo Moncada

3RD ANNUAL DIRECTORS SALON

This unique Working Theater program evolved out of a need for a community and support network for emerging directors in New York City. The Salon was developed by directors Luke Harlan, Dina Vovsi and Nicole A. Watson in 2010. It is now an annual week of events that gives emerging directors the chance to showcase their work, meet with other directors and theater artists, to hear from leaders in the fields of directing and arts management and most importantly, a platform to actually direct. This year's theme, inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement, was **WORK FOR CHANGE**.



Above: The *Will Work For* ___ directors, actors, and Directors Salon curators before the final performance! Right, from top to bottom: Salon Co-Curators Luke Harlan, Dina Vovsi, and Nicole A. Watson



This year, the Directors Salon featured 2 panels (an Artistic Director/Producer/Union Panel and an Activism in the Arts Panel), a Night of Director-Driven Work, and a night of short plays titled *Will Work For* _____. Emerging directors were chosen from names in a hat for the chance to direct one of these short plays, and were provided with a professional ensemble of actors, rehearsal space, and a final performance at the end of the week.

• PANELS

The Salon offered 2 nights of panels for emerging directors to meet with leaders in the field.

Our **Artistic Director/Producer/Union Panel** featured **Alvan Colon Lespier** (Pregones Theatre), **Kate Loewald** (The Play Company), **Stephanie Ybarra** (The Public Theater), **Peter DuBois** (Huntington Theatre) & **Ellen Rusconi** (SDC).

Our **Activism in the Arts Panel** featured **Mallory Catlett** (City Council Meeting), **Morgan Jenness**, **Judith Malina** (The Living Theatre), & **Judith Sloan** (EarSay).

• NIGHT OF DIRECTOR-DRIVEN WORK

Out of countless submissions, these pieces were selected as a diverse representation of emerging director-driven work:

AMERICAN VOICE directed by **Jenna Worsham**

With **Andrew Marotta** (Guitar/Ukulele), **Alexander Lambie**, **Emily Zemba**, **Cesar Rosado**, **David Zheng**, **Kai Heath** and **Julissa Contreras**

THE LECTURE directed by **Melissa Moschitto**

With **Josh Adler**, **Robert Colpitts**, **Jean Goto**, **Brianna Kalisch** and **Rajeev Varma**

LIVERPOOL TRADING <---> NEW YORK directed by **Anita Gonzalez**

With **Paul Boothroyd**, **Genevieve Bozek**, **Andrea Cesar**, **Antonio Disla**, **Adam Harrison**, **Siobhan Reddy-Best**, **Brendan Quinn**, **AnnChris Warren** and **Dashawn Wilson**

A talk-back with our three directors followed the performances to discuss their experiences developing their plays over several weeks.

• WILL WORK FOR

7 short plays by **Jocelyn Bieh**, **Bekah Brunstetter**, **Ed Cardona, Jr.**, **Tim J. Lord**, **Rehana Lew Mirza**, **Matthew Paul Olmos** and **Crystal Skillman**
directed by **Isobel Bruce**, **Elizabeth Flax**, **Tracy Francis**, **Shana Solomon**, **Ilana Stein**,
Elisabeth Sutherland and **Daniela Thome**

featuring **Claudia Acosta**, **Kate Benson**, **Philip Callen**, **Jasmine Cephas-Jones**,
Jorge Cordova, **McKenzie Frye**, **Brian Hastert**, **Bianca LaVerne Jones**,
Bruce A. Lemon, **Maria-Christina Oliveras**, **Flor De Liz Perez**, **Emily Perkins**,
Jerry Richardson and **Rachel Rusch**

The final culmination of our random opening night lottery was followed by a feedback session to discuss the directors' experiences throughout the week.

THE LINE 2012

Working Theater helped organize and gather support and participation for **The Line 2012**, partnering with **HERE** and other arts and labor groups including the Arts & Democracy Project, Laborers' Local 79, CVH Action, the Civilians, CWA Local 1180, Dance New Amsterdam, DC37, Democracy for NYC, Dixon Place, Downtown Community Television, Fourth Arts Block, National Jobs for All Coalition, National Organization of Women – NYS, New York America, New York City Central Labor Council, NYC Americans for Democratic Action, New York Immigration Coalition, New York State Immigration Fund, Occupy Wall Street, Peculiar Works Project, Professional Staff Congress, Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition, Teamsters Local 814, UAW, UFT, United NY, Workers Defense League and Workers United.

On March 6, 2012 (“Super Tuesday”) from 8.14am – 8:28 AM, activists and members from art and labor groups formed an unemployment line stretching 3 miles along Broadway from the bull on Wall Street to Union Square. Participants held pink slips above their heads for 14 minutes in solidarity with the 14 million currently unemployed. The action was a stunning visual evocation of the need for policies that encourage job creation versus tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest one percent.



Working Theater's Nikko Betito participates in The Line 2012

THE POETRY OF PHILIP LEVINE

May 7th, 2012 at the 32BJ SEIU auditorium at 25 West 18th Street

Working Theater presented a reading of the poetry of this year's **U.S. Poet Laureate Philip Levine**, which explores and extols the world of working people. Many set against the rusting background of Detroit (Mr. Levine's birthplace), his poems give voice to the unemployed, the overworked and the financially beaten.

Readers included Pulitzer-Prize winning novelist **Jeffrey Eugenides** and performers **André De Shields**, **Gene Gillette** and **Lisa Ramirez**.



Pictured from left: Working Theater Producing Artistic Director Mark Plesent, Jeffrey Eugenides, Lisa Ramirez, Philip Levine, André De Shields and Gene Gillette.

2012 ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY



Working Theater's Mark Plesent awards
32BJ SEIU President Mike Fishman

Working Theater's 2012 Annual Awards Ceremony honored **Mike Fishman, President, 32BJ SEIU** for bridging the gap between the arts, labor & community on **Monday, May 21st, 2012** at **Sardi's Restaurant** and featured cocktails, dinner & dessert, a Silent Auction and a special performance of excerpts from ***The Best of TheaterWorks!***

2012 Annual Awards Ceremony Sponsor:



VIP Tables:

**32BJ SEIU - Belluck & Fox
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Patron Tables:

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Tickets & Ads:

ABM - Abrams, Herde & Merkel, LLP - Tom Acosta - Administrative Services Only
Amalgamated Bank - Amalgamated Transit Union - Robert Arcaro - Association of Benefit Administrators
ATPAM - Bill Lynch Associates, LLC - CIR SEIU - Esther Cohen - Collins Building Services, Inc.
Council of School Supervisors and Administrators - CWA Local 1180 - Anne D'Orazio - DC 1707
DC 37 - DC37, Local 372 - Empire BlueCross & BlueShield - First Trade Union Bank
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Silent Auction Donors:

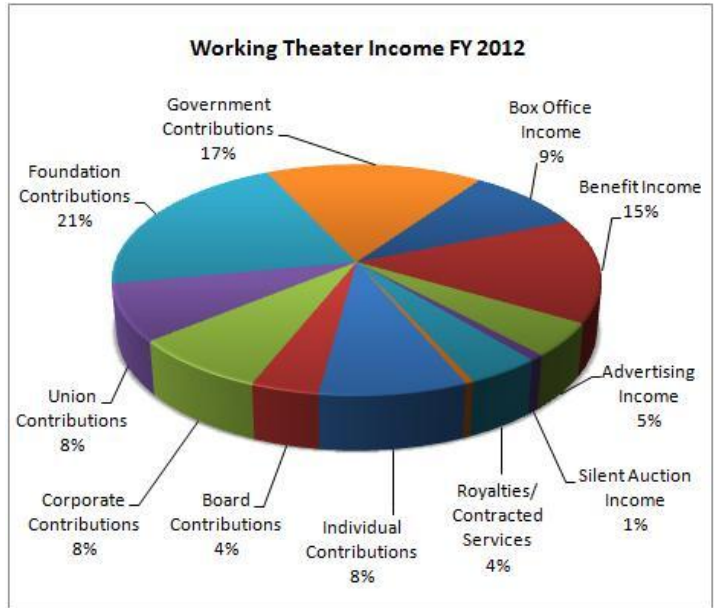
59E59 Theaters - Brenda Berkman - Peter Bernstein & Sarah Cox - Veronica Carnero
Chez Lucienne - Disney Theatrical Group - Susan Eisenberg - Jordan Fox
Connie Grappo - Harlem's Heaven Hat Boutique - Bill Henning - Irish Repertory Theater
Lance Woven Co. - Local One, IATSE - MagnaCare - Ma-Yi Theater Company
Mobay Uptown Restaurant & BBQ - Page 73 Productions - Sea Oaks Golf Club - Wake Robin Inn
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FINANCIALS

The Working Theatre Co., Inc. Jul '11 - Jun '12

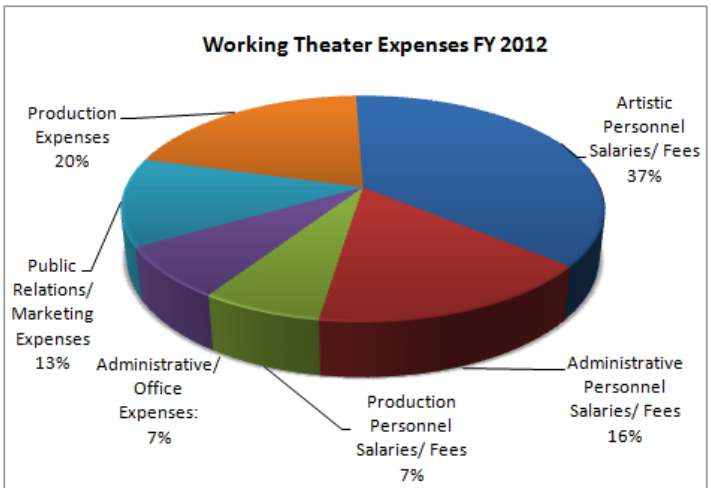
Income:

Box Office Income	\$ 35,021
Benefit Income	\$ 56,546
Advertising Income	\$ 18,200
Silent Auction Income	\$ 3,174
Contracted Services	\$16,500
Misc Earned Income	\$ 1,801
Individual Contributions	\$ 32,808
Board Contributions	\$ 15,185
Corporate Contributions	\$ 30,850
Union Contributions	\$ 30,850
Government Contributions	\$ 64,655
Foundation Contributions	\$ 81,097
	\$386,687



Expenses:

Artistic Personnel Salaries/ Fees	\$134,489
Administrative Personnel Salaries/ Fees	\$ 60,106
Production Personnel Salaries/ Fees	\$ 25,070
Administrative/ Office Expenses	\$ 27,268
PR/ Marketing Expenses	\$ 46,351
Production Expenses	\$ 74,043
	\$367,327





SUPPORTERS

Working Theater is extremely grateful to all of the individuals, foundations & companies that have supported our 27th Season!

(List from July 1, 2011- May 14, 2012)

Gold Sponsors:

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The Shubert Foundation
The Fund for Small Theatres, a project of the Alliance of Resident Theatres/ New York

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Joan Kane
Isaac Klien
Rebecca Martinez

Tony Marzani
Rikki Hudes Michels
Elizabeth Morgan
Kate Navin
Marcia Newfield
Lorraine O'Brien
Maria-Christina Oliveras
Margarett Perry
& Brian Dykstra
Susan Perry
Rosemarie Petrone

Mary Piteo
Emanuel & Fay Plesent
Pamela Prather
& Travis Millman
Zakiyyah Rahim
Lynette Ralph
Rebecca Schull
Lydia Smith
Vanda Wark
Ruthie Wharton
Cotton Wright



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George Bueno
Joseph Canovas
Jordan Fox
Arthur French
Frank Goldsmith
Connie Grappo

Pat Judah Harris
Jonathan Kay
Lavender Rouzier
Eleanor Tilson
José Vargas
Roslyn Yasser

Working Theater Staff:

Mark Plesent: Producing Artistic Director
Laura Carbonell Smith: Managing Director
Joe Roland: Director of Educational Programs
Dina Vovsi: Literary Associate
Luke Harlan, Dina Vovsi, Nicole Watson: Directors Salon Curators
Kate Messinger, Austin Nimnicht, Sierra Beth Ryan: 2012 Season Interns
Sarah Livescault: Graphic Design

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