

ScriptForward!

Hamilton Dramaturgy's E-Newsletter

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Serving playwrights for five years!



Greetings!

Welcome to the October issue of ScriptForward!, a specialty e-newsletter prepared for professional and aspiring scriptwriters by Hamilton Dramaturgy. With nineteen years of experience in New York, across the nation, and internationally, I offer this newsletter as a means of support and information to the worldwide scriptwriting community.

This issue features a guest column by Paula Cizmar about **SEVEN**, a documentary play that honors courageous women activists from seven countries.

She discusses the collaboration between seven female playwrights, and the continuing life of the play as it travels across the world.

And please look over the "Recent Successes" section to see all the exciting events which are taking place.

I hope that this issue of ScriptForward! will be useful to you and I welcome your feedback. - Anne Hamilton

Testimonial

"Talk about the right person at the right time! Anne Hamilton provided me with line-by-line insights into my new play, FRONTING THE ORDER, which helped me bring added life to my characters and soundness to the plot. What at first seemed perfect to me was diagnosed by Anne as in need of immediate surgery, which I performed to the betterment of the piece. To her credit, she's like the soothing voice on your GPS: she never scolds you for making a wrong turn, but puts you on the right route with grace and charm."

Warren Bodow - NYC and Tucson, Arizona, USA. Warren's play RACE MUSIC played on Theatre Row in NYC and received great reviews from The New York Times. He is the author of TWICE BLESSED, MFA, OVERMAN ON HIS WAY OUT and is the retired President of New York Times Company radio stations WQXR and WQEW. FRONTING THE ORDER is a five character ensemble piece which explores the ethics and practicality of using deception to gain a short term profit.

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SEVEN

A Documentary Play Spotighting Women Activists

By Paula Cizmar

SEVEN has an effect on people.

And in many respects, the way the documentary play **SEVEN** has been brought into the lives of so many different people from so many different walks of life is one of the most unique aspects of the project.

It all began when Carol Mack got the idea of creating a play about the women activists involved with Vital Voices, an international NGO that works on issues such as human trafficking, corruption, and violence toward women.

Carol invited a group of playwrights to join her. (A more detailed account of the origins of the project is in the Summer 2010 issue of *Women in Theatre Magazine*, published by the League of Professional Theatre Women.) The seven of us—Carol Mack, Catherine Filloux, Gail Kriegel, Ruth Margraff, Anna Deavere Smith, Susan Yankowitz, and I—were each paired with an activist from a different country. My assignment was Marina Pisklakova-Parker—a woman who singlehandedly created the first domestic abuse crisis center in Russia, even though her government denied there was a problem and even though she endured threats to her own life.

Just to contemplate what these activists have risked their lives doing is daunting. But even more daunting to us as playwrights was: How do we create this piece? How do we put it together?

Our leader Carol was sure that the best way to proceed was to let the women themselves tell the stories—in their own words. We would not fictionalize them or create dramatized versions of their lives.

I spent hours and hours talking with Marina, an incredibly intelligent and wonderfully empathic woman. But my first interviews revealed an interesting obstacle for a playwright: By the time I met her, Marina was used to being interviewed, so she tended to speak in sound bytes at times. It wasn't until I began speaking to her in a different way, setting up little "what-if's", asking her to take me on little mental excursions through Moscow, or meditations about her work day, that she began to tell me the stories that would make it into **SEVEN**, the script.

With Marina, the turning point came when we talked about Moscow in the wintertime. She was so clearly in love - with the landscape, the light, the people, her culture - that our talks suddenly came alive.

After the playwrights collected the interviews, we had the task of trying to assemble them—first, into individual monologues. And finally, into an interwoven script that told each story. Creating the monologues was a challenge; though we were using the women's words, people rarely speak in complete, perfectly organized sentences. They use fragments, digressions, asides. For my Marina monologue, I had to sort through a vast amount of material, plus had to find a dramatic order for the various topics we had discussed. Then came the

"...the best way to proceed was to let the women themselves tell the stories-in their own words..."

question—how to shape this to make it theatrical, to feel as if it's in the present tense, unfolding in the moment.

It's something akin to shooting a documentary film and ending up with hundreds and hundreds of hours of footage—which somehow must be cut and assembled into a unified, coherent whole.

When we then wove the monologues together into **SEVEN**, we also had to go back into the monologue material and look for similar themes and recurring images that cropped up in the individual stories because we needed a way to make connections between these different women and their work.

Trial and error was the process—and at times, it was quite a painful one. Seven different writers writing about seven different dynamic women

required negotiating, testing, assessing, doing and redoing. And again, lots of cutting.

In the end, when it came time for publication, we decided to include the individual monologues about the women in the volume, along with the script **SEVEN**—so that interested audiences would have access to more information about the lives of these extraordinary activists.

The efforts to get the play seen seem to embody a new way of looking at theatre. **SEVEN** works as a consciousness-raising tool, as well as a performance, so it sometimes gets presented at nontraditional venues.

On March 12th, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton introduced a reading of the play, starring Meryl Streep and Marcia Gay Harden, at the Women in the World summit in New York City.

For another example, take the life of **SEVEN** in Sweden. Hedda Krausz Sjögren, fortunately, saw a reading of the play at the 92nd Street Y and immediately wanted to translate it into Swedish and get the play presented in her home country. Hedda's ideas for getting **SEVEN** seen are quite unique. She first presented the piece as a series of readings in Sweden's *Home Not Home* festival. Then, under the auspices of Riksteatern, she began a campaign to get the play done all over the country—and performed by some highly unusual performers: politicians. It's an election year in Sweden, and in August the play was performed by female incumbents alongside women running for office—representing all the parties from conservative to left-wing. But, in an even more unusual move, in July the play was done as a reading by an all-male cast made up of members of the Swedish Parliament, once again, from conservatives to liberals, at the Visby Political Week festival, an annual event in which politicians, journalists, policy-makers, etc. come together to meet, discuss, and attend workshops about the future of Sweden. The Parliament members in Hedda's cast so identified with the characters they played that they began speaking out on the issues of the piece after the performance.

Vital Voices has also taken the show on the road. It has been performed at conferences and summits in England and France and in September was done in India. And, thanks to a translation grant from the Avon Foundation, a Spanish version will tour Argentina. Plus, Riksteatern of Sweden is taking the play to Turkey and Belgium.

Universities also are performing the play—so far University of Mississippi in Oxford, and Rhodes College in Memphis are producing it, and the University of Southern California's new M.A. program in Applied Theatre Arts has adopted the book as a text.

We wanted to do something when we took on **SEVEN**. As artists, we wanted to help provide a forum for social change.

With the help of many people in the U.S. and abroad, that goal is now a reality. And the women of **SEVEN** keep touching people and changing lives.

Featured Book of the Month

In An Hour Books presents
Playwrights in An Hour Series

ALBEE IN AN HOUR
BECKETT IN AN HOUR
HANSBERRY IN AN HOUR
By E. Teresa Choate

Available at: http://smithandkraus.com/htdocs/in_an_hour.php

PLAYWRIGHTS IN AN HOUR is a series of 27 titles that focuses on the most-produced, studied and published playwrights, ranging from the ancient Greeks to contemporary authors. Each book is under 100 pages.

Testimonial

"Anne Hamilton dramaturged my play in such an exact and precise way that I was able to access her notes and complete my rewrite effortlessly. She highlighted the core of her concerns and communicated them to me so as not to destroy inspiration, but instead encourage me to do my best work; to say what I wanted to say without being told what I should say. Together we were able to build scenes and find character truths, motivations and clarity and fully develop them accordingly. Anne is probably one the best dramaturgs working in America and I could not recommend her highly enough."

--Tina Andrews

NYC Playwright of the upcoming drama **CHARLOTTE SOPHIA**, screenwriter of the Warner Bros. film, **WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE**, and winner of the Writers Guild of America award, and the NAACP Image award for the CBS miniseries "Sally Hemings, An American Scandal".

SEVEN Women

SEVEN is a documentary play by Paula Cizmar, Catherine Filloux, Gail Kriegel, Carol K. Mack, Ruth Margraff, Anna Deavere Smith, and Susan Yankowitz. The Dramatists Play Service volume includes freestanding monologues by each playwright on her subject in the documentary work.

Marina Pisklakova-Parker - Russia ••• Playwright: Paula Cizmar

THE BRIDGE, a monologue by Paula Cizmar

Against tremendous odds, in 1993 Marina founded the first domestic abuse crisis center which has since grown into a network providing counseling and services to 100,000 women all over Russia.

<http://home.earthlink.net/~pcizmar/>

Mu Sochua - Cambodia ••• Playwright: Catherine Filloux

NINETEEN PRALUNG (NINETEEN SOULS), a monologue by Catherine Filloux

Now a member of Parliament, Sochua spent her childhood in exile when the Khmer Rouge took over her country. In 2005 she was co-nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for her work against sex trafficking in Cambodia and Thailand.

<http://catherinefilloux.com/>

Annabella de Leon - Guatemala ••• Playwright: Gail Kriegel

NO MORE SILENCE, a monologue by Gail Kriegel

Raising herself out of poverty by getting an education, Annabella became a congresswoman who fights against corruption and for the rights of the poor, particularly for women and indigenous people.

<http://gailkriegel.com/>

Inez McCormack - Northern Ireland ••• Playwright: Carol K. Mack

SEEING ANOTHER COUNTRY, a monologue by Carol K. Mack

"It has been an honor and delight to get to know Inez and some of the women whose lives she has changed, to participate in her Participation & Practice of Rights Project, and to become her friend. A Protestant married to a Catholic in Belfast, Inez played a critical role in the 1998 Good Friday Peace Accords and has worked for women's and human rights, labor, and social justice since the 1960s." - Carol K. Mack

<http://www.carolmack.com>

Farida Azizi - Afghanistan ••• Playwright: Ruth Margraff

NIGHT WIND, a monologue by Ruth Margraff

Farida worked to bring medical supplies to women in remote parts of Afghanistan and struggled to fight the marginalization of women under Taliban rule.

<http://ruthmargraff.com/>

Hafsat Abiola - Nigeria ••• Playwright: Anna Deavere Smith

HAFSAT ABIOLA, a monologue by Anna Deavere Smith

An advocate for human rights following the murder of her activist parents, Hafsat founded the Kurdirat Initiative for Democracy, which provides skills and leadership training for young women in Nigeria.

<http://annadeaveresmith.com/>

Mukhtar Mai - Pakistan ••• Playwright: Susan Yankowitz

THE THUMBPRINT OF MUKHTAR MAI, a monologue by Susan Yankowitz

Mukhtar was gang-raped by four men in retribution for an alleged "honor crime," but instead of taking the traditional woman's route of committing suicide, she brought her rapists to justice and used settlement money

to build a school. <http://www.susanyankowitz.com/>

Hamilton Dramaturgy's Recent Projects:

Playwrighting

- My play **THE DELIVERY** appeared in the 2010 Emerging Female Voices Festival on October. This festival features 21 original works and is being produced by the Manhattan Shakespeare Project. The short comedy features a subway car, a maternity ward, and one determined little girl. Lori Wolter-Hudson directed.
- I am a member of NO PASSPORT, I have read from my work in our monthly reading series featuring fine writers like Carida Svich, Midaglia Cruz, Alejandro Morales, and Randy Gener. If you're in NYC, please come to our next event on October 19th. NoPassport Theatre Alliance & Press and INTAR, in collaboration with the Nuyorican Poets Café, will present **HIBERNATING RATTLESNAKES: DEMONIOS - An Evening of Demons, Chupacabras . . . and things that go HISS in the night**. I will read my play **THE BREAD OF FORGETFULNESS**. Description: A bakery, a Memory Haunting and a writer's imagination collide over a *Pan De Muerto* on the Day of the Dead. Please join us at 7pm at the Nuyorican Poets Café, 236. E. 3rd Street (Avenues B/C) in NYC (www.nuyorican.org) Suggested admission is \$5. Bring Friends!
- On December 14th, I will direct a reading of my play **THE STACY PLAY - A LOVE SONG - VOLUME I** at Julia's Reading Room in NYC. Held at the home of legendary producer Julia Miles, JRR is a program of the League of Professional Theatre Women. As a special treat, I will also direct and present a performance of my clown play **BOUDOIR BENCH**, which introduces a new archetype: the beautiful female clown.
- Writer's Digest has just sent notification that **THE STACY PLAY - A LOVE POEM, VOLUME I**, has placed in the top 100 entries in the Stage Play category of the 79th Annual *Writer's Digest* Writing Competition. It will be listed in the December issue of the magazine

Anne On the Air

- On July 24th, I served as a guest commentator for the L.A. Theatreworks audio presentation of Lee Blessing's **GOING TO ST. IVES**. The topic was Mothers and Sons in **THE GLASS MENAGERIE**, **A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE** and **ALL MY SONS**. The segment was aired nationwide on NPR as a companion piece to the broadcast of the play. An audio of the play and segment can be ordered at <http://audio-sales1.amazonwebstore.com/Going-to-St.-Ives-Library-Edition/M/1580812791.htm>
- L.A. Theatreworks has a large catalog of audio recordings of important plays performed by leading actors. Its website is a terrific resource at www.latw.org.
- Season One of my audio podcast series **TheatreNow!**, an oral history of leading American female theatre artists is complete. You can find it at <http://hamiltondramaturgy.wordpress.com>. The inaugural segment features playwright and librettist Quiara Algegría Hudes, who wrote **ELIOTT, A SOLDIER'S FUGUE**, and the libretto for **IN THE HEIGHTS** (2008 Tony Award winner for Best Musical, and 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Drama nominee). Please listen to additional guests already online including: Ruth Margraff, Claire Lautier, Valentina Fratti, and Catherine Filloux, Yvette Heyliger and Yvonne Farrow. Yvette Heyliger speaks about her play **WWJD?**, which has been nominated for nine Audelco Awards. (www.twinbiz.com)

Dramaturgy

- I am currently approaching theatres hoping to locate a producer for Warren Bodow's drama **FRONTING THE ORDER**, which I also dramaturged. The five character ensemble piece explores the ethics and practicality of using deception to gain a short term profit, and we see a premonition of the conflicts of our 21st century information age. Please send all inquiries to me at: hamiltonlit@hotmail.com. Warren is the retired President of radio stations WQXR and WQEW and received great reviews from The New York Times for **RACE MUSIC** last year on Theatre Row. He presented a very well-received staged reading at the Abingdon Theatre on September 29th.
- Tom Cavanaugh, a long-time client, was given a staged reading of his play **BEHOLD** at the Utah Shakespearean Festival this summer. The drama, about a family's disintegration after its son/brother was killed in a Columbine-type school shooting. Its plot hinges upon the very topical subject of peer bullying and violence. The play was very well received. Please contact me at hamiltonlit@hotmail.com for a press packet and copy of the script.
- Broadway legend George Marcy performed his musical play **THE BALLAD OF GEORGIE PORGIE** (co-written with Bob Goldstone, who also serves as Musical Director) on September 12th at Don't Tell Mama in NYC. Here are his comments: "Anne Hamilton, with her insight, creativity and knowledge, is responsible for guiding **THE BALLAD OF GEORGIE PORGIE** to where it is today." Bravo, George!

- I still serve on the LPTW's Mentoring Committee under Chairwoman Margery Klain. The committee is dedicated to providing mentoring opportunities to female theatre artists who are members of the League. Please see www.theatrewomen.org for an application.
- Alana Ruben Free directed and presented her play **FEAR AND DESIRE: A MOTHER-DAUGHTER STORY** at Julia's Reading Room on September 21st. It is Part I of **THE EDEN TRILOGY**, a poignant love story between one woman and her own life. I dramaturged the play, and am now seeking to find a theatre to produce it. Please email me at hamiltonlit@hotmail.com if you would like to read **FEAR AND DESIRE**, or the other plays in **THE EDEN TRILOGY**.
- Two plays which I dramaturged in the past appeared as readings in NYC this fall: Carrie Robbins' **THE DEATH & LIFE OF DR. CUTTER**, and Cheryl L. Davis' **SWIMMING UPTOWN** (at the Abingdon Theatre's 2010-2011 Staged Reading Series).

Publications

- The Bucks County Women's Journal published my article, "Advocacy for Women Playwrights" in my Page & Stage column (October/November). In the July/August issue I completed my profile of Quiara Alegria Hudes, the Pulitzer-Prize nominated playwright.
- The Open to Hope Foundation published four of my articles on Healing Through the Arts on its website www.opentohope.com. The series, on Maintaining Emotional Fluency Through Artistic Expression, revealed my healing journeys as a writer. "Writing Poetry Helps Thirty Years After Friend's Death", discusses how I discovered my internal soul-shift while writing the poem "Summer Storm".

Public Workshops

- I've been invited to teach a workshop of playwrighting and screenwriting at the Philadelphia Writer's Conference next June. Please sign up at: <http://www.pwcwriters.org/index.html>



Anne M. Hamilton, M.F.A., has nineteen years of experience in New York City, across the nation, and internationally. The Founder of Hamilton Dramaturgy, she has consulted with Lynn Nottage, Andrei Serban, the Joseph Papp Public Theater, the Harold Prince Musical Theatre Institute, Michael Mayer, Classic Stage Company, Jean Cocteau Repertory Theater, Leslie Lee, Andrew Barrett, the New York City Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and the University of Iowa Playwrights' Workshop. She worked for James Lipton (host and producer, **INSIDE THE ACTORS STUDIO**) for three years as the academic advisor to the graduate students and faculty at The Actors Studio Drama School in NYC. The Bogliasco Foundation of New York City and Bogliasco, Italy awarded her a fellowship in recognition of her personal contribution to the American theatre. She studied the philosophy of aesthetics at St. Catherine's College, Oxford University and was a NYSCA auditor. Hamilton is a graduate of Columbia University School of the Arts and holds dual citizenship in the United States and Italy. She is available for consultations in script development, production dramaturgy, and career development, through her website at www.hamiltonlit.com. Anne is a member of The Dramatists Guild of America, Inc.(DGA, www.dramatistsguild.com), Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA, www.lmda.org) and is a past Co-Secretary of the League of Professional Theatre Women (LPTW, www.theatrewomen.org).

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Hamilton Dramaturgy is an international dramaturgical practice located in Bucks County, Pennsylvania on the East Coast of the United States. Also known as "The Genius Belt", this peaceful area filled with farms has been the home and workplace of the composers Oscar Hammerstein II and Stephen Sondheim, and the novelists Pearl S. Buck and James Michener.

ScriptForward! is a free specialty E-newsletter offering easy and informative tips on how to advance your professional scriptwriting career now. It is intended as a helpful informational tool to those actively engaged in the writing arts. If you have colleagues or friends who would benefit from this e-newsletter, please feel free to forward it to them, as long as you pass it along in its entirety, with all accreditations, references and copyrights. Many thanks and All the Best!

Disclaimer – The opinions presented in ScriptForward! are those of the artists and guest columnists, and not necessarily those of Hamilton Dramaturgy.

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