

On Her Shoulders in New York City



By:
Anne Hamilton, M.F.A.

My respected colleague Susan Jonas, the founder/director of *The Legacy Projects*, is also a co-founder of **50/50 in 2020**. In recent years, she has made pursuing gender parity in theatre her life's work, and her success continues to grow.

Her newest endeavor is *On Her Shoulders*, a series of staged readings of plays by women that will occur in Manhattan

monthly through December, 2013. It's a terrific new program that seeks to educate theatre professionals and the public about women's plays written over the course of 10 centuries. The historical scope of the material, as well as the involvement of leading theatre specialists, is unprecedented.

On Monday, May 20th, the project presented Rachel Crothers' controversial 1909 play, *A MAN'S WORLD*, directed by Melissa Crespo, and introduced by Jane Ann Crum. Other plays in the season include: Anna Cora Mowatt's *FASHION*, Cicely Hamilton's *DIANA OF DOBSON'S*, Shelagh Delaney's *A TASTE OF HONEY*, Lorraine Hansberry's *LES BLANCS*, Daphne du Maurier's *THE YEARS BETWEEN*, and Susanna Centlivre's *A BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE*.

Founded in 2012 by Andrea Lepcio (Playwright), Lillian Rodriguez (Performer), and Susan Jonas (Dramaturg/

Scholar), the reading series is dedicated to "re-loading the canon' by familiarizing potential producers and audiences with a neglected legacy of plays—not by *women* playwrights but by *great* playwrights."

"*On Her Shoulders* intends to restore their contribution to theatre history, the canon and the living repertory," the founders assert on their website, which includes a curated list of significant plays by women.

The initiative encourages teachers to include plays by women on their syllabi, introduces students to monologues and scenes for acting and directing exercises, and invites literary managers and artistic directors to produce these plays on their stages. Its practical, multifaceted approach is unique because it provides the incentive to look at the plays as living works of art rather than just relegating them to history books.

The series will culminate in the publication of an anthology of the scripts staged for production with introductions by major scholars and theatre artists.

Admission is free, and seating is first come, first served, with RSVPs required. More information is available at <http://onhershoulders.weebly.com/>.

*Anne Hamilton has 22 years of experience as a dramaturg. She is available for script consultations and career advising through hamiltonlit@hotmail.com. Season Three of *Hamilton Dramaturgy's TheatreNow!* launched with an interview with Kate Valk, a leading actress with The Wooster Group.*

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Dear Diary: How Journaling Helps Us Heal



By: Linda C. Wisniewski

Did you keep a journal or diary when you were a teenager—a place to write out your secret thoughts, dreams, and heartaches? Many women still do. Writing can help us clarify and release emotions.

But many women have told me they only use their journal to write about negative experiences. When good things happen, it seems we

don't need to make sense of them or to find the meaning. We just want to be happy, and there's nothing wrong with that.

Unfortunately, writing only about the bad stuff can result in what I call "ruminating on the page." You know, that conversation in your head with your mean old boss, insensitive husband, or ungrateful child? Yeah, me too! But going over and over all those things we didn't say, want to say, couldn't say just makes us feel bad all over again with no resolution.

Venting on the page can be a healthy step but only if we go on to mine the experience in a meaningful way. Did your writing give you a new perspective on your problem? Did you learn something about yourself or your life?

Marlene Schiwy, author of a book about women's journaling called *A Voice of Her Own*, has this to say:

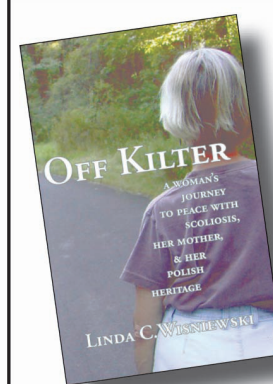
"Healing comes from the same root as whole and holiness... For many women, the journal provides a gentle setting in which healing can take place. It offers one place where, literally and symbolically, all of the pieces of one's life finally come together."

James Pennebaker of the University of Texas has been researching the effects of journal writing on the body since the 1990s. He says "Storytelling simplifies a complex experience." It actually trains our brain to look at the experience from outside ourselves and use it to find solutions.

To do this, we have to stick with it. Don't just pour your heart out and walk away. Read your journal aloud as if you were with a trusted friend. Then write again as if this was a story about someone else. The symbols, patterns, and even solutions that pop up on your page may surprise you! Happy journaling!

Linda C. Wisniewski teaches memoir workshops and enjoys speaking about the healing power of writing. Visit her website at www.lindawis.com

or contact her at lindawis@comcast.net to schedule a class or presentation for your group.



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