

## From the Artistic Director...



This is our summer issue. Yes, I said summer. And like each of our seasonal issues it is being published and disseminated in the wrong season – the one that follows the one that is supposed to be reflected within. Why is that? It's pretty simple, really. For all I do to make sure that information is being gathered, editorial writers are writing, and

layouts are being laid out – not to mention plays being read - I'm always behind. Just like almost everyone else in the profession. More about that in a bit.

PlayPenn 2008 came to a close in the last days of July. Our fourth conference was a great success – the only way we could judge it as being more of a success would be if and when each of the plays to which we offered time and attention finds its way to full production on stages across the country. Once again we invited six playwrights to bring their work to Philadelphia with a director of their choosing along with a dramaturg and professional actors from our broadly and deeply talented Philadelphia acting pool. In addition to the six plays that received two full weeks of development time, we offered three other writers varying degrees of resources based on their needs at the time culminating readings, either public or in-house. Add to all of that new play activity two symposia discussing issues of concern to those of us who are interested in new work and it was a conference replete with stimulus for all involved.

For each issue of *The New Play Times*, I ask two or three theatre practitioners who are invested in new plays, as playwright, dramaturg, literary manager or artistic director, to write for the coming issue. I don't often have specific ideas of what the subject matter might be. I am genuinely interested in what other

people are thinking and what ideas they might have that will be thought provoking in ways that might expand the substance of our work and how we think about it. So I'm always surprised to see what people choose to write about.

This time around I asked Emily Morse, the Director of Artistic Development at New Dramatists, to write something for us. She called me after a while and said that what she wanted to write about was maybe a little strange and did I mind. Seeing as how I have no agenda except getting people to write what they think, I said "write whatever you want and if it needs editing, we can do that together and if it's terrible you can find somewhere else to publish it" (I didn't really say that last thing.). After a few weeks she sent me a draft of what is published in this issue, a meditation on "wellness" as it pertains to us in the theatre – what it means to work and live in what might be called a healthy way. It was at that point that I asked Eric Pfeffinger to write something for this issue (full disclosure: both Emily and Eric have worked at PlayPenn during past conferences.). I mentioned to Eric what Emily was writing about and it seemed that he had something to say on the subject, too.

### *In memory of Paul Newman (1925 - 2008)*

*PlayPenn offers its condolences to Joanne Woodward, the Newman family, and everyone at the Newman's Own Foundation following the passing of Paul Newman on September 26th. The Newman's Own Foundation's support of PlayPenn's 2008 Conference was invaluable, and we will be forever grateful to the artist and pioneer who championed the causes of so many.*

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What surprises me in their expressions is that, when viewed together, they present common concerns that seem to be a preoccupying element in the daily lives of a playwright (Eric) and a literary manager/dramaturg (Emily) – like how do we keep from over-committing and meet our obligations in a timely and substantive manner? There is something in the culture – not just the culture of the theatre, but the culture at large – that is beginning to become more than apparent to us all about what it means to be productive and what constitutes a substantive life in the realm of creative endeavors. Emily and Eric are both struggling with finding meaning in what they do and a meaningful way to go about doing it.

It warmed me to find each of them invoking the time they spent at PlayPenn. We are challenged on a daily basis to struggle with those forces that would have us become a festival rather than a conference; to increase the size of our venue; to find ways to commercialize the conference; to think in terms of production rather than nurturing development. Very simply, we are striving to maintain the posture that what playwrights need most of all is time, space, human resources and the freedom to exert their personal authority over a process that will serve their needs toward bringing their play closer to a state of production-readiness. It is in that spirit and through that lens that I hope you will appreciate these thoughtful pieces by Emily and Eric.

So it's fall and the summer issue of this newsletter is finished. And the emails have been answered. And the laundry done. And the lawn is mowed. It's time to read new plays. I'll be getting back to that in a bit. See you at the theatre.

Warm regards,

Paul Meshejian, Artistic Director

*Paul Meshejian is PlayPenn's Founding Artistic Director. For 35 years, he has worked around the country as actor, director, producer, and teacher. He has been a member of the company at People's Light and Theatre in Malvern, PA since 1989 and serves on the faculties at University of the Arts in Philadelphia and Arcadia University in Glenside, PA. He is on the Boards of Directors of PlayPenn and the International Institute of Theatre Research and on the advisory board of Freedom Train Productions, as well as being a member of LMDA.*

## PLAYPENN'S 2008

### PRE-CONFERENCE RETREAT SUCCESS

This year, with the support of the Philadelphia Theatre Initiative, a program of the Philadelphia Center for Arts and Heritage, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and administered by the University of the Arts, we were able to make a substantial addition to the conference in the form of a pre-conference retreat. For three days immediately preceding the work of the "conference proper," playwrights, directors and dramaturgs came together at the Adrienne Theatre to learn more about the plays they would be working on, about one another, and about the city of Philadelphia. The coalescence that was engendered by the intensely challenging and utterly satisfying enforced socialization of the retreat gave us all the opportunity to begin our work well ahead of the curve. All of those early questions and concerns that accompany every rehearsal process were washed away by the opportunities afforded us by the extra-ordinary time together.

*For me, the pre-conference retreat was an absolutely essential part of the process. In addition to providing an initial response to my play, it established an unrestricted creative atmosphere. The friendships I formed during the retreat have carried on beyond the conference: we share opportunities, contacts, and serve as advocates for one another. - Sylva Semerciyan, playwright*

*Overall, I think the retreat benefitted the playwrights. By focusing our attentions on the goals of the conference in the largest sense before any rehearsals or rewriting got underway and by creating social ease and encouraging crosstalk between artistic teams, the work in each specific rehearsal room was expanded, and this, I think, redounded to the benefit of the playwrights. - Larry Loebell, dramaturg*

*The pre-conference retreat created a supportive working atmosphere that was invaluable to my work as a creative artist, and enhanced my working relationship with playwrights and dramaturgs alike. - Rick DesRochers, Director*

We have every hope of keeping the pre-conference retreat an integral and primary aspect of this conference as it continues to grow and mature.

## SORRY THIS ISN'T LONGER

by Eric Pfeffinger

The story goes that Raymond Carver, the famous poet and short story author, was asked about his literary influences. Instead of mentioning someone predictable like Hemingway, he said his kids. Why his kids? Because if he didn't have to deal with his kids, he'd have the time to write something longer than poems and short stories.

At least that's how I remember the story going. I don't have time to check on it, because I have a kid. He may also have mentioned something about laundry.

I hope he did, anyway. Because I can totally relate to a writer whose biggest influences include not only his kids but his laundry. Who knows how some of my plays might have turned out if I hadn't had to pause in the middle of a line of dialogue to transfer a load of darks to the dryer? My oeuvre's a field day

for some future academic who wants to scrutinize it for strong thematic undercurrents of misplaced delicacies.

You've got to write every day. Write every day, every single day, for God's sake are you listening to me? Whatever you do, make sure you write every day! Everyone who writes gives the same advice to people who want to write: write every day, write every single day, and don't take any days off because you can't afford it. It's great advice, it's correct advice – whenever I conduct a workshop I give the same advice: you've gotta write every day. Incidentally, on a related matter, I don't write every day. My secret and shameful confession is that sometimes I might go for as long as a week without writing. Without writing, like, *anything*. No, seriously. I *know*! And having admitted that aloud, as it were, in public, I fully expect unpleasant repercussions. A dark rebuke from the Dramatists Guild; a flat and impermeable hush the next time I walk up to a group of playwrights; a

critical reassessment in people's minds of every play of mine they ever thought they liked. How good could it have been – he doesn't even write every day.

I'm not saying this as a rebel or (God forbid) a maverick; I'm not mounting a challenge to the conventional wisdom about writing every day. Writers really should write every day. Oh, how I wish I wrote every day. When you write every day, you churn out a certain requisite number of words and pages, but that's the least of it – when you write every day it keeps you dwelling in the right head space. The space where you absolutely need to be. Kind of staking out a part of your brain, setting it aside with yellow caution tape and dedicating it to this one project, or group of projects. So that when you do sit down to write – every day – you won't boot up your laptop and be surprised and discombobulated by what you find there.

If you go for a week or more without writing, you'll finally sit down and look at the draft of

Eric Pfeffinger is a member of the Dramatists Guild whose plays have been produced by Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Geva Theatre Center, the Vital Theatre Company, City Theatre in Miami, Childsplay, the Bloomington Playwrights Project, Visions and Voices, Vox Humana, the Noble Fool and elsewhere. He has developed work through workshops and readings with Chicago Dramatists, the New Jersey Rep, the Rattlestick, the Abingdon, Theatre of NOTE, and the Bonderman Conference. He's currently writing plays on commissions from the InterAct and Imagination Stage. His play *LOST AND FOUNDLING* is available from Dramatic Publishing. He's also co-author of the novel *THE HIGH-IMPACT INFIDELITY DIET*, available at finer airport bookstores everywhere. He developed his play *MALIGNANCE* at PlayPenn in 2006.



the play you're ostensibly working on – scroll through the document to wherever you last left off – and become confused. Why are all the characters singing a song? Was that my idea? Did it make sense a week ago to have them singing something? Is this song even in the public domain? A prickly and antagonistic relationship has evolved between myself and the writer I was a week ago. Because – between you and me – that guy has no idea what he's doing. And it keeps falling to me to figure out ways to clean up his stupid messes.

It would be a lot easier for me to get along with the writer I was yesterday. He's all right. He and I, we can relate. We've got things in common. Sometimes he's even smarter than I am. But my problem – the way I too often work – is that the writer I was yesterday wasn't even writing. He was doing something else – replying to overdue emails and driving to daycare and sliding in to his day job late and hoping nobody noticed. He can't help me. So I'm stuck with week-ago guy, who's like the worst collaborator ever. Possibly because he's so blinded by rage at the writer I was two weeks ago. (And he has a point; that guy's a moron.)

What I need to do is write whenever I happen not to be doing other things. But ever

since I've found myself with both a day job and a child, the only time I reliably have to write is between nine p.m. and eight a.m., and I can barely bring myself to fold laundry after nine p.m., much less evoke subtext. In the early morning I'm sleepy, and late at night – well, I'm sleepy. I'm sleepy a lot. And also sometimes I'm watching *The Soup* on the E!

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channel. Faced with choosing between artistic discipline and Joel McHale, sometimes we choose Joel McHale. Literary trivia: the only reason Trollope was so productive was because he didn't have basic cable.

So I find myself snatching time where I can – half an hour here, fifteen minutes there, thinking, *now I know how Raymond Carver felt*. Thinking, *this is what we talk about when we talk about not having enough time to do our stuff*. I work on sure things and obligations, like commissions, and the stuff with deadlines, like applications, and

– with not enough time, and forced to choose – I work on the stuff that seems most likely, all things considered, to maybe bring in some money. And that fifteen minutes or that hour doesn't seem productive unless I finish something, or really make a dent in it, because time is precious and we're thinking about money and it's all about the page count.

One of the attractions of a program like PlayPenn, of course, is that it's a glorious fantasyland in which the work/life problem is no problem. You're in the right head space all the time, except when you don't feel like it, and it's all about the work, and you get so much done that when you return to regular life afterwards with all its regular responsibilities it feels like you may never get anything done again and you become dissatisfied with everyone and everything and very hard to be around.

Or maybe that's just me.

On one of the playwriting listservs to which I subscribe, there was once a discussion about what one needs to do in order to be a successful playwright. Among the usual practical recommendations – get an MFA, move to New York, nurture your neuroses, knock it off with all the stage directions already – there was one person, the most successful

playwright on the listserv, who said, tongue only barely in cheek: Don't get married, and don't have kids. So now you know: next time a writer friend gets married or has a child, don't be so insensitive as to send congratulations. Somber sympathies will do.

When my spouse – who does an awful lot of domestic drudgery herself, in addition to having a demanding career and being a parent – asks if this might be the week when I mow the yard, my instinct is to respond: How can I possibly justify mowing the yard when I haven't worked on my play in six days? But no actual human being can be expected to be moved by that argument (except possibly another playwright, and even then their reply is likely to be "Your play? What about *my*

play?"). So the yard (eventually) gets mowed, and the laundry gets done, and bills get paid, and the kid gets bathed, and you make it from the bed to the shower to the closet to the day job and all your obligations get at least minimal attention except for the writing, because that's the one whose shirking is least likely to lead to getting fired, getting jailed, or getting in trouble with the health department. Even though you can't afford not to write every day, you can't afford not to do these other things more.

Which isn't an injustice; it's just how it is. Much to my dismay, it isn't something I can reasonably blame on Republicans or the NEA or the *Times* theater critics or my neighbors or television or regional theater artistic staffs. I

could be getting twice as many commissions and three times as many productions as I am now, and my daughter would still need to be bathed and I'd still need to find my way from the bed to the shower to the closet to the day job (something along the lines of a MacArthur Genius Grant might make a difference; I'd be willing to give it a shot, anyway). It's not an injustice – it's just something I need to deal with, probably between the hours of nine p.m. and eight a.m., preferably a little more functionally than I've been handling it so far.

First step will be doing something about that no-talent jerk of a writer I was a week ago. At least until my daughter wakes up or the end of the spin cycle, whichever comes first. Bring on the delete key.

### **PLAYPENN PLACES TWO PLAYS AS FINALISTS FOR SMITH PRIZE**

The national New Play Network (NNPN), administrators of the Smith Prize in playwriting has recently announced the six finalists for this year's prize. Among them are two plays that have been developed at PlayPenn:

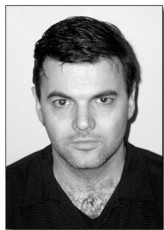
**THE RANT by Andrew Case (PlayPenn 2007)**  
**A HUMAN EQUATION by Peter Bonilla (PlayPenn 2008)**

Congratulations to the playwrights!

### ***THE SMITH PRIZE***

*In the Spring of 2006, NNPN announced that it will administer a new, annual play prize. Funded by a gift from novelist and playwright Timothy Smith, The Smith Prize will be awarded to a play that specifically focuses on American politics - examining our civic institutions, particularly our democratic institutions - and asks: Who are Americans as a people? What are we becoming? What are our global responsibilities? The prize carries a \$5,000 cash award, which will be split between the playwright and the first National New Play Network member theatre that chooses to produce the winning play.*

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



**Andrew Case's** play, **THE RANT** (PlayPenn '07) will open at Miami's New Theatre on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, will be produced by InterAct Theatre in Philadelphia in January of '09, and will be seen at New Jersey Rep in Long Branch, NJ next summer

**Jennifer Haley's** play **NEIGHBORHOOD 3: REQUISITION OF DOOM** was recently read at a college in New Zealand. Her play **BREADCRUMBS** (PlayPenn '08), which is now entitled **GINGERBREAD HOUSE**, received a reading at The Victory Theatre in Burbank, CA.

**GINGERBREAD HOUSE** is under consideration for future productions in St. Louis, MO and Philadelphia.



**Lila Rose Kaplan:** Following PlayPenn 2008, Lila Rose's play **WILDFLOWER** was further workshopped and given a reading at The Lark Play Development Center in NYC. Much of the PlayPenn cast returned. Soon after, Perishable Theatre in Providence is producing

Lila Rose's one act **BIOGRAPHY OF A CONSTELLATION** as part of their Women's Playwriting Festival. The play will run from Oct. 16 - Nov. 2nd. Lila Rose is the Shank Playwriting



Fellow at Cornerstone Theatre Company in LA for the 2008-2009 season.

**Sean Christopher Lewis:** The national premiere of Sean's play **MILITANT LANGUAGE** (PlayPenn '07) is going ahead as scheduled with productions of it in Cincinnati, Cleveland, New Haven, and Chicago



and a reading in NYC. Also, his play **THE APERTURE** won the inaugural Rosa Parks Award for Social Justice in Playwriting from the Kennedy Center and will premiere at the Cleveland Public Theatre in March. Sean's solo piece **THE GONE CHAIR** just played the Open Stage Harrisburg Flying Solo Festival and will open Penn State University's Cultural Conversations Festival. **MILITANT LANGUAGE** is being published by Original Works Publishing.

**James McLindon's** play **FAITH** was recently workshopped and read at the Lark Theatre's Playwrights Week in New York. Firefly Productions in Vermont will be mounting the



second production of his play, **A BRIEF HISTORY OF PENGUINS AND PROMISCUITY** this fall, date TBA. (It premiered in LA earlier this year.) His brand-new play, **DIERDRE OF THE SORROWS**, an updating of the Celtic legend, will receive its first reading on Jan. 19th in New York as part of the id Theatre's Bridgeworks series.



**Gregory Moss:** After spending time at the Millay Colony following PlayPenn, Greg was recently at Dartmouth doing a

workshop of his play **PUNKPLAY** for New York Theatre Workshop directed by Les Waters in early August. In Minneapolis, October 10 - 26, Red Eye Theatre is presenting his new play **AMANDA TEARS, TEENAGE DETECTIVE** to open their 25th season. Details are at [www.redeyetheater.org](http://www.redeyetheater.org).



**Lucy Thurber** (PlayPenn'06) was at the Labyrinth Theatre retreat in July working on her play **MONSTROSITY** which will be produced by 13P this year – February 2009 – in New York. Lucy also will be teaching playwriting at Sarah Lawrence College next year having been given the fancy title of Professor of Playwriting. She is also developing a number of screenplays.

**Eric Pfeffinger's** play **HUNTING HIGH** received a staged reading at the New Jersey Rep in August. Also in August, his play **ASSHOLES AND AUREOLES** was produced as part of the Indianapolis Fringe Festival, where it had also won first place in the New Play Script Competition, and enjoyed the distinction of being the best-attended show in the festival. His short play **ARMS AND THE MAN** was produced at the Bloomington Playwrights Project, and his kids' play **LOST AND FOUNDLING** is slated for production this season at the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha. He also



spent time this summer developing a new play at the Summer Salt Writers' Retreat in Chatham, MA, and he has written an article about playwright James Still that will appear in the October issue of *American Theatre* magazine.

## CONFESSIONS OF A WORKAHOLIC

by Emily Morse

Warning: I don't have any answers. But you know as well as I do that a dramaturg's value is not in the solutions they provide, but rather, in the quality of the questions that they ask. With that in mind, here is the first of many: What are the ways in which we do and don't promote wellness in our profession and in our lives? Let's define wellness as balancing what's necessary to have a strong, flexible, capable body; a strong, curious, healthy, agile, creative mind; having functional, supportive relationships; doing meaningful and satisfying work in the company of respected, trusted colleagues; and (here's the rub) time to not do, in other words, time to just be.

In these times when "busy-ness" is pervasive, what is the quality of attention we're giving to the abundance of work on our plates? Is there space for deep consideration for each project to which we commit? Are we able to take pause and acknowledge the completion of a task or project before launching into another for which we're already behind? It's occurred to me in the past several years that I spend the majority of my day reacting – to emails, to phone calls, requests, deadlines, queries, etc. My job is to serve

playwrights and correspondence is part of that service (it's also how I keep in touch with friends/colleagues and how I stay informed). But so is reading their plays and when do I do that?

Perhaps it's just easier to allow discrete tasks to be the driving force of your day. Admittedly, there's something very satisfying about striking things off my TO DO list. Understandably, it takes effort to look away from an inbox containing thousands of items, hundreds of which might still be

**What are the ways in which we do and don't promote wellness in our profession and in our lives?**

unread, and will power, or discipline at best, to carve out time in the early part of the day for the less concrete, more fluid aspects of our artistic work. I think the modus operandi is that if I can just get through those email items, or return all those calls than I'll have the better part of the day to read or think. It unfortunately rarely happens that way, so from where do you pull that extra time? The answer is on route or at home. Reading plays is probably the most important part of my job and it

rarely happens during regular work hours.

So really, where does that time come from? Where is the mind free to daydream? For me, it often happens when I am not trying to generate anything. Where? Typically the shower, the elliptical machine at the gym, while taking walks or practicing yoga and the rare times when I indulge in body work, i.e. facials, manicures, or massages. Vacations, if you can take them, are not necessarily places to daydream around work, but to relax the mind, rejuvenate and replenish. Or, at least that's what I've heard. Isn't replenishing the well necessary for the generation of new ideas? Isn't rejuvenation essential to good health? And isn't there a connection between healthy minds, healthy bodies, and healthy work and home environments?

I'm not so naïve to think this is a problem unique to theatre however. Through my husband, who is a massage therapist, and a few other sources, I do know that the corporate world is connecting wellness and productivity. For example, David Letterman has a yoga instructor on staff; *The New York Times*, and New York University have "staff appreciation days" and "student fun days," respectively, when they bring in massage therapists who spend several hours doing

back-to-back (no pun intended) chair massages. And it's not just the corporate world – The Pace/MacGill Gallery has a massage therapist come in every other week to perform chair massages on the staff, and up until a couple of years ago, New Dramatists offered weekly yoga, something several of us are lobbying to reinstate.

In the fall of 2006, Paul Meshejian invited me to the 2007 PlayPenn New Play Conference. He had invited me to participate in PlayPenn 2006 and I had said yes, only to pull out later when the reality of having a new baby set in. So in the summer of 2007, along with my one-year-old and my 83-year-old mother who agreed to cover childcare, I moved into an apartment on 12<sup>th</sup> Street between Spruce and Pine. It was three blocks from a playground, four blocks from the South Street Whole Foods, near enough to the Adrienne that we could walk to rehearsal yet far enough to get a work out. It was an ideal situation. In addition to these fab accommodations, PlayPenn invited me into the world of Russell Davis through his play, *The Day of the Picnic*. What this gig afforded me was time: time to focus on one project; time to prepare for the work as defined by the needs of the project; time to consider and dream about the play; time for conversations and thoughtful

responses to questions, concerns, insights and inspirations that arose in rehearsal, and despite all that preoccupation with the play, we were still able to prepare nice meals, take walks, go to the playground, and read books, children's and otherwise. There seemed to be time for everything. Perhaps there is a connection to be made between the simplicity of a daily routine or ritual and the promotion of complex and deep thinking about the work. For the record, I have experienced this sensation before; usually when I've been hired to work out-of-town in

**What if productivity was less about more and more about better?**

developmental, playwright-focused new work festivals like JAW/West in Portland, Oregon, the Baldwin New Work Festival at UCSD, and The New Work Festival at UT-Austin.

New Dramatists, among other developmental based organizations, offers simply that – time and space – to its playwright company members. New Dramatists' unique contribution to the field is the gift of seven years during which time the playwrights drive their own processes according to the needs of their work in the company of their most gifted peers. I have witnessed and experienced the direct and

positive impact of time and space on the lives and careers of these playwrights. It's evident in how they develop themselves; how they support their fellow artists; how they forge vivid, artistic visions and take on leadership roles; and ultimately, how they grow the gorgeous bodies of work that line our library shelves.

Obviously this topic is of interest because I carry a heavy work-load that I am often responsible for creating. And I wouldn't mind some time and space for myself. I suspect that I am not alone. Early in our

careers, saying yes to everything provides opportunity to build dramaturgical skill and muscle, versatility and enduring artistic and personal relationships. But at what point does saying yes become habit, or a compulsion?

The other day I had a conversation with a fellow mom who recently re-located to the US from Sweden. She asserted that the obsession with work is THE defining characteristic of citizens of the United States. Is this an American conundrum? I might add too that, in a commerce-oriented society, intangible resources are difficult to quantify or to define in terms of "success," therefore they seem, generally speaking, less valuable. Our society likes product and tangible outcomes,

so perhaps we take on too many things because “career building” is valued over art-making or character building for that matter? What if productivity was less about more and more about better?

So what is this really about? It’s about many things: my age, where I am in my career, having a child, but most directly, and it’s very personal, it’s about evaluating my priorities and questioning how I conduct my life. Within the past six months, my immediate family lost one of its members to stomach cancer and the theatre community lost a treasured actress/playwright after a 12-year battle with breast cancer. These profoundly individual beings were vibrant, successful people: artists, business women, mothers, daughters, sisters, partners; young middle-aged

women who fought valiantly, survivors who succumbed. My sister said that she wished she had taken a job that could be left at work, rather than one that, even after returning home, persisted. Whether or not that was true is irrelevant. What occurs to me, though, knowing what I know about her, is that she regretted not attending to the needs of her self. She sacrificed a lot for her business, and while she was a “healthy” person – vegetarian, runner, non-smoker – stress was her nemesis, but perhaps she didn’t know that until it was too late.

What if you only had 12 years to live, or you found out that you only had until you were 50, or two years was it? I find myself asking if how I spend my day-to-day is adding up to lifetime satisfaction. I also wonder what is enough; what’s

worthy of my time and what’s not, and what is successful? I’m also practicing saying no to work without feeling like I might compromise my career. To the contrary, as I am learning, it’s necessary for healthy living, and ultimately, healthy creating.

On a final note, Zakiyyah Alexander and I are starting a wellness salon at New Dramatists. The schedule is yet to be determined, but the intention is to bring some of these questions and concerns into the New Dramatists community – to be discussed, to be addressed, to educate, to experiment, break some habits perhaps – all in pursuit of feeling good, being more mindful people and creators in the midst of crazy busy lives.

*Namaste.*



**EMILY MORSE** is a multi-faceted theatre artist entering her eighth year at New Dramatists as the director of artistic development. She has served as dramaturg on workshops and productions at The Philadelphia Theatre Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, New York Theatre Workshop, the Wilma, Clubbed Thumb, New Georges, the JAW/West Festival, Ripe Time, Cincinnati Playhouse, The Culture Project/Women Center Stage, and PlayPenn. Her directing work and 10-minute plays have been seen in a variety of venues in New York City and regionally. She has also held administrative positions with Ping Chong and Company, Lema Productions, and LMDA. Workshops in which she’s participated include Choreography for Directors with Annie-B Parson, Butoh with Dawn Akemi Saito, Viewpoints with J.Ed Azaira, Critical Response and Movement and Stage Composition, respectively, with Liz Lerman, and playwriting with Eduardo Machado, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Karen Hartman. She has studied various forms of dance including Swing, Argentine Tango, and Flamenco. INNOCENTS, her co-adaption of THE HOUSE OF MIRTH with Rachel Dickstein and the Ripe Time company was produced at the Ohio in 2005, and more recently, she worked with Carol Gilligan on an adaptation of THE SCARLET LETTER. She has been a guest for the Baldwin Festival of New Work at UCSD, the Sewanee Writers’ Conference, and the New Works Festival at UT-Austin. She is an artistic advisor for New Georges, LCT’s Directors Lab alumna, NYTW Usual Suspect, LMDA member, and a Board Member of The Talking Band. She lives in Greenpoint, Brooklyn with her actor/massage therapist husband Gary, their two-year old son, Lincoln, and two felines.

# PlayPenn Submission Guidelines

## **PlayPenn is now accepting submissions for the 2009 New Play Development Conference.**

The 2009 conference will be held in Philadelphia from July 10 – 26, 2009 at the Adrienne Theatre. Invited playwrights will have the opportunity to work with a director, dramaturg and professional Philadelphia-based actors over a 17 day period that allows for 29 hours of rehearsal and staged reading time. The workshops will be preceded by a three-day pre-conference retreat that will help in laying the collaborative groundwork for the development time ahead. The conference will end with public staged readings that are intended as a part of the process, giving playwrights an opportunity to measure the efficacy of their work, providing an opportunity to gauge the work ahead. PlayPenn will provide travel for casting for both writer and director, travel to and from the conference, housing, per diem, and a stipend.

Applicants should be aware that we are a development conference rather than a festival or showcase for new work. The distinction is important and meaningful to us in the current climate of the increasing commercialization of play development. We seek to avoid participation in what is known as “development hell” by fostering an environment in which risk is rewarded and honest assessment is provided and encouraged.

Please note, we do not accept agent submissions. Because of an increasing number of submissions, PlayPenn will only consider a single submission from each playwright.

### **Interested playwrights should send the following in hard copy:**

- 10 continuous pages of a new play. Plays that have been previously produced are not eligible for consideration.
- A complete history of the play’s development (workshops, readings, etc.)
- Cast breakdown (number of roles, number of actors required, etc.)
- Cover letter with complete contact information (mailing address, phone and email address)
- An up-to-date resume and short bio
- If you would like confirmation of receipt, enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard.

**In addition to sending the above by post, playwrights should also email a ‘Word’ or ‘pdf’ file of the above 10 pages to [playpenn1@verizon.net](mailto:playpenn1@verizon.net).**

We encourage you to submit using double-sided printing and staples or paper clips to reduce the use of paper and binders, and to minimize your costs. All submissions will be read. From these, full manuscripts will be solicited for consideration. Do not send a manuscript with, or instead of, the writing sample. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be read. Due to an increasingly large number of submissions, we cannot return any materials from the initial submission round.

**Send your materials to:  
PlayPenn  
220 West Evergreen Avenue, D-2  
Philadelphia, PA 19118**

**SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 1st, 2008.**

**\* THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS \***