

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF  
WRITERS' THEATRE

ISSUE THIRTY-TWO  
JANUARY 2011

# THE BRIEF CHRONICLE



**WT**  
WRITERS'  
THEATRE

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# THE BRIEF CHRONICLE

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ISSUE THIRTY-TWO JANUARY 2011

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**Kathryn M. Lipuma**  
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Dear Friends,

Bringing life to new work is one of the most rewarding, challenging, thrilling and important adventures in the life of any theatre. Revivals are certainly crucial to the identity of Writers' Theatre and breathing new energy and perspective into classics like *A Streetcar Named Desire* will always be central to our mission. But if we don't put our resources into staging the original works of living playwrights, eventually there will be no classics left to revive. This is our second project with playwright Brett Neveu, the first being *Old Glory* in 2009. Brett is in capable hands with director William Brown at the helm, who has proven himself a significant interpreter of new work. He and Brett make a fantastic team.

In this issue of *The Brief Chronicle*, we take a closer look at the career and collaborations between playwright Brett Neveu and director William Brown. The play focuses on a father and son con-man team, so we also go in-depth with the production's sleight of hand consultant—explaining the background of the scams and cons that you will see during the production. Furthermore, Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden shares the importance of developing and producing new work and the significance of Writers' *Literary Development Initiative*.

Backstage at Writers' Theatre we celebrate the recent opening of *Travels With My Aunt* at Books on Vernon. The last few months have been full of exciting events including the new and increasingly popular, *Making Of...* series and the *Director's Society Open Rehearsal*—a special thank you to our generous supporters giving them unprecedented access to the art.

In the meantime, we're in full swing preparing for *A Minister's Wife* in New York; we have nearly completed casting for *Heartbreak House* at Tudor Court and we're deeply involved in the planning of our 2010/11 Season. Be sure to watch your in-box for exciting announcements.

Sincerely,

Michael

Kate

WORLD PREMIERE

# *Do The Hustle*

BY **BRETT NEVEU**  
DIRECTED BY **WILLIAM BROWN**

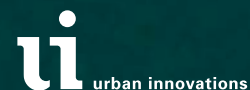
January 25 – March 20, 2011  
Performed at 325 Tudor Court

Sam and Eddie Sisson are more than just father and son, they're a crack team of hustlers always looking for the next mark. Sam, just a teenager who has practically raised himself, now wants to distinguish himself from his father and strike out on his own. Eddie doesn't want to let his son go without one final hustle, which could bring in their biggest take yet—but could ultimately tear them apart.

THE CAST: **PATRICK ANDREWS, FRANCIS GUINAN, JOE MINOSO AND KAREN JANES WODITSCH**

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This program is partially supported by a grant from the *Illinois Arts Council*, a state agency.







# BRETT NEVEU: A NEW VOICE IN PLAYWRITING

BY **BOBBY KENNEDY**, *Producing Assistant/Literary Associate*

Frequently identified as a singularly Midwestern playwright, Brett Neveu was actually born in California. His father was a soil science major in college and worked for a company that manufactured medicine for livestock, a career path that relocated the family to Newton, Iowa when Neveu was still a toddler. He and his sister adapted well to the Midwestern winters, though his Cajun father and

half-Puerto Rican mother found it took some getting used to.

Neveu's interest in the theatre began at a young age, although at first he wanted to be an actor. An early experience in a play at the YMCA turned him on to acting, which he continued to do through junior high and high school. It was not until high school that the future playwright



wrote his first play, confessing that, “I’ve always been writing, just not realizing at first how much I loved it.” Enrolling at The University of Iowa, the budding writer chose to study both acting and playwriting. It was also here that Neveu met his wife Kristen, who was studying communications and anthropology with an aim towards incorporating the subjects into her work as a painter.

After graduation, Neveu and his wife relocated to Minneapolis where he worked with The Playwrights’ Center, a lauded play development center. Despite their love of the city, the couple was having trouble succeeding artistically. After talking to some friends in Chicago who spoke fondly of the local arts scene, they decided to try their luck in the Windy City.

## I’VE ALWAYS BEEN WRITING.

Arriving in 1994, Neveu started his Chicago theatre career by performing all over town with an adult-themed, suitcase-based puppet theatre. He also had a short piece produced in the back of Sheffield’s bar by college friend Rebecca Gilman (the now award-winning playwright). While the show was only sparsely attended, the experience galvanized Neveu’s

determination and he spent the next five years focused on writing plays. His works-in-progress were frequently read at Chicago Dramatists, where he became a resident playwright. The dedication to his craft paid off when he met director Ann Filmer while working on Collaboraction’s first Sketchbook performance series. She took a liking to the emerging playwright and produced his first full-length play in Chicago, *The Last Barbecue*, in 2000.

From there, Neveu’s star ascended rapidly and he quickly became one of the most produced and talked about local playwrights. Between 2000 and 2010, the writer had 15 new plays and one musical receive their world or regional premiere productions at Chicago theatres. A Red Orchid Theatre, where Neveu became an ensemble member, produced the lion’s share of his work, including *Eric LaRue* (2002), *4 Murders* (2005), *The Earl* (2006), *The Meek* (2007) and *Weapons of Mass Impact* (2007). *Weapons of Mass Impact* was the second in a trilogy of plays, following the world premiere of the first part, *Harmless*, at TimeLine Theatre Company in 2007. He also had works produced locally at Goodman Theatre, American Theatre Company, The Factory Theatre, Stage Left Theatre, Strawdog Theatre Company and Chicago Dramatists. The playwright also holds the honor of winning the League of Chicago Theatre’s inaugural Emerging Artist Award in 2005.

Writers’ Theatre commissioned Neveu in 2007 to complete his trilogy of plays that began with *Harmless* and *Weapons of Mass Impact*. The resulting work, *Old Glory*, debuted at Tudor Court in February 2009 and became the first play that Writers’ Theatre commissioned, developed and produced through its newly minted *Literary Development Initiative*. Following the artistic success of *Old Glory* (which received a critically-acclaimed production last February at The Victory Theatre Center in Burbank, California), Writers’ Theatre commissioned Neveu again and the writer responded with the thrilling new play, *Do The Hustle*.

In 2007, Neveu and his wife decided it was time to move cities once again and relocated to Los Angeles along with their new baby daughter, Lia. He has made inroads with the film and television industry in addition to working on the plays he is under commission to write. His writings have also been making their way beyond the Land of Lincoln, with productions mounted in New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Stratford-Upon-Avon. The Royal Court Theater in London commissioned Neveu and recently produced the world premiere of his play *Red Bud* in October 2010.

Writers’ Theatre is proud to support Neveu’s development as a writer and looks forward to a continued relationship. Nurturing talent is essential to furthering the artistic horizons of both our audiences and

the theatre community at large. Our audiences are some of the privileged theater-goers who have been able to watch a new voice in playwriting emerge. Brett Neveu is a tremendous talent in the prime of his career and is now more than ever poised to break

## HIS WRITINGS HAVE ALSO BEEN MAKING THEIR WAY BEYOND THE LAND OF LINCOLN WITH PRODUCTIONS MOUNTED IN NEW YORK, LOS ANGELES, LAS VEGAS...

through as an essential voice of the contemporary American theatre. ■



# DREAM TEAM COLLABORATORS

Playwright Brett Neveu and director William Brown, who directed the world premiere of Neveu's play *Old Glory* in 2009, have teamed up again to bring the world premiere of *Do The Hustle* to the Tudor Court stage. Producing Assistant/Literary Associate Bobby Kennedy discusses with Neveu and Brown the background of the play and their exciting collaboration.

**BOBBY KENNEDY:** Brett, where did you get the inspiration for *Do The Hustle*?

**BRETT NEVEU:** I was standing on the Ravenswood Metra platform during the rehearsals for *Old Glory* at Writers' Theatre when I overheard a father and his teenage son talking about some kind of con job. At least, in my mind, that's how I heard it. Most likely they were just arguing, but there was something covert about their conversation and that struck a chord. After I got on the train, I wrote down a few ideas about the pair and stuck the title *Do The Hustle* on the scrap of paper.

**BK:** Did you immediately know that *Do The Hustle* would be a good fit for

Writers' Theatre? Bill, how did you come on board the project?

**BN:** Artistic Director Michael Halberstam had offered me another commission through the *Literary Development Initiative*, so I was on the prowl for new ideas. When inspiration struck, I met with him and gave him a brief sketch. He told me to see what might take hold and I began working on the play. Our aesthetics match quite well, so typically I know when an idea for a play is a good fit and I'll work to reach the bar the theatre has set for quality of work.

**WILLIAM BROWN:** When I heard about the new commission I just couldn't wait, and I didn't even have

to read the script. I had such a good time working on *Old Glory* and I think in some odd way we suit each other. We share a commitment to telling the truth. Everything starts and ends with that. Whether as an actor, director or writer, Brett and I are 100% committed to truth and that's the common ground we share.

**BK:** Bill, you directed *Old Glory* and are back again to direct *Do The Hustle*. What is the key to your collaboration?

**WB:** I love the mystery inherent in Brett's work. You have to really pay attention when watching a Brett Neveu play because he leaves the work up to the audience. I adore that. I love when an author doesn't take my intelligence for granted and I love a mystery. His stories are never a simple "whodunit," but a question of "why" or "how." I also love the economy of his writing, and yet his work is very rich. We are constantly fueled by the complexity that he gives us.

**BN:** Bill knows what to do with my stories. It's as simple as that. He understands that no matter how "real" the play may feel, I don't write realism. The theatrical world of the play is always on his mind as well as the search for ultimate truth within the script. He allows actors to explore their journeys to this truth and always keeps everyone in the room asking questions. For him, there are no right answers—only strong choices. Plus he's very funny and has become a great friend. So those things help the process, too.

**BK:** Bill, have you ever collaborated this closely with a living playwright before? What were the benefits or drawbacks of that collaboration?

**WB:** I've worked on several new plays and I wish I could say there is a difference. I always feel a responsibility to the playwright and his words, whether they've been dead for 400 years or they're sitting right next to me. When directing I have to believe in the inherent strength of a play. I don't go in thinking, "I can fix this." That respect for the writer is essential to me and an essential part of the art at Writers' Theatre.

**BK:** How did your previous experience on *Old Glory* inform your work together for *Do The Hustle*? Did it change your working relationship?

**WB:** I only knew of Brett before working with him on *Old Glory*. When we met for the first time, we became old pals immediately. He loves hanging around in rehearsal and we'll laugh, fuss, argue and tell stories. It's always been an easy relationship and one I'm thankful for.

**BN:** Writers' Theatre is such a wonderful place to work that a writer wants to create equally wonderful work for its stage. I discovered during *Old Glory* that an even mixture of artistic support and theatrical challenge exists whenever Writers' produces a show and that mixture pushes me to do good work. ■

# THE ART OF THE CON

## ENTER THE WORLD OF GRIFTERS

Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden talked with Dennis Watkins about hustlers and their trade. Watkins is a third-generation magician and sleight of hand expert who will work with the Do The Hustle team to perfect the play's scams.

**STUART CARDEN:** Con artists are often called "grifters." Do you know where this term came from?

**DENNIS WATKINS:** To the best of my knowledge, the term came about around 1915 and was originally used in describing circus and carnival tricksters. Most of my research says that the term is an alteration of "grafter" which was British slang for corrupt criminals.

**SC:** The con is as old as civilization itself. What are some of the iconic swindles throughout history?

**DW:** The most iconic is the shell game where you watch the pea under the shell. If you find it, you win. If you lose it, you also lose your money. This developed into the classic magic trick The Cups and Balls. The card player's variation of

this is Three Card Monte, in which the mark is told to keep up with one of three playing cards (typically a queen sandwiched between two kings). Through all kinds of sleight of hand, the queen is always lost and the mark always loses.

Incidentally, the term "Mark" has a fun story. When guests would stand in line to buy tickets to the carnival, the ticket booth was always elevated. This was to enable the seller to look down into the buyer's wallet and determine whether or not they had any real money to be swindled. If they did, the ticket seller would signal a carny who would place a small chalk mark on the buyer's back and different carnies would spend their time swindling those bearing the chalk mark.

**SC:** Is there a certain city or time period that is particularly well known for being rife with grifters?

**DW:** Frankly, every city and every time period has been packed full of grifters. The cons change constantly with technology and education, but the grifter has been around forever

and will never go away. These days, people steal your credit card information or use e-mails to get your money. We've gotten pretty good at stopping the street cons (the shell game, three card monte, etc...) and now grifters are being much more creative.

**SC:** Are there any famous Chicago grifters and if so what were their trademark cons?

**DW:** I immediately think of Joseph Weil, who was reported to have stolen over \$8 million in the course of his career. While working as a collector at age 17, Weil noticed that his co-workers were keeping small sums for themselves. He then started a protection racket: he wouldn't tell on his co-workers if they gave him a share of the stolen money. From that moment on, Weil lived the life of a career confidence man. Some of his most famous cons include selling talking dogs to exotic pet lovers before revealing that the canines were unfortunately stricken with laryngitis and swindling the detective escorting him to prison into buying \$30,000 in "stock." Weil defended his actions by saying, "I never swindled an honest man—only rascals. They wanted something for nothing. I gave them nothing for nothing."

**SC:** Is there a quality or personality trait that successful grifters share?

**DW:** They're fearless. It takes a lot of confidence to pull off these

schemes, which is why we call them confidence games. A grifter's success comes from their ability to confidently and gracefully play whatever role is required of them.

**SC:** What are some of the more unique and iconic cons that are the standard trade of grifters?

**DW:** We don't always think of them as grifters but con artists have evolved. So, I think of people like Bernie Madoff, who ran an enormously successful Ponzi scheme—until he got caught, of course.

Speaking of the Ponzi scheme, it's named after Charles Ponzi, an Italian-American immigrant who was a notorious grifter. Ponzi would pay returns to separate investors from their own money or money paid by subsequent investors, rather than from any actual profit earned. The Ponzi scheme usually entices new investors by offering returns other investments cannot guarantee. These short-term returns are either abnormally high or unusually consistent, and their perpetuation requires an ever-increasing flow of money from investors to keep the scheme going. *The Boston Post* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1921 for its investigative reporting which led to the exposure of Ponzi's scheme. ■

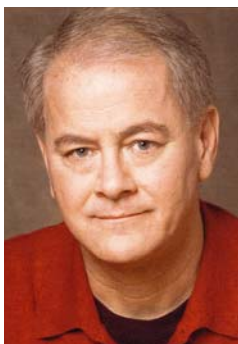
# SCAM STORIES

The Brief Chronicle asked the cast of *Do The Hustle* and Writers' Theatre staff to share stories of encounters they've had with con men. Here are some tales of real-life hustlers operating in the world today.



**KAREN JANES WODITSCH**, Cast, *Do The Hustle*

This is a classic el train scam and it happened to me during my first weeks of living in Chicago. I was on the Red Line going south to Belmont and a guy had a shell game scam going in my train car. I had never seen anything like it. He was extremely charming and was rotating the cups with great panache on his little piece of cardboard. I watched him take \$20 from another guy and I thought, "I saw exactly where the ball was and I could certainly use the money." The deal was that I would hand over \$5 and if I guessed wrong he got my \$5. If I guessed right I got his \$20. I watched carefully, saw where the ball was, pointed at the cup—nothing there of course. Bye bye fiver, but a great lesson learned.



**FRANCIS GUINAN**, Cast, *Do The Hustle*

A friend and I were walking through Times Square in the summer of 1990. We came across a three card monte game right in the middle of the sidewalk. Having lived in New York I'd seen the game many times and knew it was a losing proposition. My friend, having watched several rounds, knew he had the game figured out. Over my protests he dropped \$20 on the table and faster than you could say "red queen" the game was over and the \$20 was walking up Broadway. I still don't know exactly how it's done but it's a beautiful act to watch.



**MICHAEL HALBERSTAM**, Writers' Theatre Artistic Director

A few years ago I was parking my car in a commercial lot. As I pulled into the lot, a man came up to me and asked me how long I was going to be parking for and indicated where I should park. He told me that it would be \$20 and as I handed him the money he handed me a little claim check. He moved away from the car and then quickly started running to his nearby bicycle which he promptly hopped on and rode away. Simultaneously, I realized that the lot was in fact an automated pay lot. I had been very well scammed and must confess to have been more amused and impressed with his con than annoyed. His "performance" was worth the \$20.



**JARON BERNSTEIN**, Writers' Theatre Development Assistant

In college, two of my friends and I went to Paris together for spring break. One day we went to a very touristy area and despite speaking French, we stuck out like a sore thumb. As we began to ascend a long flight of steps three very charming Senegalese men descended upon us. Before we knew what was happening, they had separated us and began braiding very cheap-looking bracelets onto our wrists. When we protested, they simply said, "but, look, your friend is getting one. You will like it too!" and continued. I decided that it wouldn't be a big deal to give this guy a Euro or two. When he finished, I handed him a Euro, but he protested and said that this cheap bracelet made of string cost 10 Euros (around \$15). When I argued, he merely pointed to one of my friends who was handing his man money and said, "see, your friend is paying!" We were divided and conquered—the only way to get away was to give this man what he wanted. I handed over the 10 Euros and left. I couldn't help but marvel at their hustling technique—they had it down to a science.



# WHY HERE?

*With two world premieres in the 2010/11 Season and a number of other new works currently in development for future seasons, Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden responds to: why new plays at Writers' Theatre?*

In an interview, novelist Toni Morrison said, "if there's a book you really want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." I love this quote. There is something wonderfully energizing about the idea that despite however many thousands of years we've been telling one another stories there are still so many that have yet to be told and so many new ways to tell old stories with fresh perspective. I have an insatiable hunger for new stories and new plays because they speak directly and specifically to the current moment. We live in a thrilling, complicated, unsettling and fast-paced world and as a result, we now more than ever need new stories to help us gain insight and perspective on who we are and what is important to us.

Furthermore, it is vital to acknowledge that the classic plays of tomorrow are being written today. I think it is quite easy to forget that the plays that we often think of as "classics" were once brand new world premieres. Imagine being in the theatre the first night that Shakespeare's mischief-maker Puck sprinkled his fairy dust in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or when Blanche offers that she has "always depended on the kindness of strangers" in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. By producing new plays we hope to share with you the excitement of seeing for the first time ever an indelible character come to life on stage or hearing a new phrase that speaks to the essence of our humanity.

Investing in new plays is essential to secure the future of the American playwright and thus the American theatre. It is challenging for theatre artists to make a living in the best of times. The current economic climate makes it nearly impossible to make a living writing for the stage.

Consequently, our very best writing talent is being drawn to television and film by the lure of financial security. And yet, even in Hollywood, with such extraordinary financial stakes at play, their work must often be compromised for the sake of commercial interest.

## INVESTING IN NEW PLAYS IS ESSENTIAL

By commissioning and producing new plays we are laying foundations for the classics of the future and helping to ensure that we have intelligent, diverse and vibrant voices writing for the American theatre. Indeed, Writers' Theatre has enjoyed a high degree of success with the David and Mary Winton Green *Literary Development Initiative*. In 2003 we premiered Marilyn Campbell and Curt Columbus's adaptation of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. It has been presented in over 30 regional theaters nationwide and made its New York premiere when Writers' Theatre produced it at 59E59 Street Theaters in 2007, setting box office records for the venue and earning unanimous critical acclaim. *The Savannah Disputation* by Evan Smith, which we premiered in 2007, went on to enjoy a successful New York

staging at Playwrights Horizons and has subsequently enjoyed productions in California, Georgia, Massachusetts and Wisconsin. Brett Neveu's *Old Glory* premiered in 2009 and enjoyed a critically acclaimed run at the Victory Theatre Center in Los Angeles, and finally, our world premiere musical *A Minister's Wife* adapted from Shaw's *Candida* with book by Austin Pendleton, lyrics by Jan Tranen and music by Josh Schmidt, will make its New York premiere at Lincoln Center Theater in 2011, directed by Artistic Director Michael Halberstam.

However, it is your commitment as Subscribers, Members and donors that makes this journey possible. Statistically, audiences prefer what is familiar to what is new. By joining us for an entire season and putting your faith in the complete spectrum of our programming, you allow us to keep new work as a significant part of our mission. So thank you for your trust and for the crucial role you play in ensuring that there will be new classics for tomorrow's audiences. It can't happen without you.

# WHY NOW?

# CONGRATULATIONS



## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL HALBERSTAM

### 2010 ZELDA FICHANDLER AWARD RECIPIENT

Michael Halberstam, Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Writers' Theatre, has been awarded the 2010 Zelda Fichandler Award by the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF).

The Fichandler Award recognizes an outstanding director or choreographer who is transforming the regional arts landscape through singular creativity and artistry in theatre. It also heralds accomplishment to date and promise for the future, artistic vision, and deep commitment to a region outside of New York. The award is given regionally on a rotating basis and is one of only three awards given to theatre directors and choreographers by their peers.

David Cromer, long-time Writers' Theatre collaborator, presented the award to Halberstam on Monday, October 18th, 2010 at Steppenwolf Theatre. Halberstam shared an exceptionally moving speech featuring his thoughts on the theatre, saying:

*"There is and always has been an urgency to our profession. It has been argued that the human instinct for appreciating art is not a socially learned experience but an innate one.*

*As our planet becomes increasingly polarized around inflexible ideology and dogma, the need for shared experience and common understanding is becoming about a matter of survival. Where else will people be able to come and dialogue in order to find common ground but within the limitless confines of artistic expression? It is in the theatre that we can provide a place where people can come not to seek answers but to ask the right questions."*

# TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT OPENING NIGHT

On Friday, November 19, 2010, 50 of Writers' Theatre's closest friends and supporters gathered with staff to celebrate the opening of the second show of Writers' Theatre's 2010/11 Season, *Travels With My Aunt*, directed by Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden. Following a fast-paced performance at the Books on Vernon stage, guests adjourned to the book store where they were joined by the artists for a celebratory toast with champagne provided by Good Grapes of Glencoe, as well as tasty appetizers provided by Whole Foods Market in Northbrook.

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**1.** Director of Institutional Advancement Carol Dawley with *Director's Society* members Richard and Jane Lipton **2.** Trustees Joe Dillon and Larry Adelman with his wife Carol Adelman **3.** *Director's Society* members Bill and Stephanie Sick with *Artists' Council* member Marcie Stein and Susan Ross **4.** Corporate Production Sponsor NES Rentals CEO Andrew Studdert with wife and Trustee Mary Pat Studdert, Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden and the cast of *Travels With My Aunt* and their guests **5.** Sara Pfaff, Rick Melcher and Trustees Christopher Pfaff and Barbara Melcher **6.** Dr. Christopher Straus and *Director's Society* member Liesel Pritzker with Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and Executive Director Kate Lipuma **7.** Writers' Theatre Co-Founder Marilyn Campbell and her husband Michael Lowe



# TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT OPEN REHEARSAL:

On Thursday, October 28, 2010, members of the *Director's Society* joined Director and Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden for an exclusive glimpse into the rehearsal process for *Travels With My Aunt*. Guests observed an hour-long rehearsal session and conversation. Afterwards they enjoyed a reception where they mingled with the cast and creative team while sampling delicious hors d'oeuvres provided by Whole Foods Market in Northbrook.

This event is one of many planned throughout the season for members of our *Director's Society*, an association of Writers' Theatre's most generous supporters.

For more information about the *Director's Society* and how to join, please call Development Manager Amber Bel'cher at (847) 242-6012.



Event Sponsor



1. Actors LaShawn Banks and Sean Fortunato rehearse a scene from *Travels With My Aunt* 2. Caren Thomas, Executive Director Kate Lipuma and Trustee Avril Klaff 3. *Director's Society* members Hilary and Barry Weinstein with Stuart Carden (center), Associate Artistic Director and Director of *Travels With My Aunt* 4. *Director's Society* members Nancy Williams and Larry Becker with actor LaShawn Banks (center). 5. Actor Sean Fortunato and Trustee Mary Pat Studdert 6. Trustees Susan Belgrad and Tina Pompizzi 7. *Director's Society* members Laurie and Michael Petersen, Bill Sick and Don Belgrad 8. Actor LaShawn Banks, *Director's Society* member Judy Silverman and Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden.

## SPONSOR SALUTE



Howard Conant, Jr., Urban Innovations Chairman and Writers' Theatre Trustee with his wife Pam.



Writers' Theatre is thrilled to welcome back Urban Innovations as Production Sponsor for the world premiere of *Do The Hustle*. Previously, Urban Innovations sponsored *The Old Settler* in 2010 and two world premiere productions: *Old Glory* in 2008 and *The Savannah Disputation* in 2007.

*"Writers' Theatre has crafted a very special environment for the creation and refinement of its art, especially in regards to performing new and emerging works. Urban Innovations is delighted to partner with Writers' Theatre again this season, and pleased to support the company's amazing artistic ambitions."*

- HOWARD CONANT, JR., URBAN INNOVATIONS CHAIRMAN AND WRITERS' TRUSTEE

Writers' Theatre thanks Urban Innovations for its ongoing generosity, which has helped to build the organization into a cultural leader in the Chicago area and a player on the national stage.

# DON'T MISS THE *MAKING OF... SERIES*

*A series just for you—our Subscribers, Members and supporters!*

On Monday, October 18, 2010, the *Making Of...* series kicked off with 40 Writers' Theatre Subscribers and Members gathered at Tudor Court for an exciting presentation with Scenic Designer Jack Magaw and Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden. They spoke at length about Magaw's design for *She Loves Me* and his artistic process. Following an invigorating Q & A, the guests joined Jack Magaw and Stuart Carden on stage for refreshments and pastries provided by Rolf's Patisserie.

On December 13, 2010, an overflowing house at Books on Vernon learned about foley techniques and sound design from Mikhail Fiksel, Sound Designer for *Travels With My Aunt* and Writers' Director of Education Nicole Gilman. Guests were able to have their questions answered during an invigorating Q & A session and enjoyed pastries again provided by Rolf's Patisserie.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE NEXT MAKING OF... EVENT**  
**Monday, February 7, 6:30-7:30 p.m., 325 Tudor Court**

Featuring a behind-the-scenes glimpse into *Do The Hustle*, this is one event you won't want to miss. Con-artist consultant Dennis Watkins, our resident expert on sleight of hand and other trickery techniques, will join Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden in conversation about the unique challenges and specific preparations necessary for this complex play about a father and son team of grifters.

Event Series  
Sponsor:



ALL MAKING OF... EVENTS ARE FREE, BUT SPACE IS LIMITED:  
RSVP TO [SPECIALEVENTS@WRITERSTHEATRE.ORG](mailto:SPECIALEVENTS@WRITERSTHEATRE.ORG)  
OR CALL **847-441-8194**.



# ARTIST SPARK

Nicole Gilman, Writers' Theatre Director of Education, asked some of the artists in our 2010/11 Season about their childhood experiences with the arts. She asked if there was a seminal experience, a "spark" so to speak, in their education that made them want to learn more about theatre or be an artist? Here are some of the responses:



**HEIDI KETTENRING**, Cast, *She Loves Me*

I played Anne in a production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* when I was a junior in high school. During the rehearsal process there was a tragedy at school. A girl named Emily, who was doing props for the show and rapidly becoming a good friend, was killed in a car accident. It was a horrible experience. I didn't want to keep doing the play, but my teacher convinced me it would be healing for me as well as for the audience. She was right. I received many messages from students who came to see the show, and the number of people who were transported for those few hours astounded me. It was then I went from being a girl who liked to do plays to someone who loves the theatre for its ability to give an audience an escape from their lives. An escape to think, to cry, to laugh or to learn. I am so thankful to my teacher Mrs. Stamps for encouraging me to continue.



**SEAN FORTUNATO**, Cast, *Travels With My Aunt*

My grandmother passed away last fall during the run of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. My older brother, her first grandchild, couldn't say "grandma" so he went with the obvious choice: "Beedo." By the time of her death she was known as Beedo to most of the people who knew her. When I was a little boy I was lucky enough to be taken to my first Broadway show by Beedo. She did the same for each of her 10 grandchildren and several of her great-grandchildren. She had a great enthusiasm for the theatre and an openness to really engage in what

she was watching. So much so, that when she saw me in *Anything Goes*, during the "Bon Voyage" number when the whole cast is waving goodbye to the audience, I saw her lone arm in the house waving back at us. The night I saw *She Loves Me*, I was told afterwards by someone in the audience that they loved how my face was lit up for the whole show. I didn't realize that I had been part of the audience's experience, but I got that sense of engagement from Beedo.



**NAN ZABRISKIE**, Costume Designer, *She Loves Me*

I grew up in Arizona and I didn't even know what live theatre was until the Salt Lake City Ballet came to Phoenix. We went to see them perform and I was entranced. On stage was a fairy tale book in three dimensions. That was the event that eventually led me to get involved with the thespians in high school. While I did not have much of a career as an actress, my high school drama teacher was a wonder woman. I was immediately drawn in to the collaborative approach to telling a story. Mrs. Tyson set me on the path that I'm still on.

In addition to my design work, I have headed the Stage Makeup program at The Theatre School of DePaul University for 30 years. I never tire of helping college students find their own skills in our unique business. If I can pass on to my students some of the work ethic, skill, and pleasure in storytelling that my teachers instilled in me, I hope it will serve as a thank you to the many wonderful teachers who contributed to my life's work.

**For more information on Writers' Theatre Education and Audience Enrichment programs go to [writerstheatre.org/education](http://writerstheatre.org/education).**



SAVE THE DATE

# WordPlay

Writers' Theatre Gala  
Friday, April 15, 2011

The Peninsula Chicago

Beth L. Kronfeld, Gala Chair

—  
Mark your calendars for  
what has become one of the most anticipated  
events on the Chicago social scene!

In the past, WordPlay has sold out several  
months in advance, so be sure to reserve your  
place early by calling 847-441-8194

## WELCOME TO WRITERS' THEATRE

Writers' Theatre is delighted to welcome the following individuals to the Board of Trustees:



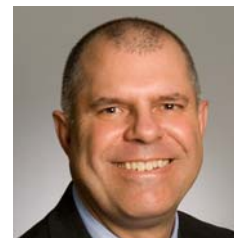
**THOMAS HODGES**, Evanston, IL

Mr. Hodges rejoins the Writers' Theatre Board of Trustees as Treasurer after having served on the Board from 2002 until 2008 as Treasurer, Vice-President and Board President. Mr. Hodges is the Chief Investment Officer of NorthShore University HealthSystem, having joined the company in June, 2000. He has an MBA in Finance and Accounting from The University of Chicago and a BA in Economics from Harvard College. He currently lives in Evanston with his wife, Gail. We are thrilled to welcome Mr. Hodges back to the Board!



**AVRIL KLAFF**, Glencoe, IL

Ms. Klaff was received her undergraduate degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology from the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, where she was born and raised. She has lived on Chicago's North Shore since 1978 and has spent her time getting a graduate degree, working, volunteering, raising her three children and traveling. She is an avid art collector and is a member of the Museum of Contemporary Art Women's Board as well as a Sustaining Fellow at the Art Institute. After being a long time Subscriber and donor to Writers' Theatre, we are delighted that Ms. Klaff has agreed to join our Board of Trustees.






**CHRISTOPHER S. PFAFF**, Glencoe, IL

Mr. Pfaff joins the Board of Trustees as a long-time Subscriber and donor to Writers' Theatre. In addition, Mr. Pfaff and his wife Sara co-chaired the 2010 WordPlay Gala which raised nearly \$500,000 in support of Writers' Theatre—an unprecedented amount for the company. Professionally, Mr. Pfaff is a Senior Vice President of Investments at UBS Financial Services. He holds an MBA from The University of Chicago and a BA from Dartmouth College. Mr. Pfaff has served in leadership roles on many boards and will be a wonderful asset as a Writers' Theatre Trustee.

# DONOR REWARD PROGRAM

WRITERS' THEATRE PARTNERS WITH COMMUNITY BUSINESSES TO OFFER **SPECIAL DONOR DISCOUNTS!**

Writers' Theatre has once again partnered with local shops and restaurants for the **Donor Reward Program**. Individuals who support Writers' Theatre with a gift of \$250 or who give monthly during the 2010/11 Season receive a special Donor Reward Card, which entitles them to exclusive offers throughout the year. Present your Reward Card at the following businesses to receive the listed discount:

 <p><b>15% OFF YOUR FINAL BILL WITH THEATER TICKETS</b></p> <p><b>An Apple A Day</b> 317 Park Avenue Glencoe, IL 847-835-2620</p>	 <p><b>20% OFF YOUR PURCHASE*</b></p> <p><small>*Glencoe location only</small></p> <p><b>The Art Store and Gallery</b> 668 Vernon Avenue Glencoe, IL 847-835-2770</p>	 <p><b>10% OFF YOUR TOTAL PURCHASE</b></p> <p><b>Books On Vernon</b> 664 Vernon Avenue Glencoe, IL 847-835-5180</p>	 <p><b>15% OFF YOUR FINAL BILL</b></p> <p><b>Foodstuffs</b> 338 Park Avenue Glencoe, IL 847-835-5105</p>
 <p><b>10% OFF YOUR FINAL BILL</b></p> <p><b>Glencoe Roast</b> 700 Vernon Avenue Glencoe, IL 847-242-0200</p>	 <p><b>10% OFF YOUR PURCHASE OF \$50 OR MORE</b></p> <p><b>Good Grapes</b> 685 Vernon Avenue Glencoe, IL 847-242-9800</p> <p>809 Oak Street Winnetka, IL 847-446-8000</p>	 <p><b>\$1 OFF YOUR PURCHASE*</b></p> <p><small>*Glencoe location only</small></p> <p><b>Starbucks</b> 349 Park Avenue #1 Glencoe, IL 847-835-8098</p>	

## DONATE TODAY TO RECEIVE YOUR REWARD CARD.

Go to [writerstheatre.org](http://writerstheatre.org) or contact Development Assistant Jaron Bernstein at **847-441-8194** or [jbernstein@writerstheatre.org](mailto:jbernstein@writerstheatre.org).

# DO THE HUSTLE PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

## JANUARY

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
23	24	25 7:30	26 7:30	27 8:00	28 8:00	29 4:00/8:00
30 2:00/6:00	31					

## FEBRUARY

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
		1 7:30	2 7:30	3 7:30	4 Private Event	5 4:00/8:00
6 2:00/6:00	7	8 7:30	9 2:00	10 8:00	11 8:00	12 4:00/8:00
13 2:00/6:00	14	15 7:30	16 7:30	17 8:00	18 8:00	19 4:00/8:00
20 2:00/6:00	21	22 7:30	23 7:30	24 8:00	25 8:00	26 4:00/8:00
27 2:00/6:00	28					

## MARCH

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
		1 7:30	2 7:30	3 8:00	4 8:00	5 4:00/8:00
6 2:00/6:00	7	8 7:30	9 7:30	10 8:00	11 8:00	12 4:00/8:00
13 2:00/6:00	14	15 7:30	16 2:00/7:30	17 8:00	18 8:00	19 4:00/8:00
20 2:00	21	22	23	24	25	26

Writers' Wednesdays - Post-Show Discussion after evening performances



# WRITERS' THEATRE IS GEARING UP FOR THE 2011/12 20TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON!

The 20th Anniversary is almost here and we're looking for Subscribers, Members and donors who have been with us since the theatre was founded in 1992 to be part of the celebration. If you have been coming to Writers' since the beginning or have a memory of Writers' Theatre to share from the last 20 years, we want to hear from you!

**Email: [anniversary@writerstheatre.org](mailto:anniversary@writerstheatre.org) and be part of the celebration!**



**Administration & Box Office**

376 Park Avenue  
Glencoe, Illinois 60022

*Artistic Director*

Michael Halberstam

*Executive Director*

Kathryn M. Lipuma

**WRITERSTHEATRE.ORG**  
**847-242-6000**



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Ticket discounts are available for groups of 10 or more.  
Call 847-242-6000 for more details.

2010/11 Season Restaurant Partner



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