

The Milk Man



Spring 2004
Volume 1, Issue 1

COMING SOON: *THE RECEIPT PLAYS*

The Milk Can Theatre Company
www.milkcantheatre.org

OF NOTE...

- The Receipt Plays will be at The Sande Shurin Theatre on May 14 and 15.
- Join us for dancing, drinks and prizes on May 15 at our Spring Fling.
- You can check out our workshop of *Resolutions* on June 23.
- Please consider returning the enclosed donor form and making a donation.

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The Receipt Plays is this season's annual showcase of our Artistic Associates' work in ten-minute form. Each playwright randomly chose a shopping receipt from a milk can and wrote a ten-minute play inspired by that receipt.

Inspiration can come from many places. ML Kinney captured it best: "Inspiration from a receipt? Sounds a bit strange, but believe me it worked. As a playwright I was amazed at how the receipts influenced the group of Artistic Associates in their choices for inspiration in writing *The Receipt Plays*. Time, item purchased, location, even a cashier's name, all became the muse for a group of remarkable pieces that show the diversity and talent of all the playwrights involved."

Read on for a few stories of inspiration and then check out the website to read about each of the plays, our inspiration, and to see all of the receipts.

Bethany Larsen was inspired by the name of the business (Amish) on her receipt: "Let's see...I thought for two weeks about grocery stores, cantaloupes, people shopping for fruit...nothing. Very discouraging. Not one idea. Then, while at work one day, a delivery van for the Amish Market drove by me, and a

light went off: The Amish! They're funny! And ripe for conflict and drama. It also helped that *The Passion of the Christ* had been in the news for days and something about the ludicrous nature of religious fundamentalism stuck in my craw and I thought about putting an extreme lifestyle belief in direct conflict with the desire that most American teenagers have to express themselves as individuals, and voila. A first draft was born."

Sharon E. Cooper embraced the immense diversity of items on her receipt as well as the location of the store: "I carried the receipt with me for several days, looking at the quirky items -- decided that receipts (in general) would represent memories for one of the characters -- that the items on this particular receipt would have been bought for a specific purpose. I decided that the location on the receipt would have some importance, but the play wouldn't take place there. All of this, plus having conversations with two different people about current relationships, informed *In the MeanTime*."

Anne Phelan was inspired by the location of her receipt: "I looked up the Bowery in two New York City reference books, and I read about a

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Spring Fling!

Please join us on Saturday, May 15, to celebrate our amazing first season and toast to our ambitious second season at our First Annual Spring Fling.

The festivities will begin at 8:30pm at the luxurious Windfall Lounge and Grill, located at 23 West 39 Street (between 5th and 6th Avenue). The party is sure to heat up

quickly with music, dancing, snacks, drinks and the most scintillating personalities in New York City. Dance, celebrate, and laugh out loud amidst Windfall's turn of the century oak paneling, high gold relief ceilings and along its forty-four foot curved bar.

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COMING SOON: THE RECEIPT PLAYS (continued from page one)

Please visit our website
(milkcantheatre.org)
for a complete listing of
the plays, stories of
inspiration, and to view
all of the receipts!

May 14 at 7pm
May 15 at 3pm & 7pm
Sande Shurin Theatre
311 West 43rd St.
Between 8th and 9th

New Yorker named William Miller, who predicted that judgment day would be on April 23, 1843. When it wasn't, he revised the date to Oct. 23, 1844, and after the world didn't end then, Miller fell into obscurity. For both these dates, New Yorkers prepared by buying fabric from stores on the Bowery to make their angelic robes, so they'd be ready to ascend to heaven. *Bowery* explores what the reaction to Miller's predictions would be now."

The ten-minute play is an extremely difficult, but extremely rewarding format. It is an enormous challenge to write an entire play with a beginning, middle, and end, which also contains character development – all in ten minutes or less. A true play – not a sketch – all in a very limited time frame.

We hope that you'll join us for seven prime examples of the well-crafted ten-minute play.

Writing a New Musical



Nick Moore and Anne Phelan wrote *Joshua Tree* – a ten-minute musical – for *The Receipt Plays*. Here's a little bit of information about that process according to Nick...

"What is it like to write a musical? Well, it takes an entire creative and design team to write a musical and more importantly, to rewrite a musical. From start to finish, each of the artists involved in the project has to be committed to the piece, and to inspiring each other. I really look forward to, and feed on, the creative process of collaboration. Even my worst collaborations – and I have had some really 'interesting' ones – have resulted in work that I can learn from and build on.

The starting point for all of this work is the story. All the artists involved must make sure they are telling the same story in the same context. As a composer it is surprising to me how much I hear myself say that the story is more important than the music, but it is true. If any of the artists involved tell a different story the show becomes a mess, suffers, and often fails. The team must come together on the story, and everything in the show

must advance that story.

It really isn't about writing a musical. It's about rewriting a musical. You really never know what you have until you get into rehearsal and can see how the whole piece works on its feet. Rewriting means that the team will have to keep in mind that they are collaborating not dictating: the composer and lyricist will have to cut 10 of the 20 songs they originally wrote while the day before opening, they'll need to write a brand new piece; the book writer must sacrifice the best scene; the director must help to develop, but not write, the piece; the actors have to trust the team and be ready to learn new material every single day; and the designers must be allowed to tell and advance the story in their own way.

While collaborating always has its ups and downs – and usually feels like raising a child with total strangers – it has ultimately led to my most successful artistic creations. I have found that truly great artists make each other better. And that's just the beginning of the answer to what it is like to write a musical...."

Company News

Julie Alexandria (*12th Night*) appeared as Margot in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, with the Tennessee Repertory Theater. She is currently recuperating in L.A. before returning to real life in NYC. • **Julie Fei-Fan Balzer** (Artistic Director) has directed *The Busybody* by Susanna Centlivre for The Looking Glass Theatre. **Jessica Chandlee Smith** (*Mushroom*) is playing "Patch." The show's run is from April 22-May 16, 2004. • **Zack Calhoon** (*12th Night*) played "Jamie" in the Dreamscape Theatre Co. production of Keith Bunin's *The Credeaux Canvas*. He is currently rehearsing the role of "Lady Anne" in Judith Shakespeare's *Richard III*. • **Jacob Grigolia-Rosenbaum** (*Mushroom*) is currently in rehearsal

for an adaptation of *The Count of Monte Cristo*. He has also been cast in the next Les Freres Corbusier piece – a remounting of Bradley Bazzle's *The Franklin Thesis* – which will be presented as part of the Ice Box Festival at the Ohio Theater in July. • **Paul Edward Hope** (*12th Night*) and **Brian Morvant** (*12th Night*) are touring together in a seven-person adaptation of *MacBeth* for the American Globe Theatre's Shakespeare for Schools program. • In January, **Brad Makarowski** (*12th Night*) became a "Bat" – one of the resident members of Jim Simpson's Flea Theatre in Tribeca. This Fall, he will begin attending the FSU/Asolo Conservatory's MFA graduate acting program.



If you have worked with
The Milk Can Theatre Company
and have news to report,
please send it to:
info@milkcantheatre.org

The Milk Man • Spring 2004

Tickets

Receipt Plays	\$15
Spring Fling	\$20
Both	\$30
212-561-0618	

SPRING FLING!

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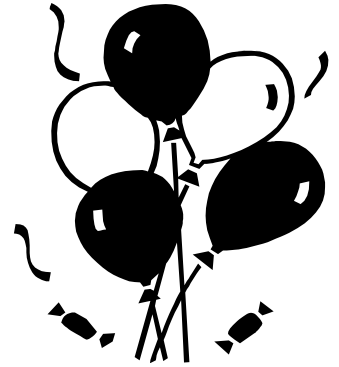
But wait, there's more! We will be raffling off free theatre tickets to four of Broadway's most popular shows. You could win a pair of tickets to see *Avenue Q*, *Bombay Dreams*, *Fiddler On The Roof* or *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. We are also raffling off season tickets to Milk Can's 2004-2005 season!

Tickets to join in the celebration are only \$20. For \$30 you can combine seeing *The Receipt Plays* (any performance) with a ticket to the Spring Fling. A savings of \$5! Both tickets include free raffle tickets, free food, a night of dancing and that really wonderful feeling that comes from donating

to a good cause.

Come out to support the Milk Can Theatre Company – the evening of unforgettable memories is our free gift to you!

Please note that advance tickets are limited to those patrons purchasing both a ticket to The Receipt Plays and a ticket to the Spring Fling. Show only tickets may be available at the door ten minutes prior to curtain and on a first-come-first-served basis. Spring Fling only tickets can be purchased at the door at Windfall.



SUMMER/FALL 2004

June 23, 2004

Scene Herd Uddered: Resolutions
Written and Directed by
ML Kinney

July 21, 2004

Scene Herd Uddered:
Aristophanes Experiment
Directed by Julie Fei-Fan Balzer

October 19 - November 7, 2004

Running in Repertory:
Aristophanes Experiment
and
Ashes
Written by ML Kinney

Directed by
Julie Fei-Fan Balzer

2004-2005 Season

We've got big plans for the upcoming 2004-2005 Season. We hope that you'll join us for our ambitious second season.

October 19 - November 7, you can catch Artistic Director Julie Fei-Fan Balzer's adaptation of a comedy by Aristophanes run in rep with *Ashes* by Artistic Associate ML Kinney, at the Abingdon Theatre Complex (312 West 36th St.).

The adaptation may draw from several of Aristophanes' plays, including: *The Knights*, *Peace*, *Ladies' Day*, and *The Assembly of Women*. Julie is also experimenting with having the audience play the chorus. A workshop version will go into rehearsal in July. We hope you'll come to the reading and give us your feedback so we can be ready for the Fall.

In the new play, *Ashes*, two sisters return to their childhood home after the death of their estranged mother. Madeline and Leanne must sort through their mother's things and decide what to do with her ashes. The process proves both comic and catastrophic as the two weave a tapestry of sibling rivalry, reverence and rage. "Here's to family. The ties that bind, unwind and finally weave us into whom we are."

Next year's ten-minute play festival will take place on January 28-29, 2005. The theme is yet to be decided, but it's sure to be an exciting challenge.

We're also looking forward to our upcoming Spring 2005 Mainstage shows. Current plans

are to run Artistic Associate Anne Phelan's *Mushroom in Her Hands*, directed by Julie Fei-Fan Balzer, in rep with George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, directed by Artistic Associate ML Kinney.

A series of vignettes featuring encounters with fantastical creatures from Wonderland, *Mushroom in Her Hands* explores the sexual and intellectual awakening of a young girl. The classic theme of the student surpassing the master is central to Alice's gradual recognition of what she really wants. *Mushroom* had a very well received workshop staging in January as part of our Scene Herd Uddered Series.

Shaw's play about war and marriage, *Arms and the Man*, established him as one of the greatest wits in the London theatrical scene. During the course of the play, a young girl's romantic and idealistic notions about love and war are shattered. With the help of her "chocolate cream soldier" she comes of age and to understanding. ML has some exciting ideas on how to make this classic resonate with a modern audience.

Of course, we'll continue to offer our popular Scene Herd Uddered workshop series. We look forward to showing you more plays-in-progress. For information on the plays currently under consideration, check out the website (milkcantheatre.org). Who knows which of them may go on to the Mainstage....

We look forward to seeing you in the audience!

For only \$90, you can purchase a season ticket pass and receive admission to all 10 of our 2004-2005 productions! A \$125 value!





**The Milk Can
Theatre Company**

Artistic Director

Julie Fei-Fan Balzer

Artistic Associates

Rori Bergman

Sharon E. Cooper

Jeannine L. Jones

ML Kinney

Bethany Larsen

Nick Moore

Anne Phelan

We're on the Web!

Check us out at:
www.milkcantheatre.org

RESOLUTIONS by ML Kinney

Resolutions blurs the line between love and obsession. Rose's solitary life is thrown into turmoil when she meets Ben and his wife, Diane. These three characters set the corners of a lover's triangle that spins out of control.

As part of our "Scene Herd Uddered" reading series, ML Kinney will use the month of June to experiment with the narrative structure of her play *Resolutions*.

In her own words:

"I am looking forward to bringing the play to the next level. For me, the script is an adventure in storytelling. With the use of narrative to structure the play I have tried to

balance the focus of who is telling the story with how events and other characters influence the action and change the narrative.

This piece had a reading in 2002, which greatly influenced its structure. Time limits were put on the reading and therefore the script had to be cut to twenty minutes. So, I cut most of the narrative and focused on dialogue, story structure, and character development. After the reading I realized that I had built a strong base for the original work. With this SHU I would like the opportunity to put the narrative back onto this base and see how the play changes."

Please come and give us your feedback on June 23.

About The Milk Can Theatre Company...

The Milk Can Theatre Company's productions are marked by a highly theatrical sensibility and the clean, clear results of an extensive development process.

There is power in simplicity. Our theatre combines four simple elements: language,

emotion, story and audience.

We emphasize that which makes theatre distinct from television and movies. We develop and produce work that can only exist between actors and audience. It is work that has to be told on stage.

The Milk Can Theatre Company
www.milkcantheatre.org

Make a
donation and book
your season
tickets today!