

September 2009

# THE GREEN ROOM

The Newsletter of the Doctoral Theatre Students Association

Ph.D. Program in Theatre of the CUNY Graduate Center • 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016

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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

This has been an intense summer of preparations and thoughtful considerations for us. I come to the DTSA Board with a deep conviction that we, the students in the program, can play a very active role in shaping our paths through our doctoral studies. I also come with the idea that a strong sense of community is essential for forging alliances that will prove helpful for our professional futures— alliances that I expect to be long-lasting. After all, we are the theatre scholars of the future, and we will work with and encounter each other for decades to come. I am happy to see that the entire DTSA board is selflessly working with utmost energy towards such goals. The DTSA Website is the most obvious change that we introduced, but there are a myriad of other initiatives in the making. These projects reflect the needs and desires of our student community. They also help to keep up with the changes in academia by allowing our student body to experiment with new forms of scholarship and by finding a space for interactions outside of established models. You are the DTSA, and this Board will do its best to assist you in any aspect of the program and to foster your projects and initiative.

We hope to keep strengthening our sense of community through a collaborative attitude and a nurturing environment for exciting new scholarship. We are committed to these efforts, but remember that all this will only be possible with your participation and leadership. Knowing that I may sound eccentrically prophetic, let me conclude by saying that the future of academia starts now, in every single effort that we dare to make. We are the future of scholarship.

Boris Daussà-Pastor  
DTSA President



## BOOTH AWARDS

As most of you know, the Edwin Booth Award, established by the DTSA in 1983, is our signature annual event. This year, we plan to begin the planning process significantly earlier than in the past. I will soon be sending an email soliciting nominations for the Award, which is intended “to honor an individual or organization that has had a significant impact on theatre and performance in New York.” Shortly thereafter, I will send a second email asking you to vote from the list of nominees.

We would also like to consider organizing a one-day conference that would happen on the same day, organized separately, but in conjunction with the Award in order to further raise the profile of both events, and of our program. Ideally, the theme of the conference would be

related in some way to the winner of the Award, helping to further the Award's mandate to strengthen the bond between the practical and academic theatre communities.

In order for the conference to happen, though, we'll need considerable input from students outside of the DTSA board. If you have any interest in serving on a committee to organize the conference, please contact me at your earliest convenience. The conference two years ago was very successful, and we hope to build on that success by involving as many students as possible in the planning and organization; I would serve on this committee as the liaison to the Booth Award.

This is a great networking and CV-building opportunity, as well as a chance to make your mark on our community and our program. Whether you're chairing the conference committee, or nominating an artist or organization for the Award, we look forward to working with you on these exciting and ambitious events.

Frank Episale  
DTSA 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

## PROFESSIONALIZATION REPRESENTATIVE POSITION CHANGES

As the Professionalization Committee Student Representative for the 2009/2010 school year I would like to explain the new structure of the position and of the Committee as a whole. The Professionalization Student Representative meets with the other members of the Professionalization Committee (currently Profs. Jean Graham-Jones, Judy Milhous and Jim Wilson) several times over the course of the year to plan professionalization events. These events currently range from "demystifying the handbook sessions," to workshops on useful professionalization skills lead by Prof. Jim Wilson, to student panels on particular topics, to guest speakers. Most professionalization events this year take place on Thursdays at 4:15 PM in the Green Room. Some highlights of upcoming events include a panel of recipients of travel grant awards on Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>; a guest presentation by Prof. Elizabeth Wollman from Baruch College on Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>; and a dissertation colloquium organized by Ana Martínez on Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. The Committee will meet to discuss the remainder of the year's events in late September, and there is plenty of room for creative suggestions, so please email me at goldstein.julia@gmail.com with your ideas.

Julia Goldstein  
DTSA Professionalization Committee  
Student Representative



## ASTR: PUERTO RICO

DTSA members will be well represented this November at the ASTR conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Graduate Center Theatre students participating in working sessions include Boris Daussà-Pastor, presenting *Theatre in Cuba: "Proyectos" and the Emergence of Queerness*; Steve Luber, presenting *Plato is a Strange Loop: The Neuroscience of Subjectivity and Representation*; Lisa Reinke, presenting *Second Life's Ballet Pixelle*; Dan Venning, presenting *Shakespeare in Asia: Cultural Imperialism, Appropriation and Assimilation*, and

*Intercultural Encounter*; Catherine Young, presenting *Merci Beaucoup, Stew: Identity and National Fantasy in Passing Strange*; Gad Guterman, presenting *Fool's Gold: Destination and Performance in Genny Lim's Paper Angels*; Ben Spatz, presenting *Academic Standards and the Rigor of Practice*; and George Panaghi, presenting *Multiculturalism is Multilingualism: Marvin Carlson and the Untranslatable*. Several faculty members will also be giving papers at ASTR, including Jean Graham-Jones, who will present *Santa Gilda: Virtuality as Devotional Orature*; David Savran, who will present *Outsourcing Broadway*; and Maurya Wickstrom, who will present *Placed: The Irish State, Neoliberalism, and Irish Traveler Theatre*.



## SUMMER STOCK: FACULTY UPDATES

**MORRIS DICKSTEIN:** My new book, *Dancing in the Dark: A Cultural History of the Great Depression*, has just been published by W. W. Norton. It includes a chapter on Clifford Odets and the Group Theatre, as well as a great deal on the movies, music, and writings of the 1930s. I've also edited two collections of critical essays that will be out in October—one on *The Great Gatsby*, the other on the poetry of Robert Frost.

**JEAN GRAHAM-JONES:** I earned quite a few air miles this summer: after an early-June family reunion on the West Coast, I traveled to Washington, D.C., to see Gala Theatre's production of *Momia en el clóset / Mummy in the Closet*, Venezuelan playwright Gustavo Ott's truly bizarre musical about Eva Perón. The following week found me at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania participating in a one-day symposium in honor of a new essay collection, *Vectors of the Radical*, to which I have contributed an introductory essay on translation. I returned to New York just in time to catch Argentinean troupe Timbre 4's final performance at Teatro StageFest and check out my translation of their recent play *Tercer cuerpo / Third Wing*. In July I traveled to Lisbon, where I delivered a keynote address at the International Federation for Theatre Research, chaired several sessions, and co-led a publishing workshop for the New Scholars Forum. I followed up the conference with a week-long road trip up the Portuguese coast to Galicia. By early August I was back in New York for ATHE, where I chaired a session, presented a paper, and delivered the opening keynote for the Latina/o Focus Group's one-day postconference. I'm now settling into my new position as the program's Executive Officer.

**DAVID SAVRAN:** I went to Minneapolis in June to cover the Tony Kushner Festival at the Guthrie Theater for *American Theatre* magazine. My article, "Kushner's Children of the Revolution," will appear in the October issue, along with an interview I conducted with the playwright. During the summer, I collaborated with eleven of my students (Jessica Brater, Jessica Del Vecchio, Andrew Friedman, Bethany Holmstrom, Eero Laine, Donny Levit, Hillary Miller, Carly Smith, Kenn Watt, Catherine Young, and Peter Zazzali) from my Sociology of Theatre course on an essay that grew out of a class assignment. The essay, "'Let Our Freak Flags Fly': DreamWorks Theatricals and the Branding of Diversity," argues that DreamWorks is using *Shrek the Musical* to exploit a generic theme of diversity to extend the reach of the *Shrek* franchise and challenge Disney in its own backyard. By bringing a political economic analysis to bear on the study of commercial theatre, it shows that DreamWorks is using its marketing strategy—diversification—to provide the theme—diversity—for the product it is employing to implement that strategy. We have submitted the essay to *Theatre Journal*.

**DAVID WILLINGER:** I was on sabbatical leave over the course of the 2008-09 academic year. Here is a list of some of the projects I started, completed, and moved forward with: 1) I completed post-production work on the feature-length independent film, *Lunatics, Lovers and Actors*; I am the scenarist and co-director. Of the 60 something cast-members, at least 30 were CCNY students. I'll

be sending it out to festivals and looking for a distributor, and will keep you abreast of any positive developments. 2) I made great progress with an ongoing musical for which I'm writing the book and lyrics; the composer is Christopher Beste. It's called *Casterbridge* and is based on Thomas Hardy's novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. I anticipate that it will be completed by Christmas; the next step will be to make a demo recording and try to market it. 3) I also made great progress with a large book commissioned by Peter Lang, Inc. for their Francophone Belgian Series, tentatively entitled *A Maeterlinck Reader: Conversation with the Infinite*. It is planned as a 320-page book comprised of new translations of five of the Nobel-Prize winning author's major plays (*The Princess Maleine*, *Pelleas and Melisande*, *The Blind*, *The Intruder*, and *The Death of Tantalus*) – all of which I'm translating myself -- and a number of his essays on theatre, short stories, poems, epigrams, etc. to be translated by my co-editor, Daniel Gerould. Together we are writing a substantial essay on lesser-known aspects of Maeterlinck's work, personal history, and international impact to accompany the primary documents. This, together with a bibliography and numerous images, promises to make an important contribution to Maeterlinck studies and appreciation. 4) My article, "The Current Belgian Renaissance," was commissioned and published in the Summer 2009 issue of *Western European Stages*. 5) My article, "Arne Sierens: Abstractionist of the Rough Theatre," was accepted by *Plays International*, and will appear in one of their monthly issues this fall. 6) A second article about Arne Sierens as well as one about Flemish directors' reception in New York City were commissioned by *The Contemporary Theatre Review* in its Summer 2010 issue, and are now being redacted. 7) My article, "Georges Linze, Unique Playwright of Futurist Theatre in Belgium: How Futurist Was It?" the written version of a conference presentation, presented at a conference on Futurism in Brussels at the V.U.B. (Vrij Universiteit Brussel) this past March, is scheduled to be published along with other selected conference presentations by December 2009. It will be published in Dutch translation (!). 8) My review of Serge Goriely's book, *Le Théâtre de René Kalisky: Tragique et ludique dans la représentation de l'histoire*, was commissioned by and submitted to *Textyles*. 9) Over the course of the year, I travelled twice to Brussels for two three-week sojourns in the fall and spring at the height of the theatre season, during which time I was able to see and write about a lot of theatre as well as to do on-the-spot research, and twice to Tennessee to work with Chris Beste on the musical. It would have been much harder to do all this during a normal academic year.



## SUMMER STOCK: STUDENT UPDATES

**ERIK ABBOTT (Level III):** My summer was mostly about the wedding. I got married in June, in the Cotswolds (in England), and have been happily settling in to my new home in Luxembourg. Between planning and marrying and moving, I conducted a key dissertation interview in March and attended the FIRT / IFTR conference in Lisbon in July (and saw several GC faculty, students, and alumni). I've also been to a few of the professional theatre offerings here in Luxembourg.

**KEVIN BYRNE (Level III):** I spent the summer working on my dissertation, after a research trip to the Library of Congress turned up some fantastic archival material related to African American musical comedies of the 1920s.

**EMILY CLARK (Level I):** After returning from my trip to Holland and Denmark, I spent the majority of my summer studying for the French language exam. Passing the exam made my summer worth it, and I celebrated at Disneyland while home for a crazy extended family reunion! Between reading various theatre history texts, I raced through many great novels and had a wonderful time.

**BORIS DAUSSÀ-PASTOR (Level II):** I travelled to Spain where I performed in a show (I have been doing this one-actor/one-musician show for the last five years), and later went to Galicia for a visit to

a little kid I care for with my life. In between, I traveled to India; I gave a paper in a conference; I met Gayatri Spivak; and I started the organization of a Study Abroad program to India for CUNY students that will take place next December-January (Ph.D. students can join, and it is worth 3 credits!) I gave papers in IFTR conference in Lisbon, and later in AAP and ATHE conferences in New York. All this, interspersed with some weeks of intensive actor training up in the Catskills area with Kari Margolis (physical theatre). Believe or not, after giving six papers in conferences, getting an article published in Spain, and doing my actor training, I survived the summer! Glad to be back working on my book lists.

**ROBERT DAVIS (Level III):** In July, I presented a paper on *Medea* in antebellum American theatre at Oxford University. In August, I presented a paper on the visual record of the Astor Place Riots for the American Drama and Theatre Society at ATHE. I passed the second exam and am currently working on a dissertation proposal. In December, I will be giving a paper on nineteenth-century productions of *Medea* in the United States as part of the Sawyer Seminar series.

**GARRETT EISLER (Level III):** The most productive part of my summer was the two weeks I spent researching my dissertation at Chicago's Newberry Library (thanks to one of the department's Tackle travel grants--thanks guys!). Two weeks of exciting archive work plus some fun Chicago theatre...priceless. Unfortunately I was laid off in June from NYU after 9 years as an administrator, but was time to quit the day job anyway. My wife Alissa and I continue to unpack and settle into our Kew Gardens apartment, and we seek advice from fellow Queens-ites on cool things to do in these parts.

**DONATELLA GALELLA (Level I):** I spent my summer in Arlington, Virginia doing a fantastic internship in dramaturgy at Arena Stage and checking out the D.C. theatre scene. While in the capital, I also volunteered at the LMDA (Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas) conference. Back in my hometown of New York City, I'm excited for my first year at the Graduate Center.

**JOE HEISSAN (Level III):** I went to London for two weeks to research the Complicite theatre company in the archives at the National Theatre and the Victoria & Albert Museum for my dissertation. I came back just in time to attend the ATHE conference. Here in the City, I saw *Les Ephemeres*, which was directed by Ariane Mnouchkine, and in Cooperstown, NY, I saw a wonderful production of *La Traviata* at the Glimmerglass Opera, which was directed by Jonathan Miller. I also tried kayaking for the first time.

**JAKE HOOKER (Level I):** I spent all summer running a small performance venue/bar in a former hair salon in Berlin's Neukölln neighborhood. We called our place the Lyn-Lin for BrookLYN-BerLIN. My colleagues (read: friends) and I curated about 15 nights of performance featuring local Berliner artists (and not a few expats from all over the world) -- music, visual art, performance art, theatre, dance, video, etc. etc. etc -- as well as making and performing two new pieces of our own. My piece -- a solo performance/lecture with video -- was called *[LAND SCAPE] Utopia, Euphoria, Hysteria: Various thinkings on placidity. A Lecture. (On Gardening)*. It went over unexpectedly well and was a blast to make and perform. Outside of running the space, I ran around Europe taking in the sites from the South of France to Copenhagen and various spots in between. In short -- it was a great summer full of travel, art-making, spectatorship, community, engagement, active relaxation, and, well, fun.

**SASCHA JUST (Level I):** I have recently been informed that my paper "Down with Plot: Eisenstein, the Tramp, and the Subversiveness of Montage of Attraction" will be published in the next issue of *Text & Presentation*. During the summer I filmed the beautiful North Sea. This footage is the start for my new film. Other than that, I look forward to seeing a lot of theatre this semester.

**EERO LAINE (Level II):** I have been working on second exam lists and thinking about *Shrek the Musical* and the sociology of theatre. I spent a week canoeing near the Canadian border in Minnesota just before the semester started. I sometimes wish New York City had more lakes or northern Minnesota had more theatres.

**DONNY LEVIT (Level II):** At this year's Association for Asian Performance Conference, I presented a paper entitled *Stop Not Making Sense: The Other Shore by Gao Xingjian in "Chinese-Hyphenation" Performance*. In addition, the Cohn-Lortel International Theatre-going Award provided me the opportunity to travel to and research theatre in Buenos Aires this past August.

**HILLARY MILLER (Level II):** I had a full summer, continuing my work at Baruch's Communication Institute while also moving forward on second exam reading, Italian-studying, and assorted outside projects. In August I delivered a paper on playwright and performer Annie Lanzillotto at the ATHE LGBT Pre-Conference. I also squeezed in some low-impact travel, visiting lovely Maine for the first time.

**LISA REINKE (Level II):** I delivered a paper about the online ballet company, Ballet Pixelle, at ATHE. I also delivered a paper theorizing puppets on screen at AAP. For ASTR I will be talking about *Second Life* the video game. Would anyone like to own 2 guinea pigs?

**BEN SPATZ (Level II):** I got sick in June and had to cancel all my summer plans for research and teaching in Europe. Whole summer = big zero. But at least I'm almost better now, and I passed the First Exam. Now I'm working on my Second Exam fields and focused on getting back into my studio work. Taking my first course in Drama Therapy this semester. I also just moved in with my sweetheart of seven years.

**NAOMI STUBBS (Level III):** Much of my summer was spent preparing for the second exam, but I did manage to fit in a short research trip to Baltimore trying to track down another elusive pleasure garden. In the coming semester I'll be teaching at LaGuardia and working on my dissertation proposal.

**CHRISTOPHER SWIFT (Level III):** Prior to spending three weeks over the summer in the Sevillian archives, I received four dissertation writing and travel awards: a Dissertation Grant from the Medieval Academy of America, a GC Sponsored Dissertation Fellowship, a CUNY Writing Fellowship, and a Cohn-Lortel Travel Award from the Theatre Program. I'm now very busy trying to fulfill the promises I made.

**DAN VENNING (Level III):** I spent the summer preparing for my second examination. Highlights included reading Hegel on the beach, and ultra-brief vacations to New Haven, Long Island, and California. I also moved apartments and finished a paper for the British Shakespeare Association. In the coming months, I'll be presenting papers at the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, VA, and in the Shakespearean Performance Research Group at ASTR in Puerto Rico, as well as organizing my new apartment, which is still a mess.

**PETER ZAZZALI (Level III):** While I spent the bulk of my time this past summer studying for the Second Exam, I was fortunate to share in two special collaborative projects: 1. The *Shrek* piece that came out of David Savran's Sociology of Theatre course; 2. A shared paper presentation at ATHE with CUNY colleagues Meghan Duffy and Janice Capuana that examined pedagogical ethics in actor training.