

**The
Smart Women Project 2009**

Kathie Rasmussen Women's Theatre
Madison, Wisconsin

promoting women playwrights and directors

Nine short plays by

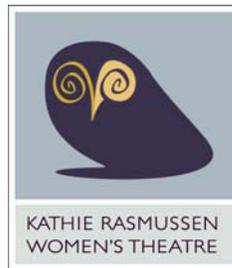
**Betty Diamond, Elena Hartwell, Kathleen Allison Johnson,
LynleyShimat Lys, Karen Milstein, Gail Sterkel, Aoise Stratford,
Amy White, and Andrea Varda**

Directed by Deanna Reed

Produced by Jan Levine Thal and Heather Renken

TAPIT/new works Studio Theater, 1957 Winnebago Street, Madison
October 16-24, 2009

Why a Women's Theater Company?



Kathie Rasmussen (1949-2007) used to joke that despite her brilliance, her wit, and her publications, local theater companies wanted only her organizational skills as “prop girl.” Later she would achieve acclaim as an actor and playwright, so she wasn’t entirely correct—but the general issue remains.

Companies tend to assign artistic vision to men and practical tasks to women, who nonetheless volunteer in greater numbers. The dearth of recognized women playwrights and directors is a national phenomenon in professional theater. In 90 years of the Pulitzer Prize, 13 women won for drama versus 64 men (13 years no awards were given). Three women have won the Tony Award for Best Play over six decades and four for Best Director of a Play or Musical.

Recently Madison area community theater companies have engaged more women directors and performed more plays by women. We applaud this trend. Nonetheless, our focus—promoting women playwrights and directors—is a contribution, providing more openings for women to write and direct and more opportunities for audiences to see work not routinely available. And for men and women who join our ranks.

Two amazing people helped found the Kathie Rasmussen Women’s Theatre in 2008—Heather Renken and Ben Emerick. We should have been four but Kathie left us for the Greatest White Way. Fortunately, a group of hard-working, inventive people have come forward, contributing wonderful ideas as well as time and effort and money to help our company thrive.

I thank the nine playwrights who participated in the Smart Women workshops and created these exciting new plays. I am grateful to Deanna Reed whose remarkable vision brought the work to life. Sarah Whelan provided endless time, space, and support. Wendy Fern Hutton donated *The Fabulous Crone Show* funds at a key moment. The actors, designers, and staff for this show are all incomparable. The Smart Women jury and the Krass Board also deserve accolades for their efforts. Special thanks to Kathie’s family, our consistent supporters.

In the years ahead we will need volunteers in every area, from the business to the artistic end of our work. Our dream is to have our own space where we can not only perform but conduct workshops and classes. We welcome you to come on our journey.

Jan Levine Thal, Artistic Director
October, 2009

The Smart Women Project 2009

Directed by Deanna Reed

Turning the Heel

by Amy White

Judy Mary Fairweather Dexter
Evelyn Nancy Craig

The Report is Longer Than . . .

by Karen Milstein

Patient Mary Volin
Alter Ego Addie Clearwood
Professional #1 Brian Belz
Professional #2 Nancy Craig

The Magician

by Elena Hartwell

Christine Sarah Whelan
Jason Justin Lawfer

Punctuated Equilibrium

by Kathleen Allison Johnson

Arts Sarah Whelan
Technology . . . R. Elena Tabachnick
Science . . . Mary Fairweather Dexter
Computer Brian Belz

Turtle Beach

by Aoise Stratford

May Addie Clearwood
Beverly R. Elena Tabachnick

Send the Dummy

by Gail Sterkel

Juggler Brian Belz
Lugosi Nancy Craig
Bela R. Elena Tabachnick
Joyce Mary Fairweather Dexter
Whitmore Justin Lawfer

Johnny Five

by Andrea Varda

Johnny Don Dexter
Sister Laura Sarah Whelan

Prelude to Gaza

by Lynley Shimat Lys

Lynley Mary Volin
Wolf, Ahmad Justin Lawfer
Mohammed Brian Belz
Layla, Citizen . . R. Elena Tabachnick
Salima Mary Fairweather Dexter
Miri Addie Clearwood
Yasser Arafat Don Dexter

Vivace—Ma Non Troppo

by Betty Diamond

Sylvia Nancy Craig
Francis Sarah Whelan
Loretta Mary Volin
Simon Don Dexter
Robynne Mary Fairweather Dexter

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission

Designers & Staff

Director	Deanna Reed
Stage Manager	Ben Doran
Producers	Jan Levine Thal & Heather Renken
Technical Director	Ben Emerick
Set Designer	Deanna Reed
Lighting Designer	Patricia Micetic
Sound Designer	Doug Reed
Costume & Props Designer	Heather Renken
Costumer	Siobhàn Edge
Properties & Welcome	Wendy Fern Hutton
Promotion	Mary Volin
Videographer	Natalie Hinckley
Photographer	Christopher Benson
Smart Women Logo	Tim Spires
Krass Owl Logo	Ingrid Kallick
Lighting Technician	Cassi Harris
Lighting Assistant	Kim Leal
Sound Technician	Alanna Medearis
Sound Equipment	Norman Stockwell
Set Builder	Cindy Crane
Rehearsal Space Host	Sarah Whelan

Board of Directors

Artistic Director	Jan Levine Thal
Program Director	Heather Renken
Development Director	Deanna Reed
Board Secretary	Ben Emerick
Board Members	Betty Diamond, Nancy Craig, Kathy Hughes, Andrew Miller- Rhoads, & Mary Volin

I want to support the **Kathie Rasmussen Women's Theatre** in the amount of:
 _____\$5 _____\$10 _____ \$50_____ \$100_____ \$1000 \$_____ Other

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The Company

ACTORS



Brian Belz would like to thank everybody for all their great work with this project. Thanks to Deanna for a fun and educational directional experience. Brian continues to give Kathie Rasmussen two thumbs up. Brian performed in Rasmussen's "Dancing with My Other" in 2008. Brian hopes that *The Smart Women Project* will help people everywhere better understand women and does wish you all the best of luck with that. And with some importance Brian would also like to thank his beard for—you know—just always being there. Cheers and enjoy these great shows.



Addie Clearwood has been obsessed with theater from the time she could walk. She is only fourteen so she can't quite call herself a "real actor" but she has been involved with many plays. This is her first time working with adult actors, not her peers, and she has been mystified by the other actors' performances. She would like to thank her mother and father who had to drive her to and from rehearsals due to the fact that she can't drive.



Nancy Craig started acting in college, graduating with a degree in theater. After a long hiatus, she auditioned and was cast in Broom Street Theater's "Oh, God! There's Baptists at the Door!" by Heather Renken. She has been acting or otherwise involved with theater on a regular basis since then. She is excited to be a member of the ensemble for Krass's inaugural plays.



Don Dexter began acting at age nine. For forty years he has acted and directed professional and community theatre and appeared in television and film in California, Illinois, and Wisconsin. He holds a BFA in acting from the University of Illinois, and studied in Chicago with Bella Itkin at the Goodman Theatre and with Del Close at Second City.



Mary Fairweather Dexter has acted on stage and film for 30 years in Chicago, LA, and southern Wisconsin. Recently, she appeared in “The Good Doctor” at Baraboo’s Summerset Theatre and the short film “Lost Pieces”—A long way from gorillagrams. Cellist Mady is her and her husband Don’s much-loved daughter.



Sarah Whelan has been acting for over 60 years, in venues all over the United States and Europe. She was instrumental in founding the Bartell Theatre and served on its board for the first ten years of its existence. She now divides her time between TapIt projects, and *The Smart Women Project 2009*.



Justin Lawfer. This is Justin's first show with the Kathie Rasmussen Women’s Theatre, but he hopes it’s not his last! Justin splits his time between acting and writing fiction, which include the published stories "Kaharaboo," "Hospitality," and "Between the Toes." He’d like to thank his family and friends for supporting all his crazy creative endeavors!



R. Elena Tabachnick has done community theatre in Buffalo, NY, and performed extensively on radio, but her primary dramatic experience has been teaching—all ages from preschool to adults. Peripatetic in life and work, she has lived in five countries and had many professional roles such as Benedictine monk, paleobiologist, and writer.



Mary Volin is a graduate of the Steven Ivich Studio in Chicago. She is a writer, lifelong student and takes great interest in humanitarian efforts. Mary recently appeared in "Scout," an independent feature film by Spacefaring Productions. Mary also started Aitia Productions which is devoted to drawing attention to important issues through documentaries and stories from everyday people.

PLAYWRIGHTS

Betty Diamond (“Vivace—Ma Non Troppo”) is very pleased to be part of the inaugural season of the Kathie Rasmussen Women’s Theater. She is an award-winning playwright whose work has been seen in New York City; Chicago; San Francisco; Washington, D.C., Austin, Texas; and Valdez, Alaska, as well as Madison. Betty is also a director, and is currently directing Madison Theatre Guild’s production of “Souvenir,” another not-to-be missed show.

Elena Hartwell (“The Magician”) has a B.A from the University of San Diego, an M.Ed from the University of Washington, and a Ph.D. from the University of Georgia. Her play "In Our Name" performed in NYC, Seattle, Eugene OR, and was published in *Plays and Playwrights 2008*, with a monologue appearing in *Best Monologues for Women 2008*. Her latest play "A Strange Disappearance of Bees" will receive a workshop reading through the Seattle Repertory Theater and the Northwest Playwrights Alliance in October 2009. She is currently finishing two trilogies—one about the long-term effects of war and one about environmental issues.

Kathleen Allison Johnson (“Punctuated Equilibrium”) has degrees in math and English. Nine of her plays have been produced, and her full-length play, “The Eleventh Hour,” was a semi-finalist for the Panowski Playwriting Awards. She is a founding member of Inkslingers and a former member of Playwrights Ink. As a laboratory technician she worked in bacteriology and metallurgy, then wrote scientific reports and newsletters. She's an amateur astronomer and has traveled to Australia, Norway, and parts in between.

LynleyShimat Lys (“Prelude to Gaza”) has a BA in Comparative Literature (Hebrew, Russian, and English) from UC Berkeley, studied Film Archiving at NYU, and will be starting an MA in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the Rothberg International School of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem this summer. Lynley has published essays and poetry in various journals, was the featured artist at Miriam Books'

website and received the Emily Chamberlain Cook Prize for Poetry from the University of California, Berkeley.

Karen Milstein (“The Report is Longer Than . . .”) has a B.A. in Linguistics and German from the University of Michigan. Her work has been published in a variety of publications and newsletters including the *Wisconsin Academy Review* and *Wisconsin State Journal*. This is her first play.

Gail Sterkel (“Send the Dummy”) was a founding member of InkSlingsers, a local group of five playwrights whose focus was one-act plays and monologues. In addition, Gail was a finalist in the New Jersey Rep's Seven Deadly Sin Contest with her play, "Lust Through Infiniti." Her plays were performed in both years of “At the Edge” at Edgewood College's Regina Theatre, as well as at the Overture Center, in both “Fabulous Crone Show” productions in Madison, and two productions at Monona Grove High School featuring student actors. Two of her short plays were selected for “Hair, the Universe, and Other Scandals” at TapIt Studios in June, 2008. She’s a published poet and flash fiction writer, teaches creative writing at Monona Grove High School and is currently working on a novel and collaboratively on a screenplay. Gail thanks her mother, Janice Sterkel, for the story that led to the title of her play, Jodi Cohen for the prompt, and Jan Levine Thal for support and encouragement.

Boise Stratford (“Turtle Beach”) did her undergraduate work at the University of NSW in Australia where she won the Penguin Book Prize. She also holds an MFA from the University of San Francisco, and is working on a Ph.d. in Dramatic Literature at Cornell. Her plays have been performed in England, Australia, Canada, Italy, and Belgium, as well as throughout the U.S.A. "Hell Hath Three Furies" is published in *2005: The Best 10-minute Plays for 3 or More Actors* by D. L. Lepidus (Smith & Kraus 2007), and "Our Lady of The Sea" was recently published by Uniting Stages. She has won several awards including the Alan Minieri Award, and a Pinter Review Silver Medal in Drama, and she has been nominated for an American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award. Her most recent full-length play, "The Unfortunates," is about Victorian

prostitute Mary Jane Kelly and was workshopped at the Orlando Shakespeare Theatre. She is currently revising a short play about love and thunderstorms, and working on a novel.

Amy White (“Turning the Heel”) received an M.F.A. in creative writing from the University of Virginia. Her play "The Knitting Lesson" was produced by the Mt. Vernon/Lisbon (Iowa) Community Theatre in 2001 and three of her monologues have been performed at the "Walking the Wire" festival at Riverside Theatre, Iowa City. Her one-act play, "The Way It Starts," won the 2003-2004 National Student Literary Competition sponsored by the League for Innovation in the Community College. Her choral reading pieces for high school students, "Eva's Evolution" and "Sarah Saves the Economy," have been performed at the state level of competition in the Iowa High School Speech Association. Last summer she wrote and directed an historical pageant celebrating Lisbon, Iowa, where she serves as the director of the public library.

Andrea Varda (“Johnny Five”) has a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is active in theatre, acting in and producing several shows in the Madison area. This play marks Andrea's first time being recognized as a playwright. She hopes to write more in the future.

DESIGNERS & STAFF

Chris Benson (Photographer) After 12 years of success in restaurant/fine dining management, Chris Benson decided to pursue his childhood passion of photography. Chris had his first nationally published photo within three months. Since then Chris moved to Madison and enjoys exploring the world through his lens. His work can be seen on his blog: chrisisageek.wordpress.com

Cindy Crane (Set Builder) is the Executive Director of Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools. She has learned carpentry, architecture, landscaping, and road construction as a result of owning a lovely but needy house. She has a miter saw in her living room.

Ben Doran (Stage Manager). Besides listening to and playing music, Ben manages to act or work tech two or three times a year in local theater works. This is his first opportunity to work/play with Krass.

Siobhán Edge (Costumer) was born in October 19**, played Jesus that Christmas and hasn't really stopped since. Done everything from Ayckbourn to Zoromska, and loved every minute of it. Started costuming after an embarrassing crinoline malfunction and is sometimes, here in the USA, more known for the sewing than treading the boards. Thanks, as usual, to Playtime Productions for letting her use their serger to work on and husband Brian for never bothering that there is fabric all over the house.

Ben Emerick (Technical Director) is a founder of Krass and serves on its board of directors as well as designing its website. He has worked with several companies in Madison and elsewhere. He thanks Liz and his family.

Cassi Harris (Lighting Technician) is an alumnus of Broom Street Theater, where for seven years she was a resident performer and writer. Her original Broom Street play, "For What It's Worth," was the recent recipient of a grant from the Dramatists' Guild, and another Broom Street play, "Dancing in Cleo's Café," was published by Dramatic Publishing Company. Cassi is currently applying to Ph.D. programs in California and New York.

Natalie Hinckley (Videographer) is a web designer and director. The founder of Hinckley Design and Production, she creatively integrates web and digital video, both technically and artistically. She tackles a variety of projects in collaboration with web developers, audio engineers, and a camera crew.

Wendy Fern Hutton (Properties & Welcome) is an artist, actress, and elder assistant. Her latest creative adventure is performing water ballet with her aqua-size class. She is the founder of *The Fabulous Crone Show* and hopes to perform synchronized swimming in the 2016 Olympics.

Alanna Medearis (Sound Technician). A Madison native, Alanna has worked with community, regional and national theater companies for fifteen years in positions ranging from House Manager to Wigs Master. She is very excited to be involved with this inaugural production of the Kathie Rasmussen Women's Theatre and would like to thank you for attending this performance.

Patricia Micetic (Lighting Design), has designed lighting for professional and amateur theaters in the Madison area. She is an architect in private practice in Stoughton, Wisconsin.

Deanna Reed (Director) has been directing and acting in Madison in between raising two kids in Stoughton for the last 10 years. Credits include Caryl Churchill's "A Number" and David Mamet's "A Water Engine," but mostly she has directed new plays. Her Stoughton-based youth company, Actor's Factory, has workshopped over 20 new works in six years. For Mercury Players Theatre she has directed the late night, "Short Stack: Dance of the Alien," more than a handful of 24-hour Blitz's, in addition to the San Francisco tour of "Temp Slave: The Musical." She is very proud to add this collection of new works to her credits. She has a BA in Theater from the University of South Florida.

Doug Reed (Sound Design) has previously sound designed for Actor's Factory in Stoughton.

Heather Renken (Costumes and Property Designer), is a founder of Krass and serves on its board of directors. An actor, director, and playwright, she has worked with several companies in Madison and elsewhere. She holds a degree in theater and teaches acting. She thanks her husband and sons for supporting her through all her endeavors.

Jan Levine Thal (Producer) has acted, directed, crewed, and written for theater in Madison and NYC. A founder of Krass, she serves as its Artistic Director. She's been on air at WORT-FM since 1984. She thanks her fabulous family and friends, especially her son, Jeremy Thal.



KATHIE RASMUSSEN
WOMEN'S THEATRE

Among the oldest species of vertebrates, owls are associated with many legends and myths including the Greek goddess of wisdom, Athena. The Krass Owl was designed by Ingrid Kallick.

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This project is supported by the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission with additional funds from the Overture Foundation and Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation



This project is possible because of a generous donation from Wendy Fern Hutton and *The Fabulous Crone Show*

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Special thanks to Kathie Rasmussen's family and the 25 anonymous jurors and actors who participated in the playwriting workshops

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Vin
By Stephen House

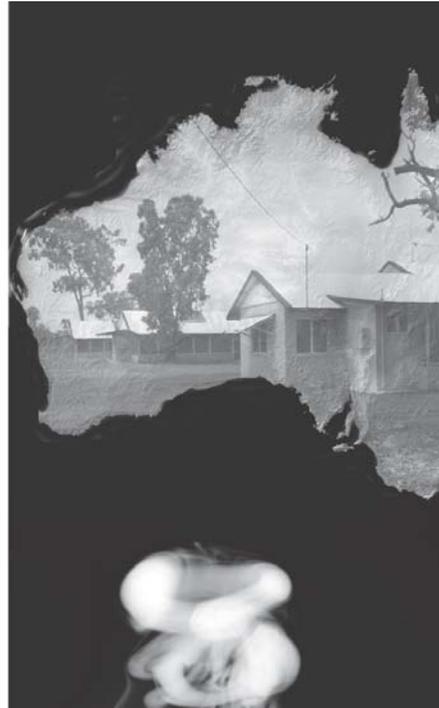
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