



**LITTLE
CHILDREN
DREAM
OF GOD**

ROUNDAABOUT
UNDERGROUND

UPSTAGE CALLBOARD

Little Children Dream of God

On a balmy night in Miami, a soon-to-be mother, Sula, floats ashore on a car tire. Having braved a perilous journey to escape her native Haiti, Sula is determined to forge a better life in America for her unborn son. She soon finds safety in an apartment building that shelters refugees in need, joining a diverse community of immigrants, each with their own unique dreams and dilemmas. But even though the life she has hoped for seems within reach, Sula knows she can't outrun her demons forever.

a note from Artistic Director Todd Haines

Jeff began to write *Little Children Dream of God* after talking to his mother about her experience moving their family from her native Haiti to Florida before Jeff was born. The care with which Jeff has conjured both Haiti and its traditions is evident on every page of the script. He takes us deep into questions about the immigrant experience, about what it means to leave a culture behind, about what we gain and lose when deciding to be "American." But he's also crafted a powerful story above love and the particular love that a parent has for a child. Most movingly, Jeff asks us to consider not just what a parent can give to a child but what that child owes in return, no matter their age. What will our legacy be?

when

Present Day

where

For the most part in Overtown in Miami, FL, but also various locations in the greater Miami area, West Palm Beach, and the Atlantic Ocean.

who

Sula - Mid 20s Haitian woman

Carolyn - Early 40s White American woman

Joel - Early 30s Haitian-American man

Vishal - Mid/Late 20s Multi-Ethnic Trinidadian man

Madison - Early/Mid 30s Haitian-American woman

Manuel - 113-year-old Cuban man

Man - Early 30s Haitian man



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UPSTAGE CONTRIBUTORS

MANAGING EDITORS:

Kim Oria
Education Program
Manager

Jill Rafson
Director of New
Play Development

WRITERS:

Jason Jacobs
Teaching Artist

Leah Reddy
Teaching Artist

Nicole Tingir

Artistic Manager

Olivia O’Connor
Artistic/Literary Assistant

Emily Ruderman
Education Apprentice

INTERVIEWS:

Ted Sod
Education Dramaturg

GRAPHIC DESIGNER:

Darren Melchiorre
*Manager, Design and
Production*

CONTRIBUTORS:

Jennifer DiBella
Director of Education

Mitch Mattson
*Assistant Director of
Education*

Paul Brewster

*Senior Manager of
Education Programs*

Andrea Jo Martin
Education Coordinator

Julia Borowski
Education Assistant

Katlyn Rapini
Education Apprentice

Sorina Degeratu
High School Intern

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INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT JEFF AUGUSTIN

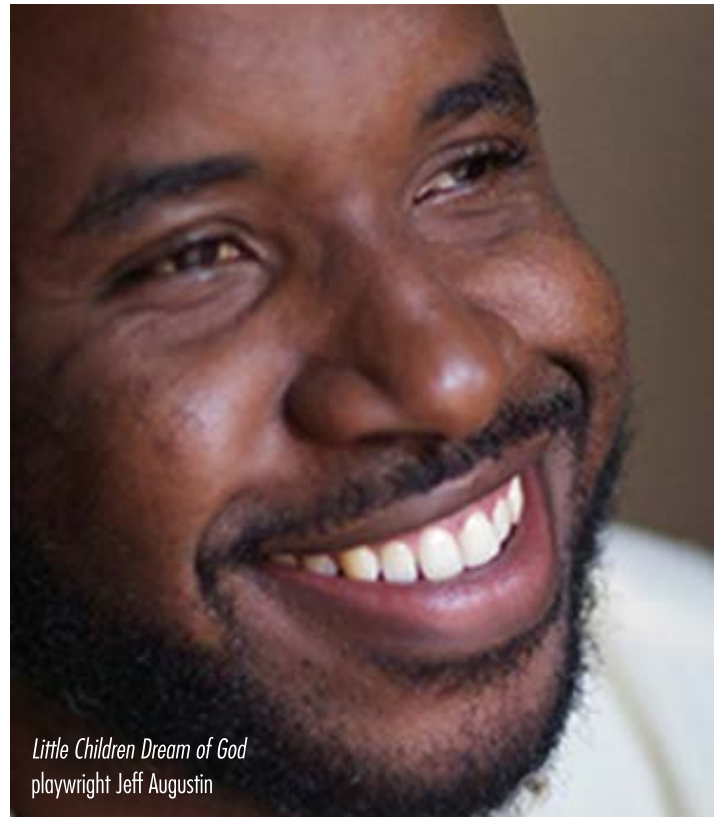
Education Dramaturg Ted Sod interviews *Little Children Dream of God* playwright Jeff Augustin about his work.

Ted Sod: Where were you born and educated, and why did you decide to become a playwright? Did you have any teachers who had a profound impact on you?

Jeff Augustin: I was born in Miami, Florida. I am one of seven children. My sister and I were the only ones born here in America; everyone else was born in Haiti. A mentor of mine in high school saw me at a poetry slam competition and she said, "When you go to college, you should check out the theatre department." I wound up going to Boston College, planning on becoming a corporate lawyer. I went in as a poli sci and economics double major, but I took Intro to Theatre, and it was there that I discovered the theatre. At the time, I thought that acting was all there really was to theatre; I thought all playwrights were Sam Shepard and the like. I ended up taking playwriting with Scott Cummings, a brilliant man. I knew by my junior year that I was not a good actor and I should not be acting. I was in a green room before a performance saying, "What am I going to do with my life?" and Scott magically appeared out of nowhere and said, "You're going to be a writer. Come talk with me and I'll show you how." And then he vanished. During my last years of college, I started writing plays. Scott's the one who really pushed me into writing. In Miami there's a big Haitian population, but I wasn't seeing plays about the Haitian-American experience, and that's where I was coming from. That was my in to theatre. I was interested in seeing those people and hearing those voices on stage—my mom's story, my neighbors' stories. There is a play by Gus Edwards titled *Lifetime on the Streets*, and in the prologue he says, "These are the stories behind the faces we see, but never get to know. Their hopes, loves, dreams and desires." I became fascinated with that concept. Who are these people on the streets that we don't get to know? But, more importantly, who are these Haitian-American people that I've grown up with, why aren't their stories on stage?

TS: You are Roundabout's resident playwright. Can you describe what that's been like?

JA: I just graduated from the MFA in Playwriting program at the University of California – San Diego, where I was for three years. *Little Children Dream of God* is a play I wrote my second year of grad school. Jill Rafson, who is the Director of New Play Development at Roundabout, was really pushing for it to be produced here. Last November we had a reading for the artistic staff on a Friday, and I heard from them that following Monday—not only did they want to produce my play, but they wanted me to apply for a residency underwritten by the Tow Foundation. A residency means you can spend the year writing and working on other projects. They applied, and I started my residency in July. I moved to New York, and it's been an amazing, luxurious thing for an emerging writer to be able to focus on writing and not have to worry about basic living expenses. I'm planning on going to Haiti with my mom, which I haven't done in years. I also get to interact with other aspects of Roundabout, like the Education department. I've been working with high school students, and that is something I've loved doing.



Little Children Dream of God
playwright Jeff Augustin

TS: Tell us about the inspiration behind writing *Little Children Dream of God*. Was it your mother's story that inspired you?

JA: It actually did start with my mom. I'm very close with her. We talk weekly, if not every other day. One time we were having a conversation and, I'm not sure how it came up, but when she immigrated here she was pregnant with my brother. And let me just say, my mom loves Haiti. She always says that when she retires she wants to go back. I think if the political and economic situations had been different, she would still be there. When she was pregnant with my brother, she decided to leave because she wanted all of us really to have a better life. Like Sula, the main character in my play, my mom was highly educated. She came here speaking English, Haitian Creole, French and Spanish. But, when she came here, she had to raise her son. She tried to take college classes, but it was hard for her to keep up, so she became a security guard. She worked a bit in a nursing home, like Carolyn in the play. So, yes, my mom was kind of the jumping off point of *Little Children*...

TS: Could you track the development process of the play for us?

JA: I've always been interested in the magic realism of theatre and also Haitian mythology. I was challenged by my grad program and my mentor there, Naomi Iizuka, to write this play about a woman on a tire who was eleven months pregnant. There was a point when I thought that this play was just going to take place on the Atlantic Ocean. Naomi then told me to just write. She said, "Here's this opening idea, now just write and see where the world takes you." So, I just started writing, and these characters just started popping out to me. In grad



"DON'T BE AFRAID TO WRITE ABOUT WHERE YOU COME FROM AND WHO YOU ARE."

school, I finished the first draft of that play right at the end of my first year, then put it away. I had a workshop production at school at the end of my second year, and then I submitted it to the O'Neill, where it was accepted in the summer of 2013. The O'Neill brought in Giovanna Sardelli, who's directing the show at Roundabout. Giovanna and I started working on it, and entire scenes and characters were crossed out. It's just been constant writing and rewriting. I actually just sent in a new draft last week that moves things around. I'm changing the ending of the first act, so even now it's still very much in development.

TS: Did you have to do any research about the world of the play?

JA: Most of my research has been me spending hours on the phone with my mom. For example, the nursery rhyme at the beginning of the play. I called my mom and asked her about nursery rhymes and how basic rituals go. A lot of my research tends to be talking to people and finding out information that way.

TS: What do you want audiences to take away from the play?

JA: One of the things I want people to think about is that you can't really move on without confronting your past. The play also connects to the dreams we have as children that we hold onto into adulthood and that sometimes we just need to let go of. Also, because immigration is such a topic right now, I want audiences to think about the people who immigrate to this country and the importance of different cultures in our society.

TS: Was there a part of the play that was most challenging for you to write?

JA: Oh, so many. Something I constantly think about when I'm writing this play is the aspect of voodoo. There's a way that people think when they think of voodoo. So, it's a challenge for me to make it authentic and real. I have to make sure that I'm being respectful of this religion and that I'm not fictionalizing it. That's actually been something that is difficult for me to write and finesse.

TS: Is there a part of the play that was the most fun?

JA: I think writing about all these characters and the way they exist in this world has been fun. One of the most fun scenes for me to write is

the dream scene between Sula and the adult version of her baby.

TS: What do you look for in a director?

JA: I look for someone who is game. Someone who will go on this journey with me. Someone who's constantly asking questions and pushing me. Someone who can say, "Okay, that's a great image, but dramaturgically, how is this functioning in the play?" Someone who can challenge me, but who can also come up with brilliant ideas.

TS: What type of actors did you need for this particular play?

JA: We needed actors who could handle language and different dialects. We needed actors who could really find the darkest place within themselves. All of our actors are brilliant and fun, but they're also actors who own the characters. They can't be afraid to go really dark and realize that within darkness there is laughter and fun.



Ensemble and Creative Team of *Little Children Dream of God*

TS: Do you have favorite playwrights? Do you find reading or seeing other people's work inspiring?

JA: You can learn so much from other writers' work. I learn the most from reading and watching other

people's work. I love reading Adrienne Kennedy, Jose Rivera, Dael Orlandersmith—I'm a huge fan of her ability to turn a phrase and create images. It's such visceral work. I'm also a fan of some novelists, especially Haitian novelists like Edwidge Danticat, who I really jive with.

TS: Do you have any advice for the young people who may want to be writers?

JA: Don't be afraid to write about where you come from and who you are. I think that's very vital and important and should be on stage, so don't run away from it. I also say you should read, read, read. Read as many plays as you can and not just Shakespeare, who's also one of my favorite playwrights, but also the contemporary writers like Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins. See a lot of theatre. Don't be afraid to reach out to writers that you admire. I don't know any writer who would mind grabbing coffee with a young, aspiring artist. There are so many people to learn from. 🧑🏻‍🎓

HAITI'S HISTORY

5000 BCE

The island now known as Haiti and the Dominican Republic is inhabited for the first time.

1400S

Local Taino and Ciboney people subsist on a farming, fishing, and inter-island trade-based economy.

DEC. 6, 1492

Christopher Columbus spots the island and dubs it La Isla Española, later anglicized to Hispaniola. The island is the first Spanish outpost in the New World.

1503

Africans are brought to Hispaniola to serve as laborers.

1514

Taino and Ciboney population has dropped to approximately 30,000 as a result of enslavement (for gold mining) and disease.

MID-1500S

French and British buccaneers establish bases off the western side of Hispaniola.

1664

The French claim the western part of Hispaniola and rename it Saint-Domingue.

1697

Spain officially cedes the western third of Hispaniola to France.

1749

Eventual capital Port-au-Prince is founded.

1780

Saint-Domingue, having built a prosperous economy on the backs of slave laborers, now produces more than one-half of the coffee and one-third of the sugar consumed worldwide.

1789

The height of Saint-Domingue's slave population. 500,000 of the colony's 556,000 residents are slaves.

1789-1799

French Revolution.

1791

A group of former slaves, in part led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, carry out the first successful slave revolt in history and launch the Haitian Revolution.

1801

L'Ouverture is granted the title of "governor-general-for-life" by the constitution of the new Colonial Assembly. Napoleon dispatches troops to Saint-Domingue to restore French rule.

MAY 5, 1802

L'Ouverture surrenders to Napoleon's troops and is imprisoned by the French.

1803

War between France and Britain forces Napoleon to pull troops out of Saint-Domingue. L'Ouverture's remaining army, led by generals Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henry Christophe, defeats the remaining French. The French fully withdraw from the island.

JANUARY 1, 1804

Saint-Domingue declares independence with Dessalines as its leader and is renamed Haiti ("mountainous"). Haiti is now the first black republic in the world and the second independent nation in the Western Hemisphere.

1806

Dessalines is killed during a revolt. Haiti splits into two states; the north led by Henry Christophe and the south by Alexandre Pétion. Civil war results.

1820

Jean-Pierre Boyer reunifies Haiti and takes control of Santo Domingo.

1825

Haiti is ordered to pay 150 million francs in reparations to France in order to be recognized as a legitimate nation. Haiti takes out massive loans from American, German, and French banks.

1843-1915

Twenty rulers pass through the Haitian presidency. Sixteen of those in power are either overthrown by revolutions or assassinated.

1844

Santo Domingo declares independence from Haiti.

1915 - 1934

The US occupies Haiti to enforce payment on the country's loans and to quell violence in the region.

1929

US stock market crash.

OCTOBER 1937

Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo orders the expulsion of Haitians from the Dominican Republic. Between 17,000 and 35,000 Haitian laborers are slain along the Dominican border.

1957

Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier is elected President.

1964

Duvalier declares himself "President for Life." Throughout his regime, he terrorizes the Haitian people with a secret police



organization colloquially known as the Tontons Macoutes, or “bogeymen.”

1971

Duvalier dies, and his 19-year-old son, Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier takes over. Throughout the reigns of both Duvaliers, some 30,000-60,000 Haitians are killed, and thousands of others are raped, beaten, and tortured at the hands of the Tontons Macoutes.

1986

“Baby Doc” Duvalier is forced out of power and flees to France, taking an estimated \$900 million in embezzled money with him. A provisional government takes over in Haiti.

1987

A new constitution outlining a process for democratic government is ratified.

1990

Jean-Bertrand Aristide is elected president in what is considered to be Haiti’s first free election. Seven months into his term, he is ousted in a military coup and flees to the US.

1990-1993

The US Coast Guard rescues 41,342 Haitians at sea, a number higher than the previous decade’s rescues combined.

SEPTEMBER 19, 1994

The UN mandates that Haiti’s military government be dismantled and that Aristide and the rest of the elected government be reinstated.

1996

Aristide steps down, and Rene Preval is elected President.

2000

Aristide is again elected President in elections largely considered to be fraudulent.

2004

Celebrations of Haiti’s 200 years of freedom turn violently against Aristide. He flees to South Africa, and the UN sends peacekeepers to stabilize Haiti.

2006

Rene Preval is re-elected President.

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2008

A series of hurricanes lands on Haiti, killing some 800 citizens and displacing hundreds of thousands.

JANUARY 2010

A 7.0 magnitude earthquake strikes southwest of Port-au-Prince, causing widespread infrastructure damage and massive loss of life. More than 230,000 Haitians are killed in the disaster, and more

than 1 million are left homeless. About one-third of the country’s 9 million citizens are impacted by the quake.

OCTOBER 2010

A cholera epidemic kills thousands, many of whom are among the 1.3 million earthquake survivors living in makeshift camps in Port-au-Prince.

APRIL 2011

Michel Martelly is elected President. ♿

HAITI TODAY

Haiti’s future has been shaped by the landmark events of its past: the introduction of slavery, the deforestation of the land, the triumph of revolution, the defeat of debt, the shaky transition from dictatorship to democracy, and the pummeling of natural disasters. Though these events cannot offer a fully comprehensive picture of Haiti’s history and culture, they are inescapable facts in the narrative backbone of the nation. Haiti retains the damage of centuries of human rights abuses and political and environmental upheaval. As of 2010, some 80% of the population lived below the poverty line, and today, five years after the 2010 earthquake, 150,000 Haitians are still residing in temporary housing and unofficial encampments. The country is the poorest in the Western Hemisphere, and its survival rate of newborns is the lowest in the Western Hemisphere.

The past year has marked another period of political instability in the nation. Local elections have been stalled since 2011 (the result of a political stalemate over an electoral law), and as 2014 drew to a close, political terms neared expiration. If parliament shut down, President Martelly would rule by decree until Presidential Elections in late 2015. In December 2014, in the midst of violent protests, Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe stepped down and President Martelly nominated former Port-au-Prince Mayor Evans Paul to take over as Prime Minister. On December 29th, a tentative accord was set forth to extend the terms of politicians until an agreement could be reached on the contentious electoral law, but the accord collapsed when opposition parties no-showed the vote. Political terms expired, and Evans Paul, though not confirmed by Parliament, was sworn into power. At the end of January, much of Haiti’s political system (including posts across the Supreme Court, Parliament, and Senate) was essentially nonfunctional, and President Martelly, ruling by decree, had appointed mostly political allies to lead his interim cabinet ministries. Though Martelly has pledged to carry out legitimate elections later this year and the international community has voiced support for his efforts, Haiti’s political trust is once again waning. The compromises of the coming year will not be easily negotiated.

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR GIOVANNA SARDELLI

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod talks with director Giovanna Sardelli about her work on *Little Children Dream of God*.

Ted Sod: Will you tell us about yourself? Where you were born and educated? When did you decide you wanted to become a theatre director?

Giovanna Sardelli: I was born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada, when it was really just a desert town, so I didn't get to see much theatre. Right before I graduated, I said, "Oh my god, I'm about to get a degree in theatre and I've never seen a play." My family sent me on one of those theatre trips where you go to London and Edinburgh and see twenty-one plays in twenty days. That trip made me realize that I needed to go to grad school. I got accepted into the graduate acting program at NYU when Zelda Fichandler was running it and Ron Van Lieu was the acting teacher. I started my career as an actor but was never quite satisfied. One day, I was sitting in Zelda's office having a crisis and Zelda said, "You've always had the eye of a director, I think you should direct. Why don't you come back for another year of education?" At that time, NYU had a directing lab where they would invite three former grads of grad acting for one year of free training in directing. Everything I learned at NYU just gelled, and my career as a director has been so much easier than my career as an actress.

TS: Why did you want to direct *Little Children Dream of God*?

GS: Wendy Goldberg at the O'Neill Center called me and said that she thought it would be a good play for me and would I like to do it? Well, my first thought was, "Oh, yeah! I want to go to the O'Neill." Then I read the play and loved it. Jeff Augustin's writing is so theatrical, so large in size, scope, and imagination; the play is about intimate relationships and basic humanity. It spoke to me on so many levels because it's pure, theatrical fun, yet he's telling a compelling story about people making their way in the world.

TS: Will you talk about your first emotional response to the play?

GS: I think that the great thing about the writing is that every time I met a new character they became my favorite. It's a rare play where you care about everyone, you follow everyone, you get just enough of everyone's story to invest in their journey and what's going on in their lives. I think Jeff did this in such a fascinating way. The tapestry of different people that he has woven together, how he makes their stories intertwine, is really beautiful. I was captivated by that. I always find it so refreshing when a playwright brings his or her culture to the story they are telling. It's eye-opening for the audience.

TS: What has it been like to work with Jeff?

GS: He has such a special soul. He absorbs and processes everything. He's gentle, but he's not a pushover, and he doesn't make changes until he's ready. He's got such a unique voice, and I'm so glad he's being produced at the Roundabout Underground.

TS: It is a really complex piece to direct in the Roundabout Underground space, isn't it?

GS: Oh, yes, it is. I'm laughing because we're in the middle of the



Little Children Dream of God
Director Giovanna Sardelli

design phase right now. I feel so lucky because the entire design team is absolutely incredible. Andrew Boyce, who is designing the set, and I have worked together before. He designed *The Mountaintop* for me at the Actors' Theatre of Louisville, and I love how we created the design of that play together. I knew he would be a fantastic designer for this because he's smart, he understands limitations, and his imagination rivals that of our playwright. So, we're going to figure out how to make this space expand by using imagination. That space, I don't think, has ever had to transform quite in this way before.

TS: Do you define this play as magic realism? Or cinematic? Or are those terms that have no meaning for you?

GS: I just call it theatrical. I think it would be filed under magic realism on a library shelf, if you were to categorize it, but it's really just theatrical and imaginative. Part of what makes the play so special is that all of the magic that's in it is a part of that world and a given in the play. It's integral to the story.

TS: How are you addressing the changing of location?

GS: We are trying to keep it a surprise. We want the audience to engage their imagination, so we want to give them just enough so that they can go somewhere with us, but we're not filling in all the blanks. I just don't think we can. So during the play there are some interesting ideas about voids and colors, and right now we're figuring out all the specifics.



"I THINK THAT THE GREAT THING ABOUT THE WRITING IS THAT EVERY TIME I MET A NEW CHARACTER THEY BECAME MY FAVORITE."

TS: What type of research did you have to do to work on a play like this?

GS: At the O'Neill, there is incredible dramaturgical support, so we came away from there with some amazing images of life in Haiti: about immigrant life, about the specific neighborhood in Miami where the play takes place. One of the members in the cast at Roundabout is actually a Haitian gentleman. The conversations I've had with him and Jeff are living dramaturgy. They told me about their families and their food and cultural rituals. I'm also doing research on Haitian religion and vodou, but that's something I don't really want to read about - I want to find somebody who can tell me stories first hand.

TS: Has the play changed much from what you were working on up at the O'Neill Center?

GS: The play has changed because we have been blessed to have great dramaturgs, Sarah Lunnie at the O'Neill, and, of course, Jill Rafson, Robyn Goodman, and Josh Fiedler here at the Roundabout. I think the best thing about the play's development is that Jeff keeps honing the story. At the O'Neill he cut an entire character and two scenes. Every change he makes makes so much sense.

TS: What did you look for in casting the actors? What traits did you need?

GS: We needed actors who are larger than life and yet honest in their core being. Everything they do, no matter how big it is, no matter what the circumstances, has to be grounded in reality. We needed actors who have an incredible vulnerability. And, in the midst of all their pain, can also land a joke. I think it calls for very brave and skilled actors because Jeff is asking them to play with language in a different way and to create a world that's larger than normal. What we were looking for were imaginative, brave, and bold actors with big hearts.

TS: Will there be original music?

GS: M.L. Dogg is our sound designer, and I chose him because he has such a great ear, not to mention he could easily be a character in the play. We're having a meeting to talk about Haitian drumming because it is clearly an integral part of the story. One of our questions is: who are we going to hire to provide that? So, there will definitely be drumming, and we will see what else comes to light.

TS: I also wanted to know how you saw this play vis-à-vis this national conversation about immigrants.

GS: I think part of Jeff's story is why we have immigrants, why they're fleeing, and what are they hoping to get when they come here. Immigrants make such a contribution when they're here, and their survival is really based on their community and having a home. The play doesn't preach, it really just speaks to what happens when you land on our soil. Who's here to greet

you? Who takes care of you? And what happens if you don't find that? Most of the characters in the play really don't have a lot to give and yet they are phenomenally generous with what they do have.

TS: The play made me feel that you can be born here and still feel like an outsider.

GS: That's definitely true with the character of Joel. The feeling of being torn between two worlds, the obligation of being connected to a place is a huge part of the story, as well. We have a few characters who are Haitian-American, who are dealing with their relationship to Haiti.

TS: Do you have any advice for young people who want to direct?

GS: If you want to direct, the best thing you can do is meet playwrights. My love has always been new work. I always love creating a story, and in order to do that, one has to meet those people who are the creators. I sought out playwrights. I think what it comes down to is finding the people who are doing what you like and then meeting them. Send out emails to people whose work you admire and ask if you can assist them. I think most people are more generous than you think. If you're worried about rejection, the good thing is that most people don't remember that they said no to you. Meet the artists who are making the work you like. And, of course, see theatre.

TS: Do you still feel that it's a struggle for women to direct in this country?

GS: I do and I know statistically that it's true. It's funny, though, because most of my close friends are female directors, and they are all doing well. If I compare our careers to the men of the same generation, I think ours have been a little slower to pick up, and yet we are all working. We are all supporting ourselves. I know that if more women continue to become producers and artistic directors, which is happening slowly but it is happening, it will actively change the gap. ♿



Jeff Augustin and Giovanna Sardelli

HAITIAN VODOU

As Sula begins her new life in America, she is haunted by memories about her past in Haiti. These include her connection to, and possible misuse of, Vodou practices. Sula is the daughter of a Manbo (a female Vodou priest) and is able to talk to spirits. Today, Haitian Vodou is practiced by millions of people, both within and outside of Haiti, yet it is widely misunderstood by outsiders.

Vodou in Haiti is not a religion and is not experienced in churches, nor does it have a central organization or set commandments. Rather, Vodou can be seen as a body of practices used to connect with spirits, deities, and deceased ancestors. It developed among the West African slaves who were first transported by the Spanish in the early 16th century. Passed on as an oral tradition, Vodou offered enslaved people a way to find a common identity and connect to their cultural heritage when so much had been taken away. Note that the Haitian spelling of "vodou" differs from American "voodoo"; the spellings signify that these are distinct practices, and New Orleans voodoo comes from a different tradition.

The Bwa Kayiman ceremony in August 1791 was an important event in Haiti's history. Slave leaders gathered together, sacrificed a black pig to an important spirit, and drank its blood as a pact to achieve their freedom. The ceremony launched the Revolution that ended slavery in Haiti in 1804 (almost 60 years before the emancipation of slaves in the United States) and established the country as the world's first black republic.

Vodou is practiced within communities called sosyetes or "houses." Each house may have its own unique ways to practice. Female priestesses are called Manbos, and male priests are Houngan. Many Haitians are Roman Catholic, and as a result of beginnings under Catholic colonizers, many Vodou activities are combined with Catholic rites.



While it is not a religion, practicing Vodouisants do share some central beliefs: foremost is the concept of a single creator God, called Bondye. For Catholic practitioners, Bondye is equated with the Christian God. Most Vodou ceremonies begin with worship to Bondye. However, the true purpose is to serve (as



opposed to worship) the Lwa (or Loa) – the pantheon of spirits and lesser deities who co-exist with Bondye. Most of these spirits are connected to West Africa, but some relate to the indigenous Taino people who inhabited Haiti before Columbus. Some Haitian spirits are also served, including black leaders Toussaint L'Ouverture and Jean Jacques Dessalines. The proliferation and veneration of Lwa is similar to the various saints of the Catholic religion.

Vodouisants view bad events as a sign from the spiritual world that something is out of balance and needs to be corrected. By consulting with one of the Lwa, a person can try to understand the problem and address it. Many individuals identify with a specific Lwa whom they believe has chosen them. Lwa are served in ritual ceremonies and on altars in homes. Offerings might include food, pictures, flowers, lamps, weapons, bottles, and colorful fabrics that could attract the spirits. Lwa may be consulted for healing, advice, or divination, and they may communicate with their servants through dreams, as experienced by Sula, or temporary trance possessions.

Trance possessions by Lwa are conducted by Houngans and Manbos during communal ceremonies. A spirit temporarily inhabits or "rides" a Vodouisant, using the body to eat,





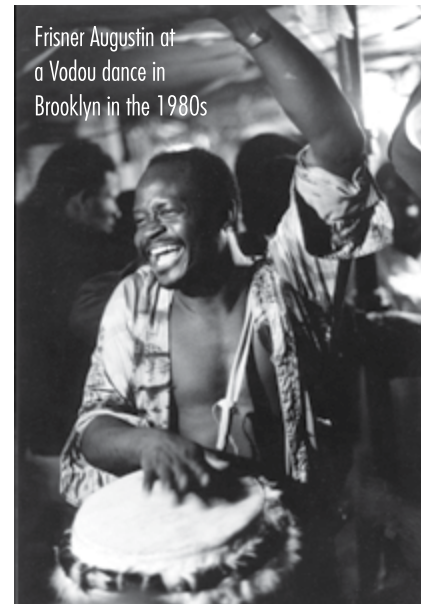
A contemporary poster of a Mami Wata, or "serpent priestess", often honored in Haitian Vodou

drink, dance, give advice, and participate in celebrations. The Lwa are almost always invited; possessions are temporary and can be dismissed by the Manbo. It is not known which participant a spirit will choose to ride, and the person is not considered superior within the community because of the possession.

The practice of animal sacrifice developed from the need to offer meat to some of the Lwa. Many Haitians still live in rural areas without access to supermarkets and processed meat products. It is typical to raise and slaughter animals for subsistence, and on occasion, to reserve animals for Vodou celebrations. Today, these sacrifices are rare, and when they do occur, animals are treated humanely and butchered by trained Manbos and Houngans with as little pain and suffering as possible.

Since the arrival of Columbus, Haitian people have endured a history fraught with turmoil, violence, corruption, and

poverty. Haitians often had reason to be distrustful of government and police, and in rural areas, the Houngans and Manbos helped to maintain order for their people. President Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier, who ruled Haiti from 1957 to 1971, associated himself with Vodou, but many other rulers in the 19th and 20th centuries made the practices illegal. After the Haitian earthquake in 2010, some critics alleged the disaster was a "punishment" for years of Vodou practices. Some Vodouisants were not allowed to bury their dead or hold memorials after the earthquake.



Frisner Augustin at a Vodou dance in Brooklyn in the 1980s

In the United States, KOSANBA, a scholarly association for the study of Haitian Vodou, was established at the Center for Black Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Their declaration, formulated in 1997, asserts that "Vodou plays, and shall continue to play, a major role in the grand scheme of Haitian development and in the socio-economic, political, and cultural arenas. Development, when real and successful, always comes from the modernization of ancestral traditions, anchored in the rich cultural expressions of a people." 🧑

To see a video about Vodou practice today, go here:

http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/haiti_haitianvoodoo?source=relatedvideo

To learn more about the Haitian Vodou tradition at KOSANBA, go here:

<http://www.research.ucsb.edu/cbs/projects/haiti/kosanba/declaration.html>

INTERVIEW WITH ACTRESS CARRA PATTERSON

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod interviewed *Little Children Dream of God* actress Carra Patterson.

Ted Sod: Where were you born and educated? Where did you get your acting training?

Carra Patterson: I was born in St. Petersburg, Florida. My mother was only 16 when I was born, so she was a teenage parent, but she took my brother and me to college with her, so I spent many of my early years growing up on a college campus. Education was always very important in our household. We eventually settled in Atlanta, Georgia, which is where I attended college. I got my bachelor's degree from Georgia State University and my MFA from NYU's graduate acting department.

TS: I'm curious why you chose to do the role of Sula in *Little Children Dream of God*. What was it that spoke to you?

CP: It's such a beautiful role. Jeff Augustin, the playwright, did a great job of just writing a juicy, rich role. And as a young black actress, you don't find that many roles of this caliber to be honest. It's such a gift. At first glance, Sula seems like this beautiful, delicate, almost virginal character, but she's a fighter. And there is nothing pretty about her past or her journey. Sula is not a victim who's helpless and depressed. She's a fighter who is literally clawing her way out of her painful past. I love that complexity, and that's what I'm looking forward to exploring during rehearsals.

TS: I just saw a TV interview with Meryl Streep, who said she reads a lot of scripts and she knows it's the right one because her heart starts beating faster. Did something like that happen to you when you were reading *Little Children Dream of God*?

CP: Oh, definitely. There is this final moment in the play—and I don't want to reveal too much—where Sula finally confronts her past. I remember the first time I read it aloud, it was so visceral, I could literally feel the drums and the rhythm of the language, almost like a trance. There are so many moments in this play where you don't know if it's a dream or a nightmare. I look forward to bringing those moments to life and seeing how they translate from the page to the stage.

TS: What type of research do you have to do to start on this role?

CP: Lots! I am not Haitian, so I am pretty much reading everything I can get my hands on. Although the play is set in Miami, it's very much a story about Haiti; its culture is very important to the world of this play. There's no way I can truly understand Sula's journey without an exploration of Haitian art, spirituality, and traditions.

TS: I know you haven't started rehearsal yet, but what do you think the play is about?

CP: In a way, the title says it all. Children come into this world full of innocence and possibility, and somewhere along the way, it gets lost. I think every character in the play is trying to recover a sense of hope. I definitely think that's what Sula is wrestling with throughout the story. Every parent wants his or her child to have a better life, and Sula wants her son to hold on to the innocence that she's lost.



Actress Carra Patterson

TS: What style do you think the play is written in?

CP: What I love about Jeff's writing is that on one hand it has a magical, dreamlike quality, and then in the next moment it switches to a tone that's edgy and straightforward. I love how the writing vacillates between those two worlds at any given moment.

TS: How do you see the relationship between Sula and Carolyn?

CP: I love Carolyn's character. She seems to be a symbol of motherhood. However, Carolyn is not the typical mother...she has 11 children, who we never meet in the play. But she also seems to nurture many of the characters in the play in one way or another. I think Sula admires this quality in Carolyn, and sometimes that terrifies her. Between motherhood and her relationship to God, Carolyn represents almost everything Sula is running away from.

TS: What about Sula and Joel? That's a very complex relationship.

CP: I think Sula and Joel are teachers for one another. While they both are trying to recover the ability to dream, Sula also forces Joel to embrace his Haitian roots – the language and the traditions he's lost touch with. Joel is trying to encourage Sula to create a new history for herself and her son. Sula and Joel push each other and force one another to face their fears.

TS: How would you describe Sula's relationship to Haiti?

CP: Well, although Sula is running from the pain of mistakes she made in Haiti, she loves her home. She forces Joel and Madison to reflect on



"I THINK EVERY CHARACTER IN THE PLAY IS TRYING TO RECOVER A SENSE OF HOPE."



Maurice Jones and Carra Patterson

their own loss of connection with Haiti. Even though she's running from the life she had, she carries the beauty of the culture with her, and that's where the conflict lies with Sula. In order for her to move forward and create a better future for her son, she still has to confront the mistakes and the pain of her past...something we all have to do at some point.

TS: How do you like to collaborate with the director?

CP: I love when there's a true collaboration process between the actors and the director to tell the story. There are all kinds of directors, and I have definitely had experiences where it doesn't feel collaborative at all. Sometimes directors know exactly what they want and it's your job to just do that. Luckily I know the way Gio works, and I am so excited to get started on this journey.

TS: Have you worked with Giovanna Sardelli, the director, before?

CP: I have. She taught me at NYU during my first year, and it was great. Every time we've seen each other since, we always say, "I can't wait to work with you!" And now it's happened. I think a true collaborative process is about trust – the actors trusting the vision of the director, the director trusting the ability, interpretation, and input of the actors. I absolutely believe that I'll have that with Gio. And because she also started as an actor first, I know she knows how to communicate with actors in a way that enhances the collaborative process.

TS: You mentioned doing a table read of this play. Do you have a history with the project?

CP: About a year ago, I had the opportunity to do a reading of this play. It was last minute, so I had to dive in right away. By the end, I was blown away by the story and by the journey that Sula takes. That's when I fell in love with this play. And I was looking

forward to the opportunity to audition for it all year.

TS: Do you have any advice for those young people reading this who might be considering acting as a profession?

CP: As cheesy as it sounds, learn as much as possible and stay in school. If you're serious about being an actor, then you should learn as much as you can...and not only about acting. In order to be an artist, it's great to learn about everything in this world in order to be able to stretch your imagination and be able to go anywhere the story takes you. Good actors never stop learning. We're in a celebrity culture that sells this notion of being discovered, "going viral," or being an overnight sensation. I went to public school, and back in Atlanta as a teenager, I was definitely one of those kids dreaming of being discovered. I was going to move to LA or New York, and I believed my talent would speak for itself. I had no clue how much my

education and my training would be the stepping stone to all those open doors I dreamed of as a child. 🙌



Carl Hendrick Louis and Carra Patterson

OVERTOWN



Overtown, a neighborhood just west of downtown Miami, Florida, is the setting of Little Children Dream of God. Though the area is slowly changing, Overtown remains Miami's poorest neighborhood. It's described as a blighted urban slum, home to high crime rates and few businesses.

But for much of its 120 year history, Overtown was the "Harlem of the South," home to a thriving African-American and Bahamian community. Its nightclubs, recording studios, and jam sessions—haunted by everyone from Count Basie to James Brown—were the stuff of legends.

THE HARLEM OF THE SOUTH

Overtown was founded in 1896 as "Colored Town," a 14-by-7-block area of Miami set aside for black residents. The original inhabitants of Colored Town worked for the Florida East Coast Railway, as did all of Miami's early citizens: the city was founded by the Railway as part of a planned economic corridor stretching into the Caribbean. When Miami voted to incorporate in July 1896, 162 of the 370 votes cast were cast by African-Americans.

Miami was almost completely residentially segregated between 1896 and the 1950s. Colored Town, though denied most municipal amenities, was a lively, self-contained community. Sidney Poitier and Lena Horne were childhood residents. The population was roughly split between African-Americans and immigrants from the Bahamas. Residential segregation extended to hotels, so famous black musicians playing Miami's grand resorts had to eat and stay in Colored Town. After playing, they said they were "going over town," giving Overtown its current name. Integrated audiences filled Overtown's after-hours hotspots on "Little Broadway." Prominent African-Americans like Langston Hughes, Joe Louis, and Thurgood Marshall vacationed there. By the mid-1950s, Overtown was home to 40,000 people.

Overtown is located just west of Miami's central business district, and by mid-century, city leaders were taking steps to redevelop Overtown and shift the city's black population to isolated outlying neighborhoods. Overtown was pushed into decline by a series of economic and political events but most significantly by the construction of I-95 and the I-95/I-395 interchange through the heart of the neighborhood during the 1960s. The interchange alone destroyed the housing of 10,000 Overtown residents. By the time construction was complete, Overtown had lost three quarters of its residents and most of its businesses.

IMMIGRATION CHANGES MIAMI

Miami was changing in other ways in the 1960s. Fidel Castro's 1959 Communist takeover of Cuba sent 600,000 Cuban exiles fleeing to the United States during the following decade. The United States' policy was to grant asylum to Cuban refugees, considering them victims of political oppression. Many settled in Miami, building a Little Havana near Overtown. Many in Miami's black community felt that Cubans received preferential treatment from the government.

A second wave of Cuban refugees arrived in Florida in the early 1980s after a change in Cuban policy allowed anyone who wanted to leave Cuba to do so. With thousands of Cubans boarding ramshackle ships, the U.S. was forced to change its policy toward the refugees. By the mid-nineties, Cubans caught at sea were repatriated to Cuba; Cubans who made landfall would be allowed to stay. This is known as the "Wet Foot-Dry Foot" policy, and it stands to this day. Additionally, 20,000 Cubans are granted visas each year.

Haitian refugees began arriving in Miami in 1991 and 1992, after a military coup ousted President Aristede, a popular and democratically elected leader. Aristede's supporters were persecuted, and 40,000 people fled Haiti by boat. Many died at sea; those who were rescued were held at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. Though most qualified for asylum in the United States because of their political affiliations, President George H.W. Bush ordered that all Haitian refugees be repatriated to Haiti. To qualify for asylum, Haitians must apply and be processed in Haiti.

Today, approximately 5% of Miami's population is Haitian, while seventy percent is Hispanic. ♿





MAGICAL REALISM ON STAGE

In *Little Children Dream of God*, playwright Jeff Augustin uses aspects of magical realism, a style that originated in literature and visual art. The framework of his play is apparently realistic, until elements of dream, magic, and supernatural phenomena are introduced.

Magical realism first appeared in the works of Latin American novelists like Gabriel Garcia Márquez and Jorge Luis Borges. Novelists of this style allow fantasy to coexist with realism, so that boundaries are erased and neither reality nor fantasy is subordinate to the other. In theatre, magical realist plays have largely been associated with writers from marginalized groups. The re-envisioning of a “reality” dominated by rationalism is a powerful artistic strategy to challenge the status quo and traditional, Western classifications. Augustin joins a growing number of American playwrights who, over the past two decades, have been exploring the potential of magical realism on stage.

JOSE RIVERA

Born in Puerto Rico but raised on Long Island, Rivera initially tried to portray the Latino-American experience through kitchen-sink naturalism, but his shift to magical realism led to his breakout 1992 play, *Marisol*. In an apocalyptic version of the Bronx, a young woman meets her guardian angel, who warns Marisol that the angels are planning a revolution against a senile God. Rivera recalled the impetus for his shift from realism: “I was exploring my cultural heritage by writing in a new form, employing the myths and legends of my grandparents. That was a real liberation for me.”

TONY KUSHNER

With an angel crashing through the ceiling, diorama mannequins coming to life, and a hallucinated travel agent, magical events are foundational to *Angels in America*. Kushner recognized Márquez’s influence over many writers of his generation. His interest in magic on stage came from a desire to push theatre’s capacity beyond “that whole sort of illusion-reality paradigm.” Central to Kushner’s vision is an acknowledgement of the theatrical illusion, as stated in



Fort Worth Opera's production of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*

his stage direction for *Angels*: “[I]t’s OK if the wires show, and maybe it’s good that they do.”

SARAH RUHL

In *The Clean House*, Ruhl brings elements of fantasy to intrude on the realistic household setting; snow falls indoors, and apples fall from the sky into the living room. A magical lyricism informs Ruhl’s play *Eurydice*, and she most recently used elements of magical realism and puppetry to explore reincarnation in *The Oldest Boy*. Ruhl has articulated her interest in theatrical forms that move away from a Freudian-based “realism” on stage: “[I]f you excavate people’s subjectivity and how they view the world emotionally, you don’t get realism.” 🧛



A production of Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* at The Phoenix Theatre

HAITIAN PLAYWRIGHTS

PRE-COLONIAL

Traces of indigenous Taino storytelling survive in areïtos, ceremonial song forms that have been adapted into modern Haitian musical traditions. The most famous composer of areïtos was Anacoanda, a female Taino chief who was executed for resisting Spanish occupation in 1503.

COLONIAL

Spain ceded the western half of Hispaniola to France in 1697, and French-style theatres were soon erected in the colony's major cities. Local troupes performed successful French plays and operas.

POST-REVOLUTIONARY

Post-Revolutionary theatre in Haiti was dominated by the French-educated mixed-race sons of white fathers, who wrote French-style plays on patriotic themes, most often King Henry Christophe and the Haitian Revolution.

ROMANTIC

Mid-nineteenth-century Haitian playwrights continued to write in French and increasingly adopted the Romantic style. Auguste Nau penned comedies like *La Fiancée De Léogâne* (*Leogane's Fiancée*), a five act play in verse. Haitian history, politics, and national identity remained popular topics: it is thought that the Haitian Revolution is one of the most dramatized events in history.

Evidence of performances in Creole exists in surviving newspaper advertisements. These shows were low-comedy or vaudeville in style, and scripts were not published.

INDIGENOUS AND POPULAR THEATRE

The United States' occupation of Haiti from 1915 through 1934 catalyzed a movement toward a popular, indigenous theatre. Dominique Hippolyte, the best-known playwright of this era, focused on Haitian history and political and social satire. Stern Rey was an actor and monologist who wrote and performed in Creole, drawing his material from everyday life. In 1953, Félix Morisseau-Leroy's *Antigone in Creole* opened in Port-au-Prince, the first serious, traditional drama in the language of the Haitian public.

TEYAT ANGAGE (REVOLUTIONARY THEATRE)

The rise of Francois Duvalier in the late 1950s drove many playwrights to the United States, Montreal, and France and created a vibrant diaspora theatre community.

Frank Fouché, author of the Creole *Oedipus*, went into exile in 1965. In 1971, he wrote his most famous play, *Général Baron-le-Croix ou le silence masqué* (*The Masked Silence*). The play focuses on a vodou priest (a thinly-veiled stand in for Duvalier) who uses sorcery to maintain his power.

Haitian theatre companies were formed in New York City and Montreal during this period. The Kouidor group operated in New York from 1969 to 1977 and created work in the tradition of Brechtian epic theatre, using Haitian dance, drumming, folklore, and vodou in their politically charged works.

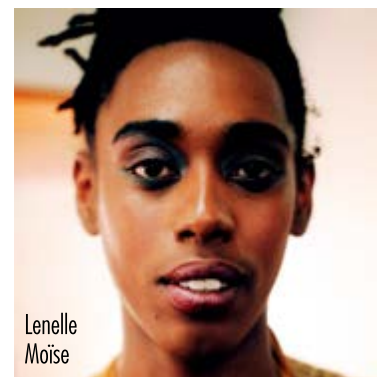
Those who remained in Haiti during Duvalier's reign faced strict censorship. From inside Haiti, novelist and poet Frankétienne wrote *Pélen Tét* (*Head Trap*), a Creole adaptation of Slawomir Mrozek's *The Emigrants*. *Pélen Tét's* social commentary initially passed Duvalier's censors because it explores the lives of Haitian immigrants in New York City.

Evans Paul, current candidate for prime minister of Haiti, is also a playwright. He founded Konbit Petit Kay, an anti-Duvalier theatre company in Port-au-Prince in the early 1980s. He penned *Debafre! (Enlightened!)*, a "modern Euripidean monologue" in Creole and had it performed in the city's Iron Market despite a government ban. He was elected mayor of Port-au-Prince after the fall of Duvalier.

THE NEW GENERATION

The children of Haitian revolutionaries and refugees came of age in the 1990s and 2000s. They write primarily in English and, in doing so, open the Haitian-American experience to a new audience.

France-Luce Benson, daughter of Haitian immigrants to Miami, writes plays and screenplays set in the United States and Haiti, exploring the challenges of immigrant life as well as Haitian history and spirituality. Lenelle Moïse is a playwright, poet, and performance artist born in Port-au-Prince in 1980 and raised in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her work, which includes the well-received 2008 play *Expatriate*, focuses on sexuality, class, race, and identity. ♿



Lenelle Moïse



JOSE RIVERA'S RULES FOR PLAYWRITING

One of Jeff Augustin's playwriting idols is Jose Rivera, whose work ranges from plays like *Marisol* and *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot*, to the screenplay for *The Motorcycle Diaries*, which led to Rivera being the first Puerto Rican writer ever nominated for an Academy Award®. Jeff once read a list that Rivera had composed of his "Rules for Playwriting." Read it here and you may find yourself as inspired as Jeff was.

- Good playwriting is a collaboration between your many selves. The more multiple your personalities, the further, wider, deeper you will be able to go.
- Theatre is closer to poetry and music than it is to the novel.
- There's no time limit to writing plays. Think of playwriting as a life-long apprenticeship. Imagine you may have your best ideas on your deathbed.
- Write plays in order to organize despair and chaos. To live vicariously. To play God. To project an idealized version of the world. To destroy things you hate in the world and in yourself. To engage in the conversation started by great writers in the past. To further evolve the artform. To make money.
- Write because you want to show something. To show how fleeting love and happiness are. To show the inner workings of your ego. (Each "to show" is active and must be personal, deeply held, true to you.)
- Each line of dialogue is like a piece of DNA; potentially containing the entire play and its thesis; potentially telling us the beginning, middle, and end of the play.
- Be prepared to risk your entire reputation every time you write, otherwise it's not worth your audience's time.
- Embrace your writer's block. It's nature's way of saving trees and your reputation.
- Language is a form of entertainment. Beautiful language can be like beautiful music: it can amuse, inspire, mystify, enlighten.
- Rhythm is key. Use as many sounds and cadences as possible. Think of dialogue as a form of percussive music. You can vary the speed of the language, the number of beats per line, volume, density. You can use silences, fragments, elongated sentences, interruptions, overlapping conversation, physical activity, monologues, nonsense, non-sequiturs, foreign languages.
- Vary your tone as much as possible. Juxtapose high seriousness with raunchy language with lyrical beauty with violence with dark comedy with awe with eroticism.
- Action doesn't have to be overt. It can be the steady deepening of the dramatic situation or your character's steady emotional movements from one emotional/psychological condition to another: ignorance to enlightenment, weakness to strength, illness to wholeness.
- Invest something truly personal in each of your characters, even if it's something of your worst self.
- If realism is as artificial as any genre, strive to create your own realism.
- Write from your organs. Write from your eyes, your heart, your liver, your ass – write from your brain last of all.
- Write from all of your senses. Be prepared to design on the page: tell yourself exactly what you see, feel, hear, touch and taste in this world.
- Find your tribe. Educate your collaborators. Stick to your people and be faithful to them.
- Strive to be your own genre. Great plays represent the genres created around the author's voice. A Chekhov genre. A Caryl Churchill genre.
- Strive to create roles that actors you respect will kill to perform.
- Form follows function. Strive to reflect the content of the play in the form of the play.
- Don't be afraid to attempt great themes: death, war, sexuality, identity, fate, God, existence, politics, love.
- Theatre is the explanation of life to the living. Try to tease apart the conflicting noises of living, and make some kind of pattern and order.
- Push emotional extremes. Don't be a puritan.
- You have thoughts and you generate ideas constantly. A play ought to embody those thoughts and those thoughts can serve as a unifying energy in your play.
- A play must be organized. This is another word for structure. You organize a meal, your closet, your time – why not your play?
- Strive to be mysterious, not confusing.
- Think of information in a play like an IV drip – dispense just enough to keep the body alive, but not too much too soon.
- Faulkner said the greatest drama is the heart in conflict with itself.
- Keep your chops up with constant questioning of your own work. React against your work.
- Listen only to those people who have a vested interest in your future.
- A character must be stupendously hungry. There is no rest for those characters until they've satisfied their needs.
- In all your plays be sure to write at least one impossible thing. And don't let your director talk you out of it.
- A writer cannot live without an authentic voice – the place where you are the most honest, most lyrical, most complete, most creative and new. Finding your authentic voice as a writer is your business, your journey – a private, lonely, inexact, painful, slow and frustrating voyage. Teachers and mentors can only bring you closer to that voice. With luck and time, you'll get there on your own. 🐢

DESIGNER STATEMENTS

ANDREW BOYCE, SET DESIGN

Little Children... in its scope, use of language, poetic narrative, and culturally specific perspective has given me so much to explore. My hope is that we've created a world that enriches and emboldens the mystery and poeticism of the play. Set primarily in Overtown—a neighborhood in Miami—as well as numerous other locations, the play calls for a transformative, flexible space that allows for moments of specificity and location set within a larger dreamscape. Our goal has been to create a design that bends to the audience's imagination and supports the heightened theatricality and ephemeral quality that runs deeply through the narrative and language. We also hoped to find a gesture that was singular in its tonality—but also culturally specific to both Overtown, Miami and to the Haitian community that lives there. In researching this world, we found ourselves drawn to the murals of artist Purvis Young. We found his dynamic, expressionistic work to be whimsical and iconographic, dark and dangerous—yet playful—existing at a crossroads of folksy and urban. This is a modern, timely, American myth tapping deeply into the traditions of a specific community.

GINA SCHERR, LIGHTING DESIGN

The main consideration in lighting *Little Children Dream of God* is accounting for the many different locations and moods in the piece. As we transition from the ocean to an apartment etc., the light will help locate us within the frame

of the flexible set. At the same time, the relationship between dreams and waking life will also need to be delineated with light, while allowing the worlds to bleed together in the liminal space. One major influence that came up during the design process involves the vibrant Haitian immigrant life in Miami. The scenic mural certainly helps illustrate that idea, and the light will play off of that with saturated colors and bold shapes. The darkness of the play, reflected in the scenic design, is another consideration. The light will need to reflect the haunting of the characters while serving the needs of the space. As we shift between vodou dreams and reality, the light will clarify where we are and where we're going. It's a marrying of the worlds of darkness and light, good and evil, and past and future.

JENNIFER CAPRIO, COSTUME DESIGN

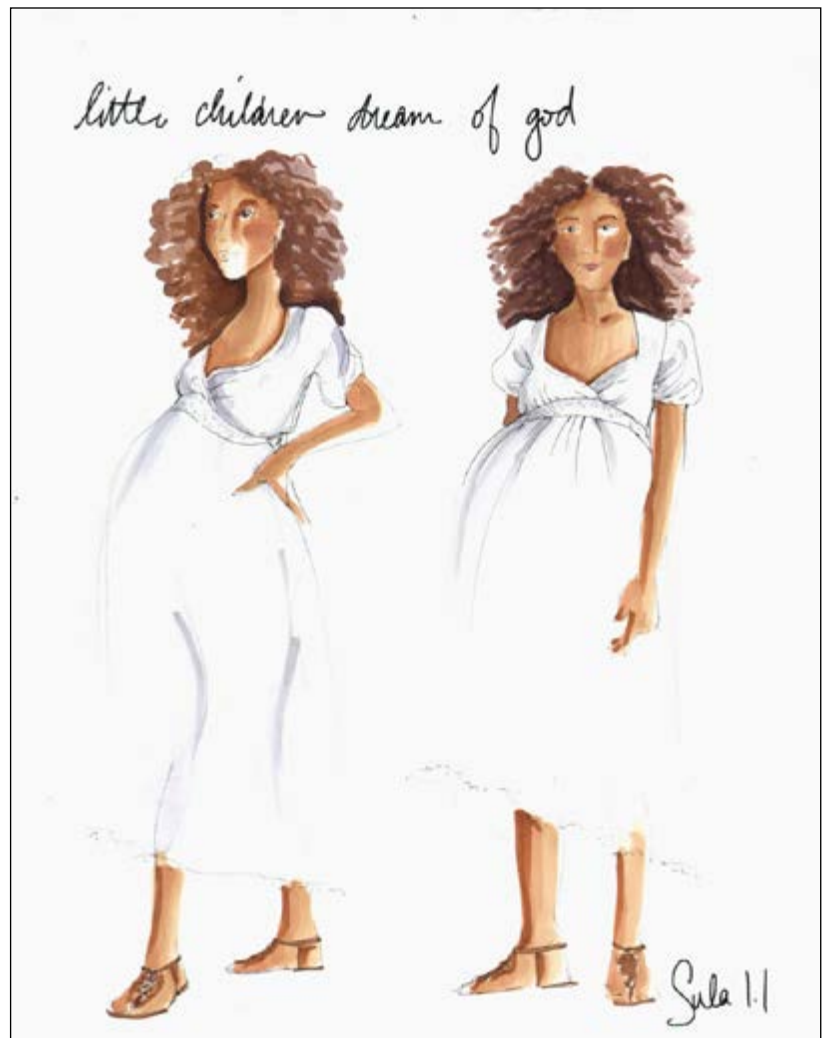
When I first read *Little Children Dream of God*, I imagined the beautifully naturalistic world that Jeff (our playwright) has created, the world in which the play seems to live. This world, however, has a darker, more surreal and magical counterpart that resides in the language, characters, and conflicts of the piece. The two, the realism and the magic, live in a beautiful harmony. To wrap my head around this dichotomy, my first steps were what I consider seemingly obvious—I read the play, I made lists, I talked to Giovanna, our fearless director, to see what she envisioned for the visual language and world of the play. I asked Jeff why he wrote the play. That's an important piece for me to get inside



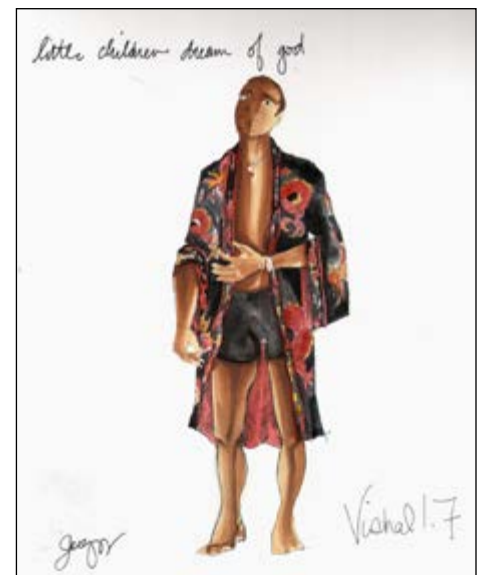
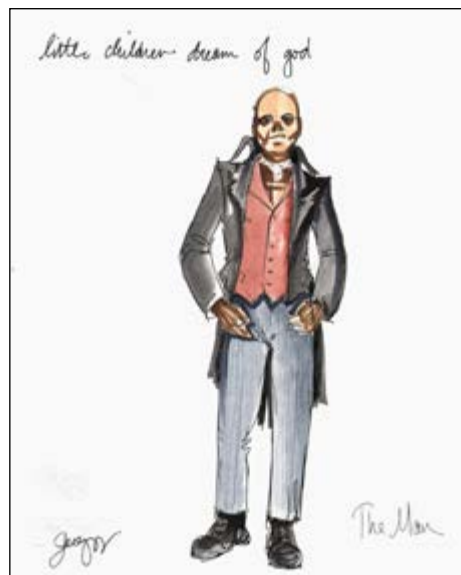
Set Design for *Little Children Dream of God*



a new work. Then, armed with this knowledge, I spent several days at the Strand Bookstore, in the library, and on the web researching images. I researched voodoo practices so I could begin to understand the darker parts of the piece. I immersed myself in images of Overtown, Miami, to get a sense of the realistic world in which these characters reside. After pouring over images, Giovanna and I decided the best approach to the costume design was to make the clothes as realistic as possible. The only way we can believe some of the things that the characters tell us is to visually believe the characters as honestly as they take themselves. Then, even though this particular show is set in the modern day and the clothes are not being custom made, I drew many sketches so Giovanna, Jeff, and our cast could get a true sense of each character's visual arc. The next step resulted in a lot of "method shopping," or trying to figure out where characters would actually shop. Would they go to WalMart or Saks? Once we get believable looks, the team then can address the magical (what does 11 months pregnant look like?). Hopefully all of this collaboration results in an audience completely believing each character and, for a play like this, having the costumes become part of the actors' physicality so that they don't even appear to be wearing a "costume."



Costume Designs for *Little Children Dream of God*



PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

HOW DO PLAYWRIGHTS USE ELEMENTS OF THEMSELVES TO CREATE CHARACTERS WITH A CULTURALLY-SPECIFIC PERSPECTIVE?

Playwright Jeff Augustin drew on his background as the child of Haitian immigrants in writing *Little Children Dream of God*. Like most Americans, Augustin is influenced by both American culture and the culture of his family.

REFLECT What cultures do you identify with? How would your family identify itself?

ANALYZE Create a chart by drawing a vertical line down a sheet of notebook paper. Label one side **American** and the other side the name of **another culture with which you identify**.

Use this chart to inventory aspects of your background, organizing them by the culture from which they come. Suggested topics: food, language or expression, interests, music, old wives' tales, and superstitions.

WRITE Using your chart as a guide, write a monologue in which you explain your background to a new friend.

HOW DOES AN ENSEMBLE CREATE A DREAM SCENE ON STAGE?

Little Children Dream of God includes dream scenes as a central part of the story. Explore how theatre artists can create a dream scene in this collaborative activity. (For more information about magical realism in theatre, read the article on page 15 of this UPSTAGE.)

REFLECT Lead a discussion about dreams and how we experience them. How do they work? What is the "logic" of dreams? How are dreams different from our waking reality? What do dreams communicate to us? (You may want to talk about magical realism in theatre and literature).

CREATE Work individually, in pairs, or small groups to create a scenario for a dream. Include 5 events, and at least 3 of them should be something that could not happen in our waking reality. (Note: this scenario can describe images and actions; dialogue is not necessary for this activity.)

ACTIVATE Rehearse and perform their scenes. Encourage them to use everyday objects in creative ways, and to use the classroom space resourcefully. Anything can happen in a dream.

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

HOW DOES A PLAYWRIGHT WRITE DIALOGUE TO EXPLORE INTER-CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS?

(Note: this activity can be an extension to the cultural perspectives pre-show workshop activity)

You've seen how Jeff Augustin's play explores relationships between Haitians and Americans. The theme of inter-cultural relationships offers rich potential for theatre. Work in pairs to write a scene exploring your own cultures.

REFLECT Discuss Sula's encounters with the people she meets in America (including Americans of Haitian descent and white Americans like Carolyn). What are some of the questions, issues, and conflicts that occurred in these encounters?

WRITE

1. Review or create a chart on your own cultural identity (described in the pre-show activity).
2. Pair-up with a partner and compare your charts and cultural influences.
3. Work in pairs on a dialogue in which two characters from different cultures must interact. (Possible given circumstances: one character is inviting the other to meet his/her family and needs to explain their beliefs.)

ACTIVATE Rehearse and perform your scene for the class. Audience can provide feedback about what parts of the scene are most interesting to watch.

HOW DOES A SET DESIGNER USE VISUAL SYMBOLISM TO AMPLIFY A PLAY'S THEMES?

Andrew Boyce found inspiration for the set design of *Little Children Dream of God* in the works of artist Purvis Young. Young lived and worked in the neighborhood in which the play is set.

MATERIALS: Library or computer with internet access for research, paper, pencils, and paint.

REFLECT During the show, take time to examine the set. What images and colors do you see? How are they connected to the play's language and action? Are they symbolic in any way?

RESEARCH Find a visual artist from your neighborhood or city whose work resonates with you. (Alternatively, use the works of Purvis Young as inspiration.) Create a list of elements of this artist's style to use, noting color, texture, and symbolism.

CREATE Design and paint a mural of your school or community in the style of your local artist. What symbols represent your neighborhood? How does the style reflect your community?

CREOLE TRANSLATIONS

SONGS IN CREOLE

DODO TI PITIT MANMAN... - Go to sleep mommy's little baby
SI OU PA DODO SHAT LA VA MANGE'W... - If you don't sleep,
the cat will eat you

MANMAN OU PALA LALÉ NAN MACHÉ/ - Your mommy went to the river
PAPA OU PALA LALÉ NAN RIVIÉ... - Your daddy went to the farm

MWEN PA MOUN ISIT/ - I'm not from here

MWEN VIN TRAVAY/ - I come to work

POU M' ALE/ - Then I leave

M' SE NEG NON MON O/ - I've come from the mountain

MWEN PA KA RETE, M' POU ALE/ - I can't stay I have to go

MEN LE YO' WE MWEN YO GEN PAROL YAP PALE/

- But when they see me, they always have something to say

M' PAP OKUPE YO/ - I don't mind them

MAGI M' VIN FE POU M' ALE... - I've come to make magic and leave

CREOLE PHRASES

KI MOUN OU YE - Who are you?

TANN - Wait

MEH NENM KOTE MANMAN OU -
Then take me to your mother

LI TOUJOU TRIS - It's still sad

YON IMIGRAN - An immigrant

ENTEJIAN - Intelligent

KRIYE POU MANMAN - Cry for mom

KI SA - What?

MANTI - Am I lying?

TI PITIT - Little One

KITE M TRANKIL - Leave me alone

ESKIZE M - Excuse me

PA FE SA - Don't do this

LAP DÒMI - He's sleeping

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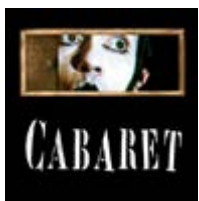
ABOUT ROUNABOUT

ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

Founded in 1965, Roundabout Theatre Company has grown from a small 150-seat theatre in a converted supermarket basement to become the nation's most influential not-for-profit theatre company, as well as one of New York City's leading cultural institutions. With five stages on and off Broadway, Roundabout now reaches over 700,000 theatregoers, students, educators and artists across the country and around the world every year.

We are committed to producing the highest quality theatre with the finest artists, sharing stories that endure, and providing accessibility to all audiences. A not-for-profit company, Roundabout fulfills its mission each season through the production of classic plays and musicals; development and production of new works by established and emerging writers; educational initiatives that enrich the lives of children and adults; and a subscription model and audience outreach programs that cultivate and engage all audiences.

2014-2015 SEASON



Book by Joe Masteroff
Music by John Kander
Lyrics by Fred Ebb
Starring Alan Cumming
and Emma Stone
Co-directed and
choreographed by
Rob Marshall
Directed by Sam Mendes



By Tom Stoppard
Directed by
Carey Perloff



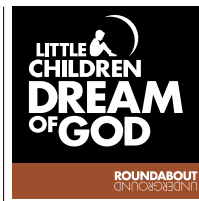
By Tom Stoppard
Starring
Ewan McGregor,
Maggie Gyllenhaal,
Josh Hamilton
and Cynthia Nixon
Directed by
Sam Gold



Music & Lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim
Book by James Lapine
Reimagined by Fiasco
Theater
Directed by Noah Brady
and Ben Steinfeld



Book & Lyrics by
Betty Comden
& Adolph Green
Music by Cy Coleman
Choreographed by
Warren Carlyle
Directed by Scott Ellis



By Jeff Augustin
Directed by
Giovanna Sardelli



By Joshua Harmon
Directed by
Trip Cullman

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: INTERVIEW WITH SENIOR EDUCATION PROGRAM MANAGER, PAUL BREWSTER

Ted Sod: Tell us about yourself. Where were you born and educated? How and when did you become Senior Manager of Education Programs?

Paul Brewster: I grew up in New Hampshire, attended public school K-12, and became involved in (read: obsessed with) theatre at age 10. I moved to NYC for undergrad at NYU Tisch, where I studied Film & TV production. Missing the collaborative environment of the theatre process, I began directing and stage managing in New York and Regionally. I first learned about Roundabout's Education department while on the stage management team for Roundabout's *Look Back in Anger* in 2011. After starting grad school for Educational Theatre, I was lucky enough to be hired as an Education apprentice at Roundabout in the Fall of 2012. Since then, I've been hired full-time and promoted to my current position.

TS: Describe your job at RTC. What are your responsibilities?

PB: Roundabout has in-depth partnerships with around 15 middle and high schools across the five boroughs each year. I collaborate with teaching artists and partner educators to create residencies that use theatre to teach core curriculum, theatre skills, or both. We also help students and teachers to mirror professional theatre processes by

mentoring them on productions at their schools. All the programming is thematically connected to a Roundabout show, which students attend as part of the residency or mentorship. Additionally, I liaise with the I.A.T.S.E. to produce a series of "Hidden Career Path Days" for partner school students that focus on the skills and workplaces of backstage professionals. I also run Student Ambassadors, an afterschool program for representatives from our partner high schools.

TS: What is the best part of your job? What is the hardest part?

PB: The best part of my job is seeing young people grow because of their engagement with Roundabout's programming. This can manifest in so many different ways: finding a new way into a difficult academic concept, assuming a new role in a group setting, being exposed to a career opportunity, recognizing an untapped talent, honing artistic skills, or even the wonder of experiencing a professional play for the first time.

TS: Why do you choose to work at Roundabout?

PB: It's gratifying to collaborate with expert teaching artists, dedicated partner educators, and passionate students. Roundabout prioritizes education and outreach initiatives alongside producing some of my favorite shows.

Learn more at roundabouttheatre.org. Find us on:



WHEN YOU GET TO THE THEATRE

TICKET POLICY

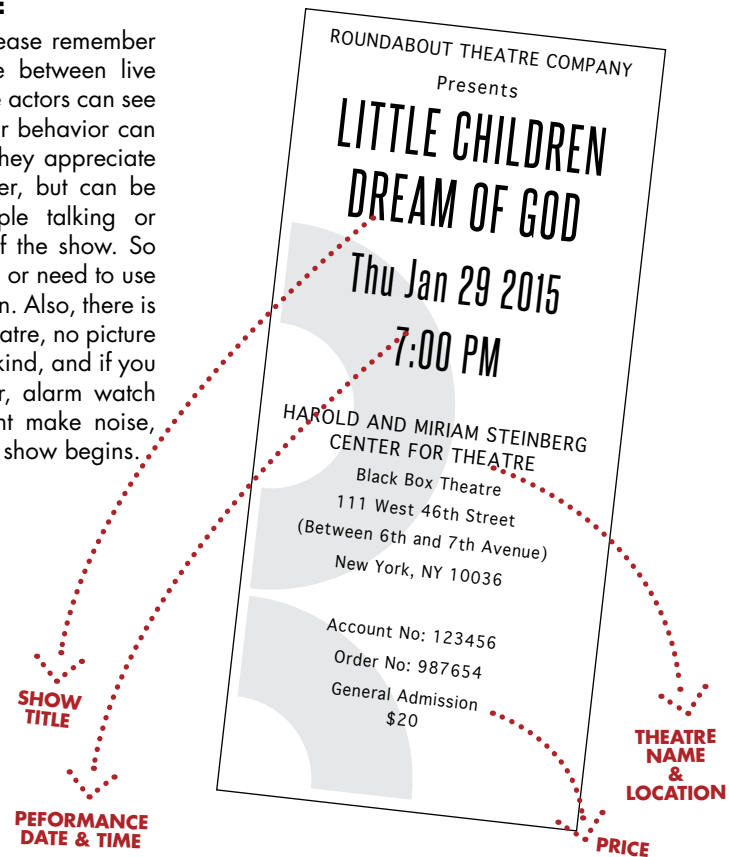
As a student participant in Producing Partners, Page To Stage or Theatre Access, you will receive a discounted ticket to the show from your teacher on the day of the performance. You will notice that the ticket indicates the section, row and number of your assigned seat. When you show your ticket to the usher inside the theatre, he or she will show you where your seat is located. These tickets are not transferable and you must sit in the seat assigned to you.

PROGRAMS

All the theatre patrons are provided with a program that includes information about the people who put the production together. In the "Who's Who" section, for example, you can read about the actors' roles in other plays and films, perhaps some you have already seen.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

As you watch the show please remember that the biggest difference between live theatre and a film is that the actors can see you and hear you and your behavior can affect their performance. They appreciate your applause and laughter, but can be easily distracted by people talking or getting up in the middle of the show. So please save your comments or need to use the rest room for intermission. Also, there is no food permitted in the theatre, no picture taking or recording of any kind, and if you have a cell phone, beeper, alarm watch or anything else that might make noise, please turn it off before the show begins.



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