

Susan Merson

Curriculum & Professional Vitae

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<http://www.susanmerson.com>

www.nytheatreintensives.org

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts (Creative Writing)

Goddard College, Plainfield, VT

Bachelor of Science (Theatre)

State University of New York/ Regents College, NYC, NY

40 year professional experience as actress, playwright, producer and educator

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZING, THEATRE PRODUCTION & ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

CO PRODUCER/ LITERARY MANAGER

UNTOLD STORIES OF JEWISH WOMEN: A Three Day Festival at the Museum of Jewish Heritage

This three day festival featured 46 plays and 40 playwrights. I read, recommended, commissioned and adapted material for the festival, assisting in directing, casting, coordination, Museum and public liaison on all matters relating to the production and artistic aspects. I also acted and directed pieces where necessary and had two of my plays and two adaptations included in the program.

ORGANIZER

MICHIGAN COORDINATED CAMPAIGN

CLINTON-KAINE

Worked the campaign organizing and producing events for the 2016 election in Cass and St. Joseph Counties, Michigan as part of the Clinton campaign. Organized phone banks, voter registration events, get out the vote efforts and volunteer recruitment in two rural conservative areas in SW Michigan.

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, 13th Street REP, NYC

I took over the production and artistic responsibilities of this Village icon in Nov 2014 rescuing it from imminent closure

Responsibilities included oversight of physical plant, budget, staff, programming and marketing.

FOUNDING DIRECTOR, NY THEATRE INTENSIVES

Created 6 week intensive focusing on the collaborative process and new play development.

Also, a producing organization focusing on women's work, and theatre seminars in New York and Los Angeles.

www.nytheatreintensives.org

NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT/Dramaturg, NEW YORK CITY

At New Dramatists, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Jewish Rep, Manhattan Theatre Club, Playwrights Horizons, Lion Theatre Company etc.

PRODUCING DIRECTOR, JEWISH WOMEN'S THEATRE PROJECT,

Los Angeles, CA.

Helped to create vision and direction of this womans theatre company dedicated to the voices of Jewish women, exploring questions of Jewish and cross-cultural identity.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, STREISAND FESTIVAL

This new play festival, based at UCLA, introduced new works from contemporary American Jewish playwrights in a staged reading format. Offered residencies in Palm Springs, LA and San Diego. Responsible for Artistic leadership, selection and direction of plays, playwrights' contracts, audience development, promotion, board coordination, citywide liaison, service on Jewish communal boards and committees. Nationally recognized, recipient of merit grants from US Hillel, City of Los Angeles and State of California.

DRAMATURGE/ITCHY FOOT CABARET

As part of this project, served as dramaturg for reading of poetry of both Israeli and Palestinian poets. Corey Madden, Taper Producer

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
FOUNTAIN THEATRE**

Worked to help mount several Fountain Productions including SONIDOS GITANOS (LA/SF), SWEET NOTHING IN MY EAR, DECLARATIONS

PRODUCER/LIASION,

Mark Taper Forum and Council on Jewish Life,
LA Jewish Federation Council

Coordinated the visit of the Haifa Theatre to the Taper with their production of SOUL OF A JEW. Set up community outreach with company members and local university programs, coordination of 300 person benefit dinner at Music Center.

ASSISTANT TO PRODUCTION MANAGER, ABC CIRCLE FILMS

As assistant to UPM on miniseries (OUT ON A LIMB) I coordinated travel, production shipping, film units and casting in Lima and Cusco Peru. Liaison with Peruvian military operations.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

Arts Program Coordinator/Festival Producer

Produced ten day festivals in New York and Tel Aviv with the Council of Jewish Theatres

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE. LABOR INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, AFL-CIO

Served as researcher for this labor based media project

**LITERARY COORDINATOR, MARK TAPER FORUM AND HOLLYWOOD WOMEN'S
COALITION**

Literary and PR responsibilities for this commemoration of Hiroshima.

WORDBRIDGE NEW PLAY CONFERENCE

Faculty Director at Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina

SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT/SCRIPT ANALYSIS/COVERAGE**LITERARY MANAGER**

Ensemble Studio Theatre/ LA Project

Solicit, review and dramaturg scripts for possible production

SCRIPT ANALYST

- Freelance script analyst for Dan Blatt Productions, TNT, Fogwood Films, *TNT, Dan Blatt Productions, Craig Anderson Productions* and *Cabin Fever Productions*, Polygram Pictures and Artisan Entertainment.
- Did professional coverage of fiction, nonfiction and screenplays for major film studios. Analysis of text, story and marketability.

PERFORMANCE RESPONDENT Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival

Ongoing respondent to new plays on regional and national level.

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Theatre Site Evaluator/ Program Auditor

BOARD AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

- Board Member, Woman in the Arts and Media Coalition, NYC
- Managing Director, 13th Street Repertory Theatre, New York City 2014-present
- LEAGUE OF PROFESSIONAL THEATRE WOMEN, Programming Committee, NYC
- Producing Artistic Director, NY Theatre Intensives, NYC
- Founder, Moderator, Sylvan Writers Group
- Coordinator, Dramaturgy, Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Region VIII
- Board Member, Ensemble Studio Theatre, NYC
- Founder and Moderator, Los Angeles Writers Bloc
- Book Reviewer, Backstage, NYC
- Former Board Member, Ensemble Studio Theatre, NYC, LA
- Former Artistic Director, Streisand Festival for New Jewish Plays, Los Angeles
- Former Producing Director, Jewish Women's Theatre Project, Los Angeles
- Former Associate Producer, Fountain Theatre, Los Angeles
- Affiliate Artist; National artist residency program (8 years)

TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

CENTER FOR APPLIED LIBERAL ARTS IN THE HUMANITIES

ARTS AND WRITING DEPARTMENT

New York City, NY

Adjunct Instructor

SOLO PERFORMANCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

2017

Catalogue description: "A basic workshop for anyone interested in exploring their voice and style in solo performance. Participants will write and perform their own pieces using life experience as fodder and the tools of the actor/writer to bring that experience into a dramatic form. Participants will write, act, react and ultimately present their work in a final presentation. Come prepared to explore a basic question through writing, acting and voice work."

NY THEATRE INTENSIVES, FOUNDING DIRECTOR

New York City, New York

10/2009/ Present

Conceived and implemented 6 week summer intensive focusing on the collaborative process and new play development including, curriculum design, marketing, advertising, recruitment, budgeting, teaching. Professional Outreach to other programs and professional organizations

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

1/2004 - 2015

Fullerton, CA

- Served as *Coordinator of Dramaturgy* for Region VIII, *American College Theatre Festival*.
- Recipient of 2007-08 *Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award* for University Honors and Scholars Program.
- Developed and currently teach classes in beginning and advanced playwriting.
- Introduced *Dramaturgy* to the curriculum.
- Doubled the student base in Playwriting; within three years, have produced two National Playwriting Awards recipients
- Conceptualize and Produce ongoing campus radio series featuring student work (*Playdio*) and a new play festival of student written works in progress (*On Your Feet*). Presented a total of over 90 pieces of work in four (5) years in Radio and Staged reading format.
- Adjudicated Region 8 *KCATCF Dramaturgy Award*

WRITING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Sacred Center, NYC

Sanctuary NYC

Private Sessions

2010-present

12 session independent writers seminar on the ritual and in depth work of writing in all genres.

VOICING: Exploring myths, ghosts, and fellow travelers that inhabit your work.

Ongoing creative writing workshop in NYC.

2011-present

LA WRITERS BLOC

Playwriting/Screenwriting/Fiction/Non-Fiction/Teaching

Los Angeles, CA.

1/1985 – Present

- Co-founded with Jane Anderson, *professional peer mentoring. Serving as dramaturge, instructor*
- An outgrowth of the *New York Writers Bloc* founded by Jeffrey Sweet, the group has developed writers and projects that have gone on to win the Pulitzer, National Book Award, Emmy and various other notice.
- Alums include *Donald Margulies* (Time Stands Still) *Janet Fitch* (White Oleanders- Literary Fiction), *Laurie Graff* (*You Have to Kiss a Lot of Frogs- ChickLit*), *Jamie Callan* (*The Writers Toolbox- nonfiction*) and *Jane Anderson* (*The Baby Dance-Theatre, Olive Kittridge-TV Emmy*). Input and analysis of the elements of structure: story, plot,

character and marketing follow-through.

UNIVERSITY OF JUDAISM

JEWISH PLAYGIRLS: A Playwrights Workshop 2003-2005

- Created on-going workshop to explore contemporary American Jewish cultural issues. Sponsored by the JWTP and the Dortort Writer's Institute at the University of Judaism, Los Angeles, CA

PRIVATE COACH/ ACTING/FICTION/THEATRE/FILM 2000- present

Work with individual actor and writer clients on per project basis.

TEACHING GUEST ARTIST

- Bonn Players, Bonn Germany
- European Space Program Theatre Company, Frankfurt Germany Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah (Convocation speaker)
- KCACTF Region 8, 2, 3 and 7 (respondent, dramaturg, acting coach/adjudicator and playwright)
- Ohio Wesleyan University
- Davidson College, Charlotte, N.C.
- Augustana College, Quad Cities, Illinois
- Snug Harbor Arts Center, Staten Island, NY
- Wayne State University Detroit, Michigan
- Spirit Square, Charlotte, NC.
- Wonderland Ave. School, Los Angeles, CA

COURSES TAUGHT

SEMINAR IN PLAYWRITING

ADVANCED PLAYWRIGHTING

AUDITION TECHNIQUES

SURVIVAL IN THE PROFESSIONAL THEATRE

LIFE STORIES WORKSHOPS

SOLO PERFORMANCE

CREATIVE WRITING

WRITING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

ACTING-Advanced Scene Study

THE ARTIST IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

INDEPENDENT STUDIES: Production Dramaturgy
 Final Rewrite for Full Length Plays
 Writing the Solo Performance Piece
 Performing the Solo Piece
 Acting/ Scene Study (Stanislavsky)
 Theatre Criticism
 Writing Professional Coverage
 Fiction Practicum

AREAS OF TEACHING SPECIALTY & RESEARCH INTEREST:

Playwriting, Creative Writing, Fiction

Acting, Solo Performance, Theatre Criticism, Applied Theatre Techniques and Dramaturgy Literature:

Contemporary American Theatre (1970- present)
 Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues of Diversity
 Ecumenical Concerns in Contemporary Theatre
 History of the Off Off Broadway Movement
 Development of Theatrical Ensembles

PANELS AND PRESENTATIONS

Association for Theatre in Higher Education

<i>Solo Performance Workshop – San Francisco, CA.</i>	2005
Dramaturgy Panel -- ATHE	2006
Production Support, PLAYWORKS, Looking for Caciato by Romulus Linney	
Lead Dramaturg: The Fairy Play, by Tom Diggs, New Orleans	2007
Playwright, White Birches (10 minute play Playworks selection)	
Bounty of Lace, Religion and Theatre Award, Denver	2008
New Plays Panel, Montreal	2015

Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Region VIII

Teaching Solo Performance, Workshop	
Dramaturgy Workshops, Cedar City, Utah	2004
Dramaturgy in Performance Workshops, Cedar City, Utah	2005
Director and Dramaturg, Dog Our God (10 minute play),	2006
Dramaturgy Panels, developed and presented.	
Director and Dramaturg, Road Kill,	
Dramaturgy Assignments and Panels	2007

The Contemporary Drama Conference, Los Angeles, CA

Playwright and Panelist, Bounty of Lace	2008
The Bellarmine Forum at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA	
Playwright and Panelist, Bounty of Lace	2008
Respondent, Region 7, KCACTF	2010
Respondent Region 8, KCACTF	2011
Respondent, Region 1, KCACTF	2012

AWARDS, GRANTS, MEMBERSHIPS and UNION AFFILIATIONS

Shortlist Finalists, Fulbright in India **2014**

SAG, AFTRA, AEA, DRAMATISTS GUILD	Current member	
Finalist, DRAMARAMA, San Francisco Playwrights Center, <i>Meeting Betty Sue</i>		1995
Finalist, Chesterfield (Amblin) Writers Project, Los Angeles, <i>Meeting Betty Sue</i> (screenplay)		1996
Finalist, FIRST LOOK FESTIVAL, Ensemble Studio Theatre/LA Project <i>Sarah's Last Dance.</i>		1996
Finalist, ASK Theatre Projects, Los Angeles, <i>Danse Russe</i>		1997
Finalist, NYU Screenplay Award, <i>Dream Date</i>		1998
Best Actress Award, (<i>Family Secrets</i>), Detroit News		1999
Volunteer of the Year, Wonderland Elementary School, Los Angeles, CA		1999
KCACTF Faculty Fellowship to O'Neil Theatre Conference		2007
BREAD LOAF WRITERS CONFERENCE		
• Novel DREAMING IN DAYLIGHT selected for workshop at the Bread Loaf Writers Conference in Middlebury, Vermont		2007
Heidemann Award Finalist, Actors Theatre of Louisville , HAIR: A REMINISCENCE		

Religion in Theatre Award, Bounty of Lace, ATHE	2007
Outstanding Mentor Award, Honors and Scholars program, Cal State University, Fullerton, CA	2008
	2008

WRITER/PLAYWRIGHT

I. ONE ACTS:

MOMMY AND ME

Readings: Ensemble Studio Theatre/ LA Project

MEETING BETTY SUE

Readings: Ensemble Studio Theatre/LA

Fountain Theatre, Los Angeles

Finalist: Dramarama, San Francisco Playwrights Center

STAR TRAIN

Produced: Ensemble Studio Theatre/ LA
Emerging Artists Theatre/NYC

Summer Shorts Festival

Reading: Theatre Geo

HOPE

Readings: Fountain Theatre, Los Angeles

Theatre of NOTE, Los Angeles

Produced: AFTER BEIJING FESTIVAL, Ensemble Studio Theatre, New York

SARA'S LAST DANCE

Readings: WORDSMYTHS, LATC, Los Angeles; Theatre Geo, Los Angeles; Ensemble Studio Theatre /LA (Finalist FIRST LOOK FESTIVAL); JET Theatre, W. Bloomfield, Michigan

Finalist: Nantucket New Play Festival

BLACK AND WHITE TOGETHER

Readings: LA Writers Bloc; Interact Theatre, Los Angeles; JET Theatre, W. Bloomfield, Michigan (STAGED)

DANSE RUSSE

Readings: Ensemble Studio Theatre Winterfest, Los Angeles; A.S.K. Theatre Projects(Stage One)

HAIR:A REMINISCENCE

Commissioned by Jewish Women's Theatre Project

Produced: as part of HAIRPIECES: BY WOMEN ABOUT HAIR , produced by Hudson Guild, Fountain Theatre and Jewish Women's Theatre Project

Finalist: Heideman Award, Actors Theatre of Louisville

ORADUR SUR GLANE

Readings: Ensemble Studio Theatre, New York and Los Angeles

BEFORE FEAR

Readings: Ensemble Studio Theatre, New York and Los Angeles

Produced: Ensemble Studio Theatre, Miles Memorial Playhouse

THE WHITE BIRCHES

Readings: Ensemble Studio Theatre, New York and Los Angeles
 ATHE, PLAYWORKS, New Play Development Selection
 Produced: Ensemble Studio Theatre, Miles Memorial Playhouse
 Produced: American Avant Garde Theatre Festival, NYC

SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES

Commission Glendale Community College MOTEL CHRONICLES series
 Produced: Glendale Community College

I BELIEVE IN MARRIAGE

Produced: Miles Memorial Playhouse, Los Angeles
 Produced: League of Professional Theatre Women One Act Festival

RECOGNITION

Produced: Miles Memorial Playhouse, Los Angeles

CARLA TALKS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED IN THE BLUE BEDROOM

Produced: Miles Memorial Playhouse, Los Angeles
 Berkshire Playwrights Lab, Great Barrington, Massachusetts

WHOLE AGAINST THE SKY

Variations Theatre Company, Harvest Festival, Long Island City, NYC, 2012

IN THE EVENINGS

Presented in staged reading format IN HER NAME FESTIVAL, 2016; UNTOLD STORIES OF JEWISH WOMEN 2018

II. FULL LENGTHS:**DOOR OPENS WALK THRU**

Produced 13th ST Rep
 June 2015

BETWEEN PRETTY PLACES

Produced NYC, 13th Street Rep, September 2015

THE MARRIAGE SUITE

Developed at Ensemble Studio Theatre NY/ LA
 Studio 6 Developmental Production, Theatricum Botanicum, Seedlings Reading April 09

BOUNTY OF LACE

Commissioned by the Jewish Women's Theatre Project.
 Religion and Theatre Award, 2008, Association for Theatre in Higher Education.
 Produced by JWTP April 2003
 Produced : Alcyon Festival, Chicago Illinois 2009
 Staged Readings: EST/LA project
 Theatricum Botanicum, Topanga CA
 Judith Shakespeare Company/NYC
 Perishable Theatre/Providence RI

Traveling Jewish Theatre/ SF
 Golden Thread Productions/ SF
 Phanos: A 6 Part Series Exploring Faith and Identity
 Bellarmine Forum, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles
 HALCYON THEATRE: Alcyone Festival, June/July 2009 Production

THE BUSINESS OF HEAVEN

Readings: Fountain Theatre, Los Angeles;
 Ensemble Studio Theatre/ NYC

FIREWORKS OVER THE BACON

Readings: Los Angeles Theatre Center
 Fountain Theatre. Los Angeles; Ensemble Studio Theatre, NYC

BEYOND THE SEA

Readings: Ensemble Studio Theatre, NY Summer Conference, FIRST LOOK FULL LENGTHS
 EST/LA/OCTOBERFEST, NYC , 2003
 California State University, Fullerton, ON YOUR FEET 2008

WHAT REMAINS

Commissioned by Jewish Women's Theatre Project
 Produced as part of SALON Series, JWTP, Los Angeles, CA;
 Staged Readings: Goddard College, Plainfield Vermont; First Look Full Lengths, EST/LA
 JET Theatre. Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

III. FULL LENGTH - SOLO PLAYS:

WHEN THEY GO AND YOU DO NOT

Readings: LA Writers Bloc, Ensemble Studio Theatre NYC
 Produced: EstroGenius Sola Nova Festival, NYC, Fountain Theatre, Los Angeles

REFLECTIONS OF A CHINA DOLL

Produced by: Ensemble Studio Theatre, New York and Lake Forest, Illinois.
 Toured internationally 5 years

THE LOVES OF SHIRLEY ABRAMOWITZ

Produced by: Jewish Repertory Theatre. NY
 TelAviv International Theatre Festival
 Co-writtten with Edward M. Cohen , based on the writings of Grace Paley

PICNIC IN EDEN

Produced by Affiliate Artists to tour 2 years

CLARICE COHEN'S TRIBAL TALES OF LOVE

Commissioned by the Jewish Women's Theatre Project as part of Plays for the New Millenium
 at the Skirball Cultural Center
 Readings: HBO workspace
 Produced : Eclectic Company Theatre/LA

WRITER/FILM AND TELEVISION

SCREENPLAYS

MEETING BETTY SUE

Finalist, Chesterfield (Amblin) Writers Project

DREAM DATE

Finalist, NYU Film Competition

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

Optioned: Stuart Berton and Company-JIMOLA Productions

V. EPISODIC TELEVISION:**PASTOR'S WIFE(spec) and CHICAGO HOPE (spec)**

with partner Mark Winkworth

VI.WRITER/ NON FICTION:**WHEN THEY GO AND YOU DO NOT: Writings on Transition****YOUR NAME HERE: An Actor and Writer's Guide to Solo Performance**

Star Publish, 2004

ACTOR'S LIBRARY monthly book review column, BACKSTAGE WEST**WORKING ON A NEW PLAY (Consultant)**

A New Play Development Handbook For Actors, Directors, Designers

and Playwrights consultant to Edward M. Cohen

published by Prentice Hall Press, NY, 1988

VII.WRITER/FICTION**Short Stories/Fiction*****"Blood in the Sand"** published by Dutton/Plume Press, New York

as part of NICE JEWISH GIRLS, Marlene Adler Marks, editor. 1991

"Chicken Noodle Nightflights" published selection from REFLECTIONS OF A CHINA DOLL in THE JEWS OF AMERICA, 1994, HUGH LAUTER LEVIN, INC. STAMFORD, CT., Also published by LILITH MAGAZINE.****"Pressing the Flesh"** in DEMOCRAT'S SOUL, Health Communications, Inc, Deerfield, Florida, 2008.***"Miss Burns"** in ULTIMATE TEACHERS, Health Communications, Inc. Deerfield, Florida, 2009**Novel/ Fiction*****"Dreaming in Daylight"**, novel, 2009 Star/blocpress**Memoir/NonFiction****When They Go and You Do Not****PROFESSIONAL ACTING RESUME-CURRENT (tape at www.susanmerson.com)**

FEATURE FILM (representative)

Freeheld

The Prizewinner of Defiance Ohio

Dir: Jane Anderson (Dreamworks)

Terminator 3

Dir. Jonathan Mostow

Phenomenon

Dir. Jon Turteltaub

Lost in Yonkers(lead)

Dir. Martha Coolidge

Things To Do In Denver When You're Dead

Dir: Gary Fleder

MOVIES OF THE WEEK (representative feature roles)

American Meltdown

FX/ Dir. Jeremiah Chechik

Littlejohn

Hallmark Hall of Fame

The Elian Gonzalez Story (Janet Reno)

Fox/ Dir: Chris Leitch

Tom Clancy's Net Force

Prod. Dennis Doty

Absolute Strangers

Dir: Gil Cates

TV GUEST STARS/EPISODIC (representative)

SCANDAL (ABC)

Grey's Anatomy (recurring) Monk

True Blood (HBO)

24 Without a Trace

Numbers

REFERENCES:

Donald Margulies

Playwright

donaldmargulies@mac.com

Paul Slee, Producing Director, Ensemble Studio Theatre, NYC

chapinero@mindspring.com

slee@ensemblestudiotheatre.org

Jule Selbo, PhD.

Professor, Cal State Fullerton

jselbo@fullerton.edu

Janet Zarish

Head, Acting Department, New York University

jz10@nyu.edu

Bob Jaffe,

Chair, Board of Ensemble Studio Theatre

NYC

bob@bobjaffe.com