

Susan Merson

Curriculum & Professional Vitae 2008-2009

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EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts (Creative Writing)

Goddard College, Plainfield, VT

7/03

Bachelor of Science (Theatre)

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

6/74

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

TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON
Fullerton, CA

1/2004 - Present

- Serve 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 60 pieces of work in four (4) years in Radio and Staged reading format.
- Adjudicate Region 8 *KCATCF Dramaturgy Award*.

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 *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*). 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

2000-2008

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

TEACHING GUEST ARTIST

- Davidson College, Charlotte, N.C.
- Augustana College, Quad Cities, Illinois
- Snug Harbor Arts Center, Staten Island, NY
- Wayne State University Detroit, Michigan
- Cal State/Riverside, Riverside, CA
- 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

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, 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 -- Chicago Production Support, PLAYWORKS, Looking for Caciato by Romulus Linney	2006
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
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), Dramaturgy Panels, developed and presented.	2006
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

BOARD AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

- Coordinator, Dramaturgy, Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Region VIII
- Current Board Member, Ensemble Studio Theatre, NYC
- Founding and Current Moderator, Los Angeles Writers Bloc
- Book Reviewer, Backstage, NYC
- Former Board Member, Ensemble Studio Theatre, The LA Project
- 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)

AWARDS, GRANTS, MEMBERSHIPS and UNION AFFILIATIONS

SAG, AFTRA, AEA, DRAMATISTS GUILD Current member

Finalist, DRAMARAMA, San Francisco Playwrights Center, *Meeting Betty Sue* 1995

Finalist, Chesterfield (Amblin) Writers Project, Los Angeles, *Meeting Betty Sue (screenplay)* 1996

Finalist, FIRST LOOK FESTIVAL, Ensemble Studio Theatre/LA Project
Sarah's Last Dance. 1996

Finalist, ASK Theatre Projects, Los Angeles, *Danse Russe* 1997

Finalist, NYU Screenplay Award, *Dream Date* 1998

Best Actress Award, (*Family Secrets*), 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 2007

Religion in Theatre Award, Bounty of Lace, ATHE 2008

Outstanding Mentor Award, Honors and Scholars program, Cal State University, Fullerton, CA 2008

WORDBRIDGE NEW PLAY CONFERENCE

Faculty Director at Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina 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

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

Produced: Ensemble Studio Theatre, Miles Memorial Playhouse

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

SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES
Commission Glendale Community College MOTEL CHRONICLES series
Produced: Glendale Community College

II. FULL LENGTHS:

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

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

III. FULL LENGTH - SOLO PLAYS:

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

WRITER/ NON FICTION:

YOUR NAME HERE: An Actor and Writer's Guide to Solo Performance
Star Publish, 2004

ACTOR'S LIBRARY monthly book review column, BACKSTAGE WEST

Consultant, WORKING ON A NEW PLAY

A New Play Development Handbook For Actors, Directors, Designers
and Playwrights consultant to Edward M. Cohen
published by Prentice Hall Press, NY, 1988

WRITER/FICTION**SHORT STORIES:**

“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.

“Dreaming in Daylight”, novel, 2009 Star/blopress

SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT/SCRIPT ANALYSIS/COVERAGE

1995-2001

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

PROFESSIONAL ACTING RESUME-CURRENT (tape at www.susanmerson.com)**FEATURE FILM (representative)**

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)

Grey's Anatomy (recurring)	Monk	True Blood (HBO)
24	Without a Trace	Numbers
Surface(pilot/recurring)	Six Feet Under	The Practice
Passions(recurring)	Ally McBeal	Frasier
Party of Five	E.R.	Reasonable Doubt
Profiler	Family Matters	Life Goes On(recurring)

THEATRE (NYC/LA-representative)

Broadway: CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD	DIR. Gordon Davidson
SATURDAY, SUNDAY, MONDAY	DIR. Franco Zefferelli

Off Broadway: VANITIES (original company) DIR. Garland Wright

Off Off Broadway-Workshops and Developmental work: New Dramatists, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Circle in the Square, WPA, La Mama

LOS ANGELES Ensemble Studio Theatre(NY/LA), Jewish Women's Theatre Project, The Fountain Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, HBO Comedy Festival(Aspen), Edgemar Theatre, 24th Street Theatre

PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTION & ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

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.

PUBLICATIONS

BACKSTAGE

- Currently a book critic for Backstage writing under the pseudonym S.M. Shultz

“YOUR NAME HERE”; AN ACTOR/WRITERS GUIDE TO SOLO PERFORMANCE

- Published in 2004, this is a guide to developing solo work for theatre artists. Available at AMAZON.COM

AMAZON SHORTS

- Short plays THE WHITE BIRCHES, BEFORE FEAR AND ORADUR SUR GLANE on their site, as well as the first chapter of my novel, entitled ROSIE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

FICTION

- Nice Jewish Girls (Penguin), *The Jew in America*, (Hugh Lauter Levin) *Chicken Soup for the Menopause Soul*.
- *The Democrats Soul* (HCI Publications); Ginosko, Davka, Lilith and others.
- “*Pressing the Flesh*”, in *DEMOCRATS SOUL* Health Communications Inc, Deerfield, Florida.

DREAMING IN DAYLIGHT, a novel, [blocpress] STAR, April 2009

SPECIALIZED TRAINING/OTHER ACTIVITIES

CERTIFIED YOGA INSTRUCTOR

Center for Yoga Certification 2001

Instructor, Center for Yoga

Private Instructor/ Hollywood Dance Center

REFERENCES:

Judith Royer

Loyola Marymount University

Coordinator, New Play Program, Association for Theatre in Higher Education

jroyer@earthlink.net, jroyer@lmu.edu

Donald Margulies

Playwright

donaldmargulies@mac.com

David Kranes,

Dramaturg, Writer and Founder, Sundance Playwrights Lab

dkranes@hotmail.com

Paul Slee, Producing Director, Ensemble Studio Theatre, NYC

chapinero@mindspring.com

Jule Selbo

Professor, Cal State Fullerton

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