

The SUNY Playwrights' Project: A Brief Biography

The SUNY Playwrights' Project both produces and publishes a wide range of dramatic writing from current students and alumni of the Dramatic Writing Program at SUNY, New Paltz. Established under the mentorship of writer Laurence Carr in 1997, the program has nurtured the work of nearly 300 writers of plays, screenplays, videos and theatre pieces.

Many of the students are now working throughout the country in a variety of theatre, film and academic venues utilizing the skills they acquired through this unique dramatic writing program.

To name just a few successes:

Nathan Norman ('06) wrote the screenplay and performed the on-camera narration for the L.A. documentary, Walking High, which was included in The Best of the 168 Hour Film Project DVD.

Alyssa Weiss ('06) was a playwriting finalist (Waiting for the Boys) in the 2005-6 Kennedy Center College Theatre Festival.

J. Holtham ('95) was the co-artistic director of Youngblood and Program Director of the EST (Ensemble Studio Theatre)/ Sloan Project, two nationally known Off-Broadway production organizations.

Terry Sandler's ('01) short film, Corey, has been screened throughout the country and nationally on the Bravo Cable Network.

Playwrights Jamie Gerardi ('03) and Alyson Konsker ('04) have had numerous productions of their plays mounted both regionally and in New York City.

Gregg Bray ('01) runs a film and video company along with his brother, John Bray ('01), a successful playwright (On Top) with numerous regional and New York City credits.

The list of successful SUNY, New Paltz, Dramatic Writing alumni continues to grow each year.

One important facet of SUNY Playwrights' Project is how it also brings alumni writers back to New Paltz to create new works with local professional theatre artists. Two great benefits derive from this: Alumni now in the professional world return to share their experiences with the current dramatic writing students, an invaluable learning tool. Second, an artistic community continues to grow in New Paltz, bringing together students, alumni, faculty and professional artists in a common cause- the creation of new works for stage and screen and a chance to have these works developed so that they can be staged and screened throughout the world. As word spreads, many more young writers will want to take part in this unique academic and professional project.

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Additional samples of our work:

Vanguard Voices: New Plays from the SUNY, New Paltz Dramatic Writing Program. At Parker Theatre, SUNY, New Paltz, NY; Produced by Mohonk Mountain Stage Company, Robert G. Miller, Artistic Director; Laurence Carr, Mentor and Dramaturg; September 2004.

In May, 2004, Vanguard Voices: New Plays from the SUNY, New Paltz Dramatic Writing Program (2003) was published in the first Vanguard Voices Journal, presented to Mr. Carr and the SUNY student and alumni playwrights by Dean Gerald Benjamin of the SUNY College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The event was held at Hopfer House and was sponsored by the SUNY Alumni Association.

A new play, Scrabble and Tabouli by Laurence Carr premiered at the Mohonk Mountain Stage Company in New Paltz: November 2004, It featured SUNY alumnus Bruce Pileggi.

Anthropomorphous, New Plays by SUNY Playwrights, produced Off-Off-Broadway by The Michael Chekhov Project; David Cohen, Artistic Director and SUNY alumnus; Spring, 2004.

Vanguard Voices: New Plays from the SUNY, New Paltz Dramatic Writing Program. At the Unison Performance Space; New Paltz, NY; Produced by Mohonk Mountain Stage Company, Robert G. Miller, Artistic Director; Laurence Carr, Mentor and Dramaturg; November 2003.

Knowing Women, a new play by Suzanne Logan; produced by Mohonk Mountain Stage Company, New Paltz, NY; L. Carr, Dramaturg. October, 2003

The Color of Fire: An Evening of New Plays; Featuring SUNY, NP Playwrights; Produced Off-Off-Broadway by the Michael Chekhov Project, David Cohen, Artistic Director, Summer 2003.

Strange Desires: An Evening of Original Scenes and Monologues featuring SUNY, New Paltz Playwrights; Produced and Directed by David Cohen, Orange County Community College; May, 2003.

Detours: Expect Delays: SUNY Playwrights (with fellow SUNY artists) produced Off-Off Broadway in NYC as part of the Michael Chekhov Project, David Cohen (SUNY alumni, director). October, 2003. Carr's one-act play, The American Auditions was included.

On October 4, 2003, Mr. Carr premiered two new works at the Mohonk Mountain Stage Company in New Paltz: Stories from a fiction work, Pancake Hollow Primer, and a one-act play, I Miss Communism, featuring both SUNY alumni and faculty.