
3A

Action

Credentialing and Certificated Assignments Committee

Request for Consideration of Eminence Credential

Executive Summary: The Governing Board of High Tech Middle Media Arts, a Charter School in San Diego County, recommends to the Commission, the issuance of a credential based on Eminence to Ms. Linda Libby in the subject of Drama and Theater Arts.

Recommended Action: Staff traditionally does not make a recommendation on Eminence Credentials.

Presenter: Edye Ipsaro, Credential Analyst, Certification, Assignment and Waivers Division

Strategic Plan Goal(s): 1

Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation of professional educators

April 2007

Request for Consideration of Eminence Credential

Introduction

The Governing Board of High Tech Middle Media Arts, a Charter School in San Diego County, by resolution, adopted on June 15, 2006, in accordance with Education Code section 44262 recommends to the Commission the issuance of a credential based on Eminence to Ms. Linda Libby in the subject of Drama and Theatre.

Background

Education Code section 44262 allows the Commission to issue an Eminence Credential to any person who has achieved eminence in a field of endeavor commonly taught or a service practiced in the public schools of California. California Code of Regulations, Title 5, section 80043(a) defines an eminent individual as one who is recognized as such beyond the boundaries of his or her community, has demonstrably advanced his or her field, and has been acknowledged by his or her peers as beyond the norm for others in the specific endeavor.

The Commission has determined that an individual can demonstrate eminence if the individual meets the following requirements:

- **Recognized as eminent beyond the boundaries of his or her community:** To meet this requirement the individual must be renowned outside his geographical community with more merit given to interstate and international recognition.
- **Demonstrably advanced his or her field:** To meet this requirement an individual must provide documentation of advanced degrees; distinguished employment in the field/endeavor; and contributions to the field including evidence of authorship or research indicating a high level of expertise.
- **Acknowledged by his or her peers as “beyond the norm” in the specific endeavor:** To meet this requirement the employing agency and the candidate must submit all of the following:
 1. Letters from former employers, professional colleagues and other experts in the field, relating to the individual’s recognized expertise or position of prominence in their field.
 2. Documents evidencing extraordinary ability worthy of distinction.
 3. Evidence of major, national or international awards recognizing uncommon achievement in and advancement of a particular field or endeavor.
 4. Evidence of significant contribution to the field.
 5. Authorship of a new or unusually successful method of educating children or the public in the field or endeavor.
 6. Evidence of extraordinary success in their field.

The following tables outline the documentation submitted by the High Tech Middle Media Arts Charter School and Ms. Linda Libby, an actress, director, drama instructor and private drama coach.

Education
Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, 1980, Certificate of Completion
Master of Fine Arts, Theater and Acting, 1983, Temple University, Pennsylvania

Evidentiary Materials Presented By Linda Libby	Recognized Beyond Boundaries	Advances Field	Acknowledged by Peers as Beyond the Norm
Film Productions			
“Coup D’Todd,” Supporting Actress, 2007	X	X	
“Box of Moonlight,” Supporting Actress, 1999	X		
“A Waitress Waits,” Lead Actress, 1993	X	X	
Theater Tours – International and National			
“Abundance,” Lead Actress, 1992 Toured Russia	X	X	X
“Angel City,” Lead Actress, 1987 Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Scotland	X	X	X
“The Buddy Holly Story,” Lead Actress, Toronto and Ontario Canada	X	X	X
“Wizard of OZ,” Lead and Supporting Actress California National Theatre 4 Children	X	X	
“Babes in Toyland,” Lead Actress, 1985 California National Theater 4 Children	X	X	
Regional Theater - Musicals			
“South Pacific,” Lead Actress, 2003 Lambs Players, San Diego, California		X	X
“Cabaret,” Lead Actress, 2002 North Coast Repertoire		X	X
“The Music Man,” Supporting Actress, 2004 Starlight Theater, San Diego, California		X	
“Company,” Lead Actress, 2003 Starlight Theater, San Diego, California		X	
“Hedwig & Angry Inch,” Supporting Actress, 2002, Cygnet Theater, San Diego, California		X	

Evidentiary Materials Presented By Linda Libby	Recognized Beyond Boundaries	Advances Field	Acknowledged by Peers as Beyond the Norm
Regional Theater - Musicals (continued)			
"Cinderella," Supporting Actress, 1999 Knoxville, Tennessee	X	X	
"Doctor! Doctor!," Lead Actress, 1996 Barter Theatre, Virginia	X	X	
"Girl of My Dreams," Lead Actress, 1996 Barter Theatre, Virginia	X	X	
"Boomers," Lead Actress, 1993 Lambs Theater, San Diego, California		X	
"Pump Boys & Dinettes," Lead Actress, 1992 Lambs Player, San Diego, California		X	
"6 Women With Brain Death," Lead Actress 1985 -1987, San Diego Repertoire, California		X	X
"The Wonder Years," Lead Actress, 1984 Gas Lamp Theatre, San Diego, California		X	
"Rap Master Ronnie," Lead Actress, 1983 San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Diego, California		X	
" A Funny Thing Happened On the Way To The Forum," Lead Actress, 1983 San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Diego, California		X	
Regional Theater Plays			
"Five Cups Of Coffee," Lead Actress, 2006 Lambs Players, San Diego, California		X	
"The Women," Supporting Actress, 1992 San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Diego, California		X	
"The Glass Menagerie," Lead Actress, 1993 Tennessee Stage, Knoxville, Tennessee	X	X	X
"How I Learned To Drive," Lead Actress, 1999 Arizona Theatre Company, Arizona	X	X	X
"In Arabia We'd All Be Kings," 2005, Lynx Performance, San Diego, California		X	
"Gum," Lead Actress, 2005 Lynx Performance, San Diego, California		X	
"King Lear," Lead Actress, 2005 San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Diego, California		X	X
"Remains," Lead Actress, 2003 Mo'olelo, San Diego, California			

Evidentiary Materials Presented By Linda Libby	Recognized Beyond Boundaries	Advances Field	Acknowledged by Peers as Beyond the Norm
Regional Theater Plays (continued)			
"A Christmas Carol," Supporting Actress, 2004, San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Diego		X	
"A Christmas Carol," Supporting Actress, 1993, San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Diego			
"Women Who Steal," Lead Actress, 2004 San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Diego		X	
"Merchant of Venice," Supporting Actress, 2002 , San Diego Repertoire, San Diego		X	
"How I Learned To Drive," Supporting Actress, 1998, San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Diego, California		X	
"The Exonerated," Lead Actress, 2006 Lynx Performance, Arizona	X	X	X
"Rockaby," Lead Actress, 2001 6 th @ Penn, San Diego, California		X	
"The Vagina Monologues," Actress, Lyceum, San Diego, California		X	
"The Vagina Monologues," Actress, 2000 Clarence Brown Theatre, Tennessee	X	X	
"An O. Henry Christmas," Lead Actress, 2000 Clarence Brown Theatre, Tennessee	X	X	
"Twelfth Night," Lead Actress, 1997 East Tennessee Shakespeare Festival, Tennessee	X		
"Macbeth," Lead Actress, 1997 East Tennessee Shakespeare Festival, Tennessee	X	X	
"Moving of Lila Barton," Actress, 1999 Clarence Brown Theatre, Tennessee	X	X	
"Effect of Gamma Rays," Lead Actress, 1986 Bowery Theatre, San Diego, California		X	
"The Inner Circle," Actress, 1983 Playwrights Project, School Tour San Diego, California		X	
"I Won't Dance," Lead Actress, 1985 Gas Lamp Quarter, San Diego, California		X	
" The Unseen Hand," 1993 Black Friar Theatre, San Diego		X	X
"Six Women With Brain Death," 1996 San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Diego		X	X

Evidentiary Materials Presented By Linda Libby	Recognized Beyond Boundaries	Advances Field	Acknowledged By Peers As Beyond the Norm
Television Commercials			
Brothers Bedding, 2006		X	
<i>Automated Loan Machine</i>		X	
San Diego Union Tribune		X	
Blood Bank		X	
San Diego Repertory Theatre		X	
Directing			
“Greek Mythology,” National Tour, Traveling Lantern Productions, San Diego	X	X	
“The Sword and The Stone,” National Tour, Traveling Lantern Productions, San Diego	X	X	X
“The Vagina Monologues,” Lyceum Theatre, San Diego, California		X	
“Things May Disimprove: Short Plays by Samuel Beckett,” L2 Productions	X	X	X
“Bad Brad,” Lambs Players Theatre, San Diego		X	
“Wait Until Dark,” The Bijou Theatre, Knoxville, Tennessee		X	
“No More Secrets,” The Bijou Theatre, Knoxville, Tennessee		X	
“Kidswrite,” Developed and Directed, The Bijou Theatre, Knoxville, Tennessee		X	
Awards			
<i>1987 Drama-Logue Critics Award</i> Outstanding Achievement-Ensemble Performance, San Diego Repertory Theatre, “Six Women With Brain Death”		X	X
<i>1993 Drama-Logue Critics Award</i> Outstanding Achievement-Performance, Blackfriars Theatre, “The Unseen Hand”		X	X
<i>1996 Drama-Logue Critics Award</i> Outstanding Performance-Ensemble Performance, San Diego Repertory Theatre, “Six Women With Brain Death”		X	X
<i>1998-1999 9th Annual ariZoni Award</i> Finalist as Actor in Supporting Role “How I Learned To Drive”	X	X	X
<i>2005 KPBS 9th Annual Patté Awards</i> Outstanding Ensemble Member “In Arabia, We’d All Be Kings”		X	X

Evidentiary Materials Presented By Linda Libby	Recognized Beyond Boundaries	Advances Field	Acknowledged by Peers as Beyond the Norm
<i>Craig Noel Award</i> San Diego Theatre Critics Circle, "Cabaret"		X	X
<i>Knoxville Area Theatre Coalition Award 1993</i> Lead Actress in a Play, "The Glass Menagerie"		X	X
<i>San Diego Playbill Billie Award</i> Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Musical, "South Pacific"	X	X	X
Educational Contributions			
Playwrights Project, San Diego, California		X	
San Diego Junior Theatre, Balboa Park and Chula Vista, California		X	
Academy of Performing Arts, San Diego		X	
Letters Supporting Eminence			
Jeff Smith Ph. D., Theater Critic San Diego Reader		X	X
Larry Rosenstock, CEO High Tech Charter School, San Diego		X	
Nicole Hinostro, Director High Tech Charter School, San Diego		X	
Sam Woodhouse, Artistic Director San Diego Repertory Theatre		X	X
Kerry Craig, Language Art Teacher Bear Valley Middle School		X	X
Janis T. Gabay, U.S National Teacher of the Year 1990-1991		X	X
Dr. Jeff Turner, Teacher, Theater Studies Dept Maryville College. Tennessee		X	X
Anne Kinggard, Program Coordinator Pellissippi State College, Tennessee		X	
Thomas Adkins, Company Manger University of Tennessee/Clarence Brown Theater	X	X	
Deborah Salzer, Executive Director Playwrights Project, San Diego		X	
Professional Affiliations			
Actors Equity Association Member since 1986	X	X	
Canadian Actors Equity Association Member since 1999	X	X	
Lambs Players Theatre Associate Artist since 2004		X	X
Black Friar Theatre Company Member 1991-1994		X	

Evidentiary Materials Presented By Linda Libby	Recognized Beyond Boundaries	Advances Field	Acknowledged by Peers as Beyond the Norm
Articles and Reviews			
“From Russia with Linda” <i>Women’s Times</i> , September 1993		X	X
“Hot Women and Cold Coffee” <i>Fahrenheit</i> , January 2004	X	X	X
“Violently Awake” <i>San Diego Reader</i> , May 2002		X	X
“The Far From Expiring Minds” <i>Dramalogue</i> , November 1988		X	X
“Record Player” <i>The Daily Californian</i> , April 1996	X	X	
“Six Women to Close ?? The Rep’s Linda Libby, Not Just Another Expiring Mind!” <i>Bravo! News Magazine</i> , June 1989	X	X	X
“Six Women” Alive, Well After 16 Months” <i>The Tribune</i> , February 1996		X	X
“Abundance” in Russian and English	X	X	X
“Abundance”, <i>Daily Variety</i> , May 1993	X	X	X
“Blackfriars headed Way Off Broadway” <i>Daily Variety</i> , May 1993		X	
“Abundance Of Riches by Blackfriars” <i>Los Angeles Times</i> , May 1993	X	X	
“Abundance at Blackfriars Theatre” <i>Theater Review, KPBS</i> , May 1993	X	X	
“Best Bets - Abundance” <i>Los Angeles Times</i> , October 1991	X	X	
“Abundance” <i>Dramalogue Theatre Reviews</i> , October 1991		X	
“In Russian from Vladivostok” US Consul General and Efim Zvenyatski, Director of Gorky Theatre	X	X	X
“The Wild West Meets the Wild East” <i>American Theatre Magazine</i> , October 1993	X	X	X
“Blackfriars Gets Abundance of Russian Homage,” <i>San Diego Union Tribune</i> Aug 1993	X	X	X
“The Best Of San Diego’s Weekend” <i>Los Angeles Times</i> , October 1991	X	X	
“Stalwart Women, Cardboard Men” <i>San Diego Union-Tribune</i> , October 1991		X	

In addition to Ms. Libby's career in Theater, she has provided evidence of her teaching experience at the Middle School level as well as at the College level. Most notably, Ms. Libby is involved in the Playwrights Project in San Diego where she teaches playwriting and provides workshops to students in grades 5 through 12. She has developed curricula and serves as a director and producer for their plays, workshops and touring productions; thus, it appears she meets the requirement of having a successful method of educating children or the public in the field or endeavor.

Recommendation

Commission staff seeks direction from the Commission on how to proceed with the request from the Governing Board of High Tech Middle Media Arts, a Charter School in San Diego County in the matter of the request for issuance of a credential for Ms Linda Libby in the subject of Drama and Theatre based on Eminence.

The following pages contain a sampling of the many materials provided by the applicant as evidence of her involvement and contributions in the field of Drama and Theater.



Linda Libby



State Of California
 California Commission On Teacher Credentialing
 Box 944270
 1900 Capitol Avenue
 Sacramento, CA 94244-2700

Telephone:
 (916) 445-7254 or (888) 921-2682
 E-mail: credentials@ctc.ca.gov
 Web site: www.ctc.ca.gov

RECOMMENDATION FOR A PERSON OF EMINENCE

The Governing Board of the HIGH TECH MIDDLE MEDIAARTS
 school district, by resolution adopted on JUNE 15, 2006, in accordance
Date
 with California Education Code, Section 44262, recommends the issuance of a credential based on Eminence to
LINDA CAROL LIBBY
Name

in the subject of DRAMA/THEATRE
 Eminence was determined on the basis of her outstanding work in the field of
 Drama/Theatre in Tennessee, Arizona, and California; her Master of
 Fine Arts in Drama from Temple University in Philadelphia; her advocacy
 work on behalf of professional actors in San Diego; her glowing
 letters of recommendation from colleagues, theatre company directors,
 university faculty, theatre critics, and her current principal; and
 her work with learners of all ages, from kindergarteners to
 college students.

The above named applicant will be employed in this school district to serve as a
DRAMA TEACHER at the SECONDARY (MIDDLE SCHOOL) level.
Teacher/Subject, Administrator, other *Elementary or Secondary*

District Superintendent: [Signature]
 Date: 6/19/06

See page 2 for additional required information.

(continued)

The individual is recognized as eminent beyond the boundaries of his or her community, has demonstrably advanced his or her field, and has been acknowledged by his or her peers beyond the norm for others in the specific endeavor.

1. The following affirmations of eminence are attached:

- Letter from Sam Woodhouse, Artistic Director, SD Repertory Theatre
- Letter from Janis Gabay, WBCT & National Teacher of the Year, Preuss School
- Letter from Deborah Selzer, Executive Director, Playwrights Project
- Letter from Kerry Craig, Educator, Bear Valley Middle School
- Letter from Dr. Jeff Turner, Theatre Studies, Maryville College (TN)
- Letter from Anne Kinggard, Program Coord. Theatre & Vis Arts, Pellissippi State (TN)

2. The following documentation of achievement (advanced degrees, distinguished employment, publications, other) are attached:

- MFA in Theatre/Acting (Temple University)
- "From Russia with Linda," Women's Times
- "The Wild West Meets the Wild East," American Theatre
- Awards (KPBS Patti Awards, Arizoni Awards, Drama-Logue Awards)
- Excerpts from "The Play's the Thing: A Photographic Odyssey through Theatre in San Diego"

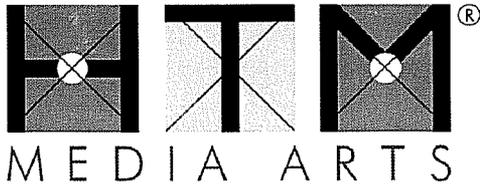
3. Please provide an explanation of the individual's effectiveness as a teacher:

At High Tech Middle Media Arts, we value Ms. Libby's extensive professional experience as a theatre artist, but we hired her as our full-time drama teacher because of her wide-ranging teaching experience. She has taught theatre classes from kindergarten to college-aged. She loves what she does, does what she teaches, and her passion reaches students in a way that is unique to her and her experience.

4. Attached are the following miscellaneous items the district feels support eminence:

- Letter from Jeff Smith, Theatre Critic, San Diego Reader
- Letter from Thomas Adkins, Company Manager, Clarence Brown Theatre Co.
- Professional resumé
- IMDB: Cast and Crew for Box of Moonlight

5. Attached is a letter from the applicant describing his or her accomplishments that support a claim of eminence.



May 25, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

I just received a gift for teacher appreciation week. It was a framed saying,
Good teaching is one-fourth planning and three-fourths theatre.

Gail Goodwin

Since I have worked in theatre as an actor and an educator for all of my professional life, this quote summarized my reasons for pursuing my teaching credential as a person of eminence in theatre.

I love what I do. As an actor and arts educator, I have been moving audiences and students for more than twenty years. As an actor it is my job to engage each audience, to raise their awareness, and ultimately to inspire them to reconsider their place in the world. A teacher's job is the same. An audience's standing ovation is a powerful acknowledgement, but no more so than the light of recognition in a student's eye when they "get it."

To qualify as eminent, I have many outstanding accomplishments I was privileged to perform in far Eastern Russia as a part of the first American theatre company to tour the region. A twenty-year member of Actors Equity Association, the union for stage actors, I also founded the Actors Alliance of San Diego, a service organization for San Diego's performing artists, now in its 19th year. Twice, I have been published as a contributing writer; first in the V-Day edition of Eve Ensler's The Vagina Monologues, and recently in The Play's the Thing, a photo journal of San Diego Theatre, where I am also featured in many photos. I have numerous awards from theatre associations across the country and have enjoyed more glowing reviews than I can count.

As a teacher, it has been my pleasure to work with students from kindergarten through college, in every type of setting. At the University of Tennessee at Knoxville I taught all levels of acting for majors and non-majors, as well as courses at Pellissippi State – a community college in Knoxville, Tennessee, and Maryville College – a small Liberal Arts College. As an arts educator in San Diego, I have taught for the Academy for Performing Arts, Playwrights Project, and San Diego Junior Theatre. I taught workshops at A.L.B.A. for students who were suspended from their schools and collected together for one last chance at education, as well as for prestigious private schools like The Bishop's School, and academically rigorous charter schools like the Preuss School at UCSD. In this wide variety of classroom cultures I have learned much about teaching.

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I hope to pass on my experience and my love of the theatre to my students, and share my knowledge with teaching colleagues. In the past year as the Drama teacher for High Tech Middle Media Arts I have confirmed what I have always known - that I learn most by teaching. I plan to continue to grow as an artist and educator. Thank you for your consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Libby".

Linda Libby
Drama Studies
High Tech Middle Media Arts
2230 Truxton Road
San Diego, CA 92106
(619) 398-8610
llibby@hightechhigh.org

October 13, 2006

Dear Commission on Teacher Credentialing:

Just last weekend I got a call. The lead actress was injured and they needed "a heavy-hitter" to come in learn the part NOW. They called me. The producer, Sam Woodhouse of the San Diego Repertory Theatre, made a point of telling me (twice) that the director, producer and every cast member had insisted that I should be called to step in and "save the show." Proving eminence as a stage actor is tough. A performance is experienced by the audience and is not preserved like a film or television show. Professional theatres make archival videos for understudies to learn parts but these are not available - even to the performers. I am a professional stage actor. What makes me even more rare is that I have made my career outside of New York City in regional theatre.

To prove eminence, I have gathered a Russian documentary, feature articles, reviews, photos and personal notes and letters from eminent colleagues. My career as a stage actor began in 1983 so I have included only some of the articles I still have. A comprehensive resume of my work as an actor (included) lists more than fifty professional stage plays, directing, film, and additional commercial credits.

Enclosed materials from the more outstanding experiences of my stage career include: "Abundance," The first American company to tour Far-East Russia with Pulitzer Prize winner Beth Henley, Feature articles and awards from "Six Women With Brain Death or Expiring Minds Want to Know" where I was the longest running actress in the longest running play in San Diego history, numerous other awards and recognitions from across the U.S., many world premiers, several publications, and contributions to published arts education curriculum. I have included brief descriptions of my distinguished colleagues to help clarify why we are eminent in this field.

As evidence of contributions to the community please find several letters from womens' organizations who received thousands of dollars from benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues." My fellow co-founders of the Actors Co-op (renamed the Actors Alliance) a twenty year-old organization that continues to serve theatre artists send their thanks. Also, a world premier adaptation of the best seller "First They Killed My Father, A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers" is represented by a photo of myself with the cast and Sheryl Crow, who performed the same evening to raise money for land mine survivors in Cambodia.

I have been fortunate to make my living as an actress on the live stage. Enclosed is an excerpt from the annual report from Actors Equity Association, the stage actors' union. This report shows the median annual income and average work-weeks for union actors. I have surpassed these average numbers every year since I joined Actors Equity in 1986.

Usually, a show runs, closes, and the actors (if they're lucky) move on to the next job. More than once, the shows I have played have run for more than a year. "Six Women with Brain Death or Expiring Minds Want to Know" broke all records of consecutive performances. I was the longest running cast member with more than 565 performances. The cast was invited to perform the National Anthem at a Chargers' football game. Mayor Maureen O'Connor even proclaimed "Six Women with Brain Death Day." Another world premier "Boomers" ran, relocated, and continues to be remounted more than 15 years after the original production.

In addition to my work on stage I have been an arts educator, teaching all levels of theatre arts classes to students aged 8-80. My curriculum vitae (enclosed) shows my wide variety of teaching experience. There are letters of support from teachers I have worked alongside including Jan Gabay, a National Teacher of the Year. It is because I love the theatre, and what theatre offers to the world of teaching that I am pursuing this credential.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with the commission to discuss any further questions about my eminence credential. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Linda Libby
(619) 398-8610 office
High Tech Middle Media Arts
2230 Truxton Road
San Diego, California 92106
llibby@hightechhigh.org

Linda Libby

7598 Camino de la Rosa
San Diego, CA 92127
(619) 665-6535 cell
(619) 398-8610 office
llibby@hightechhigh.org

TEACHING

High Tech Middle Media Arts, San Diego, California
Drama Studies grades 6, 7, 8

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Introduction to Theatre
Beginning Acting
Intermediate Acting - Contemporary Scene Study
Advanced Acting - Auditions and On Camera with guest Charles Tuthill

Maryville College, Maryville, Tennessee

Introduction to Voice and Movement
Viewpoints, Horton Modern Dance, Berry and Skinner Voice techniques,
Clown (LeCoq) with guest Amy Russell

Pellissippi State Technical College, Knoxville, Tennessee

Introduction to Theatre
Public Speaking

Playwrights Project, San Diego, California

Teach playwriting workshops to students 5-12 grade
Develop new curriculum
Public Relations for annual *Plays by Young Writers* new play festival,
touring plays, and arts education programming
Manage *Lifestages* program that creates theatre from life stories of
senior citizens
Director and producer for new plays, workshops, and touring productions

San Diego Junior Theatre, Balboa Park and Chula Vista, California

Teach wide variety of theatre skills to ages 5-18

Academy of Performing Arts, San Diego, California

Musical Theatre Workshops

Private Coaching

DIRECTING

<i>Greeks</i>	National Tour	Traveling Lantern
<i>The Sword and the Stone</i>	National Tour	Traveling Lantern
<i>Mozart</i>	National Tour	Traveling Lantern
<i>Plays by Young Writers' 03</i>	Playwrights Project	Lyceum, San Diego
<i>Bad Brad</i>	Education Program	Lambs Players
<i>Things May Disimprove: Short Plays by Samuel Beckett</i>		L2 Productions
<i>The Vagina Monologues</i>	Worldwide V-Day Campaign	L2 Productions
<i>The Vagina Monologues</i>	College V-Day Campaign	Clarence Brown
<i>Wait Until Dark</i>	Mainstage	Bijou Theatre
<i>Kidswrite</i> (developed from student writing)	Education Tour	Bijou Theatre
<i>No More Secrets</i>	Education Tour	Sexual Assault Crisis Center
<i>Evening of Sharing</i>	Unitarian Church	Sexual Assault Crisis Center

PUBLICATION

"The Play's the Thing: A Photographic Odyssey Through Theatre in San Diego,"
Photography by Ken Jaques, Article ed. Dea Hurston. Sunbelt Publications, San
Diego, 2005.

"The Vagina Monologues, The V-Day Edition" by Eve Ensler, Letters and Stories, 2
entries, Villard Books, a division of Random House, Inc., New York, 2001.

EDUCATION

Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Master of Fine Arts

Wal Cherry, Chairman

Faculty: Paul Berman, Kathy Garinella, Israel Hicks, Joseph Leonardo,
Dugald MacArthur, Dr. Julia Wing (author, "Speak for Yourself")

Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts (PCPA)
Certificate of Completion (76 units)

Donovan Marley, Director

Faculty: Kathy Brady, James Edmondson, Leticia Jaramillo, Byron Jennings,
Randall Myler, Richard Poe, Richard Rhiele, Cal Winn

Professional development

Voice - Dr. Linda Vickerman, Marta Zekan

Dance - Kathryn Irely

Alexander Technique - Joseph Lee

Linda Libby
 AEA, CAEA
 (619) 665-6535 cell
 lindalibby@hotmail.com

FILM

BOX OF MOONLIGHT Curious Waitress Tom DiCillo, Director
 w/John Turturro

REGIONAL THEATRE - MUSICALS

<i>SOUTH PACIFIC</i> San Diego Billie Award	Bloody Mary	Lambs Players	Deborah Smyth, dir.
<i>THE MUSIC MAN</i>	Mrs. Paroo	Starlight	Jack Tygett, dir.
<i>COMPANY</i>	Joanne	Starlight	Brian Wells, dir.
<i>CABARET</i> Craig Noel San Diego Critics Award	Fraulein Schneider	North Coast Rep.	Sean Murray, dir.
<i>HEDWIG & ANGRY INCH</i>	Keyboards	Cygnnet Theatre	Sean Murray, dir.
<i>BOOMERS (premiere)</i>	Susan	Lambs Players	Kerry Meads, dir.
<i>PUMP BOYS & DINETTES</i>	Rhetta (<i>banjo</i>)	Lambs Players	Deborah Smyth, dir.
<i>CINDERELLA</i>	Stepmother	Clarence Brown	Abigail Crabtree, dir.
<i>THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY</i>	Vi (<i>keyboards</i>)	StageWest (Canada)	Sam Woodhouse, dir.
<i>DOCTOR! DOCTOR! (premiere)</i>	Woman 2	Barter Theatre	Don Stephenson, dir.
<i>6 WOMEN w/BRAIN DEATH</i> 2 Dramalogue Awards	Rambi	San Diego Rep.	Sam Woodhouse, dir.

REGIONAL THEATRE - PLAYS

<i>IN ARABIA WE'D...BE KINGS</i> KPBS Patte Award	Daisy	Lynx Performance	Al Germani, dir.
<i>GUM</i>	Auntie	Lynx Performance	Al Germani, dir.
<i>KING LEAR</i>	Goneril	San Diego Rep.	Todd Salovey, dir.
<i>REMAINS</i>	Carol	Mo'olelo	Siobban Sullivan, dir.
<i>A CHRISTMAS CAROL</i>	Mrs. Fezziwig	San Diego Rep.	Todd Salovey, dir.
<i>WOMEN WHO STEAL</i>	Peggy	San Diego Rep.	Sam Woodhouse, dir.
<i>THE MERCHANT OF VENICE</i>	Nerissa	San Diego Rep.	Sam Woodhouse, dir.
<i>HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE</i>	Female Greek Chorus	Arizona Theatre Co.	David Ira Goldstein, dir.
<i>HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE</i>	Female Greek Chorus	San Diego Rep.	Sam Woodhouse, dir.
<i>THE WOMEN</i>	Edith	San Diego Rep.	Anne Bogart, dir. Michael Mayer, asst. dir.
<i>ROCKABY</i>	Woman	6th @Penn	L2 Productions
<i>THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES</i>	I Was There	Lyceum, San Diego	L2 Productions
<i>ABUNDANCE</i> Toured Russia with Beth Henley	Macon	Blackfriars Theatre	Ralph Elias, dir.

TRAINING

MFA, Temple University- League of Professional Training Schools, Wal Cherry, Chairman
 Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts, Donovan Marley, Director

SPECIAL SKILLS

Mezzo Soprano, Play Guitar, Piano, Electric Bass, Read Music, Dialects/Accents, Teaching Artist

AWARDS

KPBS Patte Award - Ensemble - *In Arabia We'd All Be Kings* - Lynx Performance
Craig Noel San Diego Critics Circle Award - Featured in a Musical-*Cabaret*- NCRT
San Diego Billie Award- Featured in a Musical- *South Pacific* - Lambs Players
AriZoni Nomination - Ensemble- *How I Learned to Drive* - Arizona Theatre Company
Knoxville Area Theatre Coalition - Special Event -*The Vagina Monologues* - Bijou
Knoxville Area Theatre Coalition - Best Children's Show- *Kidswrite* - Bijou
Knoxville Area Theatre Coalition - Best Actress - *The Glass Menagerie* - TN. Stage
Dramalogue 1996 & 1987- Ensemble - *Six Women with Brain Death* - San Diego Rep.
Dramalogue - Performance - *The Unseen Hand* - Blackfriars Theatre

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Founder - Actors Alliance of San Diego
Member- Actors Equity Association
Member -Canadian Actors Equity Association

Professional Acting Resume Attached

REFERENCES ON REQUEST

**Letters in Support
of
Eminence**



SAN DIEGO
READER

Office:

1703 India Street

619.235.3000

fax 619.231.0489

Mail:

P.O. Box 85803

San Diego, CA

92186

Internet:

www.sdreader.com

To whom it may concern:

I'm sure letters of recommendation should present a balanced picture of their subject: strengths and weaknesses, so a proper assessment can be made.

But with Linda Libby, that's impossible to do.

She's an artist -- an excellent actor ready to take on any challenge and, at the same time, a complete team player as adept at ensemble work as holding the spotlight.

She's a teacher -- currently working with young playwrights about how to craft one of the most difficult forms of all. In the classroom she has extraordinary patience and -- this obviously comes from the actor in her -- an equally extraordinary ability to listen and actually hear.

She's a director -- I wish she would exercise this gift more. It combines the teacher and the actor. And few directors have both.

She's a community developer -- one of the founders of Actor's Alliance, a service organization for local actors now in its 12th thriving year.

She's one of the best Public Relations people I've ever worked with -- and in my 22 years as theater critic of the San Diego Reader, I've worked with hundreds. She writes clear, graceful, informative prose, and knows reporters' needs.

NOW DO YOU SEE WHY I'M SO BIASED? I wholeheartedly recommend Linda Libby to you without the slightest reservation.

Sincerely,

Jeff Smith, Ph.D.

Theater critic, San Diego Reader

Editorial & Display:

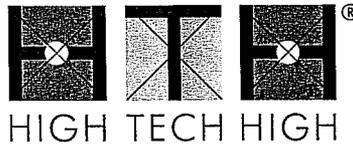
619.235.3000

fax 619.231.0489

Classified:

619.235.8200

fax 619.233.7907



November 13, 2006

Recommendation for Linda Libby

It is a pleasure to recommend Linda Libby for an Eminence Credential. An accomplished teacher and theater professional, she brings to her work a deeply grounded awareness of the qualities that we emphasize at High Tech High schools: team building and collaboration, connection to the adult world, public exhibition of work, and performance assessment. Moreover, as a working, free-lance professional in the community, she models the kinds of entrepreneurship and commitment to service that we are trying to develop in all of our programs.

Now in her second year at High Tech Middle Media Arts, Ms. Libby has made vital contributions as an exemplary teacher and as a mentor and resource person for colleagues, not only at High Tech Middle Media Arts, but at the other schools in the High Tech High village as well. She forges strong connections with students, shares with colleagues practical approaches that foster personal expression and team-building, and gives freely of her time to coach students (and staff) for public exhibitions, presentations and performances.

In a recent performance in Gillette Elvgren's *Five Cups of Coffee* in Coronado, Ms. Libby played a harried, controlling mother and wife. The play is essentially an ensemble piece, and in it Ms. Libby displayed the team awareness, attention to detail, and passion that we have seen in her teaching. A versatile theater professional with many credits in film, theater and television, she is a forceful advocate for the arts in the community, as a co-founder the San Diego Actors Alliance and organizer of benefit performances. This is just the kind of commitment we're trying to foster throughout our schools—to projects that make a difference and involve deep learning.

We are fortunate to have Linda Libby working with our students and staff. We learn from her every day. Her eminence is many-faceted—not only as an artist, but also as a teacher and member of our community. No one could be more deserving of an Eminence Credential.

Sincerely,


Larry Rosenstock
CEO



June 16, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

What we treasure about Linda Libby at High Tech Middle Media Arts is her authenticity. Linda is a professional actress who teaches Drama to our 6th, 7th and 8th graders. She loves what she does, she does what she teaches, and that passion reaches students in a way that is unique to her and her experience. When Linda's students see her on television commercials, or her picture appears in the paper for an upcoming theatre production, her students beam with pride that their teacher is a genuine authority on her subject. She is a generous team player and leader who is aware of when to step in to the appropriate role at the appropriate time. Linda is an artist on stage and in the classroom and is certainly qualified as a person of eminence in her field.

We value Linda's extensive professional experience as a theatre artist, but we hired her as our full-time Drama instructor because of her wide-ranging teaching experience. She has taught theatre classes to every level from kindergarten to University students. Her extensive knowledge of theatre provides easy links to California Standards in English, History, and even Math concepts; and connections that cross from one discipline to another are core principles to High Tech Learning.

A true teacher is someone who sees the needs of her students and respond in a way that is supportive and inspiring. Linda runs a very responsive classroom. A young man who was struggling as his parents were going through a divorce found a true advocate in Ms. Libby. The 8th grade students were very self-conscious about their scripts and the writing they were producing, but Linda brought in professional actors and the students beamed with pride as their plays were read. As a school we also identified a need to bring in more mentors from diverse backgrounds so that our students could see part of themselves in the different adults they interact with. In response Linda brought in diverse performers including vocalists, musicians and actors who have connected with our students and inspired them to follow their dreams.

Linda is a real model of someone who has followed her dreams and her passions and is able to inspire her students to do the same. Her presence is one of graceful energy and a love for life that is evident whether she is on the stage or in the classroom. Her training, experience in the field and her awareness of her students make her an obvious recipient of the title of eminence in her field.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nicole Hinostrro". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nicole Hinostrro
Director
High Tech Middle Media Arts

May 3, 2006

To Whom it May Concern:

It is my pleasure to provide a reference for Linda Libby as a person of eminence. I am personally knowledgeable of Linda's wonderful characteristics and attributes as well as her extraordinary teaching abilities as we have been working together for almost ten years in the Playwrights Project, a local arts organization.

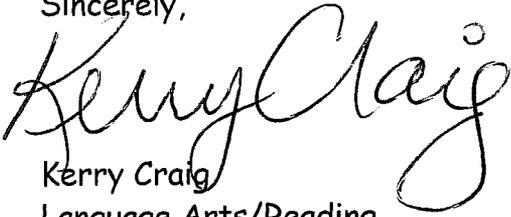
Every year, for six weeks, I would turn my students over to Linda as she taught them the art of play writing and presentation. The eighth grade students she would be given were from the lowest economic background and test scores in our district. Our school also had the distinct reputation of being the "gang" school and many parents would move out of the designated boundaries so that their child would not attend this school. Students came from families whose members were in jail, fighting addictions or completely absent from their lives. Needless to say, this was not an easy group of kids to teach and, if for any reason, they felt that someone was not being honest with them or were being disrespectful, it would have been a disaster.

Linda always won them over in the first day. Students who hated to write, the ones who would groan if you even asked them to get out a piece of paper, were writing plays. Linda's enthusiasm and energy brought out the best in them. Her genuine interest in each student provided a safe environment where even the shyest student or the toughest student would get in front of the class and do a scene. Since Linda is a professional actor to begin with, a woman who really knows what she is talking about first hand, it gives an extra credibility to the lessons. The skills the students receive from a professional actor will serve them in whatever field they choose, not just serve those who are interested in acting. Skills such as how to speak and be heard, creative problem solving, teamwork and confidence building in their individual areas are lessons that will be used throughout their lives.

Linda Libby is a true professional. She has high expectations from all of her students and they work very hard for her. Linda's enthusiasm, energy and true love of what she does is the ultimate combination in an educator. I feel very fortunate that I was able to work with her for so many years and witness the magic she creates in the classroom.

If I can provide you with any additional information please do not hesitate to call me at (760) 432-4060 or e-mail me at Craig@eusd4kids.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kerry Craig". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "C" at the end.

Kerry Craig
Language Arts/Reading
Bear Valley Middle School
3003 Bear Valley Parkway
Escondido, CA 92011



SAN DIEGO REPERTORY THEATRE

AT THE LYCEUM • HORTON PLAZA

May 3, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

We at the San Diego REpertory Theatre call Linda Libby our treasure. A leader in our theatre community, she has been a regular on San Diego stages since 1983. Over the past 20 years, she has always balanced teaching with her hard work in the rehearsal hall. When she takes her talents to the classroom, I miss her in my theatre company.

I wholeheartedly recommend Linda as a person of eminence in her field of Theatre. There are few actresses I trust more. Linda's professionalism and generosity are contagious. She creates a positive work environment with whomever she works, ages 8 to 80. She is often sought out for her contributions to developing new plays and young writers. A woman of abundant energy and spirit, she is the only one I know that performed on the Lyceum Mainstage while the premiere of the play she directed played simultaneously in the Lyceum Space across the hall. An artist of her extensive experience and sensitivity will serve her students as well as she serves her fellow artists. I look forward to seeing her talented students on our stages and in our audiences. Audiences love her here at the San Diego REP, and I hope her school will lend her to us from time to time so that her students can enjoy the magic Linda creates on stage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam Woodhouse", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sam Woodhouse
Artistic Director
San Diego Repertory Theatre

November 10, 2000

To whom it may concern,

It is my pleasure to write a strongly positive recommendation for Linda Libby as a professor of acting and theatre arts. Ms. Libby is an intelligent and talented teacher who balances her work in the classroom with professional experience on the stage. Her students respect her and look up to her as a mentor and an example of what they hope to be one day. She has provided Maryville College a much needed resource as an adjunct instructor in the Theatre Studies Department, and I will be greatly disappointed when she moves on to a tenure track position at another institution of higher learning.

A year ago, as I was attempting to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Theatre Studies program, I concentrated on developing an introductory course in stage movement and vocal training. When the faculty and administration accepted the new course, I turned to colleagues in the area to find an acting teacher who would take on this responsibility. I was very lucky to find Linda Libby. She had worked with Anne Bogart in San Diego, and I knew right away that I wanted to meet with this woman. After accepting the position of adjunct instructor and Guest Artist for the Fall 2000 semester, Linda put a great amount of time and thought into the structure of the class (long before she ever received her first paycheck). I have been most pleased, however, with Ms. Libby's professionalism and strong teaching skills. She is open, enjoys exchanging ideas with students, and has always been willing to provide needed mentoring and career advice. As might be expected, our students were initially reticent about a class that focused on their bodies and their voices (as opposed to the more standard monologue and scene work). There was resistance at first, but I was very impressed with Linda's ability to build trust with her students. In only a few months, I have been able to see a marked improvement in my students' vocal production and physical character work. If I could offer her a full-time position today, I would do so in a heartbeat. I know she will be an asset in your program, and I encourage you to look at her application seriously.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read my letter. If there is any other way I can be of service, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jeff Turner
Theatre Studies Department
Division of Fine Arts (<http://www.maryvillecollege.edu/finearts/>)
Maryville College
(865) 981-8161
turner@maryvillecollege.edu

THE PREUSS SCHOOL UCSD
9500 Gilman Drive, Dept. 0536
La Jolla, California 92093-0536
Phone: (858) 658-7400
Fax: (858) 658-0988

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Ms. Linda Libby's talents and abilities as a teaching artist. She possesses both the requisite knowledge and communication skills of a teacher and the creativity and sensitivity of the artist. My high school students in the eleventh grade English course I teach have been the beneficiaries of Ms. Libby's talents through the Playwrights Project SEEDS ("Stimulating Educational Excellence Through Drama Standards") Program for a ten-week period of approximately two hours per week per class. To state that my students have learned a lot from Ms. Libby's work with them would be an understatement. Indeed, my students have made tremendous growth in their writing and speaking abilities to the point that they each have successfully written and revised an original, complete one act play of three scenes. This is no small achievement for my students who take a very rigorous college-prep course load at The Preuss School UCSD, whether they are special education, gifted, or second-language students. To expect all students, from the shyest to the most extroverted, to participate in on-demand and very challenging speaking, performing, and writing activities requires a teacher's full mastery of the subject and talent as a facilitator and supporter of students' work. Ms. Libby possesses this mastery and talent.

Ms. Libby has an enthusiasm, energy, charm, and great sense of humor that inspires and engages students. Her lessons are very carefully planned, well-organized, and expertly carried out. She has a marvelous sensitivity to students' needs and so paces the material to keep their interest but also teaches it so that the complexity of the information is never compromised. Students' prior knowledge is acknowledged and used as a foundation for the direction Ms. Libby takes with the class in terms of elaborating on the lesson or moving on to a new concept if students quickly grasp what is being taught. Students are active participants in "theater games" and in speaking and listening activities. More importantly, Ms. Libby uses students' active engagement to introduce, build on, or elaborate a skill she is teaching, so the "fun" students are having is not from a random activity but from various activities ultimately tied to the overall lesson. This is evidence of Ms. Libby's wonderful teaching ability.

As an actor, playwright, and director, Ms. Libby is a superb role model. She is honest with students about the discipline and hard work of the theater, but she also is able to excite students about the theater's "magic". My students have been exposed to previous theater experiences, especially through viewing performances at the La Jolla Playhouse (since our school is on the UCSD campus) and hearing the actors and director debrief a production. However, never have they received such comprehensive information and insights into how the many elements of the theater fit together, and especially how and why the playwright is at the foundation of any play even before it can be produced as they have from Ms. Libby through the Playwrights Project.

For classroom instructors, the experience of turning over the classroom to a visiting or guest teacher can have either minimal or merely adequate impact on advancing the academic growth of students. In my classroom experience with Ms. Libby, I am most impressed and pleased at the progress as writers that my students have made. She is wonderful to work with—always professional, always respectful of the established culture of both the school and my classroom.

Students, too, have offered so many of their own unsolicited testimonials about the impact Ms. Libby has had on them as writers: One student, Jose, writes, “I started off doing nothing in class. But the fun I saw from others’ writing their plays made me want to have the same pleasure. I wrote my play...I’m really proud of what I wrote.” Another student, Veronica, writes her enthusiasm to Ms. Libby, “I want you to know that you’re my *heroine*. I really enjoyed coming to English class even more knowing that you’d be there and having you teach the class. You’ve taught us so much. I can’t begin to tell you how much I appreciated the hard work and seriousness you put into reading and giving us feedback on our work. We’re going to miss you so much!” So many other students feel the same way and have expressed themselves similarly.

After ten weeks of working together, I consider Ms. Libby a colleague and friend. I wish her the very best and hope and sincerely recommend that other opportunities for teaching or for sharing her gifts of the theater in whatever other form come her way. Her talents are a gift for whomever she works.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janis T. Gabay".

Janis T. Gabay

National Board Certified Teacher, EA/ELA
U.S. National Teacher of the Year, 1990-91

November 21, 2000

To Whom It May Concern:

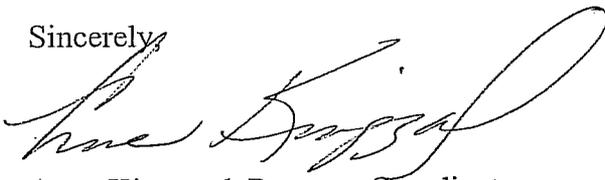
I am extremely pleased to write a letter of recommendation for Linda Libby.

Ms. Libby is hands-down, one of the finest instructors we have worked with in the theatre discipline. Her compatibility with students is exceptional. She consistently demonstrates a capacity to teach and encourage students from very diverse backgrounds, both culturally and educationally. Her superior evaluations support this observation each semester.

Another of Ms. Libby's strong points in addition to her innate rapport with students, is her extensive and active professional background in theatre arts. Her teaching style reflects her ongoing professional commitment to her craft through a current and enthusiastic curriculum. Students respond very positively to this role model and in turn are able to see "real" world application of knowledge.

As an aside, she is responsible, sensitive, a team player, and exceedingly knowledgeable in her field. She currently teaches the maximum allowed a part-time faculty member based on her outstanding performance. If our budget allowed, we would hire her full-time immediately. I can assuredly state that she will be an asset to any college or university who is fortunate enough to employ her.

Sincerely,



Anne Kinggard, Program Coordinator
Theatre and Visual Arts



Clarence Brown Theatre Company
206 McClung Tower
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0420
Telephone (865) 974-6011
FAX (865) 974-4867

November 29, 2000

To Whom It May Concern:

By way of introduction my name is Thomas Adkins, Company Manager for the Clarence Brown Theatre at the University of Tennessee.

It is my privilege to recommend and support Ms. Linda Libby in her pursuit of the position with your institution. I am delighted to have this opportunity to share with you my assessment of her talents. Over the past several years I have had the pleasure of observing and working with her as both a teacher and as a professional actress. During her career here, Ms. Libby has been an active participant in the production program both onstage and off. Faced with many challenging roles on stage and in classroom exercises, I have seen her display a vivid array of characters and styles and most importantly, a flavorful ability to tell a story. That is after all what the core of this business is.

As an educator, she continuously displays a flare for working with young minds. Her natural charm and ease of manner make her an amicable leader. Ethical, forthright, and determined, Ms. Libby brings a sense of classical tradition mixed with innovative technique to her classroom.

In short, Ms. Libby is a smart, articulate, and dedicated woman. I sincerely hope you will give favorable consideration to her application. She would be an asset to any institution, and I cannot be more confident in recommending her. Please feel free to contact me if you should need further clarification, or additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Adkins".

Thomas Adkins
Company Manager
U.T. Theatres/Clarence Brown Theatre Company
Phone: (865) 974-6725
Fax: (865) 974-4867
Email: wadkins@utk.edu

**PLAYWRIGHTS
PROJECT**



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92108

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Venice, California
90291

(310) 392-0814
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Deborah Salzer
Founder and
Executive Director



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Karen M. Ladner

Sandra Pay

October 3, 1994

To Whom It May Concern:

Linda Libby has worked with the Playwrights Project since 1991, enriching our programs with her brilliant talent and sensitivity. A natural actress of extraordinary range, she is also a gifted teacher and director.

The Playwrights Project teaches in grades 3-12, gives classroom readings of students' work, trains teachers, produces video programs, and stages full productions of plays by young writers. Linda has participated in all these programs, as well as our writing partnerships with seniors in convalescent hospitals.

Linda's greatest strengths as a teacher are her warmth, her respect for all learners, and her imagination. Students of all ages and cultural backgrounds feel encouraged and challenged by Linda. They like her and work hard for her. I remember particularly a demure little girl in a rowdy 3rd grade, who handed Linda a 15-page handwritten script at the end of their final session. Similarly, last month Linda spent two hours with a group of 8th graders she'd never met before, using improvisation to explore problems they might encounter with their peers. The improvisation her group performed for others in their grade was stunning in its candor and maturity. Her students were justly proud of themselves.

Using insight essential to a good director, Linda understands the intention of every writer/storyteller, be she 9 or 85. I've seen her direct and perform many scenes; no matter how elementary or complex, they come to life in her hands, often amazing their writers. She has a broad grasp of every aspect of theatre. Moreover, she knows how to ask open-ended questions, which lead students to think for themselves.

Linda is a consummate professional, always prepared, dependable, and disciplined. She is also unfailingly generous with her talents, adjusting her schedule to the task rather than the clock. If arrangements go awry, she adapts cheerfully. Eager to explore new techniques and support others, Linda is a team player.

I recommend Linda with enthusiasm. Please call if you'd like further information.

Sincerely yours,

Deborah Salzer
Executive Director

AWARDS

DRAMA LOGUE

CRITICS AWARD

MELINDA GILB, KATE KILEY, LINDA LIBBY
SUSAN MOSHER, SHARON MURRAY, VANESSA TOWNSELL-CRISP

For Outstanding Achievement in Theatre

ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE
SIX WOMEN WITH BRAIN DEATH
SAN DIEGO REPERTORY

G. WEINBERG-HARTER

CRITIC

1996

Bill Bondy

PUBLISHER

Finalist

9th Annual ariZoni Awards

For excellence in theatre
during the 1998-1999 year

Linda Libby

in the category of

Actor in a Supported Role

How I Learned to Drive

Arizona Theatre Company

Presented by Arizona Production Association

Herberger Theatre Center

Phoenix, Arizona

September 13, 1999

KPBS™

PRESENTS THE

9TH ANNUAL

PATTÉ AWARDS™
FOR THEATER EXCELLENCE



WHICH HONORS

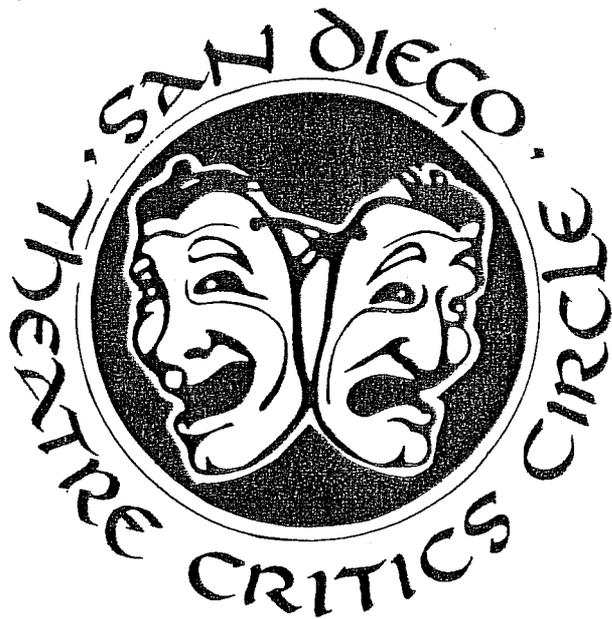
LINDA LIBBY

AS AN

OUTSTANDING ENSEMBLE MEMBER
OF LYNX PERFORMANCE THEATRE'S
"IN ARABIA WE'D ALL BE KINGS"



PAT LAUNER
THEATER CRITIC



*Certificate of
Nomination
1986-1987*

Presented to

Linda Libby

for Outstanding Achievement

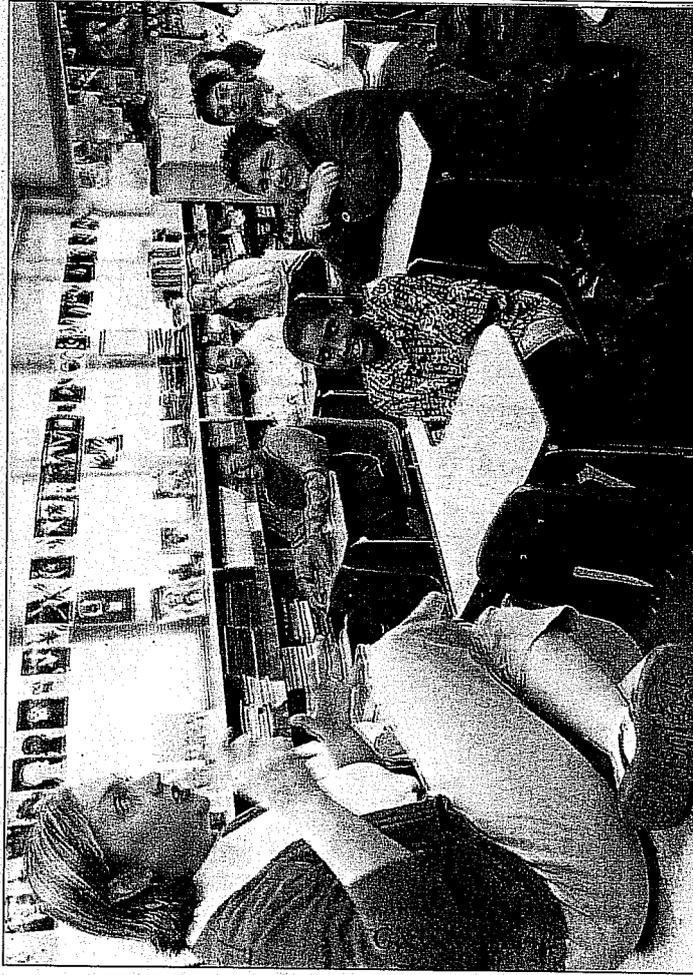
AS AN ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

IN "I WON'T DANCE"

AT THE GASLAMP QUARTER THEATRE

Educational Contributions

BUDDING PLAYWRIGHTS



Photos by STEVE MARCOTTE / FOR THE NORTH COUNTY TIMES

Above, visiting teacher Linda Libby, left, with the Playwrights Project, speaks with students Wednesday at Grant Middle School about the fundamentals of writing plays. Below, eighth-graders Breanna Prieto, Hector Macias, Ralph Anghiangco and Amber Wenske, from left, receive instruction from Libby.

Students at Escondido school learning how to write plays

■ Previous participants have won state awards

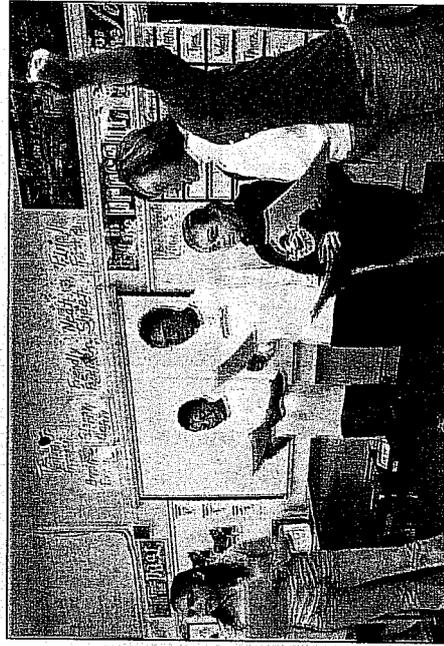
CANDICE REED

FOR THE NORTH COUNTY TIMES

ESCONDIDO — Putting on a play is great fun and watching the actors perform is even more enjoyable, but writing a script is hard work — just ask the eighth-graders at Grant Middle School.

Earlier this week the students in Kerry Craig's and Kathy Haycock's language arts classes began learning the craft of developing a plot, writing dialogue and even acting out the characters as part of the Playwrights Project.

Since the late 1980s,



Playwrights Project has taught drama to Escondido elementary, middle and high schools. Two winners of the California Young Playwrights Contest — Sarah Banning and Meredith Snapp — began writing their award-winning plays during these classes

at Del Dios Middle School last year. The winners of this statewide contest had their plays presented by Playwrights Project last year on the Globe Theatre's Cassius Carter

► PLAYS, B-5

▶ PLAYS

Continued from B-1

Students learn to listen, hone their teamwork, presentation skills

Stage.

“The students over the

years have loved this project so much they ask their teacher when the playwright lady is coming,” said traveling writing instructor Linda Libby. “The students come to class and start writing and soon they have 20 or 30 pages written without even realizing it. It’s quite a wonder to see.”

The students develop writing skills in the class, but also learn to listen and hone their

teamwork and presentation skills.

Professional actors from the San Diego area present students’ three-scene, one-act plays at the end of the course.

Student Kristene Hernandez said she would like to see the romantic play that she is writing performed on the classroom’s small stage by adult actors who have even performed in New York. Before she can put her charac-

ters and words on paper, Libby takes her and the other students through improvisational exercises and observation games.

“Not only is this class fun, but it improves your life skills,” said Kristene 13, of Escondido. “It’s such a great class, yet you’re always learning new things. Because of this class I don’t know if I want to be a doctor or a writer.”

Classroom teacher Kerry

Craig said she feels that some of her students will enter in the statewide contest.

“We have so many gifted writers in here, some that have no idea they could write,” she said. “The ones who don’t go on to the state contest have a new appreciation for plays and live performances.”

On Tuesday as Libby put the students through observation exercises, many of them

were giggling hard. Then, student Rachel Hulls, 13, bravely climbed on the stage with the visiting teacher to perform an improvisation.

“I call improv ‘writing a play on your feet,’” Libby said as Rachel quickly made up dialogue. “At the end of this course the students have so many new skills, including self-confidence. How many people can say they’ve written a play?”

Thursday, April 29, 2003
P. 2

Directing

The mission of Playwrights Project is to promote literacy, communication skills and creativity through drama-based activities, with an emphasis on inspiring youth and seniors.

Programs

- *Imagine That!* Classroom residencies in creative drama, grades 3-8
- *Write On!* Classroom playwriting residencies, grades 5-12
- *Dream Lab* Summer and after school playwriting workshops for teens
- *California Young Playwrights Contest* Open to all Californians under age 19
- *Plays by Young Writers* Professional productions of winning contest scripts
- *WINS Tour* Professional productions of plays written by past contest winners for school audiences, grades 5-12
- *Professional Development for Educators* Training and techniques for teachers, drawing on *Stage Write*, our classroom curriculum published by Interact
- *Lifestages* Intergenerational partnerships that dramatize the lives of seniors

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| Laurel Withers, <i>Development Manager</i> | Barbara Broderick, <i>Consultant</i> |

C&CA 3A-46



Plays by Young Writers 2003

Winning Scripts from the 19th Annual
California Young Playwrights Contest

Nov 21-23, 2003
The Bishop's School
La Jolla, California

Dec 2-6, 2003
The Lyceum Theatre
San Diego, California

Playwrights Project gratefully acknowledges the sponsors of
Plays by Young Writers 2003

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About the Directors

Linda Libby (*How They See It*) Linda's local directing credits include: *Bad Brad* for Lambs Players, *The Vagina Monologues* and *Things May Disimprove: Short Plays by Samuel Beckett* (co-directed with Linda Castro and L² Productions.) For the historic Bijou Theatre in Knoxville, Tennessee she directed *Wait Until Dark*, *No More Secrets* and the award winning *Kidswrite*, which she developed from student writings. Linda has extensive credits as a performer, most recently appearing as Joanne in *Starlight's Company*, and playing keyboards for Cygnet Theatre's first production, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. She is married to Jim Mooney and proud mama of Elizabeth Claire.

Delicia Turner Sonnenberg (*Forty Miles from Tel Aviv*) For *Plays by Young Writers: Details, Funny, Absolutely* and *The Broken-Winged Bird*; for Sixth at Penn Theatre: *Euripides' Children of Heracles* adapted by Marianne MacDonald; for Eveoke Dance Theatre: *Taming of the Shrew*; for Women's Repertory Theatre: *Othello* ("Billie" Award). Most recently she co-directed *Proof* for San Diego REP. Currently, Delicia is the Artistic Associate of San Diego Repertory Theatre as a part of TCG's New Generations Program. She is married to Designer Jerry Sonnenberg and mama to August and Zoe. Thanks to Brandon for his play, to all of the artists working on this play, and to the Posse (Jo, Jen, Liv) for truth, beauty and breakfast.

Robert Dahey (*Script Readings*) **Directing:** Athol Fugard's *Playland* and *Sorrows and Rejoicing*, Terrence McNally's *Lips Together Teeth Apart*, Ira Lewis' *Chinese Coffee*, Lanford Wilson's *Redwood Curtain*, Samuel Beckett's *Ohio Impromptu*, and Jim Caputo's *Body Shop*. **Acting:** *Don Pasquale* (San Diego, Kentucky and Fort Worth Opera), *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Hatful of Rain*, *Struggling Truths* (Best Actor, San Diego Playbill Award), *Auntie Mame*, *FOB*, *Amelia Earhart Lost and Found* (Best Actor, KPBS Patté Award and San Diego Playbill Award), and *Magic Lamp Theatre*, where he originated the role of Shaban for Tokyo DisneySea. **Television:** *The Chronicle*, *Invisible Man*, *Pensacola*, *The Descendant*, *On Common Ground*, *Renegade*, *Silk Stalkings* and *Vanishing Son*.

Playwrights Project
450 B Street, Suite 1020
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 239-8222
www.playwrightsproject.com
write@playwrightsproject.com

The Company

Deborah Salzer, *Producer*
Beeb Salzer, *Scenic Design*
Shaun Albrechtson, *Lighting Design*
Jennifer Brawn Gittings, *Costume Design*
Rachel LeVine, *Sound Design*
Kara Miller, *Choreographer*
Jason Hwang, *Production Stage Mgr.*

Michael Moglia, *Tech Director*
Laura McEntyre, *Carpenter*
Susan Scharpf, *Scenic Painter*
Rebecca Willis, *Props Coord.*
Dana Attari, *Crew*
Rachael Van Wormer, *Crew*

How They See It

Written by Tyler Moselle
Directed by Linda Libby

Megan Becca Foresman
Tara Briana Daugherty
Kyle Jack Novak
Fathers Walter Ritter
Mothers D. Candis Paule

Stage Manager Rachael Van Wormer

Setting

Day 1: After school, Kyle's house
Day 2: Morning, Tara's mom's car
Day 2: After school, Curb
Day 2: Evening, Megan's room
Day 3: Morning, Kyle's kitchen
Day 9: Before lunch, Auditorium

Script Readings

Directed by Robert Dahey

Writers

Scruffy Ryan Aamerud
Kidnapped! Mikaela Aziz
Not Enough Time Tanner Dufford
Madeline Learns to Fly Taylor Renteria

Actors

Marcus Fisher Julia Kelleher
Abbey Howe D. Candis Paule
BJ Jezbera Walter Ritter



*The 2000-2001 Bijou Play Series
is Proud to Present...*

Frederick Knott's

Wait Until Dark

Directed by Linda Libby ✱

January 11-14, 2001

January 18-21, 2001

803 South Gay Street...Knoxville, TN...37902

November 2003

Plays by Young Writers

The Company

Deborah Salzer, *Producer*
 Beeb Salzer, *Scenic Design*
 Shaun Albrechtson, *Lighting Design*
 Jennifer Brawn Gittings, *Costume Design*
 Rachel LeVine, *Sound Design*
 Kara Miller, *Choreographer*
 Jason Hwang, *Production Stage Mgr.*

Forty Miles from Tel Aviv

Written by Brandon Alter
 Directed by Delicia Turner Sonnenberg

Malik Diep Huynh
Salah Anahid Shahrik
 Understudy Dana Attari

Stage Manager Jason Hwang

Consultants Dr. Farid Abdel-Nour
 Dr. George Wahab
 Dr. Gershon Shafir

Setting A Palestinian home in the West Bank

How They See It

Written by Tyler Moselle
 Directed by Linda Libby

Megan Becca Foresman
Tara Briona Daugherty
Kyle Jack Novak
Fathers Walter Ritter
Mothers D. Candis Paule

Stage Manager Rachael Van Wormer

Setting
 Day 1: After school, Kyle's house
 Day 2: Morning, Tara's mom's car
 Day 2: After school, Curb
 Day 2: Evening, Megan's room
 Day 3: Morning, Kyle's kitchen
 Day 9: Before lunch, Auditorium

Script Readings

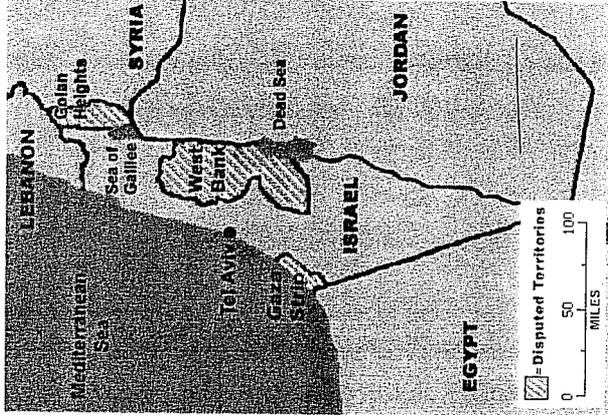
Directed by Robert Dahey

Writers

Scruffy Ryan Aanerud
Kidnapped! Mikaela Aziz
Not Enough Time Tanner Dufford
Madeline Learns to Fly Taylor Renteria

Actors

Marcus Fisher Julia Kelleher
 Abbey Howe D. Candis Paule
 BJ Jezbera Walter Ritter



Forty Miles from Tel Aviv is a work of fiction. After doing extensive research, the playwright has departed from the likely sequence of events by giving his character Malik details about an action he contemplates. The playwright takes this liberty to dramatize the relationship between husband and wife, asking questions that transcend any one time and place.

Late arrivals will be seated at the discretion of the House Manager. There will be a 15 minute intermission between plays.

as part of the V-Day 2000
College Initiative

the UTK Women's Coordinating Council
in association with
Dark Night Theatre

presents

a staged reading of

The Vagina Monologues

by Eve Ensler

in the Clarence Brown Theatre

February 14, 2000

Directed by.....Linda Libby
Assisted by..... Vicki Sparks
Technical Support..... Laura Sims
Lighting Design by..... John Horner
Publicity by..... Sarah Patterson
Program by..... Carol Goans
House Management by..... Chris Hamblin
Ushers provided by..... Dark Night Theatre
Graphic Design by..... Eric Ting
T-Shirts donated by..... Dennis Branch
Designer Graphics

Thank you...

Eve Ensler, Karen Obel, Jennifer Dritt, Kris Alexander,
Milly Morrow, the Sexual Assault Crisis Center, Andrew
Miller, Kathleen Kaplan, the UT Theatre Department,
Bill Black, Tom Cervone, Bonnie Gould, Doug Mason and
The Knoxville News-Sentinel, Adrienne Martini and
Metropulse, Courtney Watson and The Daily Beacon

The proceeds from tonight's performance will benefit the
Sexual Assault Crisis Center.

Need to talk with someone? Counselors will be available
after tonight's performance.

The Ensemble

Jennifer Ayling
Cathy Bagwell
Sarah Byrd
Allie Caronna
Nancy Dinwiddie
Suzan Erastlan
Heather Freshko

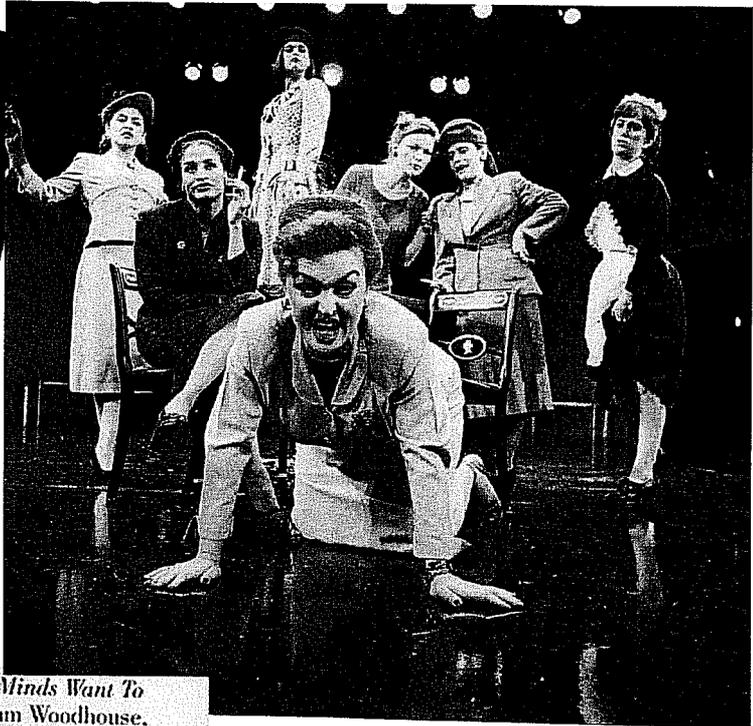
Carol Goans
Bonnie Gould
Michelle Harper
Stacey Hogg
Leslie La Chance
Linda Libby
Jenny Wattenbarger

Judy Loest
Margaret Miller
Milly Morrow
Kay Newton
Elaine Oswald
Jenny Wattenbarger

The Monologues

Introduction.....Ensemble
I Am Worried About Vaginas.....Linda (as Eve Ensler)
Hair..... Cathy
Wear and Say..... Jenny, Allie, Kay, Margaret, Leslie,
Heather, Judy, Nancy, Stacey
The Flood..... Carol
Vagina Fact #1..... Jenny
I was 12..... Leslie, Judy, Elaine, Cathy, Allie, Stacey,
Sarah, Heather, Milly, Margaret,
Michelle, Kay, Jenny, Suzan
The Vagina Workshop..... Elaine, Judy, Nancy, Stacey
My Vagina Was My Village..... Allie
Vagina Fact #2..... Jenny
Vagina Fact #3..... Jenny, Milly, Stacey, Michelle
The Little Coochi Snorcher That Could..... Margaret
Smell..... Carol, Elaine, Jennifer, Sarah,
Heather, Milly, Michelle
Vagina Fact..... Sarah
Reclaiming..... Leslie
I Asked a Six-Year-Old Girl..... Heather, Sarah
Because He Liked to Look at It..... Suzan
The Woman Who Loved to Make Vaginas Happy..... Jennifer
I Was There in the Room..... Bonnie, Ensemble

Theater and Movie Roles



When *Six Women With Brain Death, or Expiring Minds Want To Know* opened in late October 1994, I said to Sam Woodhouse, "Let's run this show until my birthday!" Shows never ran for more than 9 or 10 weeks then, and my birthday falls in late August, so I knew I was being a bit cocky, but the show kept selling out. Women would stop those of us in the cast in grocery stores, saying they had seen the show 3, 4, 5 times, and they were bringing their friends back again. The show was still going strong on my birthday and continued for almost 2 years. It was quite a phenomenon. We sang the National Anthem at a Chargers game and Mayor Maureen O'Connor designated a "Six Women with Brain Death Day." I lost count of the number of performances I did, but it was somewhere around 560. Other shows have since broken our long-running record, but I think we set the stage (if you will).

— Linda Libby, Actor

The Company of The Women. San Diego Repertory Theatre, 1992.



Linda Libby and Seema Sucko in Remains. M'olele Performing Arts Company, 2004.

Excerpts from "The Play's the Thing"
A Photographic Odyssey Through Theater in San Diego
 C&CA 3A-52

April 2007

Play by Play



LINDA LIBBY

(Dorothy) is glad to return to LPT after her last appearance as Bloody Mary in *South Pacific*. She has toured to Edinburgh's Fringe Festival, Far East Russia, and Toronto, Canada. Regional credits: Arizona Theatre Company, Clarence Brown Theatre, and Barter Theatre. Locally, Linda has played San Diego Rep, North Coast Rep, Starlight, Lynx Performance, and Cygnet Theatres. In the film, "Box of Moonlight" she played opposite John Turturro. By day Linda is the drama teacher for High Tech Middle Media Arts but her favorite role is as "Mom" to her daughter Elizabeth.

AUGUST 3 - SEPTEMBER 17, 2006

BY GILLETTE ELVGREN

THE ENSEMBLE

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

MILO
HAL
OLAF
GINA
DOROTHY
FRANK
RITA

JEFFREY JONES
GREG GOOD
DAVID COCHRAN HEATH
K.B. MERCER
LINDA LIBBY
DOREN ELIAS
CARRIE HEATH

5 Cups Of Coffee

LAMB'S
PLAYERS
THEATRE

LPT

35
Years

The Paul and Ione Harter Stage

THEATER REVIEW

A mother's loss, movingly portrayed

Diary reconstructs life of daughter murdered in Israel

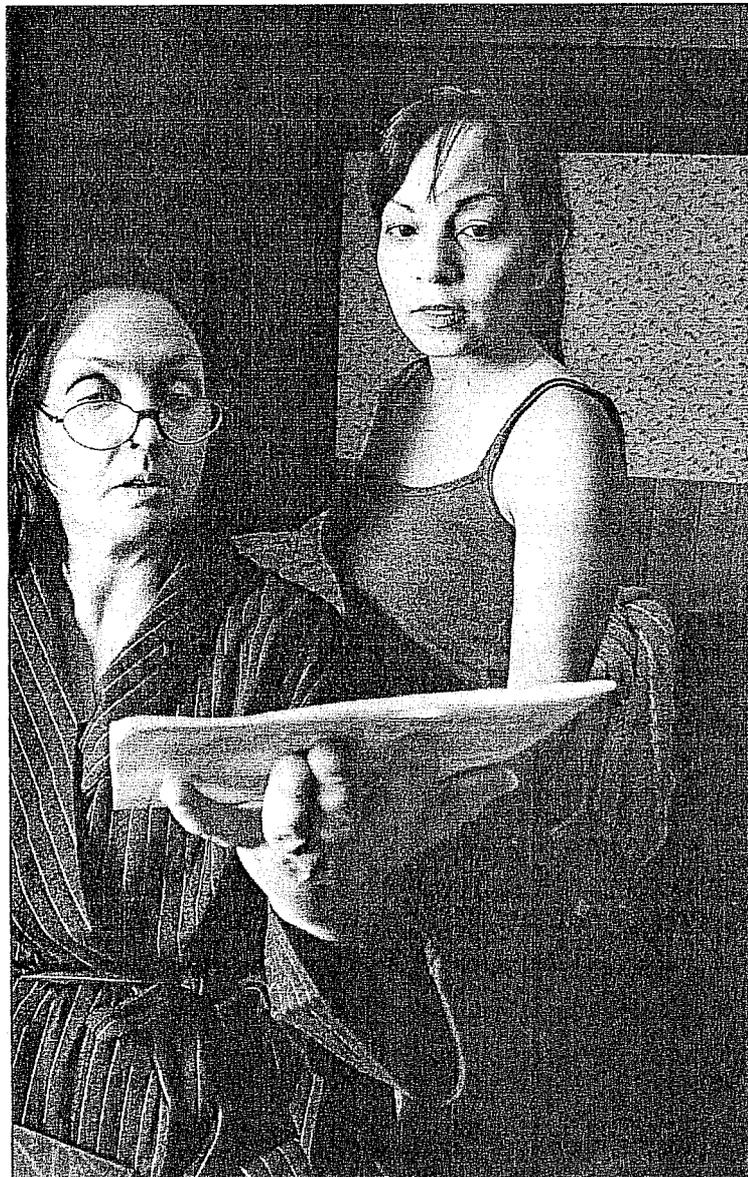
By Anne Marie Welsh
THEATER CRITIC

nto the center of the calm, often sparkling surface of her new play "Remains," Seema Sueko tosses the hard rock of Middle Eastern realities. The ripples that extend outward as that rock sinks may touch you only later, perhaps when you read a headline like, "Israel at risk of civil war, Sharon says, amid heightened rhetoric against Gaza pullout." We live in one world, the play reminds us. And the murder of one in-

DATEBOOK

"Remains"
8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays, through Oct. 3.
ARK Center for the Performing Arts, 3554 Kettner Blvd.
Midtown
\$20, with discounts for groups, seniors, students and actors.
(619) 342-7395 or tickets@moololo.net

nocent girl is always one death too many. Sueko's powerfully acted, often charming, though occasionally uneven play, marks the impressive debut of Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company, a new theater troupe with its own artistic and social mission. The year is 1993, when the violence in Israel was not so pervasive, nor as random as the suicide bombings have made it now. Our regime-changing Iraq War was only a gleam in the eyes of the same neoconservative cabal whose folly has led the U.S. and its military into the current no-good-options quagmire. Back then, despite her mother's worries, it was safe enough for an American Muslim girl named Laila Ahmed to study at Tel Aviv University. Sueko herself plays the vivacious 20-year-old student whom we meet when her bereaved mother, Carol (Linda Libby), conjures her from the



Reading from her daughter's diary, Carol Ahmed (Linda Libby, left) conjures Laila (Seema Sueko, right), who has been murdered in Israel in the new play, "Remains." Roni Galgano / Union-Tribune

diary the girl kept before she was found beaten to death. Like Tony Kushner's potent, prescient "Homebody/Kabul" (2001), about a curious British woman murdered in Afghanistan, "Remains"

never solves the mystery of Laila's death. Shrewdly, Sueko introduces many characters — friends, students, activists, peace protesters, feminists, misogynists, terrorists — who could be responsible.

Siobhan Sullivan directs with ease as Libby and Sueko enact scenes from the journal.

Siobhan Sullivan, new to San Diego, directs with confidence and admirable ease, guiding Libby and Sueko as they glide smoothly from one voice into the next as they enact scenes from the girl's journal. A third character, Maggie Monson (Kathryn Venverloh) remains one-dimensional. She's a clueless young representative of a U.S. senator who learns that Laila had stayed in a Palestinian home where one son was Hamas-friendly. So the senator refuses to get involved.

Sueko draws from many of the resources that made her Old Globe role as Jennifer Marcus in "The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow" such a stunner. She conveys the physical and mental energy of Laila, her spiritual adventurousness, and the all-too-familiar process by which risk-taking kids cross the line and put themselves in danger.

Libby's Carol recognizes exactly those moments as she reads the journal, often with joyous recognition of her daughter's quirks, and just as often, haltingly in fear. The sudden catches in Libby's voice, as if the wind has been knocked out of her, make for an intense, beautifully restrained performance.

Designers Robert Dahey (set), Kim Palma (lights), and Paul James Kruse (sound) visualize the many moods of this story in the small ARK space, yet leave room for precious imagination. A sofa can be an Israeli disco, or the top of Mount Sinai where pilgrims, like Mo'olelo's audience, may seek "Peace of Mind."

Playwright: Seema Sueko. Director: Siobhan Sullivan. Set: Robert Dahey. Lighting: Kim Palma. Costumes: Megan Faber. Cast: Linda Libby, Seema Sueko, and Kathryn Venverloh.

Anne Marie Welsh (619) 293-1265; anne-marie.welsh@untrib.com

C&CA 3A-54

production of

ABUNDANCE

by Beth Henley

Directed by Ralph Elias

CAST

(in order of appearance)

- Bess Johnson Allison Brennan
- Macon Hill Linda Libby
- Jack Flan John Blunt
- Will Curtis Kim Bennett
- Elmore Crome Dan Halleck
- Stage Manager Rebecca Nachison
- Set and Lighting Design Beeb Salzer
- Composer Lawrence Czoka
- Costume Design Clare Henkel
- Production Manager Dan Halleck
- Properties/Asst. Stage Manager Erin Kelly

SETTING: The Wyoming Territory, east of the Rocky Mountains, and St. Louis, Missouri

The play spans 25 years, beginning in 1868

There will be one 15 minute intermission.

* Produced by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service and the gracious assistance of the William Morris Agency.

BLACKFRIARS ENSEMBLE TOURING COMPANY

RALPH ELIAS (Director) has 20 years of experience as a theatre professional, as an actor, director and teacher. He became artistic director of Blackfriars Theatre in 1988, and has led the company by developing a reputation for well-acted, finely detailed productions in a variety of styles. He has had outstanding success directing plays by John Patrick Shanley, Beth Henley, Tennessee Williams, Oscar Wilde and Sam Shepard, among others. The first show he directed for Blackfriars, Shanley's **DANNY AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA**, was nominated for Best Production of 1988 by the San Diego Critics Circle, and he was nominated as Best Director for **TEIBELE AND HER DEMON** in 1990. As an actor, Mr. Elias has performed with several of the leading regional theatres in the United States, including the renowned Arena Stage in his hometown of Washington, D.C. He has also appeared Off-Broadway in New York, on television, and in several Blackfriars productions. Mr. Elias has taught acting for several universities; his most recent guest directing project was Shakespeare's **PERICLES**, at the California Institute of the Arts in 1991.

ALLISON BRENNAN (Bess Johnson in **ABUNDANCE**, Anna in **AKHMATOVA**) Ms. Brennan has played a wide range of roles for Blackfriars, including Amanda in **THE GLASS MENAGERIE**, Bess in **ABUNDANCE**, and Lady Bracknell in **Oscar Wilde's THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**, for which she received two awards in 1992. She is also Blackfriars' staff producer, and as pre-tour fund-raiser and project director, the individual most responsible for bringing the company to Russia. Allison has performed with other professional theatres in San Diego and in New York, where she also was nominated for or received prestigious acting awards. She received her training at the Yale School of Drama.

LINDA LIBBY (Macon Hill in **ABUNDANCE**) Linda recreates her acclaimed performance from Blackfriars' 1991 production of **ABUNDANCE**. She most recently played the demanding role of Willy the Space Freak in Sam Shepard's **THE UNSEEN HAND**; in 1990 she performed in Shepard's **ANGEL CITY** at Scotland's Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Linda has acted and sung in several notable productions for the San Diego Repertory Theatre, and received a coveted Drama-Logue Award for performance. She was trained in the graduate program at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

JOHN BLUNT (Jack Flan in **ABUNDANCE**) John is an artist who has served Blackfriars as both actor and designer. He acted in Joe Orton's **WHAT THE BUTLER SAW** in 1989, as well as in the 1991 **ABUNDANCE**; he has designed settings for five productions, including uniquely effective sets for **THE GLASS MENAGERIE** (1990) and **THE UNSEEN HAND** (1993). He recently designed the setting for **BLUE WINDOW** at the Foothill Theatre Company in Northern California. John received his Fine Arts degree from the Cornish Institute in Seattle.

KIM BENNETT (Will Curtis in **ABUNDANCE**) joined Blackfriars just this past spring to perform in **THE UNSEEN HAND**. He has had an active career since completing the professional actor training program at the University of Washington in 1977. Kim has appeared in a dozen productions at San Diego's famed Old Globe Theatre; in Seattle he played **Claudius in HAMLET** at the Intiman Theatre, and he has performed at several other professional theatres in the state of Washington, at the Portland Repertory Theatre in Oregon, and in San Diego.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

BETH HENLEY was awarded both the Pulitzer Prize in drama and the New York Critics Circle Award for her first full-length play, *CRIMES OF THE HEART*, which was later produced as an acclaimed feature film starring Sissy Spacek, Jessica Lange and Diane Keaton. Her second play, *THE MISS FIRECRACKER CONTEST*, has been produced by many American regional theatres and in London, and was also made into a feature film. Ms. Henley wrote the screenplays for both movies, and was nominated for an Academy Award for *CRIMES OF THE HEART*. She has also authored several other successfully produced screenplays and television scripts. Her play *THE LUCKY SPOT* was staged in New York in 1987 and in London in 1991. *ABUNDANCE* had its premiere at California's South Coast Repertory, and opened in New York at the Manhattan Theatre Club late in 1990. (The acclaimed Blackfriars' production opened in September, 1991.) Ms. Henley's most recent play is *CONTROL FREAKS*, which just opened in Los Angeles at the Met Theatre on July 16, 1993. Currently a resident of Los Angeles, Ms. Henley was raised in the state of Mississippi and attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas.

The Maxim Gorky Theatre of the Primorskii Krai and the Khabarovsk Youth Theatre present The Blackfriars Ensemble Touring Company an adjunct of

BLACKFRIARS THEATRE

The first performance visit by American Theatre Professionals
to San Diego's Sister City
Vladivostok
and to

The City of Khabarovsk

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Jane E. & Elwood Hopf

BLACKFRIARS THEATRE was founded in San Diego in 1982, and until 1991 was known as The Bowery Theatre.

The name "Blackfriars" is a significant one in theatre history. When William Shakespeare's company was unable during London winters to perform on the outdoor stage of The Globe, the players would cross the River Thames to the Blackfriars district where a large hall had been converted into a theatre; the company finally moved to Blackfriars altogether in 1608. When the Bowery Theatre changed locations in 1989, into a space converted for theatre use in downtown San Diego, a name change began to be considered, and Blackfriars seemed to fit.

As in Shakespeare's day, Blackfriars is an artist-managed theatre company, and our productions focus primarily on the skills of the actor, rather than on decorative elements or abstract directorial concepts. We are particularly interested in plays which have a mythic dimension in action and character, and which explore the nature and origins of American consciousness. Blackfriars is the only small professional theatre in San Diego with a resident company of artists.

Some of Blackfriars' most acclaimed productions have been: this past season's *The Unseen Hand*, by Sam Shepard, and Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*; Gilles Segal's *The Puppetmaster of Lodz* (1992), *Abundance* (1991), Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* (1990), *Teibele and Her Demon*, from a story by Isaac Bashevis Singer (1990), *What the Butler Saw*, by Joe Orton (1989), *Italian American Reconciliation* (1989) and *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* (1988) both by John Patrick Shanley, and *Bent* (1986) by Martin Sherman; as well as the 1991 world premiere of *The Laughing Buddha* by *Wholsifik Radio Theatre* co-authored by company member Todd Blakesley.

Theater and Movie
Reviews and Articles

Hot Women and Cold Coffee

Women Who Steal at San Diego Rep

STAGE FEATURE

by Charlene Baldrige

DALE MORRIS MAY have announced the Year of the San Diego Woman as this year's theme in his minuscule marvel, 6th at Penn, but even before his series could get off the ground, the real miracle began, simultaneously and everywhere.

Profiled two weeks ago in these pages, Julie Jacobs holds forth luminously as Lizzie in North Coast Repertory's *The Rainmaker*. The 1954 play recollects a time not too long ago when to be single was abhorrent.

Five Lesbian Brothers' *Brave Smiles: Another Lesbian Tragedy* opened at Diversionary January 10, as if to prove that Charles Ludlam and his heirs were not the only ones competent to send up and personate Hollywood film actresses and Gothic period pieces, as Ludlam did in *The Mystery of Irma Vep*.

Five hysterically funny San Diego women play a plethora of panting parts of mixed genders (perhaps) and gender preferences. Newcomer Jeannine Marquie affects adorable machismo. Robin Christ sends up Marlene Dietrich and every iconic girl's school head mistress. Wendy Waddell, Allison Riley and Melissa Fernandes complete the fab ensemble. The abundance is directed by Diversionary Artistic Director Kirsten Brandt on a set designed by her hubby, David Lee Cuthbert. It's an outrageous romp, not for the sexually faint of heart. It's Clare Booth Luce's *The Women* for the 21st century, if you will. (See Adriana's column for a report on this. I can't be everywhere and she's mewing to be my deputy.)

Meanwhile at San Diego Repertory, two women—Shana Wride as Karen and Linda Libby as Peggy—rehearse for Carter Lewis' extremely dark comedy *Women Who Steal*, which sends up female-bonding "road" shows and feminine ferocity. Bernard Baldan plays all the men what done 'em wrong. Sam Woodhouse directs. The script is a hoot!

Libby, who had an extremely busy 2003 on local stages, met me at the Rep's rehearsal hall on 13th Avenue, below Broadway. Flanked by ubiquitous rehearsal hall tables laden with copies of the hot script and cups of forgotten cold coffee, the room is replete with a raked stage built to scale for the Lyceum Space, where *Women Who Steal* has its official opening January 30. What do women steal? Sadly, each other's husbands.

Libby was born in Oklahoma, went to high school in Anaheim, attended Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts during Donovan Marley's regime, and holds an MFA from Temple University.

"I worked in my parents' auto parts store for a while," she says, "delivering parts and just doing other things. Teaching came along. I enjoy that. But what I love most is being in rehearsal and being on stage and moving people. There's nothing like it."

Move people she did as Fraulein Schneider early last year in North Coast Rep's *Cabaret* and Starlight's *Company*. She also performed an unexpected turn at the new Cygnet Theatre. Libby's husband, Jim Mooney, was lead guitar in the stage band for *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. At the 11th hour they lost pianist Jasper Grant to a tour of *Fame*. Libby was persuaded to take a look at the score. Jumping in provided a kind of electricity experienced no where else.

"Some people might have thought it was a choice that the keyboard player was like entertaining before the show. That was me out there, practicing."

"I'm just kinda like a dabbler," she says of her instrumental work, which includes banjo, blues bass, guitar and keyboard.

"But I know about people like my husband, who's a guitarist. He's a maniac. And I know what it takes to do it really right and well, so I don't go there with the music." That may be so, but she's one talented dabbler, inherently funny as well.

Libby finished last season directing for the Playwrights Project in the Lyceum Space while rehearsing Mrs. Fezzwig in the Rep's *A Christmas Carol* alongside *Women Who Steal* co-star Shana Wride. The two first became acquainted many years ago when Wride replaced Libby in the Rep's long-running hit, *Six Women With Brain Death*. Libby played around 565 performances.

Libby and *Women Who Steal* director Sam Woodhouse first worked together on the Rep's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. "I was like 22, drawing varicose veins on my legs, playing a woman who's my age now. Ever since then I've been really lucky. I work a lot."

Sometimes people say, "How can I trust you? You're an actor. You're paid to lie." Libby responds, "No, no. I try to bring truth to the stage rather than lies to my life."



Women Who Steal

The play's alcohol-fueled rampage may seem extreme, but Libby believes that infidelity is the straw that breaks Peggy's restraint. "If I thought my husband had slept with another woman would I call her up and invite her to dinner? And, having confirmed that, how would I proceed? Well, maybe with a couple of shots of tequila."

Libby and Mooney are parents of Elizabeth, 6, who thinks mom should play Cinderella in every show. Whenever both are on stage, as they were in *Hedwig* and *Carol*, Libby's mum shifts into high, caring for Elizabeth. "If I let her, she'd stock my freezer and do all the laundry. She's amazing."

Aside from sheer abundance of talent, Libby's success is due to staying on top of the business of show business. She reads. She auditions.

"It's not just being on stage, it's taking care of relationships and nurturing the community and the art itself. You can do that on stage, but you also need to do it off stage with teaching, directing or designing. Even just being there to listen to

a fellow actor who's having a tough person I can be so when the opportunity the best place to do what I can." ☛

Women Who Steal
by Carter Lewis
San Diego Repertory Theatre
79 Horton Plaza
8pm Friday, January 24th through Sunday, Feb. 1st
\$25.50-\$42.50
619.544-1000
SanDiegoRep.com

STAGE

'Menagerie' stifled by too much respect

By Doug Mason

News-Sentinel theater critic

The Tennessee Stage Company's production of Tennessee Williams' "The Glass Menagerie" hasn't many facets, but it occasionally sparkles.

Strong performances and a deep respect for the work give the production, which opened Thursday at the Bijou Theatre, much dignity and deep sincerity.

But too much respect can be suffocating. In this case a rigid adherence to The Words On The Page rob the production of breadth and the characters of an inner life.

Williams was both poet and Peeping Tom. His Southern landscapes are peppered with holes through which Grand Guignol abstractions can be seen by all who care to look.

Director Tom Parkhill offers a "Glass Menagerie" that is attractive, even loving, but he denies it subtext. Now, it's merely about a guy who wants to move out of his mother's house, and a girl who's too shy to meet a man. Sadly, Laura's unicorn becomes only a piece of broken glass.

Parkhill has assembled a fine company of actors, with the standout being Linda Libby as Amanda Wingfield, a Southern belle who left the plantation to marry a ne'er-do-well and ended up in a

Northern apartment with no husband, a resentful son and an emotionally crippled daughter.

Libby's Amanda is a steel magnolia forged by fire and defiant of harsh realities.

Whenever Libby is on stage, the pace of the play — too often grindingly slow — speeds up; she demands attention and doesn't disappoint when she gets it.

Derek Whittaker is Tom Wingfield, the son who feels duty-bound to care for his mother and sister. But, like his father, he wants only to get away.

Whittaker gives an intense performance, but often, especially in his monologues, he adopts an odd, almost campy attitude; he takes long, sensuous puffs on a cigarette and speaks with a languid Southern drawl, which is odd, because the Wingfield children grew up in the North.

The actor is better in his scenes with Amanda, which come off less forced and actory.

Biz Lyon is Amanda Wingfield, the shy sister who walks with a limp but is really handicapped by her fragile inability to communicate. Lyon is too strong, too pretty and too normal as Laura — which seems to be the director's intent. Parkhill has

said he doesn't see Laura as emotionally disturbed but merely "overlooked," an idea that robs the play of its tragedy when the Gentleman Caller turns out to be a bust.

Jim Richardson is the Gentleman Caller, a character Williams tells us is both the most real person in the play and a symbol of that wonderful thing the family is always expecting to happen.

The actor is a likable but low-key presence — I missed the overbearing eagerness the character usually has. The scene where he and Laura briefly connect is staged in a halting, awkward manner; the fantasy that he could be Laura's savior doesn't gel, so it isn't a heart-breaker when he walks out of her life.

The play does offer several fine moments, but the final scene after the caller leaves delivers real emotional punch. The conflict between Amanda and Tom reaches its apex, as the crushed Laura stands quietly to the side, withdrawn into herself.

At the very end, the play achieves the dramatic power that is missing earlier.

'Girl of My Dreams' is exciting and worthy of the Barter stage

If you've been avoiding theater lately because all you ever seem to see is dreary little two-person productions about neurotics discussing their problems in grimy apartments, then fly, run, heck — even tap dance! But do not walk to the Barter Theatre in Abingdon for a gathering at "Girl of My Dreams!" No kidding, G.I., it's that good.

It starts out with an old guy, superbly done by Ed Sala, surrounded by ghosts and reminiscing in his memento-filled attic, when his granddaughter, Laurie, shows up and begins haranguing the old gentleman to get rid of the musty stuff he's saved from his long ago days as a young soldier who somehow ended up traveling and participating in a front-line USO troop of actors, dancers and comedians. Laurie, whose clothes make her look about as sexy as the typical young woman these days — which is to say about as inviting as Fidel Castro in drag — pokes fun at Granddad's "Big War," but to her credit, she does sit still long enough for the old gentleman to unfold his tale.

And what a tale it is! Assigned to go along with the USO troop to learn its routine so he can entertain the troops, should the USO be unavailable (Army logic, go figure), he



is at first clumsy and out-of-place, but pretty quickly becomes one of the cast.

Michael Malone plays the young "granddad" and he is genuinely convincing in every way. Boyishly, he almost immediately falls in love with the prettiest girl in the USO troop, Liz, played by Christianne Tisdale who, just coincidentally, also plays the granddaughter, Laurie. Hey! There is a resemblance there!

Liz, however, only has eyes for Luke Wheeler, played by Todd Gearhart, who is a one-time big movie star and a war hero into the bargain.

Slowly, however, through months and probably years of traveling together, Liz gradually becomes...but you'll just have to see the play to figure out the, well, sorta pretty obvious — let's just say that is probably the way the ending turns out, but boy, oh boy, oh boy does this USO troop, this cast, and the Barter audience have a whole of a good time getting there!

For those of us who have actually seen a working USO troop, you won't be disappointed. You got your pretty girls, your singing, your dancing, your tap dancing, your horrible vaudeville jokes, your pretty girls.

Hey, did I say "pretty girls"? With big smiles, long legs and 1940s style clingy dresses that make you want to eviscerate whoever it was took women out of high heels and put 'em into combat boots.

Linda Libby as Effie Lawrence, and Michele Ragusa as Cindy Hawthorn, are the other two girls in the show. Linda, who is a superb trooper and would have made a heck of a good real USO performer, has never been finer, while Michele Ragusa when she is dressed in one of her beautiful 1940s costumes kinda makes one understand why the country might be just a slight bit over-populated these days.

Ted Levy and Phil Gold round out the cast. Phil does a great job as the somewhat harried leader of the group and Ted Levy sends the old (new) Barter stage to shaking when his feet begin a tapping!

The songs are all new stuff, but they could very well have been lifted right off the pro-

See GIRL, Page B5

■ GIRL, from Page B4

gram of a real USO performance only a half-mile from the German lines. They are that good, that realistic.

Yet, for all the great songs, this is no simple one-song-after-another "play." There's a real story here and it is a story so well told that it will keep you involved right through to the end.

Yeah, some of the songs and the flashy and wonderful production numbers may seem a bit campy, but you've got to remember that camp wasn't camp in 1944 and patriotism wasn't a dirty word and being pretty and brave and handsome and scared and lonely weren't just things you might have heard about; they were real. And the young G.I.'s fighting and dying in a thousand filthy battlefields did believe they owed their country something and every one of them had a dream and most of those dreams involved a little white house back home in America and inside that little white house was a girl, the Girl of My Dreams...

Barter's small orchestra sounds a whole lot bigger than just Colin Mason (reeds), Brian Quakenbush (trumpet), Bill Dunham (bass), Alan Campbell (drums, percussion), and — hey, since we're talking dreamy females — Elizabeth Falcone on piano and directing the music.

Okay, okay — I liked it. So send me to watch it five more times. All you'll get is name, rank, serial number — and a big smile.

"Girl of My Dreams" runs through Aug. 31 in the fabulously remodeled Barter Theatre. It runs in repertory with "Doctors and Diseases," (which isn't half bad), "The Baby Dance," and "The Moving of Lilla Barton," a comedy which sounds as if it will be a hoot.

For days and times of any of these plays, call the Barter at 1-800-368-3240. The new Barter doesn't appear to have a bad seat. The sound is excellent throughout. (If you have a problem hearing, ask to borrow one of the little FM hearing amplifiers they have.) There's a newly remodeled and nicely stocked souvenir shop, the theatre is set up to accommodate wheelchair users much better than before and the seats are more comfortable. Yet, it's still the same old, great old Barter. Robert Porterfield is smiling. And he's surely tapping his feet and laughing at "Girl of My Dreams," the best thing that's rattled those venerable old boards for many the year.

A one-time staff writer for the Smyth County News, Robert McKinney of Texas has also received fine wines and written freelance articles for various sporting magazines.

Strength of actors carries a nice retelling of classic 'Cinderella'

By Doug Mason
News-Sentinel arts writer

Some people put a lot of feeling into reading a fairy tale. Others just say the words and let the story provide all the charm.

The University of Tennessee Theater's telling of Rodgers & Hammerstein's "Cinderella" falls mostly into the latter category.

Buoyed by R&H's pleasant (but far the team's best) tunes and a storybook atmosphere (created by scenic designer Michael Heil and costume designer Bill Black), the familiar story is retold in a entertaining, compact 90 minutes that should hold the attention of children and adults.

There's really nothing to dislike about this production. But Thursday's preview night performance never generated any excitement, either. The show is "nice" - in the best and worst senses of the word.

The villains, as usual, provide the show's best moments.

The wonderful Linda Libby lights up the stage as Cinderella's wicked stepmother. The part is underwritten in the R&H "Cinderella," but old pro Libby packs her performance with nuances and stolen moments that demand

REVIEW

and receive attention.

She reminded me of an animated Disney villainess - and what higher praise is there?

And what's a stepmom without her two obnoxious daughters?

The specimens offered here are a rare treat. Portia, well played by Ashley Kemp, is a dimwitted moose with a throaty val-gal accent - an inspired interpretation that is in high-comic contrast to her Munchkin-sized sister Joy, played by the irresistible Leigh Alison Price.

Price is a tiny powder keg with a cheese-grater vocal delivery. If she could loan the rest of the cast just a little of her effervescence, this production would soar. This is an actress I'm eager to see again (someone *please* cast her as Ado Annie in R&H's "Oklahoma!").

Among the other primary cast members, Dan Owenby and Nancy Dinwiddie make a fine King and Queen, Stephen J. Smith and Jennifer Richmond are likable as Prince Christopher and Cinderella, and Quinn Fortune is adorable as a giggly Fairy Godmother.

The show's choreography (by

Michelle Colvin) is strictly by-the-numbers. The singing is forgettable. Richmond, a vocal performance major at UT, has the best pipes, but there's a blandness in her delivery - a fault she shares with all the singers.

Director Abigail Crabtree has bookended the play with scenes of her own devising.

She has reinterpreted the fairy tale as the dream of a harried wardrobe mistress in a circus. When the drab girl is transformed into a Cinderella, a Pierrot from the circus joins her and acts as her shadow companion (unseen by others, except for the Fairy Godmother) throughout the play.

I wasn't exactly annoyed by this add-on to the R&H musical (the opening pantomime was beautifully done; and John Ramsey Jr. has an elegant agility as the clown). But I didn't see the point of it either.

As Christmas presents go, "Cinderella" isn't a bad one.

But neither is it that big box with the bright red ribbon that you just can't wait to rip open.

Doug Mason may be reached at 865-342-6441 or at mason@knews.com.

Knoxville News Sentinel



KIM BLACKFORD

Linda Libby, left, makes Willie a freedom fighter to rally behind; Dan Halleck still fits the part of Blue Morphan.

THEATER REVIEW

A Firm Grasp of 'Unseen Hand'

■ San Diego's Blackfriars Theatre finds immediacy in Shepard's tricky, backhanded look at the assassination of JFK.

By NANCY CHURNIN
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

SAN DIEGO—More than 20 years before Oliver Stone tackled the potential conspiracies surrounding the John F. Kennedy assassination on the movie screen, Sam Shepard did it for the stage.

Shepard's "The Unseen Hand," first produced in 1969, is a riff on the disturbing ripples in the minds of some who lived through—as one character puts it—the shooting of the President and the shooting of the man who allegedly shot the President.

The newly homeless Blackfriars Theatre—long known in San Diego for its bold, daring, sometimes controversial takes on contemporary themes—finds immediacy and bite in Shepard's wildly imaginative play about an aged gunslinger brought back to youth to help an alien from the planet Nogo in a fight for freedom.

Blackfriars, one of the country's smallest professional theaters, used to weave its magic at the tiny, primitive 78-seat Bristol Court Playhouse. Now it has staged this production in the seemingly incongruent setting of Gaslamp Quarter Theatre Company's elegant Hahn Cosmopolitan Theatre, a 250-seat space, in the heart of San Diego's Gaslamp district.

But the company makes the site its own for this production, pulling out nearly 50 chairs, transforming the formal proscenium into a thrust stage with the dry brush of a Western desert highway spilling onto the first row.

At the heart of "The Unseen Hand" is the spirit of the Old West. It's dying here as epitomized by Blue Morphan (Dan Halleck), a 120-year-old former gunslinger, now living in an abandoned '52 Chevy with a JFK 284 license plate. Still salty, but tired and fearful of the highway police, Blue gets a visit from an alien named Willie (Linda Libby) with the imprint of a hand on her face.

Willie tells him a fantastic story of how her people on the planet Nogo are controlled by these imprints—every time they get a thought they are not supposed to have, the hand squeezes their brains, causing unbearable pain.

Willie wants Blue Morphan and his two dead gunslinging brothers—whom she obligingly brings back to life—to liberate her people. After a measure of disbelief, the brothers agree, but a chance visit of a disturbed cheerleader changes their plans in a "Wizard of Oz"-like twist when Willie realizes that guns are not necessary to eliminate the hand.

Still the question remains as to whether the brothers will figure out how to eliminate the "unseen hands"—as in political/social mind-control—that limit their thinking in their own society.

Halleck, the managing director of Blackfriars, won a Drama-Logue award for the 1982 production of this play in Los Angeles. Eleven years later, he fits the part like a second skin, rendering the most implausible fantasies believable.

Women's Times Directions

SPECIAL SECTION

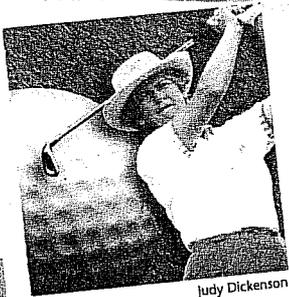


Linda Libby

14A

Arts & Entertainment

From Russia with Linda



Judy Dickenson

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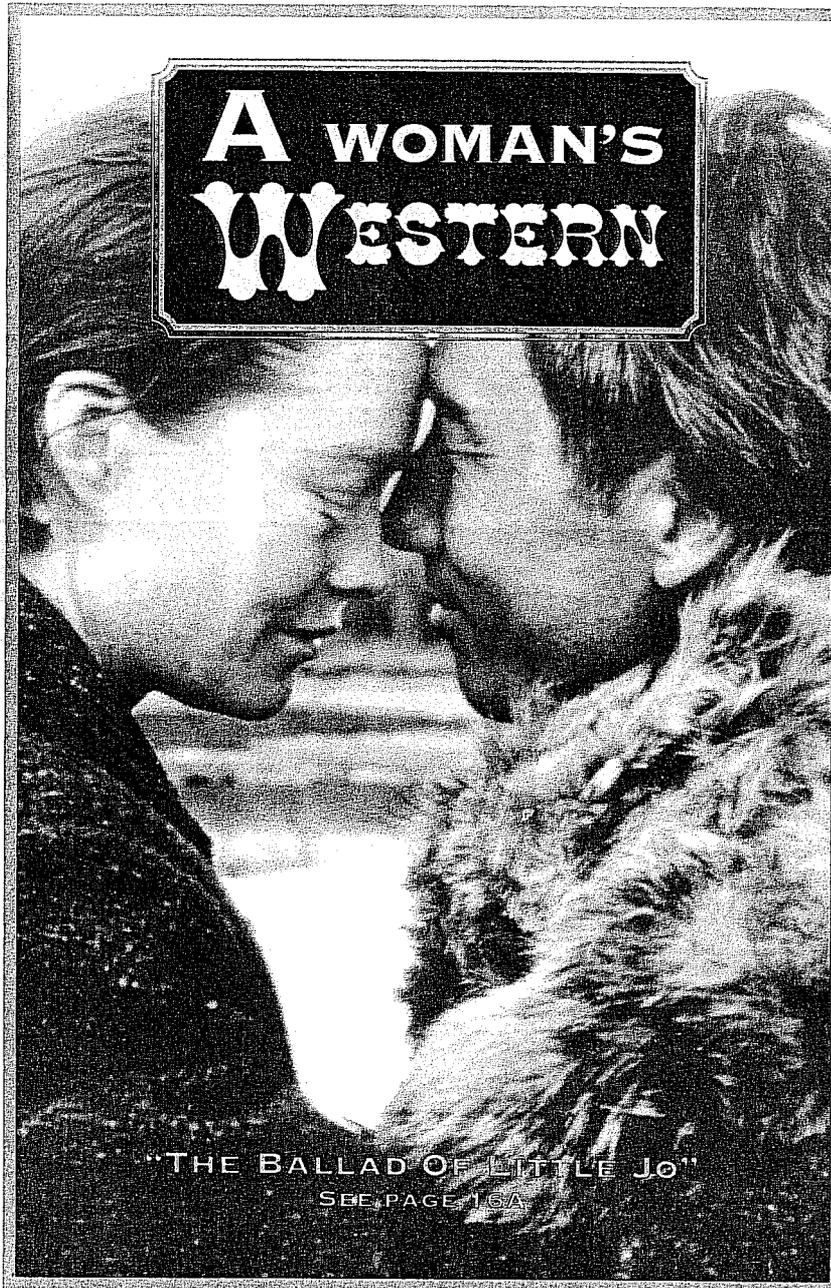
Sports

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THE EPIC



"THE BALLAD OF LITTLE JO"
SEE PAGE 16A

WOMEN'S TIMES Directions SEPTEMBER, 1993

FROM RUSSIA WITH LINDA

BY KATHI DIAMANT

God! It was incredible, the way we were received. Like royalty! Packed houses, flowers up to our knees in the dressing rooms, press conferences, a documentary film crew everywhere, even backstage! We were greeted at the airport with three TV crews, photographers everywhere, and the entire Maxim Gorky Theatre Company."

Linda Libby's eyes are slightly glazed. She should go back to sleep, but after a 20-hour flight from Far East Russia, her inner clock is understandably askew. She's been home 15 hours now, but clearly she's not through with her Russian experience, as it continues to grow with memories of a remarkable mission.

The mission was to be a cultural breakthrough: the first American theater company to perform in Far East Russia, in a city that less than two years ago was closed to all foreigners as a major Soviet strategic naval base. Conceived by artistic director Ralph Elias and producer/acress Allison

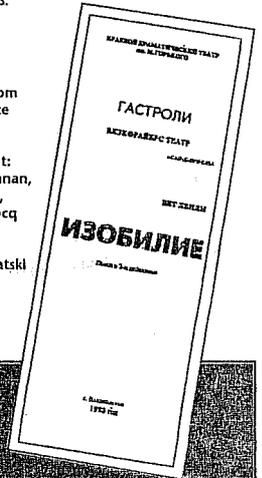


Below
Left to Right:
Allison Brennan,
Clare Henkel,
Linda Libby

American actors. "I was constantly asked if I were married. No. Any children? No. Why not? I tried to explain that finding acting work is hard, that we have to move around a lot, and that there's very little money in it. You don't need money for children, they'd say."

The Russians didn't know it, but that accurate piece of bad news about America comes from one of San Diego's most successful actresses, who has been working non-stop since her arrival here in 1983. Armed with an MFA in Theatre from Temple University, Libby came to work at her mother's auto parts store, and began immediately to look for acting opportunities.

Right:
Program from
performance



Below
Left to Right:
Allison Brennan,
Linda Libby,
Randy LeCocq
(US Consul
General),
Efim Zvenyatski
(managing
director of
Gorky
Theatre)

Culture and Tourism, the visit by the members of the Blackfriars Theatre was the most important event ever in Russian-American relations in Vladivostok. Randy LeCocq, the Consul General of the U.S. Consulate in Vladivostok, said that the selection of

curtain calls traditionally just go on and on. So on opening night, for the curtain call, the guys came out, and then Allison came out and by the time I came out to take my first bow, there was a line of people waiting with flowers. Their tradition is to



Left:
Newspaper
review.
Below:
M. Gorky
Theatre, Vlad
Kim Bennett
and Linda
Libby in
rehearsal shot



Brennan of San Diego's Blackfriars Theatre after a meeting with Efim Zvenyatski, ("the Des MacAnuf of Vladivostok") the plan was to raise \$50,000 and travel to the Maxim Gorky Theatre in Vladivostok, our sister-city in Far East Russia, to perform a uniquely American play, Beth Henley's critically acclaimed *Abundance*. Then the 12-member company would board a train to another theater, over 400 miles away in Khabarovsk, a 12-hour journey, for five more performances.

Abundance, Beth Henley's 1991 play about two mail-order brides in Wyoming Territory in the late 1860s had many parallels to the hardships encountered by the present inhabitants of Siberia's frontier...the Far East. Libby played Macon, a strong and passionate young woman whose dreams, like the land she settles, dry up and blow away in the dust.

"My first line in the play is 'Lord almighty. You're like me.' We saw that reflected all over the place, wherever we went. One of the interviewers noted how very Russian we all were. *Abundance* was so very Russian, they said. And I'd been thinking of this play as very American. The Old West is what we identify as being specifically American. And they said, no, no you are so Russian."

The mission proved to be a resounding success. According to V.V. Kerchenko, the region's Minister of

material, *Abundance*, (and a shorter, second production of Romulus Linney's *Akhmatova*, about the Russian poet Anna Akhmatova) was the best possible choice. Press conferences, constant TV and newspaper coverage, overflowing houses, and attentive, appreciative audiences greeted the San Diego troupe from their arrival on July 21 and followed them to their departure on August 11.

Opening night in the 1,000-seat Gorky Theatre was a heady experience for the small but determined and ambitious company, whose former home base was an 85-seat open space theater in the old Bristol Court Hotel on First Avenue. As Libby remembers, "In my first entrance I back onto the set, and look out into the house, and I'm supposed to see the wide expanse of Wyoming. Instead I see this sea of people...hundreds of people in the aisles, and TV cameras. The U.S. Fire Marshall would have had a fit."

According to Allison Brennan and Kim Bennett, two of Libby's fellow actors in *Abundance*, she was an unqualified hit. The Russians loved her. "Leenda, Leenda," they would cry, "we loff you!" Libby admits to being humbled by the rather overwhelming experience. "I'm not used to that, and I didn't know what to do, but it was wonderful," she sighs.

"Russian audiences don't do standing ovations. Instead, they do that rhythmic clapping, and Russian

come and give flowers at the curtain call. I couldn't hold them all. There was a huge basket with roses, there were gladiolas, and more roses, roses, roses. Literally, our whole dressing room was covered in flowers. And the flowers came every night, more flowers.

"The Russian company members were moved, touched by the play," Libby says in between sips of coffee. "An understood respect was evident, although unspoken, because we didn't really have the words to express it. But without words they let us know that we were successful, that they understood us, that they followed the storyline, that they had respect for our craft."

Respect for the craft of acting was one of the major differences Libby noticed between Americans and Russians. "The actors in Russia had a hard time understanding that actors here in America work on one job at a time, and when the job is over the struggle begins again to find another job," Libby explains. "In Russia, after they complete their training at a conservatory, they join a company, which guarantees employment. Once you've joined a company, it's like working for IBM, only that it's theater."

she also noticed a lack of "cut-throat competitiveness" among the actors and the fact that they all were married, with families—a luxury for

Two months later, her substantial talent and fresh face were put to work. Since then, she's been on several San Diego stages in a variety of character roles, most recently as the space freak Willie in *The Unseen Hand* at the Hahn Cosmopolitan Theatre. Libby was the longest running performer in the San Diego Repertory Theatre's record-setting *Six Women With Brain Death*, performing 503 out of 528 performances. During the two years she had that regular gig, she sang and played nearly all the parts.

After her trip to Russia, even with the future of the Blackfriars Theatre unclear, with no permanent home base, Libby feels that as a company member of Blackfriars, she is more validated in her profession. "It's great to work with the same people on different shows. There's a loyalty, and an opportunity to see your talent, and that of the others, blossom."

About her experience in Far East Russia, "It was all about friendship and how much alike we all are," she concludes. "When we left Vladivostok on the train, there were tears and hugs as if we'd known each other for years and years. There was an understanding between us. I felt more comfortable with these people whose words I didn't understand than I would with people who share my language but not my profession."

April 2007

WT

Los Angeles Times

FRIDAY

OCTOBER 25, 1991

ENTERTAINMENT / THE ARTS / TV LISTINGS

CALENDAR

BEST BETS

THE BEST OF SAN DIEGO'S WEEKEND

STAGE: Good 'N Plenty

■ The abundance in Beth Henley's "Abundance" refers to the limitless possibilities of the American

West in the 19th Century—for discovery, for self-determination, for hardship and for heartbreak. The abundance in the San Diego premiere of this show at Blackfriars Theatre (formerly the Bowery Theatre) is all that plus an abundance of talent. The acting by Linda Libby and Allison Brennan as mail-order brides is superb, as are the performances by the rest of the supporting cast. The direction by Ralph Elias is taut and tough, and the design by Beeb Salzer remarkably transforms a postage-stamp size stage into the vast wilds of the American frontier. This is theater at its best. Performances at 8 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday and 7 p.m. Sundays, with Sunday matinees at 2 through Nov. 17.



LINDA HECHT / Los Angeles Times

Linda Libby, left, and Alison Brennan are superb as mail-order brides finding adventure, hardship and heartbreak in "Abundance."

STAGE REVIEW

'Abundance' of Riches by Blackfriars

By NANCY CHURNIN
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

SAN DIEGO—The late 19th-Century American West lives and breathes on the stage of Blackfriars Theatre, formerly known as the Bowery. It's the rough, stark setting for Beth Henley's "Abundance," a passionate, vivid and gut-

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

wrenching story about a 25-year friendship between two mail-order brides, now in its San Diego premiere at the company's Bristol Court Playhouse, formerly known as the Kingston Playhouse.

To its considerable credit, in an age where money makes theater magic possible, Blackfriars pulls off this transformation without fancy props or special effects, but with superb acting and directing. The great skill of its supporting design team comes from knowing how not to overdo it.

Beeb Salzer's wonderful all-white set is as bleak and bare as the Wyoming and Missouri landscape where these women find themselves. A jagged edge at the top of the backdrop suggests mountains close by, light pencil sketches on the side walls conjure mountains in the distance, a floor of

While she is waiting on a bench for that man to pick her up, she meets Macon Hill (Linda Libby), who is also waiting for a man to pick her up.

They are seeming opposites: Bess is looking for love, Macon is seeking adventure. Macon wants to write books and see elephants. Bess wants a man to sing and dream with.

The men are, not surprisingly, a surprise. Instead of a sweet singer, Bess learns that the man she was waiting for is dead and she has to settle for his brother, Jack Flan (John Blunt)—a man who detests music, tenderness and weakness of any kind. Instead of an adventurer, Macon gets Will Curtis (Paul James Kruse)—a hard-working, one-eyed widower who offers her his dead wife's ring and later, in a more passionate moment, writes her a letter addressed from their cow.

What each performer brings to the part is an innate dignity and integrity—each character is true to him or herself, even as each one, in turn, fails at least one of the others in crucial moments.

Henley, best known for her Pulitzer Prize-winning "Crimes of the Heart," shows a leap in maturation with this work. She abandons the easy jokes that come with her usual quirky Southern characters, but her skillful mastery of black humor seems all the stronger for being less regionally specific. We do not know precisely where the women of "Abundance" came from before



LINDA HECHT / For The Times

Linda Libby, left, as Macon and Allison Brennan as Bess, in "Abundance."

rocks show the harshness of the land beneath their feet.

Lawrence Czoka's original score, which adapts songs contemporary with the period, seductively ushers in the mood.

But it is the acting, under tough, unsentimental direction by Ralph Elias, artistic

and extreme. She survives a traumatic situation by using her friend as a model—which is believable—but then she abandons her friend with unwarranted heartlessness and returns to her with a feeling that is far less than what her friend deserves.

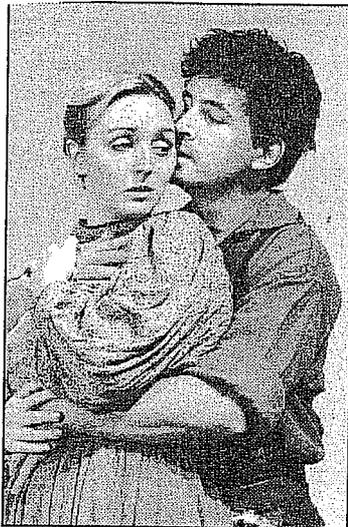
Given the nature of the women's opposite characterizations and the suddenness of their transformations, this could have come off like a cartoon—a theatrical Thelma and Louise Go West story.

But this acting and directing team dives too deep into the material to fall into that trap. Instead, the cast brings up fistfuls of treasures at every turn.

Libby, with a light in her eyes and fire in her step, commands the stage, charging it up every time she is on it. Brennan, although she still needs to clarify her character's changes, elegantly delineates the poignancy of the withdrawn and fearful Bess.

Blunt smolders as Jack, a charismatic bully whose violence is revealed to be a manifestation of his inner weakness. Kruse, whose character becomes a figure of unwitting fun, finds his anchor in decency. Tim Reilly plays Prof. Elmore Crome, the man who changes the lives of these characters as well as that of the entire Western frontier, with unctuous authenticity.

J.A. Roth's lighting design is simple, subtle and effective. Clare Henkel's costumes are entirely believable.



LINDA HECHT / For The Times

Mail-order-bride Macon (Linda Libby) with the hard-boiled Jack (John Blunt) in "Abundance."

theme would make the scenes fall apart like pages in a book without a solid binding. But the characterizations are so mesmerizing that one doesn't care. In "Abundance," one gets to watch life unfold on the Western frontier from the pioneering woman's point of view—a too little explored vantage point delivered in a gritty and truthful-sounding way.

There are quibbles to be sure. Bess makes a switch at one point in the play that seems far too rapid

director of the company, that makes this story explode.

Allison Brennan plays Bess Johnson, a meek and repressed woman who comes West in 1868 to find true love from a man with whom she has only corresponded.

BLACKFRIARS

Although there is room for tuning the show's swift turn of fate, much of it now is powerful enough to be outstanding just as is. This is an auspicious season opener for Blackfriars Theatre and one of the must-see shows of 1991.

"ABUNDANCE"

By Beth Henley. Director, Ralph Elias. Original music and sound design, Lawrence Czoka. Scenic design, Beeb Salzer. Lighting, J.A. Roth. Costumes, Clare Henkel. Stage manager, Ollie Nash. Allison Brennan, Linda Libby, John Blunt, Paul James Kruse and Tim Reilly. 7 p.m. Wednesdays-Saturdays, 7 p.m. Sundays, with Sunday matinees at 2. Theatres 17. Tickets are \$14-\$20. At 10 Ave., San Diego, 232-4088. During Theatre Days on Wednesday and Saturdays 14 to 18 get in free when you buy a half-price ticket for \$8-\$9.50 at the Times Arts Tix Booth in Horton (The theater is not recommending play for anyone under 14.)

notes from abroad

The Wild West Meets the Wild East

By Whitney Mason

Built on scenic, typhoon-lashed hills at the tip of a peninsula jutting into the Sea of Japan, Vladivostok was never a typical Soviet city. Home port of the Red Navy's Pacific Fleet, it was closed even to Soviets from other regions until its official opening Jan. 1, 1992; yet because of the thousands of wandering merchant marine officers and seamen, more of Vladivostok's residents had probably visited Western countries than those of any other city in the empire. Today, however, the once-disciplined sailors have turned Al Capone-style "businessmen," chasing after money and power in right-hand-drive cars imported from Japan.

Ten company members from San Diego's Blackfriars Theatre rode into Russia's new Wild East late last summer—as the first American performing arts group ever to visit far eastern Russia—with Beth Henley's fierce comedy of American pioneer life, *Abundance*, and Romulus Linney's moving one-act about the great Russian poet, *Akhmatova*. In addition to Vladivostok, the plays also toured last summer to Khabarovsk, a city on the Chinese border, with *Abundance*'s Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright along for the ride.

And through the seemingly anomalous and always demonstrative theatre communities of the two cities, the Americans were immersed in the complexities of life in today's Russia. Though by economic measures the cities are comparable to Tijuana, this is still the land that produced Chekhov and Stanislavsky, where even philistine borderline businessmen consider theatre a central part of cultural life. In fact, most of both the host theatres' sponsors belong to this new-mopied set. The Americans got a long look at a distinct theatrical culture which—with the self-assured signals of U.S. culture jamming the post-Cold War airwaves, and increasingly desperate financial pressures on Russian artists—runs the risk of being consigned to the proverbial dustbin.



Largeness of spirit: Linda Libby, left, and Allison Brennan in Blackfriars Theatre's *Abundance*.

THIS TOUR REUNITED the cast of Blackfriars' critically acclaimed 1991 production of *Abundance*, led by actor and producer Allison Brennan and director Ralph Elias. In Vladivostok and Khabarovsk these typically peripatetic American theatre professionals had a close encounter with the power of the Russian collective.

Actor Kim Bennett explained: "The lead actor of the Khabarovsk Youth Theatre asked me how many theatres I'd worked in and I told him between 60 and 70 over the past 15 years. He had worked in his theatre for 20 years, and had never worked with any other. It's like playing on a team—it's not all about individual stars."

Company member Erin Kelly cited the security of the collective as a key to the unrestrained theatricality of Russian acting. "I think in the United States we need to get some of that largeness back into theatre. In America we're too often limited by appropriateness and believability," she said. Actor Linda Libby suggested that the Russian acting style "corresponds to their largeness of spirit in all areas of life."

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Allison Brennan played the title role in *Akhmatova*, which she says the company approached "with some trepidation as to whether it was presumptuous of us to perform a play about a great Russian poet there." The company also worried that the one-act was too short to appear on its own program, and supplemented the evening with a reading by Russian actresses of Akhmatova's poem "Requiem" and a discussion period with audiences. But despite these qualms Brennan says the Linney one-act was received warmly and produced a "huge impact on Russian audiences," especially given that the one-act was only added to the program in May, on the suggestion of a Vladivostok theatre manager who was concerned that *Abundance* alone wouldn't fill enough seats (a fear which proved unfounded: the company filled the large 1,000-seat theatre to capacity for each *Abundance* performance there, and the four *Akhmatova* performances in a smaller venue sold out before the Americans arrived).

April 2007

Wednesday, October 9, 1991

Abundance

(Bristol Court Theater;
88 seats; \$18 top)

SAN DIEGO — Beth Henley titled this play for irony. But taken straight, the name works as a pretty fair description of the season opener for the company now known as Blackfriars, an upscale switch from the tag Bowery.

The Bowery troupe had been notable for gutsiness and taking chances, like becoming the smallest Equity house on the West Coast, if not the nation. This production indicates that such qualities will continue with Blackfriars.

Henley — using diary reports of actual experiences of women on the Western frontier — tells an epic tale, amazingly using only five characters. Such a compression invariably strains credibility, and the fortunes in these people's lives swing around so dizzily that the play could appropriately be titled "Retribution."

Still, improbable doesn't mean impossible, and this production eases the script's stretches. Ralph Elias' direction gives fluidity to the play's 25-year period, and the cast is anchored by Allison Brennan and Linda Libby as the central friends.

Bess (Brennan) and Macon (Libby) are mail-order brides who meet at their Wyoming destination while waiting for their soon-to-be-husbands. They bond, although their personalities contrast widely. Bess is shy and tentative, Macon adventurous and boisterous.

Their men prove equally diverse. Macon's Will (Paul James Kruse) is hard-working but low-key, and she finds him decidedly unattractive, largely because he has lost one eye. Bess' Jack (John Blunt) — the brother of the man she was supposed to wed, who died in a bizarre accident — is darkly handsome, but lazy, ignorant and cruel.

So for years their lives go pretty much as expected — Macon prospering with Will but feeling terribly unfulfilled, Bess sinking deeper into poverty and suffering terrible emotional and physical brutalization from Jack.

Starving and homeless, the latter couple is sheltered by Will and Macon, who finds herself reluctantly attracted to Jack. Then Bess is abducted by Indians.

Five years later, with Macon and Jack carrying on wildly as Will pretends not to notice, they hear that Bess has been found, purchased from the tribe and is being returned.

At first, Bess' presence means only that she has to be handled like a wild pet, watched or chained up so she won't run away. Then a professor shows up, having heard of her experience and wanting to use her, tattooed face and all, as part of an anti-Indian lecture tour.

Subsequently, Bess becomes notable and wealthy, and she turns Jack into her obedient lapdog. Continuing the turnabout, Macon and Will go broke, split up and head for separate sad fates.

The reversal of fortunes is too pat, and the betrayal-revenge prevalence has a soap-operatic ring. Yet, even though the message gets muted, Henley scores some devastating points about the (mis)treatment of women on the edge of known society. For them, the "abundance" that pulled men westward proved an empty mockery.

That point is illustrated inventively by Beeb Salzer's minimalist set, essentially a pile of rocks in front of a white backdrop jaggedly representing mountains. For these characters, the West is no land of fertile greens and gorgeous vistas.

J.A. Roth's lighting is a particularly important element, because Elias follows each scene by having the players pause in a dusky vignette. At first, it seems obtrusive, but then cumulatively gives the impression of history being brought to life.

Brennan, with the widest-ranging role, shines in all facets, from sympathetic to severe. Libby is almost equally versatile, although her early gusto threatens to overwhelm everyone else.

Kruse manages to make his wimp of the West somewhat likable while inspiring pity, and Blunt, in a role that's almost totally contemptible, does project the magnetism of evil.

Tim Reilly, as the professor, is the only weak link. His lines are obviously intended to be largely hypocritical hyperbole, but he delivers them too vacantly and superciliously.

—Don Braunagel