

dramaturgs'network

Dramaturgs' Network

NEWSLETTER

Spring Issue 2005

(www.dramaturgy.co.uk/newsletter)

Welcome to the spring issue of the Dramaturgs' Network's Newsletter!

A very exciting opportunity to explore dramaturgy and work practices like those discussed in this issue is coming up at the Dramaturgy Day at the Birmingham Rep on the 3rd of June: a conference initiated by the Arts Council England **LINK read more ...**

A theme running across the three articles of this issue is what we may call 'practical dramaturgy': how the drama text may be given new life or enhanced by the non-spoken aspects of the theatre event being given equal weight to the dialogue; how the work on new plays *in the rehearsal room* benefits from the work of a dramaturg.

Phil Smith, playwright, is taking a very personal approach to the task of rescuing the theatricality of drama works, arguing for the centrality of the theatrical in the dramaturg's work. **LINK read more...**

Brian Quirt, artistic director of *Nightswimming*, developing his contribution given at the New Writing discussion at the Albery Theatre talks further about the company, describing its processes and outcomes in two particular projects. **LINK read more...**

Frauke Franz, dramaturg at Polka Theatre is describing their *Playgrounding* scheme and its impact on writing for children's theatre. **LINK read more...**

We hope you enjoy reading these; as always any comments or feedback is welcome. Log on to our forum on: www.dramaturgy.co.uk/forum and let us hear from you. We also welcome letters and articles responding to our newsletter. Please send them to: newsletter@dramaturgy.co.uk (If you are writing for us, please note that our article submitting deadline for our summer issue is 30th May 2005.)

We look forward to hearing from you!

Katalin Trencsényi and John Keefe
Editors

Content:

News: Dramaturgy Day in Birmingham 3rd of June

Phil Smith: o, dramaturgy!

Brian Quirt: Building a Rough House

Frauke Franz: Playgrounding. A New Writing Scheme by the Polka Theatre

* * * * *

News: Dramaturgy Day in Birmingham 3rd of June

Frauke Franz of the Dramaturgs' Network is invited as key note speaker at the first major conference on dramaturgy in England. The conference organised by the Arts Council England and Birmingham Rep asks:

What exactly is Dramaturgy and why do we need it?

What's the difference between a dramaturg and a literary manager?

What's the process and how does it work?

To come and take part in the discussion on Friday the 3rd June at the Rep contact the box office: 0121 236 4455 or book online: www.birmingham-rep.co.uk . Tickets are £8 (£6 freelancers) and the conference is between 11.00am and 4.30pm.

Other speakers: Kwame Kwei-Armah, Angus Jackson, Lin Coghlan, Tim Fountain, Thomas Frank, Frauke Franz, Gabriel Gbadamosi, Noël Greig, Tanika Gupta, Mary Luckhurst, Claire Malcolm, Michael McKinnie, Duška Radosavljevic, Esther Richardson, Laurie Sansom, Hanna Slattne, Sarah Woods.

* * * * *

o, dramaturgy!

by Phil Smith, playwright

Be careful when you open your mouth between rehearsals - you may end up writing articles on the end of your rhetoric. Suspect all motives, all opinions.

Expressing such things can be fatal to your economics – you never know who's listening and people can go off you. It's not personal. It's business. But this is about craft. An anachronism, I know.

What follows is an ill-advised gloss on a few premeditated comments about being a dramaturg, which occasionally I am – more an activity than an identity.

I didn't set out to be a dramaturg. I answered a phone call, not an advertisement. A friend, Paul Stebbings, from college; co-founder with me of Bristol Gate – a short-lived and over-populated company. He'd split from a humourless physical theatre company and needed an outside eye on his next project.

The piece was already very theatrical, but my role was to increase that theatricality. I suggested very little change to the script – indeed by then the text and the action would have been hard to divide – but on the next show I was editing the second draft and adding ideas and dialogue.

Written in 1980 and 1981 these two shows ran for many years and one was still being performed last year, 23 years on. Something must have been right about that process. The company was TNT, now based in Munich. Where my stomach was born. I was always described as the company "dramaturg" – a role which has been an elastic one. Sometimes I've been co-writer, sometimes almost the director. But never literary manager – I've never had any voice in the choice of subject matter or text (except "is it feasible?") That's fine with me. I'm a literary foot soldier.

Sometimes I've written the first draft, sometimes made minor amendments to Paul's first draft – it's always different – sometimes my work is to prepare with Paul the conceptual framework for the production of an existing text, but always the focus is on theatricalising the material. (Theatre mimics more than enough other forms; surely, the point is to be itself.)

There is nothing demeaning or uncreative about such preparation, it is an adventure, an exploration: in Macbeth, grasping that the 'familiar' called the weird sisters and not the other way round affected the whole world of the play, finding the goddess in King Lear, foregrounding the anti-semitism in Oliver Twist, and beginning A Midsummer's Night's Dream with 4 minutes of gender-violence (Athenians versus Amazons) showed just what was at stake in this comedy. (None of this is addition or invention, but part of the work of reclaiming texts from ideology, in particular from the naturalist distortions of the work of Miller, Kesey, Golding.)

This anti-realism is often a reclaiming of performative and theatrical elements in original works, and this return to or drawing out (even foregrounding) of theatricality that I, for a reason hopefully grounded in historical practice, believe (or more probably have been told and remember as my own opinion) to be a role not dissimilar to that of European nineteenth century dramaturgs working on the texts of poets writing for the stage. (The kind of work that might be required to fit Ibsen's early work - Brand or Peer Gynt - to the limitations of the nineteenth century stage.) For my personal practice as a dramaturg this is a relationship not only with the dead but also with the distant licence of Paul Auster and Alan Sillitoe.

I wish that there was more of such theatricalising dramaturgy today; allowing dramatists to be less 'realistic', to be more speculative, symbolist and intellectual. And let alchemical dramaturgs find the hybrid practicality.

As a writer I have also experienced the close up and nothing personal of dramaturgy from the other side of the sheet of paper. Working with dramaturg Katalin Trencsényi on 'Sprout' (directed by Deborah Wilding at Proteus) has been a model experience. Not just that Katalin liked the script, but that from the start that did not stop her making a series of practical and useful detailed suggestions for changes and then, when we hit a structural problem, (two endings!) she operated with exactly the same blend of discretion and frankness – we pruned the sub-plot and regained the focus. Crucially this change came late on and was **theatrically** driven. I was immediately convinced of the need for change because I knew it came from an understanding, not from any other drive.

Where I have had problems with dramaturgs (in name or not) in the past has often been due to cutting the text too hastily for literary, rational or 'practical' reasons, rather than on account of theatrical considerations.

I have come to see the role of a dramaturg rather at odds with that of the decision-maker, at odds with the collapsing of the roles of literary manager with dramaturg. (I was once recommended to write poetical plays – as opposed to 'in-yer-face' – by a literary manager/dramaturg and the advice killed any desire for what I longed to write. We don't all respond to time.)

The one really spectacularly (in the sense of Debord) dreadful experience (that's fine in about 120 shows, can't complain) was with a panicking (with some reason) director, interpreting absurdity as silliness and (no doubt for the common good) dropped the crucial scenes that might have explained the obscenities of authoritarianism. Interestingly the scenes chopped were the strongest – it WAS an odd script but if the director had hung on, trusted, maybe with the help of a dramaturg intermediary, it might have worked as a play (rather than the strange portmanteau piece that emerged for the road).

Maybe I'm just biased by and towards the nature of my own dramaturgical practice, but I do think that dramaturgs (and directors when they take on that role for themselves) should take their cue from theatrical considerations and **results** on the rehearsal floor – a good decision taken late is a logistical problem to be overcome, a bad decision taken early is a deadly disease not easily cured.

* * * * * * * * *

Building a Rough House

Nightswimming's creation process

By Brian Quirt, Artistic Director of *Nightswimming*

Nightswimming is a Toronto-based dramaturgical company that commissions and develops new works of theatre and dance, but does not produce those works. All of our resources go toward the creation of the best possible development process for each project, and to the exploration and improvement of dramaturgical process in general.

[Editors note: Please see the article and transcript of the discussion “New Writing; how do we develop new plays?” in the winter issue of the network newsletter for a full description of *Nightswimming*.]

All commissions begin by asking an artist to propose an idea that they feel – because of its form or content or even cast size – they would not be able to pursue otherwise. We want them to work on the dream project that they don't think will fit anywhere else. We are interested in the idea they are afraid of, or have put aside for other, more accessible or easily sold projects.

Once a project has been determined – this includes text-based plays, but also choreographic works and, in the future, musical pieces – we put money into the artists' hands up front, in commissions that now begin at \$5,000. This fee is for a first draft only; subsequent drafts and workshops receive additional fees. A commission is the beginning of a relationship that will continue until the show is produced, regardless of how long that takes. As the piece develops, we promote the new work to potential partners, always seeking out collaborators who will find a passionate connection to the piece and commit to production.

Our workshops are designed to discover as much as possible about the world of the play and the approach to theatre that it requires. Increasingly, we are foregoing the term “workshop” for the dance world's phrase, “creation process”. The goal of every process is to give us a greater understanding of the creator's intentions and a growing ability to realize them theatrically.

We have chosen not to produce our work so that we can focus exclusively on the developmental process and put all our resources toward it. We do not arrange co-productions or in-association deals because we believe that producing theatres are better suited to producing than we are: that is what they do best and we benefit from their expertise and resources. They, meanwhile, benefit from the attention we are able to devote to the development process. It is an effective and efficient partnership that offers the artist the best of all worlds.

I'd like to outline two related projects that have had a substantial impact on our understanding of process. The first is *Pure Research*. The *Pure Research* program supports theatrical experiments that are not production oriented (that is what defines them as *pure*). Our intent is to pursue *primary, practical* studio research into issues of form and performance. We provide space, money and

resources to artists conducting pure research into provocative theatrical questions. Successful candidates are offered three days in a fully equipped studio theatre. There are funds available to hire personnel (often actors, but past participants have included directors, writers, sound designers and DJ-s, among others), plus a small budget for expenses. Each workshop is thoroughly documented and written reports are posted on *Nightswimming's* website. (www.nightswimmingtheatre.com)

Pure Research's goals are very broad (to increase the amount and quality of theatre research in Canada) and very specific (to offer me, as a dramaturg, the opportunity to work with and/or observe the investigations of skilled artists as they gnaw on an issue of their choice). Pressure comes only from the desire to learn, the joy of discovery, the act of searching for answers with time and freedom on our side; it is time in a theatre not fixing something, not rushing something, but digging deeply. Research invigorates and inspires.

A happy by-product of the program is that it has led to new approaches in our own, ongoing creative work. *Pure Research* feeds *Nightswimming's* work in unpredictable ways, exposes us to ideas and individuals that our own work might never otherwise encounter. My instinct says that it is transforming our approach to play development in general. *Pure Research* has encouraged *Nightswimming's* development process to be more adventurous and more open to instinct and serendipity. Through *Pure Research*, I have developed a great tolerance for the unknown. I have embraced patience as a tool. I have come to value performance research as both an end in itself and as a starting point for creation.

Without *Pure Research*, I fear that our work would move inexorably closer to the product-oriented side of the play-development equation. I struggle to resist the temptation to make the *Pure Research* projects more applicable, more like conventional developmental workshops. To counter this, I am designing our ongoing developmental work to look more like *Pure Research*, using the program to shift our developmental processes toward the "purer" end of the spectrum, where I believe we will find more interesting places to begin new pieces of theatre. Increasingly, we are suggesting the *Pure Research* model to artists we want to commission, encouraging them to explore ideas rather than propose topics for a new work. The result is that we have found ourselves conducting what are – in essence – *applied research* sessions. The challenge we face is the same as that faced by artists who submit to *Pure Research*: to keep the emphasis on *search* not creation.

Over the past three years, our work on Andy Massingham's *Rough House* illustrates the impact of this approach. *Rough House* is a one-man, one-act show featuring physical movement of an extreme nature. There is no dialogue. Andy is exploring the universal language of gesture, action and objective; it is part dance, part slapstick, part pantomime. *Rough House* is extremely funny and the physicality is both beautifully graceful and shockingly dangerous.

Rough House continues and extends our company's work with physical theatre, and our desire to incorporate the lessons of *Pure Research* into our play creation activities. Andy worked solo, starting in spring 2002, and then over an eight-month period (September 2002 to April 2003) with Brian and choreographer Julia Sasso in two-hour sessions to explore physical approaches to storytelling and to capitalize on his great talent for pratfalls and physical comedy. Andy used improvisational exercises to explore comic shtick and generate material that was filed away for future consideration. More than twenty sessions were held, generating a large volume of material that has mostly fallen by the wayside. We refused to worry at the time about creating product; our work was almost entirely about *how* to create rather than *what* to create.

"Brian allowed me carte blanche as to the creation of Rough House. I was instructed to take my time and keep in touch occasionally. Terrific. Julia Sasso suggested that I film myself improvising, as a way of developing material. So I created an archive of all the falls, rolls, and slapstick bits I had been doing all these years. More like "researchals" than rehearsals. I resisted looking at the tape until the end of the third session. It was full of chaos; as a cohesive whole it seemed hopeless, yet an uncanny thread started to weave its way through the anarchy. The difference between making it happen and letting it happen was asserting itself. I did my best not to stand in its way. Then one day I knew that the time of isolation was over. I left the security of solitude and began collaborating. I didn't know what I had, but I was elated."
– Andy Massingham

Added to this mixture was our lighting designer Rebecca Picherack. She joined us largely as an observer at first, but she weighed in on aspects that struck her as interesting and although she knew she would be lighting the show (whatever that turned out to be), her presence wasn't about preparing a design. Like the rest of us, it was about learning how and what this piece might become.

In May 2003, we spent two weeks at the Theatre Centre, an alternative space in Toronto with flexible seating and a rough and ready quality we felt appropriate to this phase of creation. We had no goal other than to create material and present whatever we made to the public on the last three nights of the second week. Andy began each day improvising to music; I asked Rebecca to add new lights each morning and improvise at the lighting board along with Andy. What transpired was a wonderful series of duets for performer and lighting designer. Rebecca immediately became Andy's partner and light became both Andy's friend and his obstacle. Using only a small metal bowl and a metal chair, we created a 45-minute piece that – very loosely – followed Andy from morning to evening, through a day, or perhaps a life.

On May 8, 9 and 10, 2003, we invited audiences to view the work in progress during three public presentations. The tremendous response, with gales of laughter, was very gratifying and indicated that we had the beginnings of a

strong piece, suitable for adults and children alike. During a two-week workshop in November 2003, we created additional material, both physical and with a third prop: a light bulb suspended on a long cord.

We completed the work during a three-week process with 13 public performances in January 2005. We began by exploring character, then revived the existing material from 2003. We worked entirely in the performance space (once again the Theatre Centre, following a substantial renovation). Within it we created a rough house of 17' white walls that gave life to the shadow play that had evolved in the previous workshops. The walls were translucent, so we were inspired to experiment with lighting and shadows from outside the walls as well, adding a new and crucial element to the final show. The space was empty, but full of possibility.

Each day began with an extended warm-up and improv session, both accompanied by different music and improvised lighting. Almost every day revealed new material; when something struck a chord with me, or Andy, or Rebecca, it was filed away and incorporated later that day. By the top of the second week, we had a 50-minute piece but neither a beginning nor an ending that satisfied us. Eschewing narrative for the most part, we sought out interesting and comic moments and looked for homes for them. We began 'previews' on the Tuesday – the show worked but was clearly incomplete. Over the next three days, we slowly added new material as it was created to the beginning and the end. A beautiful new sequence with the single light bulb swinging in an ellipse around the bowl, casting remarkable shadows on the walls, revealed itself as our ending. A boxing routine with Andy and the light bulb popped up one morning and insisted on being the opening sequence. It worked, but still something was missing. I knew we needed to introduce pure movement at the very beginning, to find a magical first image.

One day later that week, as Andy and the lighting designer ran through cues, it occurred to me that we never saw Andy's shadow on the outside of the walls. So we tried it, experimenting with some lamps left over from an unused earlier image. Andy started the show upstage, behind the white wall, with the house lights still on. His moving shadow slowly faded in on the upstage wall. The light bulb in the space flickered, attracting his attention. He entered, and the show went from there.

My point is that none of it was conceived in advance; in fact, Andy still has difficulty articulating what his show is about. Clearly then, this process worked well in the semi-abstract, text-less environment of his show. I can, however, isolate several important lessons: faith in the team; working in the performance space; incorporating design throughout the process; deferring outcomes; bringing as much stimuli as possible into the room; patience; and, most importantly, creating a process for the show that is unique to that show.

We happily reinvent it for each new piece. The next one will learn from, rather than replicate, this experience. We continue to use the term 'researchals' to launch new projects, but we are also comfortable with conventional text

based writing processes when appropriate. The show determines the process.

* * * * *

Playgrounding

A New Writing Scheme by the Polka Theatre

By Frauke Franz, dramaturg

New writing is one of the core areas at the heart of the Polka Theatre's artistic policy. *Playgrounding* is their year-long scheme to develop new plays by new writers or writers new to children's theatre. I was appointed as the dramaturg and project co-ordinator at the beginning of the scheme in 2003.

It is my first job in children's theatre since coming from the background of a dramaturgy education in Germany and having worked mainly with devising theatre companies in England. What attracted me to the job was the very open and refreshing approach to developing new writing by the then new Artistic Director, Annie Wood and the Associate Director of New Writing, Richard Shannon.

Our common vision was to open the theatre to new ways of working, a place to experiment. We wanted to give the writers a chance to experience the theatrical process during the writing process, to embrace physicality and visual images.

The project was initially structured in six stages:

1. Masterclass 1,
2. Masterclass 2,
3. Submission of treatments,
4. Development workshop,
5. One-to-one script development,
6. Staged readings.

The scheme started with two different workshops open to all writers interested in exploring children's theatre. To make these masterclasses as accessible as possible we collaborated with Soho Theatre who offered to host them at their studio space.

The first session was focused on getting the writers directly involved in the theatre process. John Wright (*Told by an Idiot*) got the writers on their feet and did some physical exercises with them. He then took stories he had developed with the writers and immediately physicalised them with actors on stage, showing how the physicality of the actors can influence the meaning of

the writer's story. The meaning of a scene, for example, could radically change when approached from a different mood or by simple putting on a mask that contradicted the initial mood of the scene.

The second half of this masterclass focused on childhood and was run by the Polka team. The writers were asked to draw and write a map of their childhood. Teamed up in groups of two or three they had to explain their map to each other. Then they had to look at the map again and find out what would have changed if their childhood were today. What things would be different – what would they play with now etc.

The second masterclass was a series of practice workshops in directing, music, design, and puppetry with acclaimed practitioners of the field. Each of the practitioners gave a brief insight into their skills and how they come into the theatrical process. The aim was to show the writers how much of the story can be told through music, design or movement. Polka then invited the writers to submit a synopsis and five pages of dialogue.

We had over thirty entries. Ten short-listed writers were offered the opportunity for one to one feedback on their work. But ultimately we chose five writers – they ranged from first time writers to experienced dramatists.

As with every new writing project that is open to everyone, the quality of the submissions was very varied. We got a lot of script ideas which were either too twee or too conventional. On the other hand some people entered ideas that were utterly unsuitable for children – and with some of them I would even doubt their suitability for an adult audience. Some writers tried to work into the curriculum but their stories lacked heart and real engagement. But from the ideas that we got interested in we had the whole variety from contemporary to historical topics, from fairytales to crime stories. We were pleased that quite a few writers genuinely tried something new, particularly stylistically.

Our group of five were invited to a week-long intensive workshop at Polka again incorporating music, design, puppetry plus a number of actors and our team. On the first day the practitioners and the Polka team gave feedback to each individual script idea. In the following days the writers each had half a day with actors to stage some of their ideas. Each of the writers could draw on the experience of the people involved. Noel Greig acted as mentor to the writers and took them all for one-to-one tutorials on their work. At the end of the week all the writers were able to take away early design sketches and music ideas for the pieces.

Over the next six months, the writers attended one-to-one dramaturgy sessions with Richard Shannon and myself. We had discussion with them about theatricality, how the characters interact and what the dynamics between the characters are. We looked at how much dialogue is necessary to tell the story and how much can be told by other media like design, physicality, light and music.

After finishing a first draft we invited the writers to attend a workshop in a local school to develop their scripts and to investigate how the play resonates with their target audience. The ideas in the play were explored through improvisation. One writer for example discovered that calling her play *Frog Girl* and having a girl turning into a frog might be a bit too obvious and revealing. Another got over his doubt that his play might tackle issues that are too difficult for children. Whereas a third writer just simply wanted to observe how children talk to each other. Our writers also attended free performances at our sister theatres: Unicorn Theatre, Half Moon, and Theatre Centre.

In November, the writers took part in the Soho Theatre New Writing Festival and professional actors read a scene from each play for a public audience. Seeing their plays coming alive through actors proved a valuable spur to complete the final drafts.

The culmination of the scheme was a two-day event in January 2004 in which each play was given a workshop performance. We aimed to match our writers with established directors – most of them unfamiliar with children's theatre but whose style we thought would benefit this area of work. It was exciting for us to build not only new links for the writers and directors but also to develop new relationships with exciting directors from the adult theatre sector.

The festival was a success not only because it attracted a large audience of adults, children and young people, but also because all the writers were able to show a strong draft of their work. And not least for us because we built some valuable relationships with directors new to Polka Theatre.

But the biggest achievement of the scheme was that all the writers managed to finish a full draft that we were able to bring to a staged reading.

The five writers and their plays were: Philippe Cherbonnier *Nesto* (directed by Richard Shannon), Roger Lang *The Shoe* (dir: John Wright), Carla Lomax *Cameron's Street* (dir: Arlette Kim George), Parminder K Madhar *Song of the Frogs* (dir: Jonathan Lloyd) and Emily Nightingale *The Fast Train to Gangotri* (dir: Paulette Randall).

We had two writers who were more experienced: Emily Nightingale and Philippe Cherbonnier. For them being able to work with very established theatre practitioners throughout the project, was the most beneficial element of the scheme. Especially Philippe Cherbonnier was inspired by the puppetry workshop from Sue Buckmaster and integrated some of her ideas.

For Roger Lang who has possibly written the stylistically most interesting play, it was the time he gave himself to concentrate just working on a play and being able to fully absorb in that. I also think that for him the one-to-one dramaturgy worked particularly well, he used me as a sounding board and I was able to get that bit more out of him into the play.

Both Parminder and Carla were new to theatre writing. For both of them the whole project was very exciting and they were possibly the two who learned

the most in quite a confined space of time. At times this might have been quite overwhelming, especially being engaged with different theatre practitioners and taking in feedback. Our one-to-one sessions were more frequent and intense with these two writers. But they also benefited from learning from the other three writers.

At the end of the festival we decided to commission two of the plays: *Nesto* and *The Shoe* for a full production.

Nesto is set in modern day Mexico and tells the story of a young boy whose father dies. Nesto is grief stricken and retreats into a world, cut off from reality. Only his grandmother can reach him and she encourages him to go on a spiritual journey into the world of the Aztecs. He is searching for a chalchuit – the sacred stone that liberates the dead from this world. He goes to save his father from this fate and has to defeat the demon of the Night – Teclanoche. After a titanic battle, Nesto returns for the festival of the Day of the Dead, when his father comes to take the sacred stone.

The Shoe is a non-naturalistic play which brings together three street kids from around the world – Brazil, Africa and London. They enter an empty space through doors which lead back into their worlds. They are brought together by a shoe which they are desperate to sell. They build friendships and begin to reveal the secrets and pain that have shaped their lives. And there is a fourth child – an invisible one...

But we didn't stop there. We did a rigorous evaluation process of our first project before launching the second year of *Playgrounding*.

Even though the first *Playgrounding* was successful we felt there are small improvements we can do to make the scheme even stronger. The basic structure has not changed but we re-structured the first phase of the scheme and added a new element in the last phase of the scheme. We decided to have only one big masterclass at the beginning, which we held on the Soho Theatre's main stage and which was led by Charles Way – one of the leading children's theatre writers of the country. The interested writers got an insight into the mind of an established writer of the field, had the chance to do some writing exercises with the Polka team and were able to interrogate the writers from last year's scheme on the experiences.

From there we immediately went into the submission and selection process – and were overwhelmed by the huge amount of submission, which more than doubled the number of the previous year.

Instead of giving feedback to a shortlist of ten writers individually, we invited the writers to a panel discussion led by Charles Way. Each of them were able to get feedback from the panel members on their ideas. After that session we chose the final five writers.

The element we added in the last phase of the scheme was a two-day dramaturgical workshop as the last step between first draft and 'final' draft for

the staged readings. This was led by myself and five actors experienced in improvising and devising. For each play we chose key ideas and scenes to explore them in a physical way. We started off by reading the scene, which led into the actors improvising the scene on stage. This workshop gave a great insight into the dynamics between the characters and how the physical language will shape the play. The actors also offered the writers ideas and insights into their characters.

The writers are off now to finish their plays and the festival in June promises to be another exciting showcase of five very talented writers. So watch this space...

Playgrounding Festival 2005
17th and 18th June 2005 at Polka Theatre

Friday, 17 June:

2pm: Chris Sykes: *Skool 4 Cats*

5pm: Hong Khaou: *It's A Long Road*

Saturday, 18 June:

11am: Lizzie Allen: *Under One Roof*

1.30pm: Discussion of the plays

3pm: Alex Bulmer: *Minutes Pass*

5pm: Rina Vergano's: *The Tower*

* * * * *

The Dramaturgs' Network is an organisation of professional dramaturgs and literary managers.

Its aim is:

- 1, To promote dramaturgy and the role of the dramaturg in British theatre and performance arts through practical means;
- 2, To create a nation-wide network for practicing dramaturgs and a forum for support, shared ideas, knowledge and resources.

You can find more information about the network on: www.dramaturgy.co.uk

If you would prefer not to receive any further newsletters or mailings from the Dramaturgs' Network please e-mail us on info@dramaturgy.co.uk

If you are not yet on our contact list and would like to subscribe to further free issues, please email us on newsletter@dramaturgy.co.uk