



## WRITERS BLOCK 2016

### A Series of Staged Readings to Benefit the Actors Fund and How! HELP

September 12–November 7, 2016

Performances Mondays and (some) Tuesdays / 7 PM



**FEATURING DAVID CAUDLE, ALVIN ENG, ROBERT HEIDE, JOHN JESURUN, KESTUTIS NAKAS, KEMBRA PFAHLER, MICHAEL SMALL, and TWEED THEATERWORKS**

Some of the most important playwrights and performers in avant-garde theater present staged readings of new works in progress at the intimate, ultimate downtown theatrical event: **Writers Block 2016** presented by How! Happening: An Arturo Vega Project to showcase the vision of contemporary writers, performers and artists, many of whom got their start in the nightclubs, seminal performance spaces, and theaters in the EV/LES. "Theater is alive and well and thriving in the East Village," says Jane Friedman, founder of How! Happening. "The performance scene is flourishing in spite of the glass and metal monstrosities growing up around it." For information and updated schedule of events: [how!arts.org](http://how!arts.org). Tickets available at the door and from Brown Paper Tickets (see prices and links below).

The staged readings series is a benefit for the Actors Fund's **Howl! HELP**, providing emergency financial assistance and social service support to artists who have made or continue to make their careers in New York's East Village and Lower East Side arts communities. Howl! HELP is administered by the Actors Fund and **100% ticket sales benefit the Actors Fund.**

## **SCHEDULE OF PLAYWRIGHTS | PLAYS | DATES**

### **Monday, September 12, 2016 / 7 PM**

#### **Kembra Pfahler *Rebel Without a Cock***

With Alice Moy, Cornelius Loy, and Music by Samoa and The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black

Kembra Pfahler is a downtown legend: a punk rocker, screen goddess, curator and performance artist who moved from Los Angeles to the East Village in the early 1980s. Over the course of her time in New York, she's modeled for Calvin Klein, sung lead in theatrical death metal band The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black, and created performances based on Anti-Naturalism and Availabilism, the tenet of which is making the best of what's available to create performances—as an expression of an ineffable part of oneself.

*Rebel Without a Cock* is an epic-length Karen Black song from the album "Fuck Island." This work uses classic rock like the bread and the performance art aspect like the butter. "It makes the sharing of this work a little happier and less austere," says Kembra as she describes the album as "having the worst titles she has ever come up with" and looks forward to putting them all onto t-shirts. She feels that a show is only as good as the t-shirt and says she would "prefer to wear a *Rebel Without a Cock* t-shirt to an *Annie* or *Chicago* t-shirt. When pressed to further explain the content of this performance she recommended "it would be better to know as little as possible about the performance so as to be more surprised."

Pfahler's work has been included in solo exhibitions at Deitch Projects, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, and The Hole, New York, NY; Rove Gallery, London, UK; and hgrp Gallery, Tokyo, Japan. She was a featured artist in the 2008 Whitney Biennial. She will have a solo exhibition at the Leopold Thun gallery in London opening November 2016. She has toured and performed extensively with The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black throughout the world and her extensive body of film work is housed in the Fales library at New York University. In 2014 she developed "Performance Art 101," a curriculum that she has taught at prestigious educational institutions like CalArts and elsewhere. Pfahler's work has been discussed in *The New York Times*, *W*, and *Rolling Stone*, among other publications.

**TICKETS: \$30 Includes a reception with the artist**

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2583447>

### **Monday, September 19, 2016 / 7 PM / Presented in Association with Dixon Place\*\*\***

**TWEED TheaterWorks *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under The Direction of the Marquis de Sade***

TWEED TheaterWorks Artistic Director Kevin Malony directs an angry, pissed-off production of *Marat/Sade*, for angry, pissed-off times. *Marat/Sade* unleashes a host of luminaries from the New York City performance scene to shred the delicate sensibilities of its audience: Edgar Oliver, David Cale, Bree Benton, Julie Atlas Muz, James 'Tigger!' Ferguson, Daniel Booth (aka Sweetie), Colleen O'Neill, Brian Butterick, Flloyd, Agosto Machado, Joan Marie Moosy, Brenda Bergman, Natasha Thweatt, and more!

In this play within a play set in the historical Charenton Asylum, the Marquis de Sade directs inmates of the institution in a historical re-enactment of the assassination of Jean-Paul Marat. *Marat/Sade* was originally published in German in 1962 and was presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1964 under the direction of Peter Brook. This iconic production later moved to Broadway where it won a Tony for best play in 1965, and was filmed in 1967.

Songs will be performed by Stephen Pell, John Kelly, Carol Lipnik, Basil Roderick, Michael Cavadias, David Ilku, Joseph Keckler, and Bree Benton (Poor Baby Bree), and the entire ensemble, under the musical direction of John Kruth. Stanley Love will choreograph.

[About TWEED TheaterWorks](#)

**\*\*\*Presented at Dixon Place, 161A Christie Street, New York**

**TICKETS: General Admission \$30; VIP Ticket \$50 includes a champagne reception with the artists.**

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2583441>

**Monday, September 26, 2016 / 7 PM**

**David Caudle *Visiting Hours***

**A slow-burning, perceptive chamber drama about sacrifice and betrayal, honesty and self-delusion . . .**

*—Miami New Times*

Miami, Florida. The present. A lesbian couple's longtime relationship is threatened when their estranged adult son resurfaces, having been arrested for aggravated assault. Their struggle mirrors that of any couple, gay or straight, faced with the prospect that their child may never be "okay." *Visiting Hours* will be directed by [Tony Torn](#) and presented in association with the Torn Page salon and APT 929 Theatre Company, where early development of the play took place.

**Immensely engaging...Caudle examines the boundaries of love and acceptance, and the sometimes manipulative competition that filial love can create...**

*—The Times Picayune (New Orleans)*

Voted Best New Play of 2012 by the *Times-Picayune*, the New Orleans production featured local celebrity Becky Allen and was directed by Ann Mahoney who plays Olivia in *The Walking Dead*. [About David Caudle](#)

**TICKETS: \$20 Suggested Donation** <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2583436>

**Monday, October 3, 2016 / 7 PM**

**John Jesurun *FAUST/How I Rose***

*FAUST/How I Rose* takes on a host of cultural, social, and personal politics. A high-flying diplomat, Jesurun's Faust is susceptible to love and its inevitable pain, a vulnerability exploited by his often-sympathetic, female Mephistopheles. Bedeviled by a kind of 360-degree vision, she sees everything from every point of view, simultaneously, and is the atmospheric center of the play. This story of Faust is set in modern secular times. Secular time infers that neither God nor the Devil exist, and the piece explores Faust's own responsibility and motivation for his work and life.

The play itself has a particular worldview: the messiness of contemporary life. Its given setting is simultaneously before, during and after our present time. It implies a precarious international panorama of eternally shifting layers of history, time and expectations.

*FAUST/How I Rose* was originally commissioned by The Builders Association and Theater Neumarkt in Zurich in 1996 and performed in Europe and the U.S. as *Jump Cut (Faust)*. In 1998, it was directed by acclaimed Mexican director Martín Acosta at the National Theatre of Mexico where it ran for several months in sold out performances. After a series of other Mexican runs, it was performed at the Cervantino Festival in Mexico and BAM's Next Wave Festival in 2004. Jesurun also directed a German version of the play in Frankfurt in 1999. [About John Jesurun](#)

**TICKETS: \$20 Suggested Donation** <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2583425>

**Monday, October 10, 2016 / 7 PM**

**Alvin Eng *The Imperial Image***

Eng brings the third in his *Portrait Plays* cycle of historical dramas about artists and portraiture.

Eng will present a work in progress reading from the third in his *Portrait Plays* cycle of historical dramas about artists and portraiture. *The Imperial Image* is a dramatic triptych that explores how and why portraits of political leaders and royalty have come to hold a powerful place in societal structures and rituals. The triptych spans three different regions and eras. The play begins with a dialogue in Mughal era India, as Western-educated and influenced emperors and court painters contemplate how to communicate and relate to their largely illiterate populace. Part II is a monologue from Marie Antoinette's court portraitist, Louise Élisabeth Vigée LeBrun. During the French Revolution she fled to St. Petersburg, where she was befriended by Catherine the Great. Many of Mme. Vigée LeBrun's works are included in the original Hermitage collection. The play concludes in the current era: OBEY/HOPE re-imagines the circumstances surrounding Shepard Fairey's creation of the ubiquitous "Hope" poster for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign.

Last June, the second Portrait Play, *33 & 1/3 Cornelia Street*, was presented at the How! Gallery's *Beat & Beyond Festival*, featuring Bowery Poetry founder Bob Holman as Joe Gould and the legendary Mink Stole—who has been featured in all of John Waters' films—playing iconic painter Alice Neel. *Three Trees*, the first Portrait Play, about the haunting relationship between Alberto Giacometti and Isaku Yanaihara, premiered Off-Broadway with the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre and was also presented as a workshop reading with Center Stage in Baltimore and the Moving Parts Theatre in Paris. Eng is a native NYC playwright, performer and professor. He is currently Visiting Professor/Head of the MFA Playwriting Program at Queens College/CUNY and is also a Fulbright Specialist Scholar in Theatre/U.S. Studies. His plays and performances have been seen throughout NYC and the U.S. as well as in Paris, Hong Kong and Guangzhou. His plays and poetry have been published in *Performing Arts Journal*, as well as the Nuyorican Poets Café anthologies *Aloud* and *Action*, and he is the editor/author of the play anthology/oral history *Tokens?: The NYC Asian American Experience on Stage*.

[About Alvin Eng.](#)

**TICKETS: \$20 Suggested Donation** <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2583416>

**October 17, 2016 / 7 PM**

**Michael Small *Keep Playing***

An Evening of One-Act Plays

When rapidly aging parents have just one wish—to stay in their own home—a good son will try to help them do exactly what they want—if only they'd freakin' cooperate. *Keep Playing* chronicles a family's struggle to maintain

their love and control amid the chaos of old age. Plus, two other short plays: *One Minute*, about a victim of the micro-theater craze, and *Held Up*, about a strange encounter enabled by a subway breakdown.

Small co-wrote the book for the musical *The IT Girl*, which premiered at Off Broadway's York Theater in 2001. It is performed regionally, including a well-received production in Vancouver in October 2015. His farce *Kaboom!*, starring Ray Wills and directed by B.T. McNicholl, played to packed houses in the 2008 New York International Fringe Festival. Other works include *Beautiful Foolish Arms* (*Naked Angels* reading series) and *The Cool Club*, first performed in a site-specific production at CBGB 313. Four previous works had readings in the HOWL Festival: *The History of Light* (2015), *Steve Cohen and the Sweet Spot* (2011), *We'll Be Fine* (2010), and *Got You* (2009). A former writer and editor at *People* magazine, Small later ran websites for *Entertainment Weekly* and *Rolling Stone*. He now works at NBC News Digital.

**TICKETS: \$20 Suggested Donation** <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2583408>

### **Tuesday, October 18th at 7pm**

#### **Paul Iacono *The Last Great Dame***

A New Play

What does it mean to be a performing artist—first, last and always? Broadway legend Luella Merritt can answer that. When the 88-year-old firecracker injures herself weeks before opening night of her latest (and probably last) Broadway musical, the show is put on hold. Her indomitable will to perform is challenged further when the show's producer and longtime friend, Langston Moorehead, is quoted blaming the accident on Luella's lifetime battle with booze.

Making matters worse, Merritt's longtime assistant suddenly quits, citing years of abuse. While bitterly recovering alone at her residence at the Regency, Luella serendipitously reencounters Chip, a young struggling actor she shared the stage with a decade prior. As Merritt convinces Chip to become her assistant and help her save the show, an unlikely bond flourishes in this madcap comedic-drama about an almost forgotten legend's last days surviving showbiz. The story is loosely inspired by my relationship with the late, great, Elaine Stritch.

A graduate of Manhattan's Professional Performing Arts High School, Iacono is best known for his portrayal of the title character on MTV's *The Hard Times of RJ Berger*. Paul was first featured on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show* at age eight, after she discovered his unique talents for impersonating Frank Sinatra and Ethel Merman. Favorite stage credits include *Mercury Fur* (The New Group), Bridget Everett's *Rock Bottom* at The Public Theater, Noël Coward's *Sail Away* starring Elaine Stritch at Carnegie Hall, *Mame* opposite Christine Ebersole at The Paper Mill Play House, as well as *Children of Eden* (Original Cast Recording), Transport Group's *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* with Donna Lynne Champlin, and Michele Pawk and John Guare's *Landscape of the Body* at Signature Theater starring Lili Taylor and Sherie Rene Scott.

On the big screen Paul starred in MGM's remake of *Fame*, Drew Barrymore's *Animal*, Darren Stein's *G.B.F.* and is upcoming in "Baked In Brooklyn," "Delinquents," and "Dating My Mother" with Kathy Najimy. He was also seen last year on HBO's *Girls*.

Iacono's first written play, *Prince/Elizabeth*, premiered at The Teatro LATEA Theater, and his musical memoir, *Where's The Fucking Kid?* with John McDaniel at 54 Below. Currently, Paul is premiering his newest cabaret show, *Psychedelic Hedonism*, at Joe's Pub on Tuesday, September 6th. He hosts a bi-weekly Wednesday night party, "HUMP" at Rumpus Room on the Lower East Side, ranked second best gay dance party by *New York* magazine. Instagram: @psychedelichedonism Twitter: @paul\_icon

**Monday, October 24, 2016 / 7 PM****Robert Heide** *East of the Sun, Zoe's Letter, and Increased Occupancy*

Plays and Reminiscences

The staged readings by actors of three short plays by Robert Heide will be directed by Ralph Lewis, one of the founders of the Obie-Award winning theater group Peculiar Works Project. Following the staged readings of the plays this off and off off Broadway theater veteran will talk about his life's work with the Living Theater, La Mama and other storied downtown institutions. Robert Heide studied theater at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. In New York he attended acting classes with Stella Adler and Uta Hagen. At the Actors Studio his mentors in the Playwright/Directors Unit were Harold Clurman, Estelle Parsons, and Horton Foote. His first play *Hector* was produced initially by The Living Theater at the Cherry Lane Theater on a bill with plays by Jean Cocteau and the poet Kenneth Koch. Later, *Hector* was produced by Lee Paton Nagrin at New Playwrights Theater off Broadway with Heide's second play *West of the Moon*.

Plays produced at the Caffe Cino in New York included *Moon* and *The Bed*, and at La MaMa E.T.C. *Why Tuesday Never Has a Blue Monday* and *Statue*. *Suburban Tremens* and *Increased Occupancy* were produced at Westbeth Theatre Center by New York Theater Strategy. *American Hamburger*, *Tropical Fever in Key West*, and *Crisis of Identity* were produced at Theater for the New City. His 25 plays are soon to be published by Fast Books. He has co-authored more than a dozen books on American pop culture, including three books for Disney: *Disneyana*, *The Mickey Mouse Watch: From the Beginning of Time*, and *Mickey Mouse: The Evolution, the Legend, the Phenomenon!*. Other books are *Box-Office Buckaroos: The Cowboy Hero from the Wild West Show to the Silver Screen*, *Home-Front America*, and *Starstruck*. His play *The Bed* was filmed by Andy Warhol, and Heide wrote the screenplay for Warhol's film *Lupe* starring Edie Sedgwick. His play *I Shop: Andy Warhol* was recently presented by Peculiar Works Project.

**TICKETS: \$20 Suggested Donation** <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2583400>**Tuesday, October 25, 2016 / 7 PM****Mimi Stern-Wolfe and Downtown Music Productions** *Pins and Needles*

By Harold Rome and Marc Blitzstein

*A lighthearted look at young workers in a changing society in the middle of America's most politically engaged city.* —PBS.org

First produced on Broadway from 1937 to 1940, the title *Pins and Needles* was created by Max Danish, long-time editor of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union newspaper *Justice*. The play looked at current events from a pro-union standpoint and skits spoofed everything from Fascist dictators to bigots and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Sponsored by the Union, the original cast was made up of cutters, basters, and sewing machine operators.

Word-of-mouth was so positive that the cast abandoned their day jobs and the production opened on Broadway, with a full performance schedule of eight shows per week. New songs and skits were introduced every few months to keep the show topical. According to American author, teacher and theatre historian John Kenrick, *Pins and Needles* "is the only hit ever produced by a labor union, and the only time when a group of unknown non-professionals brought a successful musical to Broadway." [About Downtown Music Productions and Mimi Stern Wolfe](#)

**TICKETS: \$20 Suggested Donation** <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2583401>

**Monday, November 11, 2016, 7 PM**

**Kęstutis Nakas *Remembrance of Things Pontiac***

*[Nakas] lets both his age and chops show to powerful effect in this solo about a Michigan teen, class of '71, who's tormented by delayed puberty even as he engages the universe through LSD and the MC5. —Chicago Reader*

As 1969 turns into 1970, little Tony longs for love, drugs and puberty. Caddying by day and partying by night, his dream of joining Michigan's counterculture comes true at the Goose Lake Music Festival. But then some weird shit happens.

Nakas is artistic director of [The Bridge](#), a new theatre in Chicago's Bridgeport neighborhood. The Bridge presents original, eclectic performance and theatre. In February of 2016, The Bridge joined with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, MCA, Defibrillator Gallery and a host of other venues to host the citywide IN TIME>16 performance art festival.

Nakas is a writer, performer, director, and teacher whose work has been presented at the New York Shakespeare Festival, Yale Rep, La MaMa, Dixon Place, PS122, St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, 8BC, The Kitchen, Highways Performance Space & Gallery, Prop Thtr and numerous other national venues. Performance works and plays include *RIP*, *No Bees for Bridgeport*, *Railroad Backward*, *Remembrance of Things Pontiac*, *My Heart*, *My President*, *Hunger and Lightning*, *The Andrew Carnegie Story*, and the critically acclaimed tragi-farce cycle: *When Lithuania Ruled The World, Parts I, II, III. & IV*. In the 1980's, he was active in New York's East Village performance scene and was Artistic Director of Gates of Dawn, which showcased New York performers. He has taught at NYU, UCLA, CUNY, and the University of New Mexico. He is a Professor of Theatre at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. His performance text about urban beekeeping, *No Bees for Bridgeport*, was published in *Animal Acts: Performing Species Today*, an anthology of new performance edited by Una Chaudhuri and Holly Hughes, University of Michigan Press.

**TICKETS: \$20 Suggested Donation** <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2583389>

#### WHERE:

Howl! Happening: an Arturo Vega Project  
6 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street (bet. Bowery and Second Avenue)  
Free live streaming @ [howlarts.org](http://howlarts.org)

TWEED THEATERWORKS presented at Dixon Place, 161A Christie Street, New York

**100% of the proceeds from ticket sales go to the Actors Fund**

#### [ABOUT HOWL! ARTS AND HOWL! HAPPENING](#)

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