
In Collaboration with
The Whole Art Theatre

A Play by
Kalamazoo College Alumna
and Broadway Playwright

Lisa Kron

Well

featuring guest artist Sharon Williams

February 28 – March 2, 2008
Thursday – Saturday 8 PM, Sunday 2 PM

Nelda K. Balch Playhouse • Kalamazoo College

CONTAINS MATURE SUBJECT MATTER AND LANGUAGE
Welcome to the 44th season of Festival Playhouse, the theatre arts at Kalamazoo College.

In 1958, Professor Emerita of Theatre Arts Nelda K. Balch directed the first college and university production of Samuel Beckett's absurdist classic, Waiting for Godot. Fifty years later, Festival Playhouse again produced that play (including a staged reading with members of the original cast) and continues to follow the traditions that Professor Balch pioneered: making the theatre experience the center of the liberal arts environment, an intersection of knowledge, creativity, and education for the entire community.

This season we are producing some of the greatest plays ever written, all of which explore themes of wellness and social justice. This exploration well fits Kalamazoo College's theme for this year: Towards a Just World. The main stage performances include an all-female version of Shakespeare's most famous tragedy, Hamlet; the College premiere of Well, by Lisa Kron, Broadway playwright, actress, and Kalamazoo College alumna; and Tony Kushner's Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches. The College's Dungeon Theatre will house performances of Waiting for Godot; Eric Bogosian's contemporary American drama Suburbia; and the Senior Performance Series, a series of student-directed one-act plays.

Festival Playhouse features the work of its "best and brightest" in the Senior Performance Series, young artists who support the tradition of Kalamazoo College students creating their own theatre. Well (produced in collaboration with The Whole Art Theatre) features guest artist and professional actress Sharon Williams. Angels in America is directed by guest artist Rebecca Patterson, artistic director of the Queen's Company, New York City.

Festival Playhouse: theatre that is always provocative; theatre that is always thoughtful.

Thank you for choosing the theatre tonight!

Ed Menta
Professor and Director of Theatre
WELL: PLAYWRIGHT AND PLAY

Lisa Kron (K ‘83) moved to New York City in 1984 after being on tour for a year in a national theater company. She cut her theatrical teeth at the WOW café and was a founding member of the Obie- and Bessie-award winning troupe, Five Lesbian Brothers. Her one-woman shows, 101 Humiliating Stories (this Drama Desk nominated play included humiliations that actually occurred at Kalamazoo College) and 2.5 Minute Ride (OBIE Award; Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations; L.A. Drama-Logue Award; GLAAD Media Award for best play on or Off Broadway; best autobiographical show of 1999 by New York Press) have both been previously performed at Kalamazoo College. Well premiered at the Public Theater in Spring 2004 and was listed among the year’s best plays by both the New York Times and the Associated Press. It opened on Broadway at the Longacre Theater in March of 2006 to great critical acclaim and received two Tony nominations. It is included in the anthology, Best Plays of 2004-2005. Kron is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Cal Arts/Alpert Award, an NEA/TCG playwriting fellowship and grants from the Creative Capital Foundation and New York Foundation for the Arts. In 2005 she was awarded the Kalamazoo College Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award. She teaches playwriting at Yale Drama School.

Ann Kron taught her daughter, Lisa, well. Ann once wrote, in describing living in a diverse community, the need for “weaving into the whole even the parts that are uncomfortable and don’t seem to fit. Even the parts that are complicated and painful. What is more worthy of our time and our love than this?” Indeed Lisa Kron is a genius at weaving disparate, uncomfortable events into a whole that is both complex and revealing. Who but Kron would write a play that pairs a trip to Auschwitz with a roller coaster experience at Cedar Point as she did in the 2.5 Minute Ride? Who but Kron would write a play that deals with Ann Kron’s allergies and racial integration as she did in Well? And who but Kron could make both of these plays screamingly funny. While Lisa, the character, disingenuously describes Well to her mother as a “solo show with other people in it” and calls it a “theatrical exploration” and NOT a play about her mother, Kron the playwright leads us to see how a woman who is unwell is still able to accomplish many things, both great and small. And she leads us to understand how very challenging and rich it is to truly empathize with the "other," the person we are not.

Throughout the action, Kron builds the audience's understanding of the other. Of growing up Jewish in the Midwest, Lisa, the character, speaks of the Midwest assumption that, “although you might be a Jew, you’re also still a Christian. Judaism, you know, is viewed as a kind of accessory you wear on top of your Christianity.” Ann remarks about her early understanding of race: “I think before I went to Baltimore I somehow pictured that being black was just like being white only you were also black.” Kay, one of the characters in the allergy clinic in talking about how her sister thinks she’d be better, says, “I know she thinks if she were me she’d be better, but do you know what the problem is with being sick? It’s that you’re sick. People who are healthy think they know how you could get better, because they imagine having your sickness on top of their health. They imagine that sick people have all the resources they do and they’re just not trying hard enough...I think, you suffer for just one day the way I do. I want you to feel like this just for one day. Then you tell me how to get better.” These lines prepare the audience to understand the play (“theatrical exploration”) in terms of the character, Lisa’s, struggle to come to terms with a mother who is more lovable than she is; indeed, the kind of mother who probably makes you wonder if your friends like you or if they just want to be your friend so they can be with Ann. Stay out all night after the prom? Oh, no, let’s go to Lisa’s house because Ann will be up anyway.

It is critical that you realize that while Well is autobiographical, the character you meet is not Lisa Kron but a construction of one part of Lisa Kron. Some reviewers have even written that they think they wouldn’t even like Lisa Kron. The playwright Lisa Kron created all of the characters you see here. She wrote the lines that Kay speaks and decided which attributes of her mother to reveal to the audience. Kron makes herself more brittle and less insightful than she is. In this love letter to her mother, Ann is the hero, the moral center, and the heart of Well. You can't help but love Ann Kron, the character or, for that matter, Ann Kron, the person. But, for me, our playwright is heroic because she lets her mother's light shine brighter than her own. Thus Well becomes a piece that is both worthy of our time and our love and as Kron concludes in the preface to Well “it's a lot more fun than it sounds.”

Marigene Arnold
Professor Emerita of Anthropology
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE WHOLE ART THEATRE
FESTIVAL PLAYHOUSE OF KALAMAZOO COLLEGE
PRESENTS:
WELL
BY LISA KRON
CAST

Emily Harpe.................................Lisa Kron
Sharon Williams............................Ann Kron
Sam Mercer.................................Howard Norris, Head Nurse, Himself
Joan Aisha Michelle Miller..............Lori Jones, Kay, Mrs. Price, Cynthia, Herself
Anna Simmons.............................Joy, Dottie, Herself
Dwight L. Trice, Jr......................Jim Richardson, Nurse 2, Little Oscar, Big Oscar, Himself

WELL will be performed without intermission

Please join us for a book signing and reception for Lisa Kron after the Friday performance

PRODUCTION STAFF
Technical Director Jon Reeves
Production Stage Manager Lee O'Reilly
Assistant Stage Manager Alix Reynolds
Set Construction Scene Shop Crew Dan Laushman
Light Board Operator Cedric Meyers
Master Electrician Jessica Bard
Sound Board Operator Grace McGookey
House Manager Michelle Swander
Public Relations

The use of any recording device (sound or photographic) is strictly prohibited. Please disconnect watch timers. Turn off cellular phones and beepers during the performance.

Patrons who leave their seat during the performance will be re-seated at the discretion of the house manager

Festival Playhouse gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Dorothy U. Dalton Foundation

The Whole Art Theatre gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Arcus Foundation

Produced by special arrangement with THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois
ARTISTIC STAFF
- Director: Ed Menta
- Costume Designer: Elaine Kauffman
- Production Design: Jon Reeves

THEATRE ARTS FACULTY AND STAFF
- Emerita: Nelda K. Balch
- Department Chair and Performance: Karen Berthe
- Lighting, Associate Provost: Lanford J. Potts
- Director of Technical Theatre: Jon Reeves
- Theatre Arts Coordinator: Michelle Swander

GUEST ARTISTS AND VISITING PROFESSORS
- Fundamentals of Acting: Todd Espeland
- Costume Designer: Elaine Kauffman
- Intro to African American Theatre: Dr. Von H. Washington

FESTIVAL PLAYHOUSE COMPANY
- Scene Shop Forewoman: Lee O'Reilly
- Company Master Electrician: Dan Laushman
- Box Office Manager: Michelle Swander
- Printer: Holland Litho
- Program/Poster Design: Brakeman Design

SPECIAL THANKS
- Dr. Steve Feffer's WMU Dramaturgy course
- Dr. Marigene Arnold
- Lisa Kron
- The Whole Art Theatre
- Tucker Rafferty

WELL IS GOING TO SPAIN!
Festival Playhouse is proud to announce that WELL will be traveling to Cáceres, Spain to perform in the “Muestra Internacional de Teatro Universitario 2008” (International University Theatre Festival) at the El Gran Teatro Theatre in late April. To prepare for this trip WELL will be performed one last time in the Dalton Theatre with a slightly scaled down set on Friday, April 18 at 8pm. This performance is free and open to the public.

THE KENNEDY CENTER
The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival XL

Presented and Produced by
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theatre education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theatre productions. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships grants and awards for actors, playwrights, designers stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

A faculty colleague attends those productions that are entered on the Associate level. This includes a response session with the company following the performance. The director will be provided with a written response to the work, a copy of which will be forwarded to the regional chair. The response may be accompanied by nominations for awards, including the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship Auditions. An associate production is not eligible for tour to the festival, though the institution is eligible for all other awards.

Last year more than 1,200 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theatre department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theatres across the nation.
ABOUT THE COMPANY

JESSICA BARD (Sound Board Op)
Jessica is extremely excited to be part of WELL. She is a senior Economics and Business major, dividing her time between editing The Index, K's student newspaper, and coordinating the AMIGOS bilingual mentoring program. She would like to thank Ed Menta and Jon Reeves for giving her the opportunity to be a part of this project, and her mom and dad for their ongoing love and support.

EMILY HARPE (Lisa) was last seen as Hamlet in the Festival Playhouse production this past fall. Other favorite roles have included Grandma in THE AMERICAN DREAM, and Nell, Herculine, and Betty in CARYL CHURCHILL PRESENTS. She would like to thank everyone who's ever made her laugh.

ELAINE KAUFFMAN (Costume Design)
Elaine has a BS degree from Western Michigan University in Fashion Design, including design classes at the American College of London, England. After taking a job in college managing the costume shop for the WMU Theatre Department, she began an unexpected career in costume design that led to working for almost every theatre in Kalamazoo and several others in the Midwest including a company that did national touring productions of Broadway musicals. She has costumed over 200 shows in the last 14 years with a few of her favorites being CHICAGO, GIGI, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, HAMLET and JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT. She has begun a clothing design business with a growing clientele in the area creating everything from custom-made kilts to wedding dresses. She will always have a great love for the theatre and is enjoying teaching and working with students here at K.

MATT MAIZELS (Scene Shop Carpenter)
This is Matt's fourth year with Festival Playhouse, where he has worked as a carpenter, and sometimes staff photographer. Outside the Festival Playhouse, Matt is a Religion major with a minor in Art who just completed his SIP, a documentary movie shot in Thailand.

SAM MERCER (Howard Norris, Head Nurse, Himself)
This is Sam's second time being involved with Festival Playhouse. He is a first-year potential Theater major. Sam is overjoyed to be involved with WELL.

ED MENTA (Director)
Ed is very proud and honored to direct the college premiere of Lisa Kron's Well.

Garden, Fugard's Sorrows & Rejoicings, and Brecht's Threepenny Opera, all for Festival Playhouse of Kalamazoo College; Adagio Lamentoso and The Big Break, both for The New Playwrights Development Workshop. Recent Playwriting Projects: White Horses: A Working Class Family Trilogy - Mushrooming (10-Minute play), Funhouse (one-act), and Labor Day (full-length).

CEDRIC MEYERS (Light Board Op)
Cedric is a first-year student pursuing a Chemistry and Physics double major with a Math minor. In high school, Cedric worked four years with theatre lighting including one year as crew chief, running the lights for such shows as CHORUS LINE and LITTLE WOMEN. Most recently, Cedric served as a spot light operator in last quarter's production of HAMLET.

JOAN AISHA MICHELLE MILLER (Lori Jones, Kay, Mrs. Price, Cynthia, Herself) Michelle is a junior Theatre Arts major whom you may have seen lately in PRIMERO with Cirque du K or in HAMLET with the Festival Playhouse. She is ecstatic to be having her one-act play THE PIERIAN SPRING being produced at the Whole Art Theatre later this year. She would like to thank the Theatre Arts Department and all her friends and family for helping to make this a great experience.

LEE O'REILLY (Stage & Tour Manager)
Lee is a senior Theatre major and English minor who has worked on too many productions here. She can usually be found kicking around the scene shop, but she'll spend this spring quarter playing hooky on a sailboat - at least until Spain! Thanks to the company for all the adventures.

ALIX REYNOLDS (Assistant Stage Manager)
WELL is Alix's first production with the Festival Playhouse. She is a first-year considering a Theater/English double major, and loves to play cello, soccer and volleyball. She works with 5th graders at Woodward School twice a week.

ANNA SIMMONS (Joy, Dottie, Herself)
Anna is a sophomore Theatre Arts and Physics double major, and is absolutely thrilled to be involved in WELL. She has previously performed in THE MAD WOMAN OF CHAILLOT and HAMLET, and was the Assistant Stage Manager for HAMLET. She'd like to thank Ed for giving her this opportunity, and the entire cast and crew for making this experience so wonderful!
DWIGHT L. TRICE JR. (Jim Richardson, Nurse 2, Little Oscar, Big Oscar, Himself) This is Dwight's first production with Festival Playhouse, and he is very excited to have this great opportunity. Dwight is a first-year student thinking about majoring in Theatre Arts and minoring in Psychology. Special thanks to God, his family, and all his friends (especially my DDBs!!).

SHARON WILLIAMS (Ann Kron) Sharon has appeared frequently over the last 25 years in plays at the Kalamazoo Civic, API and Whole Art theatres in addition to eight previous productions for Kalamazoo College's Festival Playhouse. Some of her favorite roles are Madame Ranevskaya in THE CHERRY ORCHARD (directed by Ed Menta), Vivian Bearing in WIT and Kate in DANCING AT LUGHNASA. She is honored and delighted to be working with Ed and the cast of Well—thank you all!

Upcoming Schedule

Whole Art Theatre

The Secretaries
Feb. 28 - March 2
Assassins
March 27 - April 19

University Theatre

Fuse 1
March 20 - 30

Miller Auditorium

Movin' Out
April 8 - 10

Festival Playhouse is a proud member of Theatre Kalamazoo!
www.theatrekalamazoo.org