

Department of Dramatic Arts 2008/09
DART 4F56: Advanced Studies in Theatre
Collaborative work in one or more theatre productions.

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Office Hours: TBA

Information for students considering DART 4F56

An Overview of the Class

4F56 has taken numerous forms over time but, whether producing existing scripts or creating new works, it is always a class where students operate as a theatre company of collaborating artists. This year's course will focus on devising a theatre work which may explore a cabaret structure. The group will use as one primary resource (among others), the writings of Bertolt Brecht (poetry, drama, song, theory). The members of the group will prepare **all** aspects of production, simulating a small company presenting a new-created work in a fringe festival.

Theatrically, the goal is to pursue the non-linear **RSVP** (Resource, Score, eValu-action, Presentation) group process to develop a performance piece. We will target two audiences for the work: attendees at Brock's Department of Modern Languages "Image and Imagery Conference" for an in-progress presentation October 10, 2008, and a community/public audience for the completed project at the beginning of March, 2009. Following the production, students will focus on developing audition and design portfolio work.

Intensive Production Experience

The first phase of the class will be **very intense** as we prepare for the October 10th conference audience. The aim is to create an initial 15 minutes of performance that a) is stage-worthy, b) contributes to the evolving work as a whole, and c) indicates our process and our direction, so as to elicit feedback useful to our process.

The phase of the work following February reading week will also be **very intense** as we will have only one week before tech week, with performance scheduled for March 5, 6 and 7 and the strike on March 8th. Expect to work outside class 5 hours weekly in a regular week, 12 hours in an intense week and 10-20 hours in a tech/opening week.

If group members are cast in a main stage show, consideration will be extended in the opening week of the main stage, but they will be expected to contribute and organize their time so as to make up for time lost in availability and contribution for the rest of the time. In planning your courses please bear in mind these periods of intense work.

The application

The letter of application is due June 30, 2008. Address it to Gyllian Raby, Instructor .

Students are asked to apply with a **particular production role** in mind. The course has a limited enrolment of 16 and the project can hold 10-14 performers, 2-4 designers and 1-2 writer-assistant directors.

In your 1-2 page letter, as if you were applying for affiliation with a theatre company, please describe:

- a) The production role (performer, designer, writer- co-director) for which you wish to apply.

- b) Your background and interest in devising theatre and/or in working collaboratively. Emphasize the qualities you would bring to the group both in your chosen role and general work approach.
- c) Your “theatre manifesto”—what kind of theatre you most want to do and why you want to do it.
- d) Your reasons for wanting to take this class and what you hope it will give you.

All letters will be considered at the same time—there is not a “first come-first served” policy. Students will receive a reply by email, or may phone Dorothy Krynicki for information, following Tuesday, **July 01, 2008**.

Please send the letter to Gyllian Raby, either at the email address graby@brocku.ca, or by mail care of Dorothy Krynicki, Administrative Assistant, Department of Dramatic Arts, Brock University 500 Glenridge Avenue St. Catharines L2S 3A1.

More details about the class

Please note that group members are *all* expected to work on one or more specific production committees (may include stage management; design: stage, costume, sound, lighting; script; publicity) since these constitute an important part of the “fringe show” production experience. Individuals’ initial roles could potentially change, depending on how the creative situation evolves and with approval of the instructor. Regardless of their chosen speciality role, group members will *all* participate in studio performance research.

First assignment

Everyone is expected to ***attend the first class with a memorized one and a half minute performance*** based on (or inspired by) a work by or about Brecht: detailed instructions will follow with notice of acceptance into the class .

Key Learning Points:

- * Students will learn the basic principles and processes of Resource, Score, eValuation and Participation in devised theatre. This studio performance research is best described as one :
 - a) where assumptions are deconstructed;
 - b) where modes of exploration into resources are invented through discipline and openness to new scores;
 - c) where a high quality bar is set to define performable stage-worthy material;
 - d) where *the contract with the audience* is of paramount concern;
- * Students will learn how to manipulate, question and disrupt narrative syllogism (this-plus-this-equals-that) rather than being manipulated by it, exploring a praxis of reversals, recognitions, mockeries, laments, revenges, disasters, rejoicings and suspense.
- * Students will learn how to foster a flexible ego within group creation and to work responsibly with other artists’ work.
- * Students will learn perseverance and the stamina involved in the demands of creating and producing a show.

Acceptance into the class is, as described at the departmental Town Hall in April, based on audition, recommendation of faculty instructors particularly of 3F50 and 3F61 and the reflective, artistic awareness and goals expressed by the letter.