

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When I directed the staged reading of my screenplay *The Bakery* last spring, one thing that struck me was the very large number of women auditioning, verses a relatively small number of men. I began to search for plays with primarily—if not entirely—female roles, which I felt would appeal to the Theatre@First community. I found *The Oldest Profession* in a collection of plays by Paula Vogel published in 1996.

I love this play on many levels. There's the provoking premise: five aging prostitutes, discussing the effects of changing times on their business in 1980. Prostitutes on stage and film don't tend to be depicted as being older than their 20s or 30s. These women are grandmother age, in their 70s and 80s. Further, these are working women—their chosen profession is the sex trade.

While it may not be the most desirable job choice, these characters embrace what they do, and I appreciate the acknowledgement of sexuality in elderly women. These characters also represent women who have had to support themselves their whole lives, women who for whatever reason did not marry during an era when marriage was a primary way women were supported. And these are five distinct women, each with their own ways of dealing with aging, with change, with each other. I have been privileged to work with five amazing actresses, who took these words on paper and brought these characters of the Life to life.



T@F is Somerville's largest community theatre and part of the Massachusetts Community Theatre Corporation, a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation.

Our mission is to work together to provide a fun, friendly, and creative theater experience for cast, crew, and audience alike. We welcome volunteers at all levels of experience, without regard to race, color, religion, ethnicity, ancestry, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, national origin, body type, age or disability. We encourage a supportive environment in which to work, play, grow, and explore new areas of the theatre arts. We offer affordable and eclectic performances to the community, aiming to surprise, delight, entertain, and educate our audiences.

As an all-volunteer organization, we depend on our audience for support. Please consider becoming a subscriber to T@F and supporting our work as a contributor.

SUBSCRIBER—For just \$50 you get free admission to all T@F shows for a full year.

CONTRIBUTOR—Support T@F with a tax-deductible donation that you can claim on your tax return. For information about benefits to contributors starting at just \$20 visit www.theatreatfirst.org.

Please see one of our staff to contribute today, or visit our website.

Thanks for supporting Theatre@First and the arts in Somerville!

BARE STAGE
BARE SOULS
BARE WORKS
BARE WORDS
BARE BONES
STAGED READINGS AT THEATRE@FIRST

The Oldest Profession

by Paula Vogel

presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc.
November 17, 2011 – Unity Somerville

CAST

CINDY BELL (MAE) is delighted to be performing in her third T@F production. Thanks to Lisè for giving me the chance to play a character so full of opposites just waiting to be discovered. And thanks to my “girls” for all their hard work.

SUSAN FENDELL (EDNA) is thrilled to debut with T@F in a role that speaks so well to her sensibilities. Susan has performed with North Cambridge Family Opera, Harvard/Radcliffe Drama Club, and the MIT Shakespeare Ensemble.

SANDI McDONALD (URSULA) has been hanging around community theater in Boston for about 10 wonderful years of friends and fun. She is happy to have her chance with T@F at FINALLY being a prostitute. Other favorite roles have been at the Footlight Club: Gertie (*Fuddy Meers*), Juanita (*Come Back to the Five & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*); at Hovey Players: Mme. de Rosemonde (*Les Liaisons Dangereuses*), Halie (*Buried Child*); at Walpole Footlighters: Nat (*Rabbit Hole*); at Arlington Friends of the Drama: Professor Ashford (*Wit*). Along with acting she also produces (*Raisin in the Sun* [EMACT Festival winner], *Sweeney Todd, Hair, Ragtime, A Midsummer Night's Dream*), ushers, sells concessions, etc.

GILLY ROSENTHOL (LILLIAN) has played a gardener, a peasant, numerous wives, one very dirty child, and several maids of different descriptions, but this is, oddly enough, her first time playing a prostitute. She would like to thank the members of Temple Beth El Quincy for being such inspiring examples (of older women, not prostitutes, that is).

DAYENNE WALTERS (VERA) recently completed production on the film *Giddy in Love*, to be released at end of 2011. Previous roles include a cast member of the TCAN Players' production of *Doubt*; Mrs. Muller in the Actor's Shakespeare Project's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; readings of *Our Girl from Trenton* by Cliff Odle (New Urban Theatre Lab); and *A to Z* by Monica Raymond, for SWAN Day at the Boston Playwright's Theatre. She is a member of Benkadi Drum and Dance, an African dance company that performs and instructs at festivals and schools throughout the region. Her choreography has been staged at Boston City Hall, the Somerville Theatre, and the Dance Complex.

STAFF

BECKIE HUNTER (ASSISTANT PROGRAM DIRECTOR) is the founding President of T@F. She has produced eight shows and is looking forward to her 9th: *Pride & Prejudice* coming in March.

ELIZABETH HUNTER (PROGRAM DIRECTOR) is the founding Artistic Director of T@F and has directed nine T@F shows (including *Clubfoot* for Bare Bones) in addition to working with other community and college theatre groups in the Boston area. She is currently adapting *Pride & Prejudice* for production at the Somerville Theatre in March 2012.

JO GUTHRIE (CHIEF TECHNICAL CONSULTANT & BOTTLEWASHER) knows where all the light switches are and is happy to use this superpower for good. Technical Director on too many T@F shows to count, Jo has also worn the hats of producer, set designer, and stage manager, as well as directing *'night, Mother* for Bare Bones in 2010.

EMILIE NIMS (REHEARSAL ASSISTANT) is excited to be involved in her first Bare Bones production. She has recently enjoyed a full spectrum of technical work with theater companies such as Unreliable Narrator, Post Meridian Radio Players and recently, Theatre@First. She has previously written and produced comedy in Chicago.

LISÈ STERN (DIRECTOR) recently directed T@F's staged reading of *The Bakery*, a screenplay she wrote about love, family, and cupcakes. Food is her professional focus, as an editor and writer, and she has written or contributed to several books including *Culinary Tea, How to Keep Kosher*, and *The Boston Food Lover*. Lisè edits two food-related magazines: Hannaford supermarket's *fresh* and *Taste of the Seacoast*. Theatrical work includes being a cast member of T@F's improv troupe Cat Soup, *Festival@First 7: Shaken Up Shakespeare*, and several North Cambridge Family Opera productions.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Betty Walker and Unity Church for sharing their space with us and to our friends, family and audience members—without your support of the arts, we wouldn't be here.

The play will be presented with one 15-minute intermission.
The audience is invited to stay for a conversation with the director and cast after the performance.
Unity Church is a non-smoking facility.
Restrooms are back up the stairs toward the entrance.