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1 First Works  
New Playwrights at T@F



## The Eagle and the Cactus

written by Inez Hedges  
directed by Jess Viator

February 25, 2016

## NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Born Lucy Schwob, Claude Cahun made a name for herself in Parisian surrealist circles as a writer and photographer before moving to the Isle of Jersey in 1937 with her step-sister and lover Marcel (born Suzanne Malherbe) and their beloved cat.

After Jersey was occupied by German forces in 1940, Claude and Marcel successfully flummoxed the German authorities for years with their endlessly inventive and often humorous anti-German tracts. These they would often distribute by bicycle, traveling around the island in their "disguise" of being two harmless middle-aged ladies out looking for berries or mushrooms.

Both of them were arrested in July 1944 and imprisoned. When I did research at the Cahun archive on the Isle of Jersey, I found letters and poems that Claude had sent to Marcel when they were confined in separate cells; some of these found their way into the play. I also imagine her adopting some of the disguises documented in her photographs, enacting her rewritings of historical heroines, and creating one of her surrealist sculptures. Her prison cell becomes her studio.

*Inez Hedges*  
February 2016

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

**Catherine Bromberg** (*Marcel*) is delighted to debut with T@F with this play. She has also appeared with the Post-Meridian Radio Players (*The Frankenstein Murders*, *Lady Molly of Scotland Yard/The Frewin Miniatures*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*) and sings in the Balkan music band Zdravets. Love and intense thanks to her family, who not only let her go out to play, but show up at her performances.

**Inez Hedges** (*Playwright*) worked briefly at the O Street Theatre in Washington DC after graduating from college, working backstage and writing plays. Then reality intervened and she became a professor. Her two passions merged in 2007 when the Northeastern Dept. of Theatre produced her play about the French Shoah, *Children of Drancy* (a play that has now been performed in many other venues including a synagogue). *The Eagle and the Cactus* also takes place during WWII; it is about fighting back. Inez finds working with Theatre@first an amazing experience, as Jess and her talented actors lift the words right off the page and embody them on the stage.

**Marty Mason** (*Mrs. Wetherington/Edna/Nikki*) is thrilled to be working on such an amazing new script! This is her first Bare Bones production, though you may have seen her in *Dracula*, *Shaken Up Shakespeare*, and *The Mousetrap*. Marty has also performed with PMRP, Hub Theatre Company of Boston, Improv Jones Boston, and Fairy Tale Players. Marty lives in Cambridge with her husband Ben, who is incredibly kind & supportive of her crazy acting schedule.

**Martha Putnam Sites** (*Claude Cahun*) returned to her theater roots two years ago, after having been off the boards for more than three decades. She's honored to have the opportunity to give voice to a new character in a new play by Ms. Hedges.

**Justus Perry** (*Otto/Nigel/The Baron*) is a local actor/writer/weirdo. He most recently appeared in PMRP's Halloween show, and is a company member with Flat Earth Theatre. In his spare time, he likes to write short biographies of himself.

**David Policar** (*Knackfuss/Jeremy/Peter*) is delighted to return to T@F's stage, where he was most recently seen as Robert during their staged reading of *Proof*. When not imprisoning French surrealists, breaking out of Nazi prisons, or hanging out at Jersey pubs he occupies himself with software requirements analysis and entertaining his husband and dog.

**Jess Viator** (*Director*) is thrilled to direct for T@F once again! Previous credits include Bare Bones productions of Zinnie Harris' *The Wheel*, and Will Eno's *Tragedy: a Tragedy*. She is also directing a short play called *The Pee Test* for Open Theatre Project's SLAM Boston in March. (She promises it is not gross.) Jess would like to thank Inez for allowing her the freedom to explore and experiment with her enchanting script, and for introducing her to the incomparable Claude Cahun.

**Vickie Wu** (*Program Director*) is thrilled to be a part of the FirstWorks program. She has a habit of trying to do all the things, all the time, and loving every minute. Past productions include: *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Producer), *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (Squires Tim and George), *Trojan Women* (Costume Designer), *Henry 4th* (Stage Manager), *Top Girls* (Angie), and plenty more that she's probably forgetting. By day she is a sous chef at a corporate cafeteria.