Revitalizing New Orleans theatre community: a report on an Arts Administration internship with DramaRama New Orleans, Louisiana, Summer and Fall, 1997

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REVITALIZING NEW ORLEANS' THEATRE COMMUNITY: A REPORT ON AN ARTS ADMINISTRATION INTERNSHIP WITH DRAMARAMA
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, SUMMER AND FALL, 1997

A Report

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of New Orleans in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Arts Administration

By

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B.A., Millsaps College, 1990
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INTRODUCTION

My personal investment in theatre can be traced to the mint-green cafeteria-cum-chapel of St. John’s Day School in Laurel, Mississippi. For as long as anyone can recall, every Friday morning a different class has been obligated to present a performance at chapel meeting; fifteen-minute pageants of the states and harmless lampoons of school faculty and staff are commonplace. As my fourth grade classmates and I soon discovered, however, our teacher, Ms. Suzanne Pickering, was anything but common.

While reading through an issue of McCall’s or perhaps Redbook, Ms. Pickering had come across a short playscript for Hansel and Gretel, one intended for young actors age ten or so. This struck her as a wonderful piece for our class, and auditions were shortly held. I was cast as Hansel.

I quickly learned I had an affinity for drama. I memorized my lines with ease— as well as those of the other players. I instinctively stood in 3/4 position. And I had an eye for staging. By the time we received a standing ovation for our one-time performance— at 40 minutes, the longest chapel presentation in recent memory— I knew I was hooked.

In high school and college, I continued to study drama. I received a Master’s from Tulane in Dramatic Literature and Criticism, then went to New York University and did work toward a Ph.D. in the Department of Performance Studies. By the time I returned to New Orleans, I had been exposed to a wide range of theatre, both good and bad. I had also come to the conclusion that my talents lay less onstage than backstage. With this latter in mind, I began my work toward a Master’s in Arts Administration.
When I finished my coursework for that degree and began to contemplate my internship, I
of course turned my eyes back to New York. While I have certain reservations about New
York— I do not, for example, believe it to be the only place in the world to find
professional-quality theatre— it is impossible to deny the abundance of theatrical activity in
the city. I made inquiries and was accepted to several development departments around
Manhattan.

Before I committed to any particular project, however, I learned of DramaRama— a theatre
festival held at New Orleans’ Contemporary Arts Center CAC that, as I recalled, hosted new
work. I was intrigued by the possibility of assisting in the production of new plays in a town
that is typically content to feeding upon the theatrical carcasses of the safe-and-sure— mostly
musicals and the better-known works of Tennessee Williams. After discussing the matter
with advisors and with DramaRama Board member Denise Chetta, I decided to take on the
job.

Having now participated as Project Manager for both DramaRama 5 and 6, I can safely say
that my feelings about the festival are mixed. On the one hand, I appreciate nearly every
effort to make the theatre scene in New Orleans more vibrant, more dynamic, more
engaging. This city had and could again have a community of theatergoers to rival its
community of music- and visual arts-lovers. DramaRama works to foster that growth, and
for that, I enjoy it.

On the other hand, DramaRama clearly has problems of long-term vision. There is no
Artistic Director, hired to ensure the quality of each work and of the whole event. The
works presented are often sloppy— artistically, technically, and intellectually. And there
seems to be no standard to which theatre artists can look for examples of what constitutes professional theatre. As I detail below, DramaRama will have to undergo significant changes over the next ten years if it is to become a home for the best that New Orleans theatre artists has to offer.

What follows is a play-by-play account of my work with DramaRama 5, followed by an explanation of my precise duties at the festival, my assessment of DramaRama 5, and my thoughts on the organization’s future and what lessons I will take with me as I progress in my career.

A HISTORY OF DRAMARAMA, INC.
The Concept
In 1992, Jan Villarubia and Denise Chetta were puzzled: Why were there no theatre festivals in New Orleans? Why was there no place for theatre artists to show their new work and to view the work of others? New Orleans’ music is known around the world, and the number of venues available for music performance of every variety is staggering. Similarly, the twentieth century has seen the development of a strong visual arts community here, with numerous museums and a growing number of art galleries. Why was the theatre community any less dynamic? New Orleans is a city built around performance, from the costumes of Mardi Gras to the highly polished rituals of fine dining; it seemed only logical that professional theatre should blossom here.

In truth, it once had. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, New Orleans was a popular place for both opera and music halls. Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré is one of the oldest community theatres in the nation; as late as mid-century, it was hosting works by
outstanding directors like Richard Schechner. But by the 1990s, dinner theatre and poorly mounted musicals had become standard fare—what went wrong?

Above all, the problem Ms. Villarubia and Ms. Chetta identified was the lack of diversity in both audience and in the type of theatre to be found. They conceived of a theatre festival—DramaRama—that would counter both these obstacles. DramaRama was intended to give artists with limited access to performance venues the space to share their work with others. Similarly, by promoting the event as a festival—a concept with which New Orleanians are quite familiar—Ms. Villarubia and Ms. Chetta hoped to make the event more attractive to those who rarely attended theatre. Novice theatergoers would have the opportunity to enjoy a sampling of New Orleans’ theatre offerings without the coat-and-tie seriousness found at other theatre affairs.

The First DramaRama

Within a few months, Ms. Villarubia and Ms. Chetta had organized a small group of theatre-lovers and began to discuss the possibility of mounting such a festival at the Contemporary Arts Center. After more than a year’s worth of planning, DramaRama premiered September 10 and 11 of 1993. The attendance and enthusiasm were so overwhelming, that Ms. Villarubia and Ms. Chetta were encouraged to make DramaRama an annual event, and applied for 501(c) 3 status. Since that time, DramaRama has been held at the CAC the second weekend of every September.
Organization

Over the course of its brief history, DramaRama has remained a Board-run organization. Although part-time staff are hired for the specific purpose of mounting the event, the President of the Board is generally responsible for overseeing the project.

Funding

DramaRama is supported primarily through public funds and earned revenue. The Louisiana Division of the Arts (LDOA) and the Arts Council of New Orleans Community Arts Grants, joined with revenue from ticket sales and proceeds from vendors at the event, make up the whole of DramaRama’s income.

THE INTERNSHIP

A Chronological History of Duties and Tasks

Initial Contact with DramaRama

My first exposure to the inner workings of DramaRama, Inc. came at a meeting with Denise Chetta, who was then the outgoing President of the Board of Directors. Over coffee, we discussed the history of the organization, its mission, its hopes for the future, and how, exactly, I might fit into its organizational scheme.

Before we finished our discussion, we had decided that I would participate in the upcoming DramaRama 5 as Intern Project Manager. I would work directly with Kenneth Raphael, incoming President of the Board, to coordinate the event. Since DramaRama is run solely by its Board, with neither paid nor unpaid staff, I understood that my responsibilities would be rather extensive.
Aside from me, Ms. Chetta explained, there would be one other staff person involved in the production of the event. The CAC would provide a "point person," someone with whom DramaRama could deal directly when matters concerning the CAC arose (e.g. insurance, food and beverage vendors, admissions, etc.). In addition to my other duties, Ms. Chetta explained I would also serve as a liaison between DramaRama and this CAC staff member.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Ms. Chetta agreed to compose a sample job description, which she would present to me at the annual meeting of the Board of DramaRama, Inc. on April 8, 1997. From that point, I was, unofficially, an Intern with DramaRama, Inc.

The Board Meeting

Attending the annual Board meeting of DramaRama, Inc. was my next duty as Intern Project Manager. The meeting was well attended, giving me the immediate impression that the Board of Directors was very active and devoted to the organization and its mission. Sadly, that impression was not a lasting one.

At the meeting, I was introduced to the various members of the Board, who represented a cross-section of theatre artists, educators, and business professionals. The Board then approved Mr. Raphael as new Board President and began discussing old and new business. During the meeting, questions were raised about how DramaRama might widen its scope, perhaps including more educational and outreach programs, or attempting to draw more cultural tourists to the event. A general summary budget for the year was also presented.

Following the meeting, Ms. Chetta, Mr. Raphael, and I met to discuss the events scheduled to take place over the course of the summer. Ms. Chetta had drawn up a timeline, based on
her considerable experience as President of the Board for several years. The extensive list of things to do in preparation for DramaRama was broken down month by month. I was also given the aforementioned job description for the role of Intern Project Manager, as well as a contract for said position. After reading over the materials, I signed the contract, and Ms. Chetta, Mr. Raphael, and I discussed the timeline. Copies of these items are located in the appendix of this report.

*My First Duty: Organizing Applications*

Aside from the compilation of a current Board list (taken from information gathered at the April meeting), my first major duty as Intern Project Manager came to pass approximately one month later, as I culled DramaRama applications from their three holding locations. Because of DramaRama's itinerant nature, applications could be brought or sent to any number of locations. Applications could be mailed to the DramaRama post office box (located in Metairie) or to Junebug Productions (a close ally of DramaRama, with several of their staff sitting on the DramaRama Board); they could also be hand-delivered to Junebug or to the CAC. On the deadline, May 15, 1997, I visited all three locations, gathering approximately 24 applications in all. I took the applications and supporting materials to my home, where I began to distill their contact information, the nature of the proposed performances, and, in preparation for my next major task, the artistic histories of the applicants.

*The LDOA*

My next priority was to complete LDOA Provider of Services forms for artists participating in DramaRama 1997. DramaRama receives a substantial Project Support grant from the LDOA, and the LDOA requires that organizations receiving such funds supply brief
resumés for artists as well as technical and administrative personnel contracted for such projects. Unfortunately, the LDOA’s annual Project Support grant deadline of March 1 puts DramaRama in a slightly awkward position. Because the deadline for DramaRama applications falls in mid-May, the list of the actual participants in DramaRama cannot be completed until well after the LDOA deadline has passed. Luckily, DramaRama has an ongoing relationship with the LDOA, having been funded by the state-run organization for several years. The LDOA understands the situation posed by the conflicting application schedules and generously agrees to award funds on a provisional basis, pending submission of Provider of Services forms soon after the mid-May deadline. My first duty, therefore, was to quickly take the information provided on the DramaRama application forms and create brief artistic resumés suitable for the Provider of Services forms, which I then submitted directly to the LDOA. A sample of a completed Provider of Services form is included in the index of this report.

Gathering Information for Stage Management and the Media

Having completed the Provider of Services forms, I began to firm up a contact list for everyone involved in DramaRama 5 and to gather important information about the submitted proposals. A technical information sheet, for example, had to be completed for each artist or group in order to ascertain their technical needs; information was also required for the DramaRama 5 program and for press-related purposes.

I contacted artists by telephone, and I explained to them the structure of the evening in the hopes that, after gaining a sense of the event, they could better articulate their technical needs. With each artist, I went line-by-line through the technical information questionnaire, determining what they needed in the way of lighting, if they intended to use amplified sound,
whether their piece included profanity or nudity, and so on. I also explained that
DramaRama should receive program information (e.g. a blurb about the piece, a sentence or
two about the company or individual, a list of performers) and a photo for press purposes as
soon as possible. A complete copy of the technical information questionnaire is included in
the appendix of this report.

The Jurying Process (and the Mysteries of the CAC)

On May 24, 1997, Mr. Raphael and I met at the offices of the Arts Council of New Orleans
to jury the DramaRama submissions. We had both had the opportunity to review the written
submissions, as well as the supporting materials, which included photos, resumés,
audiocassettes, and videotapes.

I proposed that for purposes of evaluation, we should divide the artists into three categories:
theatre, dance, and performance art. There was, ultimately, a fourth category—children's
theatre—but because there were so few entries in that category and because of the nature of
DramaRama Jr. (which does not, as a rule, distinguish between featured and non-featured
artists), we did not jury them. Mr. Raphael accepted my suggestion, and we began our
critiques.

As we sifted through the entries category by category, we gave each a score from one to ten
for the quality of the application, the quality of the piece (especially in relation to the other
pieces in the category), the experience of the performers, and the originality of the work.
Scores were added and averaged, and at the end of the evaluations, the three applicants with
the highest mean scores in each category were chosen as featured artists for DramaRama 5.
Luckily, DramaRama has no full-time staff person, for if it had, letters announcing featured artists would have been immediately sent out, which would have been cause for serious alarm several days later. As it happened, I stopped by the CAC the following week in an attempt to retrieve any material pertaining to the previous year’s event, DramaRama 4, that they might have had on hand. I called ahead to request that such information be left at the front desk. Upon asking a CAC staff member for the files, he gave me not only the documents in question, but also a box that contained other DramaRama-related information. In sum, the box contained approximately twenty additional applications for DramaRama 5 that had not been given to me when I originally retrieved applications on the submission deadline. Informing Kenneth of this dilemma, we both agreed it would be necessary to re-jury all of the entries, in light of the new-found applications.

_Gathering More Information, Setting a Schedule, & Hiring Stage Managers_

By the time we scored and tabulated the new applications, combined the results with those of the initial jurying session, and slated an amended list of ten featured artists, Mr. Raphael and I realized time was growing short; notification of acceptance to all DramaRama 5 participants had to be sent out immediately.

I began making phone calls to featured artists on the very evening after we had run the second jury, announcing the news and attempting to cull more technical information from the participants. Unfortunately, looming on the horizon was the obstacle of the program, a related and—as I knew from my experience at The Shakespeare Festival at Tulane—all-consuming job. I proposed to Mr. Raphael that the stage managers would not only be well-employed at gathering technical information, but it would also be more efficient, as they would ultimately be responsible for meeting the technical needs of performers. He agreed. In
order for the stage managers to effectively carry out that task, however, they would have to know which performers would be performing in which spaces. I therefore turned my attention to the creation of a tentative schedule for the evening.

By reviewing applications, taking into consideration the nature of each piece and the space individuals or companies had requested, I was able to propose a roster of performers for each performance space. Dancers, for example, inevitably required the large Freeport-McMoran theater because of its floor—the only wood or sprung floor to be found at the CAC and, therefore, often the only reasonable space in which dancers could perform without risking injury. Given that the Freeport-McMoran theater is, of course, the stage of choice for most DramaRama participants, divvying up the remainder of the performers was not a particularly easy task.

At this point of pre-production, scheduling precise time-slots for performances was less important than simply determining the space in which those performances were to take place. Still, it seemed only logical to include a rough timetable for each stage; at the very least, it assured Mr. Raphael and I that performances would comfortably fit in the same space, given intermissions, set changes, and the like. Thus, I constructed a complete draft of the evening's events.

In determining the slate of events for each space, priority or "hot spot" curtain times were given to the entrants who had ranked highest in the jurying process. Thus, featured artists would receive spots during DramaRama's peak hours (approximately 7:30 to 10:30 PM), next-highest scores would merit spots in and around those prime times, and the lowest-ranking performances were given very early or very late spots—though for some high-scoring
entrants, late spots (i.e. 10:30 PM to midnight) were preferable. Without stepping on too many toes, a schedule was at last created. A copy of the line-up is included in the appendix to this report.

Mr. Raphael distributed this schedule to the stage managers that he and the Production Stage Manager, Jonathan Taylor, had hired. Each stage manager was responsible for (a) contacting the performers scheduled for her/his site, (b) gathering the requisite technical information, and (c) stressing the need for program information as soon as possible. I then gave the technical information sheets I had so far collected to the respective stage managers.

_The Program_

With the formidable and time-consuming tasks of collecting technical information and acting as artist liaison appropriately dispersed among the numerous stage managers, I was free to begin amassing information for the program and sending it to DramaRama Board member Adriana Bate, who, along with the program designer, was responsible for organizing and printing the program. Though I did not undergo the trauma of actually designing the program, the process was, nonetheless, exhausting. Sending blurbs and cast lists via e-mail, hand-delivering photos and other information: putting together such a monstrous program with such a gigantic slate of performers is quite a bit of work. The posting of a useful "guide to artists," in which every individual performer is listed along with the time and location of the performance(s) in which s/he in taking part only add to the onus. Nevertheless, it is an admirable, if mammoth, undertaking. A copy of the final program for DramaRama 5 is included in the appendix to this report.
Orientation

One week before the event, an orientation for participating artists was held at the CAC. In the Freeport-McMoran Theater, Mr. Raphael, Elizabeth Gill, and I introduced ourselves and our role in DramaRama 5. Final performance schedules were given out, and Mr. Taylor introduced the various stage managers for the seven sites. Following a question-and-answer session in which artists were able to discuss any administrative concerns they might have had (e.g. complimentary tickets for friends, the disbursement of honoraria, etc.), participants were shown to their respective performance sites by the stage managers, where they were able to discuss one-on-one their needs for the event.

The Event

By the time of the actual event, the bulk of production work had been done: stage managers and performers alike were familiar with their spaces, CAC volunteers were in place taking tickets at the front door and checking in performers at the artists' entrance, vendors had set up their food and beverage tables. All-in-all, there was little for me to do on the day of the event except to oversee that everything went smoothly and to handle those few minor issues that arose. After green rooms had been equipped with ice and drinks and attendees began to arrive, my job was essentially done for the evening. I was able to appreciate the event not only as an organizer, but also as an attendee, which, I've learned, is the best way for arts administrators to experience the events they plan.

Follow-Up

After the event, my involvement with DramaRama was minimal. Most honoraria had been disbursed the night of the event, and Ms. Gill and Mr. Raphael had only to tidy up contracts. After a couple of weeks had passed and everyone associated with the event had sufficiently
recouped, I organized files, adding applications, copies of the program, press clippings and the like to the DramaRama files. I also began a mailing list of artists, directors, and everyone else who had been associated with the event for the previous two years. And that, as they say, was that, until March of 1998 when the call for submissions was put out once more and the process began anew.

Other Duties Associated with DramaRama

Development

For the last several years, DramaRama has relied heavily on funding from the Louisiana Division of the Arts and the Arts Council of New Orleans. The largest grant comes from the aforementioned LDOA Project Support grant, with the exact amount of the award varying between $7,000 and $10,000 each year. These funds—combined with a Community Arts Grant, a Statewide Decentralized grant, earned revenue from ticket sales, and vendors' donation of a percentage of their food and beverage sales—are DramaRama's primary sources of income. They provide financial support for DramaRama's two project staff positions (i.e. Project Manager and CAC Event Coordinator), eight technical personnel, and honoraria for performers, as well as marketing and other organizational expenses.

Interestingly enough, DramaRama receives little or no support from individuals, private foundations, or corporations. My educated guess as to why this is so is perhaps because of DramaRama's close affiliation with Junebug Productions, a theatre organization that can justifiably be called "grassroots" and which tends to eschew the "schmoozier" sorts of fundraising that more traditional organizations undertake. At one Board meeting, for example, a Board member raised the possibility of organizing a gala to support DramaRama. Reaction to this suggestion was almost categorically negative. Perhaps given the highly
diverse crowd DramaRama attracts and the hit-and-miss quality of the art it produces, it is assumed DramaRama would have a difficult time finding an audience for a $50-per-ticket event. Given the exorbitant amount of time and energy required to mount a gala event, I tend not to question such logic.

But as I said, my duties were not related to fundraising or development. Apart from amassing and mailing in Provider of Services forms for DramaRama 5 participants—which, as noted above, the LDOA graciously allows DramaRama to submit after the application deadline—I had nothing to do with the development activities of DramaRama.

**Marketing**

The marketing of DramaRama has traditionally been handled by Jon Pult, Marketing Director of Junebug Productions. Since DramaRama and Junebug are so closely allied, with overlapping Boards of Directors, Mr. Pult has provided his services *gratis*, to the best of my understanding. He organizes the mailing of fliers that announce the event to thousands of people in the New Orleans area. He also coordinates press releases for the event. Along with Mr. Raphael, Mr. Pult is also responsible for securing the cover of the *Times-Picayune’s Lagniappe* on the Friday immediately before DramaRama. I was, therefore, given no duties pertaining to marketing.

**Accounting & Payroll**

As mentioned previously, DramaRama has no year-round staff members. Project managers, technical personnel, and the like, are contracted specifically for the event and are paid as contractual labor. Therefore, there is no payroll system of which to speak. Maintenance of the organization’s financial records and the disbursement of checks is handled exclusively by the President of the Board of DramaRama.


**Vendors & Volunteers**

The CAC has been in existence far longer than DramaRama, and the latter draws considerable benefit from the experience and contacts of the CAC. The CAC administrator chosen to coordinate DramaRama is responsible for overseeing the non-performance-related issues of the event, and lining up volunteers and food and beverage vendors is a large part of that job. I was involved in neither the contracting of vendors or the assignment of volunteer duties at DramaRama 5.

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**AN ANALYSIS OF DRAMARAMA**

**Organizational Strengths**

*The Idea*

DramaRama is not only an admirable endeavor, but it is also a valuable cultural event for New Orleans' theatre community, much of which is itinerant. DramaRama was created to showcase the theatrical talent of the Crescent City, and it was originally intended to feature both new works from individuals and vignettes from plays produced by established local theatres. Thus, in its original conception, short pieces from Le Petit's upcoming productions would run alongside the work of performance artists and dancers who have no theatre of their own, putting the city's diverse array of theatre artists on equal social and artistic footing, if only for one evening.

Today, of course, DramaRama works slightly differently. The established local theatres have generally shunned DramaRama, leaving it to the so-called "amateurs." Not surprisingly, by and large, the events of DramaRama are more "alternative" than one might find at local theatres. Of course, that means that many of the works lack the polish and sophistication
that one might find at Southern Repertory Theatre, for example, but what they lack in style they make up in chutzpah.

In short, New Orleans needs DramaRama as a way to show off the city's non-traditional talent. The lion's share of theatre in New Orleans is conservative, to say the least—surprising, given New Orleans' notoriety as a ludic space, a "wild and crazy" town. DramaRama makes up for the endless renditions of Oklahoma, H.M.S. Pinafore, and A Streetcar Named Desire with which New Orleans theatre audiences are bombarded each year. While I do not question the quality of such works or production—for many are, indeed, very good—such conservatism ultimately dulls the audience and inhibits their growth and sophistication. DramaRama may not be the perfect answer to such problems, but it is the beginning of an antidote to the "Give 'em what they want" attitude typical of local theatre, which explains the dearth of new plays on local stages. With luck, the diligent efforts of DramaRama and other organizations will create a theatergoing public every bit as savvy and sophisticated as New Orleans' music and visual arts audiences.

The Stage Managers

In an event as sprawling as DramaRama, it is imperative that there be a clear chain of command. With scores of performers, technicians, volunteers, vendors, and the like, the situation would be practically unmanageable if left to the DramaRama President, the Project Manager, and the CAC staff person.

Ultimately, I found the most time-consuming duty to be artist relations. Having only one person to maintain contact with more than 50 artists is thoroughly inefficient. The seven stage managers, under the direction of the production stage manager, therefore, came in very
handy. Once an artist was assigned to specific performance spaces, s/he was introduced to
the stage manager for that particular site; the stage manager then served as an artist liaison
from that point forward. When artists had questions that the stage manager was unable to
answer, the stage manager simply contacted someone higher up the chain of command. All
in all, my work load was significantly reduced when the stage managers entered the picture.
An organizational chart for DramaRama is included in the appendix.

_The Self-Sufficiency of Presenting Artists_

Personally, I enjoy working on events like Dramarama—"variety show" events, where
dozens of artists come together for one evening to show off their work. The artists are
responsible for their own rehearsals, their own props, their own technical needs— in sum,
DramaRama provides the space, and the artists walk in fully prepared to do their piece. In
such a situation, event organizers are left to focus their energies on logistical rather than
artistic details, which ultimately results in a better-organized production.

The surface veneer of chaos at a DramaRama event is therefore deceptive. While audience
members are running wildly about, scurrying from one performance to the next with only
seconds to spare between curtain fallings and risings, the production staff is moderately
calm. And when problems do arise, a sizeable phalanx of veteran CAC volunteers is ready to
respond to those needs. In short, technical and administrative staff are well prepared for the
event, as are the artists themselves, which makes DramaRama much less stressful than a
theatrical production in which every position is dependent upon every other one. The
dispersal of power and duties in such events as DramaRama is the key to their simplicity.
Organizational Weaknesses

The Blithe, Equal-Opportunity Acceptance Policy

DramaRama is an equal-opportunity event. In general, everyone who applies is accepted, and it is very rare that anyone is refused. While this may be good for morale, it does little to foster a level of professionalism among the performers.

DramaRama tries to compensate for this by designating some artists as "featured artists," with the hope that newcomers to the world of theatre, dance, and performance art will look to them as role models. Sadly, even these featured artists often lack the necessary level of professionalism that New Orleans needs to foster a sophisticated theatre community. That is, with few exceptions—except, perhaps, among dancers, who tend to be reasonably well trained—DramaRama performances often border on the amateurish, if not downright sloppy.

Something should change. The event could perhaps become smaller, more competitive, with only the best groups performing. That, however, would run contrary to DramaRama's festive, cacophonous vibe and its distinctive and highly ingrained sense of grassroots art. Perhaps a better solution to this problem is to extend the event over several evenings—say, Friday and Saturday night, with Saturday slots reserved for more professional groups. This would have several effects—not least of all to make DramaRama more audience-friendly (and there are, indeed, some audience members who want the event to become less frenetic). It would also allow more artists access to the "good" spaces; since performances would take place over two nights, twice as many performances could take place on the highly desirable Freeport-McMoran stage. And just as important, it would allow DramaRama to feature its featured artists more prominently, holding them up for more careful scrutiny. As things
currently stand, featured performances often get lost in the shuffle of the event, but a special night devoted to the best of the city's independent theatre artists would perhaps provide instruction by way of example to DramaRama's many burgeoning but as yet unskilled artists.

**Gathering of Technical and Biographical Information**

The process of gathering technical and biographical information is particularly time-consuming and is a job in itself. For DramaRama 5, I had to contact each artist by phone in order to explain the event's structure and to get a feel for the look and needs of their various performances. Given that many artists left town for the summer, leaving me to communicate only with their answering machines, there were quite a few artists with whom I did not speak until quite late in the summer. This is part of the "artist liaison" responsibility that should be divided among DramaRama's various site stage managers.

**Artist Relations in the Early Stages of DramaRama 5**

In addition to the gathering of technical and biographical information, DramaRama artists need to be contacted simply to feel "in the loop." Because of DramaRama's itinerant status—no central office, no phone line, performed at the CAC but not technically part of its programming efforts—artists' connection to the organization can often feel tenuous at best. It is important that regular contact is maintained with them—perhaps twice a month—from the application deadline through the event itself. This feeling of unease could perhaps be slightly alleviated by hosting an early orientation for participating artists shortly after works have been juried. This would allow them to meet the administrative staff, the stage managers, and to see first-hand the various performance spaces—all of which would hopefully result in a more confident and well-informed group of participants.
Personal Experience

From my experience with DramaRama, I will take away several important bits of knowledge that will inform the decisions I make as an arts administrator. Above all, I have learned the seemingly obvious lesson that arts organizations must have active Boards of Directors. Of DramaRama’s fifteen Board members, Mr. Raphael and Ms. Bate were the only ones who participated in the mounting of DramaRama 5. I suspect that the lack of interest from other Board members stems from burnout associated with the festival’s early years. Whether or not this assessment is completely accurate, the fact remains that DramaRama’s Board is largely ineffective in its current form. Given DramaRama’s size—with an annual budget of approximately $30,000—hiring a year-round staff person to coordinate the event is unfeasible; Board participation is therefore crucial to the project’s execution. If even half the members had assisted with the production of the event, DramaRama 5 would have been a much simpler undertaking and much more pleasant for everyone involved.

On a related note, I also learned from my experiences that just as no man is an island, neither is any man an organization. Mr. Raphael was, for all intents and purposes, DramaRama incarnate. While he was certainly a dedicated, motivated, talented artist, his reluctance to assign duties has hindered the organization’s growth and development, and his recent passing has left DramaRama in a state of confusion and uncertainty. Mr. Raphael had nothing but the best intentions for the organization, and he was essential to the event in recent year, but if he had shared his duties with project staff and Board members, he would have insured the most important facet of such a promising arts event: its continuance.

Last, DramaRama has taught me the importance of artist relations. I often found myself so caught up in the planning of DramaRama that I overlooked the simple needs of artists—
foremost of which was the need to be informed. I held to the belief that participating artists should simply be glad that Mr. Raphael and I were going to the trouble of arranging the event in the first place; their queries and requests, therefore, took secondary importance on my never-ending "to do" list. I realize now, however, that they are the event, and that their comfort level is directly proportionate to the quality of work they produce and, therefore, the success of DramaRama.

CONCLUSION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
THE FUTURE OF DRAMARAMA, INC.

The future of DramaRama—and, I would say, of theatre in New Orleans—is dependent upon three factors. The most fundamental issues concern capital: where DramaRama is housed and what sort of physical presence it has in New Orleans. Currently, DramaRama exists in the minds of Board members and staff workers, and in one file cabinet at the offices of Junebug Productions. In order to grow, however, DramaRama must have a permanent, physical home; whether at the CAC, the Entergy Arts Business Center, or elsewhere, having a legitimate office is thoroughly important to DramaRama's corporate identity and its own sense of self-worth. Its current homeless state leaves it only a vague notion in the minds of performers, artists, stagehands, and audience members. In short, to explain itself to the community, it must be visible to the community.

Second, the community of artists who participate in DramaRama must take a sense of personal ownership in the project. They must help determine its course, they must spread word of its existence, and they must explain its benefits to the other artists with whom they come in contact. It must cease being a project carried out by one or two individuals and
become a valued resource for the city and the region. DramaRama is currently addressing this problem through a newly constituted Artist Advisory Board, which will hopefully provide much-needed input from local artists and encourage them to engage more fully with the project.

Finally, DramaRama’s success—at least artistically—depends upon providing artistic "role models" (for lack of a better term) that other artists may look to for leadership. As noted several times above, DramaRama’s featured artists are meant to serve in this capacity, but their performances are often lost in the free-for-all that is currently the DramaRama event.

Art is necessarily elitist; there must always be an audience of knowledgeable and critical art-lovers who recognize and promote what they consider “good” art. New Orleans has done well in establishing an elite within the local community of musicians and, to a lesser degree, visual artists. DramaRama must provide a similar sort of elite that might begin to set standards for artistic and intellectual excellence (e.g. intellectual rigor, preparedness, etc.) in theatre. Though these standards would, of course, be arbitrary, they would at least give some structure and guidance that the amateur and professional theatre artists who participate in the event might follow.

This issue is currently being addressed in two ways. First DramaRama is planning to split the event into two nights, with featured artists performing on Saturday. This will ensure that featured artists are seen—particularly by other theatre artists. Second, the CAC has begun to amend its performance format. In the fall of 1999, the CAC will begin bringing in more artists for residencies— theatre artists, musicians, dancers, and the like. In fact, the CAC hopes to host a number of participants in the Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Next Wave
Festival—currently, the model towards which new works festival like DramaRama should aspire. These visiting artists will host special training sessions and present workshop productions of the pieces they intend to present at the Next Wave Festival in order that local artists might have a better idea of performance trends outside New Orleans and broaden their artistic horizons.

This concern is certainly a long-term issue and cannot hope to be addressed overnight. It is, however, crucial to the future of DramaRama. If the matter is properly met, it will result in higher-caliber performances, broader community/regional support and recognition, a more sophisticated theatre audience, and, ultimately, better theatre for New Orleans.
DramaRama Production Timeline
TIMELINES (3/26/97)

GENERAL:

Make sure someone is checking the post office box once or twice a week. Right now the p.o. box is in Lakeview. You may want to have it moved downtown for next year.

MARCH

LA Division of the Arts grant was sent in. Amy Smallwood assisted with that on a contract basis.

Call for Entries mailed to artist. Be sure to send one to Richard Dodds and ask him to run it in his column. Artists not on the mailing lists -- ours and CAC's -- will call for a copy.

Staff should now be in place. This year we will have a CAC administrative coordinator and a paid intern. All funds from Community Arts and Decentralized are for staff support.

Annual Meeting for the board is usually held during this month or early April.

APRIL

CAC will have our contracts ready to sign. This is late, but our dates are on their calendar. We also had two meetings late last fall to discuss a co-presentation agreement. Everything for that is in the works and will be reflected in the contract.

Begin planning a Saturday in May when proposals can be juried. In order to be considered for this process, proposals must meet the deadline. From all those that met the deadline, have intern or administrative coordinator screen them for originality, exceptional training and/or experience. This allows for emerging artists with innovative work to also be considered.

Preparations for filing grant applications for Decentralized Fund and Community Arts should begin. Applications for funding in '98 are due early next month.

Board solicitation should begin. This can be done in a letter or by telephone.

Board should be asked if they can assist with other fund-raising such as business contacts.

Other proposals should go out to funders.

MAY

LA Decentralized Fund and Community Arts grant applications due.

By mid-month, artists should be called to begin collecting basic technical information. There are forms that Gail Morgan prepared that help with this. This is a necessary step which must occur
before a schedule can be developed.

MAY (continued)

After jurying process, featured artists should be notified. They need to be reminded that we will need a photo and bio of them for the program.

Before school closes, contact various artists/teachers to ensure high school student involvement. Ray Vrael and Kathy Randels at NOCCA, Paul Werner at Ben Franklin, and others.

Make sure publicity and marketing coordinator/committee in place. This year I hope JoAnn Abbott of My Own Marketing is going to help out. In addition to print, radio and TV, now is the time to find a printer to donate invitation/announcement. Jo Ann said she might no one who would agree to donate invitation if we purchase printing for the program.

JUNE

Develop schedule. Use technical information sheets for each work and sheets prepared by Gail on each space. Certain things cannot work in certain spaces. Certain spaces have a sound system, for example, and others don't. All this is on the sheets.

Update correspondence to artists to go out at the end of the month. This includes the date and time of performance, their contract (last year we mailed contracts later which made for less changes), a solicitation, etc. See files labeled correspondence with artists.

Check with CAC re: layout of space. Michael Batt pretty much knows how it should be set up unless you plan to change it. Be sure CAC has scheduled caterer, bar tenders, etc.

Schedule photographers -- video and still photography for the event.

Hire production stage manager and stage managers for each space.

Set up meeting with college teachers to recruit some theatre department participation. We've never been very successful in doing this, but I think it's worth a try.

JULY

Begin discussing program design with Elyce Warzeski, 488-3651. I loved the way she did the schedule last year, and I vote for simplifying as much as possible.

Program deadline is set for the end of this month. Someone usually has to follow up with cast members' names, etc. You can finalize the brief descriptions of each work.

Press release should be in preparation. First release can announce the basics Call Richard
Dodds.

Invitation should be prepared and printed.

**AUGUST**

**Check-in with Richard Dodds to see if/what he will do.**

Invitation mailed.

Major press release announcing featured artists goes out.

Coordinate story placement, interviews, PSAs etc.

Work with CAC on scheduling security, house manager, lining up volunteers.

Determine what rental equipment is needed such as long tables, cafe tables, folding chairs. Order from American Rental. Michael Batt can help with this.

Rent and borrow other theatrical equipment such as dimmer board, lights, sound, etc.

Recruit artists/teachers in community to evaluate work.

Coordinate with Whitney bank tellers, Angie and Betha to work that night. Get supplies for night deposit.

Make sure production stage managers and stage managers are ready prepared to conduct orientation meeting. They need to develop some kind of form for a rehearsal schedule during the week. Orientation is on Thursday night. CAC available for rehearsals on Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Closed Monday for Labor Day. CAC available for rehearsals Tuesday. Tech rehearsals on Wednesday and Thursday. Performance on Friday and Saturday. Note: last year we performed on one night only. Strike on Sunday morning at CAC. All rental equipment stored in back for pick-up on Monday. Note: DramaRama, Jr. on Saturday and Sunday is different, very minimal tech, although they do need a stage manager to coordinate with Marion Hodge at museum.

Program ready to go to printer at end of month or right after Labor Day. Needs to be printed by Friday.

Make sure all contracts are signed. Artists cannot perform unless we have a signed contract from the principal artist, submitting proposal, because this also releases DramaRama and CAC of any liability.
SEPTEMBER

Purchase tickets for food and drinks.

Volunteer staffs are in place.

Ushers oriented early in the evening.

Pay CAC remainder of rent.

Write checks to stage managers and crew.

Figure out all other expenses such as printing, photographers, etc. Then, figure out artists’ honoraria on sliding fee scale.

OCTOBER

Artists evaluation meeting. Give out checks to those who are there and mail the rest.

NOVEMBER

Work on final reports for DOA, Decentralized and Community Arts.

Discuss future arrangements with CAC.

DECEMBER

Send in final reports before the holidays. File Form 941 and complete W-2s for 1997 employees.

JANUARY

Begin planning for next year: funding, budget, staff, etc.

Begin recruiting artists for steering committee, if you want one, and new board members.

FEBRUARY

Work on Call for Entries to mail out early next month.
Job Description, Intern Project Manager for DramaRama, Inc.
Job Description: Intern Project Manager

Contacts participating artists and completes technical information forms.

Assists board president in preparation of 1998 Louisiana Decentralized Arts Program and Community Arts Program, due in May.

Assists in setting up jurying process for artists’ proposals.

Notifies featured artists.

Works with president and administrative coordinator on schedule, including working with LA Children’s Museum.

Assists president in hiring of production staff -- production stage manager, stage managers for each space.

Assists production stage manager with orientation, rehearsal schedules, and other duties on an as needed basis.

Responds promptly and sensitively to artists’ questions and problems.

Works with president and project administrative coordinator on developing copy for program.

Works with president with coordination of marketing and publicity. Note: there will be some assistance in this area from a small marketing firm.

Assists project administrative coordinator with large assignments such as mailing invitation, artists’ correspondence in late June, etc.

Follows-up with artists who have not sent in signed contracts, program information, etc.

Uses timelines to ensure project stays on timely track -- forecasting and preparing for tasks on the horizon as well as immediate needs.

Communicates regularly with president and project administrative coordinator.

Assists president with arranging for photographers -- vide and still -- and program evaluators.

Assists president with preparation of comp list including funders, government representatives, etc. If possible a separate mailing with note should be sent to them letting them know that we will hold comps at the door.

Works with production stage manager and project administrative coordinator in preparation of artists’ list for stage door.
Assists production stage manager with coordination of borrowed equipment.

Assists with coordination of strike.

Assists president with coordination of artists evaluation meeting.

Assists president with preparation of final reports for 1997 funding.
Contract Between DramaRama, Inc. and Intern Project Manager
DramaRama, Inc.
P.O. Box 70232
New Orleans, LA 70172-0232

Intern Project Manager Agreement

This is an agreement between DramaRama, Inc. and Richard Read who will serve as Intern Project Manager for DramaRama5 and DramaRama, Jr., presented by DramaRama, Inc. and the Contemporary Arts Center in association with the Louisiana Children’s Museum. Events will take place at the Contemporary Arts Center, 900 Camp Street, September 6, 1997 and at the Louisiana Children’s Museum, September 6 and 7, 1997.

This agreement runs from April 8, 1997 through September 8, 1997 and includes the responsibilities attached. Project remuneration shall be $350 per month, totaling $1750.

Richard Read will work under the direction of DramaRama President, Kenneth C. Raphael, with Project Administrative Coordinator, Elizabeth Gill and with Contemporary Arts Center staff.

INTERN PROJECT MANAGER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CARRYING OUT ALL DETAILS FOR RESPONSIBILITIES LISTED.

A budget for the production has been provided by DramaRama, Inc.

I have read the above and agree to these terms.

[Signature]
Intern Project Manager

[Signature]
For DramaRama, Inc.

[Date]
Date Signed

[Address]
New Orleans, LA 70117
City, State, Zip

[Social Security Number]
Louisiana Division of the Arts Provider of Services Form

(example)
PROVIDER OF SERVICES FORM [OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES]

Provide the following information if the proposed project includes contracted fees for outside services [budget expense lines 33 and/or 34 from page 3 of this application form]. Use a separate copy of this form for each person or group; and one for the project director.

47. Person or group to provide services (Please see contact information given below.)

Address

City State Zip

Professional Fee $50 - $250 per performance Total Fee $8,000

48. Service(s) to be provided performance

49. Brief résumé of Person or Group listed above. Do not attach additional pages. Do not type outside margin guides.

Frank H. Brown
1237 St. Andrew, Apt. I
New Orleans, LA 70130
(h) 504 522 8224
(w) 504 581 2012

Frank Brown has a Bachelor's Degree in Theatre from Southeastern Louisiana University. As a dancer, he has performed in a variety of companies, including the Southeastern Dance Ensemble, the Fellom Ballet, the New Orleans Ballet Association, and Anne Rice's Memnoch Ball. As a choreographer, he has organized numerous jazz and modern performances, including one chosen for competition at the American College Dance Festival, 1990.
DramaRama Technical and Biographical Questionnaire
DRAMARAMA
TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Artist's name: __________________________
Title of work: __________________________
Number of performers: ____________________
Set up and strike time: ____________________
(phone number)
Time assigned: ________________
Space assigned: ________________
Phone number: _______________________
Space requested: ________________
Length of work: ________________
Adult language or nudity? __________

1. __ Is the work site specific? If so, why? __________________________

2. __ If you are a dancer, can you perform your work on a surface other than wood? Describe: __________________________

3. __ Are you or any member of your company involved in another DramaRama piece? Other piece/performer: (WHO + WHAT)

4. __ Are there any times on Fri. and/or Sat. you are absolutely unable to perform? Times: __________________________

5. __ Is any sound amplified or unusually loud? Describe: __________________________

6. __ SOUND: (All pre-recorded sound to be on cassette tape. Not all spaces will have a sound system.)
   __ Are you using a cassette tape?
   __ Can you furnish a portable tape player and operator?
   __ Do you need standing microphones? Number: ________________
       How will they be used? __________________________
   __ Are you using live music? No. of musicians: ________________
       Instruments: __________________________
   __ What equipment will they bring? __________________________
   __ Other sound equipment: __________________________
7. **LIGHTING:** (We provide simple stage lighting. Special requests considered on a case by case basis. Artist will need to submit a detailed cue sheet in advance and provide a stage manager to call cues.)

   Any special lighting needs: ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

   Any special lighting cues: ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

   Other lighting equipment: ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

8. **SET:**

   Bringing any set pieces? List: ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

   Chairs needed: ________ Small tables: ________
   Large tables: ________

9. **Other technical equipment?** List: ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

10. **Will you need to rig or hang any objects?** Describe: (WHAT + WEIGHT)

11. **Do you have anything that needs to be plugged in?** List: ________________________________

12. **Do you need to use any other section of the space besides the stage?** Describe: ________________________________

13. **Do you use fire or smoke in any way?** ________________________________

14. **Do you plan to videotape?** Who will film for you? ________________________________

15. **Do you have any photographs that can be used for publicity?** ________________________________

**NOTES:**

   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

**ANY OTHER TECHNICAL SPECIFICS NOT ON APPLICATION:**

   ________________________________
   ________________________________
Schedule of Performances, DramaRama 5
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Atrium</th>
<th>Freeport</th>
<th>Bank One</th>
<th>Lupin</th>
<th>Rehearsal</th>
<th>Garage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:45</td>
<td>N'kafu (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>NOCCA mimes</td>
<td>Summer Stages/Luther (30)</td>
<td>Kalinov (30)</td>
<td>Loose Cannons (30)</td>
<td>Baron (30)</td>
<td>Pierce (30)</td>
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<td>7:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Rovers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Out of Our Minds (22)</td>
<td>Raisen (11)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>Dillard (30)</td>
<td>Hall &amp; Simpson (30)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stelly (35)</td>
<td>Miceli (#1) (35)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>NOCCA mimes</td>
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<td>8:15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grey (#1) (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Rovers</td>
<td>Lula Elzy (30)</td>
<td>Bratcher/3rd Eye (30)</td>
<td>Gault (10)</td>
<td>Terry (25)</td>
<td>Summer Stages/Eat (30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45</td>
<td>Japan Minyo</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Winnier (20)</td>
<td>McGovern (10)</td>
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<td>9:00</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DiMaggio (10)</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Champagne (9)</td>
<td>Top (30)</td>
<td>Miceli (#2) (20)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cocktail (30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Rovers</td>
<td>Lewinter-Suskind (30)</td>
<td>Schmidt &amp; Bell (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Frank Brown (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>NOCCA mimes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mulvehill (12)</td>
<td>Johnson (15)</td>
<td>Skantze (30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Nicole Colbert (15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Rovers</td>
<td>Brewer (#1 &amp; #2) (8 &amp;8)</td>
<td>Aqueno (30)</td>
<td>lvker (25)</td>
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<td>11:30</td>
<td>NOCCA mimes</td>
<td>Pickard (10)</td>
<td>Dykes (30)</td>
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Program, DramaRama 5
DRAMARAMA, INC.
AND
THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER
PRESENT

Septembe r 6, 1997

Photos Unavailable
Nicole Colbert Dance Theatre
C.L. Pierson and John Schwartz
DramaRama, Inc. and the Contemporary Arts Center present

DramaRama

in cooperation with the Louisiana Children's Museum

DramaRama Board of Directors
Kenneth C. Raphael, President
MK Wegmann, Vice President
Adriana M. Bate, Secretary-Treasurer
Denise Chetta, Mariama Curry, Barry Iver, Gail Morgan, John O'Neal, Gary Smith & Jan Villarrubia

Artists' Liaison Committee
Adella Gautier, Rose Bratcher, Mikko, Karen-Kaia Livers, Terence Rosemore

Jonathan Taylor
Production Stage Manager

Richard Read
Intern Project Manager

Elisabeth Gill
Project Administrative Coordinator

Michael Batt
Technical Director

Stage Managers/Running Crew
Kristin Santos, Glen Mehn, Amy Cahn, Donald Lewis, Doug Roper, Gabrielle Michell, Philip Tracy, Caroline Williamson and Julien Artressia

Atrium Coordinator
Paige Phillips

Public Relations
Rose Bratcher, Chris Jones, Vatican Lokey, Jon Pult, Gloria Powers and Kenneth C. Raphael

DramaRama is supported in part by the Arts Council of New Orleans by a grant from the Louisiana State Arts Council through the Louisiana Division of the Arts and through a Community Arts grant made possible by the City of New Orleans and supplemented by the Freeport McMoRan Endowment.
DramaRama is also supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Louisiana State Arts Council, and the Division of the Arts, Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

SUPPORTERS
Michael & Sallie Arata
Denise Chetta
Gail Morgan & Joe Norman
Jan Villarrubia

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All Area Media
Alternate ROOTS
Michael Arata Productions
Arts Council of New Orleans & Staff
Adriana M. Bate
Michael Batt
Benjamin Franklin High School
James Borders
Rose Bratcher
Contemporary Arts Center & Staff
Edward R. Cox
Dog and Pony Theatre Company
Marjorie R. Esman, Attorney-at-Law
Tina Foster, Cocktail Magazine
Eddie Francis
Jose L. Garcia
Andrea Garland
Sr. Lawrence Habetsz
Marion Hodge
Kim Hunicke
Junebug Productions, Inc., & Staff
K&B
Jefferson Performing Arts Society/S.W.A.T.
Karen-Kaia Livers
Vatican Lokey
Longue Vue Gardens

Louisiana Children's Museum & Staff
Louisiana Division of the Arts & Staff
Maria Mason
New Orleans Center for Creative Arts
New Orleans Video Access Center
Mindy Mayer
Ralph McGinnis
Elyce Picciotti
Valentine Pierce
Kathy Randels
Jin Randels
Raven Productions, Inc.
Terence Rosemore
Lindsey Ross
Orrin Ross
Merit Shallett
Yvette Sirker
Gary Michael Smith
The Times-Picayune
Treehouse Players
Tulane University
Katiina Turillo
Vieux Carre Printing
Ray Vrael
Dee Waller
Barbara Warnie
Jay Weigal
MK Wegmann
Paul Werner

MISSION STATEMENT

DramaRama is designed to showcase the greater New Orleans theatre scene by bringing together the community of artists and audiences for an annual performance and celebration. Committed to inspiring a proliferation of professional theatre artists in the area, DramaRama offers a nurturing environment for new artists and encourages mid-career and established artists in their search for new and innovative types of theatre. DramaRama is dedicated to increasing theatre audiences by providing a venue for performance as diverse as the community it serves.

Program by: Elyce Picciotti and Beth Mund

Program subject to change without notice.
**DRAMA RAMA 5**

**PERFORMANCES**

- **ANTIGONE**
  A scene from Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*. Adapted to re-create the atmosphere of Nazi-occupied France. Starring and directed by Neil Terry. Also starring and translated by R. B. Barryclay. Rehearsal, 9:45 - 9:45

- **BIRDS 'N' BOOZE**

- **THE BODY ECLECTIC**
  **SCENES FROM A SOUTHERN LIFE**
  The Southern experience is evoked through original poetry written by "Del" Hall. Poems performed by poet-composed by Joel Simpson. Bank One, 7:40 - 7:40

- **BOUNDARIES OF A LIFE**
  A work that traces the journey from grief to healing in the wake of the violent death of a loved one. It deals with the reality of pain and the conflicting feelings and, finally, offers the assurance that we will be all right in the end. Written and directed by Valentine Pierce. Starring Pierce, Lester Joshua Smith, and Zenova Hello D. Smith. Garage, 8:45 - 9:15

- **BREAKFAST AT THE LOCAL CAFE**
  A comedy sketch about a middle-aged Southern couple engaged in rambling conversation at the local cafe. Stars Debby Wise, Bob Gault, and Marilyn Murphy. Lupin, 10:35 - 10:50

- **CO-DEPENDENTLY DEVOTED TO YOU: A TRAGI-COMIC FROCK OPERA**
  Conceived and performed by Peter Perri and Popgun Paul. Garage, 11:35 - 12:00

- **A CONDOMINIUM AT A GOOD PRICE**
  Max and Sylvia share coffee, cake, and, in whatever form they remember them, memories, in a condominium high above the blue waters and early-lid diners of Miami Beach. Featuring Neil Nadler and Tony Nadler. Written by Leslie Lewston-Sucklad. Freestop, 9:00 - 9:15

- **CUTTING UP: A DELINQUENT BALLET FOR GUITAR AND SAW**
  Written and performed by Anthony Favor. Garage, 8:15 - 8:30

- **A DANCE JOURNEY TO THE CRUCIFIXION**
  A look at the profound emotional content to be found in biblical tales. Conceived by the breathtaking movements of the Lula Elzy New Orleans Dance Theatre. Biblical readings by Dolores Marsalin and Patricia Hill McGuire; music by Delraye Marsalin and Kent Jordan. Freestop, 8:45 - 9:15

- **EPHYPHANY**
  A dramatic scene between two lovers that juxtaposes various media. Performed by Karlyn Shimd and Tony J. Bell. Bank One, 11:35 - 11:45

- **EVIDENCE OF ACTION III**
  An expansion of a work shown at previous Dramaramas. The piece is "performed" all night long as you, the audience, interact with this intriguing installation. Created by C. L. Pierson and John Schwartz. Ramp Gallery, all night long.

- **GRANDMA'S GARAGE**
  A selection from a larger work dealing with a New Orleans Italian-Catholic family on St. Joseph's day. Featuring Lisa Maciel, who also wrote and choreographed the piece. Directed by George Kelly. Garage, 7:00 - 7:20

- **HAMBLED OMELETTE**
  The 4.98-minute Hamlet—complete! Featuring Jeff Burnett, Peter Gabb, Lenny Feller, and Randi Ladner. Directed by Randy Ladner. Written and co-directed by Elliott Rabin. Special thanks to Leslie Lewston-Sucklad. Rehearsal, 9:00 - 9:45 (or less...)

- **HEART TO HEART**
  A wife, chock-full of to-die-for recipes, attempts outlandish homicide against her unsuspecting husband. Her witty Epicurean plot initially shocks her religious neighbor until the wife reveals a personal secret. Starring Carol Sutton and Karen-Kaia Livers. Written by Kathleen Malvissi. Lupin, 9:35 - 9:50

- **HOW TO EAT LIKE A CHILD...AND OTHER LESSONS IN NOT BEING GROWN-UP**
  A musical romp through the joys and sorrows of being a kid, including such "how-to" lessons as "how to torture your sister," and "how to beg for a dog." Starring 20 kids from 8 to 18 from all around town. Created by Delia Epbron, John Forster, and Judith Kahn. Presented by Summer Stages. Garage, 8:00 - 8:30

- **HUSBAND TO SPARE**
  The story of two Southern women, both victims of circumstance, trying to co-exist among lies, deceit, and the ugly truth. Written by David Garrett. Starring Sueellen Wilkes and Patsy Kay Turner. Rehearsal, 10:45 - 11:15

- **I AM A CITY BESIEGED BY THE DEAD**
  A writer, dancer, and performance artist who has worked across the country with underground luminaries like Lydia Lunch and Evanston Carnitka explores the dramatic theories of Antonin Artaud in an effort to immerse the audience in an event of pure, shape shifting spectacle. Created by Vanessa Skantze. Starring Skantze, Mali Smoak, and Brent Newman. Garage, 10:45 - 11:15

- **I INHERITED THE PICAYUNE**
  A monologue about a man whose long-lost relative beguiles him through a series of "how-to" lessons—how to torture your dog. Starred 29. Written by Don Hoxton. Directed by Randi Ladner. Rehearsal, 9:00 - 9:05 (or less...)

- **IN THE BLUE ROOM**
  A crucial new dance piece choreographed by Nicole Colbert in her own unique style. Dancers: Frank Brown, M C. Cheney, Richard Plaunzer, Vanessa Skantze, Nancy Von Tony Paine: Text by Jeannette Watterson; Music: Chet Baker, Nina Simone, and Frank Sinatra. NOTE: There is brief full nudity at the end of this piece. Freestop, 7:45 - 8:00

- **INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE**
  The Educational India Foundation presents Sangasie Asanadi, who will perform traditional Indian dance in honor of the 50th anniversary of India's independence. Bank One, 9:00 - 9:10

- **JAPANESE DANCE**
  The 30 members of the Japan Minyo Club present traditional folk dance and modern dance, as well as the Festival Drum Dance. Led by Marko Tingley. At)rium, 6:30 - 7:00

- **LAST CONFESSION**
  A lawyer experiences a midlife crisis and turns to the Catholicism of his youth, relating experiences both comic and terrifying. Starring and written by Stuart Stelly. Rehearsal, 7:25 - 8:00

- **LAUGH-A-RAMA AT DRAMA RAMA**
  A best-of collection of their original sketch comedy. Stop by and see some of the skits that have made Louise Cannons a favorite in the Crescent City. Featuring Rose Bratcher and Eddie Francis. Lupin, 11:30 - 12:00

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 6**
**LUPIN GALLERY**

* 7:00 - 7:25, "FE4" is a comedy about three women roommates/friends with three very different viewpoints concerning traditional values, casual sex, and religion. Presented by Out of Our Minds.

* 7:40 - 8:00, Kim Master and Daniel Sampey perform Philip Zwerling’s “Trick or Treat,” a look at the shooting of a Japanese exchange student in Baton Rouge and the role of guns in our society.

8:10 - 8:20, "Sex at Midlife" Bob Gault relates the thoughts of a man contemplating his views on sex from youth to midlife.

8:30 - 9:00, "No Matter What" is Gisèle Wintner’s dramatic piece about five women and their long-standing friendship, which is threatened by the revelation of a long-hidden secret.


9:35 - 9:50, A wife, chock-full of to-die-for recipes, attempts culinary homicide against her unsuspecting husband in Kathleen Mulvihill’s "Heart to Heart."

10:00 - 10:15, "I Inherited the Piano" is Christian Champagne’s monologue about a man whose long-lost relative bequeaths him the Piano. It’s about to make a few changes...

10:35 - 10:50, Debbi Wuep and Bob Gault present "Breakfast at the Local Cafe," a comedy sketch about a middle-aged Southern couple engaged in rambling conversation at the local cafe.

11:05 - 11:20, "A Short Delay" is Alistair Johnson’s casual piece that shows how people often resort to anger to express any thought, no matter how absurd and trivial.

11:30 - 12:00, "Laugh-a-rama at Dreamarama" is a best-of collection of Loose Cannons’ original sketch comedy. Stop by and see some of the skits that have made them a favorite in the Crescent City.

**REHEARSAL HALL**

7:00 - 7:15, Tanda Dykes presents monologues from Shakespeare to Sam Shepard to Tennessee Williams.

7:25 - 8:00, In Stuart Shelly’s "Last Confession," a lawyer experiences a midlife crisis and turns to the Catholicism of his youth, reliving experiences both comic and terrifying.

8:10 - 8:25, One Minute Play Contest (Round I)—participants TBA.

9:10 - 9:15, "Hamlet Omlette" is the 498 minute Hamlet—complete! Written by Elliott Raisen.

9:25 - 9:40, One Minute Play Competition (Round II)—participants TBA.

9:50 - 10:00, Carol McGovern’s piece, "Voices," deals with a suicidal man arguing with his subconscious.

10:15 - 10:30, "Cutting Up: A Drunk Waltz" is written and performed by Anthony Favre.

**GARAGE**

7:00 - 7:20, A selection from Lisa Holick’s "Grandma’s Garage," a piece dealing with a New Orleans Italian Catholic family on St. Joseph’s Day.

7:35 - 7:45, "The New Don’t Look at Anything" is a surreal performance piece on the pressure of time. Written and directed by Kathleen Welsh.

8:45 - 9:15, Valentine Pierce wrote "Boundaries of a Life" to track the journey from grief to healing in the wake of the violent death of a loved one.

9:30 - 10:00, "Birds ‘n’ Bees" is a thirty-minute, spoken-word debacle: A tragicomedy portraying the ascent and descent, tinted in pink. Presented by Cocktail Magazine.

10:15 - 10:30, "I Am a City Besieged by the Army of the Dead" is Vanessa Shantis’s exploration of the dramatic theories of Antonin Artaud and an effort to immerse the audience in an event of pure, shape-shifting spectacle.

11:30 - 12:00, Steaming Illeana Productions will present a dramatic improvisation in which audience members take part in the improv and provide topics and form.


**N’Kau Traditional African Dance Company**

One of the premier African dance troupes in the Crescent City. At DramaRama they will perform a traditional Dance of Royalty that originated in the area now known as Mali.

Arrium. 8:00 - 8:15

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**OFF THE WALL AND IN THE AIR**

A revival of the New Vaudeville, where the world of the circus meets the world of the theatre. A highly skilled display of the manipulation of objects. Mind-boggling. Choreographed and performed by Michael Les Williams. Special thanks to David Franklin, Kestie Goldsmith, Pamela James, Jeffrey Laboric, and Raymond Vazquez, Jr.

Freeport, 11:30 - 12:00

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**ONE MINUTE PLAY CONTEST (SECTION ONE)**

TBA

Rehearsal, 8:10 - 8:25

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**STARING KITTEN PRODUCTIONS**

The Ensemble will present a dramatic improvisation in which audience members take part in the improv and provide topic and form.

Led by Joey Miles.

Rehearsal, 11:30 - 12:00

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**TRICK OR TREAT**

A look at the shooting of a Japanese exchange student in Baton Rouge and the role of guns in our society.

Written by Philip Zwerling.

Lupin, 7:40 - 8:00

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7
"VIOLATION" AND "WITHIN REACH"

The former dance deals with issues of women being touched, while the latter considers the joy of movement.

Featuring Dana Brewer, Joanne Labourdette, Nicole Faishholder, Lillian Gray, Stacie Dautrive, and Lesley Kernas, and the music of Ray Lynch.

Choreographed by Dana Brewer. Freeport, 10:25 - 10:40

THE ZOO—DON'T LOOK AT ANYTHING!

A surreal performance piece on the pressure of time. Scarlet skates, swamp deer, leaf blowers, and stressed-out mamans make an appearance, as well as a ten-foot, organic clock. Written and directed by Kathleen Welsh; performed by Welch and Alan Gillery.

Garage, 7:50 - 7:45

ZAMBRAS

Related in form to the flamenco tientos and tangos, "Zambras" draws from the Arabesque and was composed for the Ana Burr Dance Company by John Burr, Jr. and James Clark.

Choreographed by Anne Burr, and performed by Christina Baron, Lauren Boudreaux, Anne Burr, Camile Mouton and Gabe Pickard. Music by John Burr, Jr. and James Clark.

Freeport, 10:00 - 11:00

VOICES

A play about a suicidal man arguing with his subconscious. Performed by Bob Annoni and Patty Elion. Written by Carol McGovern.

Rehearsal, 9:00 - 10:00

ARTIST FINDER

DANIELLE ALBRIGHT
Bank One, 11:20 - 11:25

JONATHAN ALEXIS
Freeport McMoRan
11:30 - 12:00

SHIZUKO BOURNEGDO
Atrium, 6:30 - 7:00

TOYOKO AMAGASA
Atrium, 6:30 - 7:00

BOB ANNONI
Rehearsal Hall, 9:50 - 10:00

FRANK AQUINO
Bank One, 10:00 - 10:30

TOYOKO ARNOLD
Atrium, 6:30 - 7:00

BRITTANY BANDER
Garage, 8:00 - 8:30

Louisiana Children's Museum Sunday, 2:00

R.B. BARCLAY
Rehearsal Hall, 8:30 - 8:50

JOHN BARNETT
Garage, 8:00 - 8:30

Louisiana Children's Museum Sunday, 2:00

CHRISTINE BARONA
Freeport McMoRan
10:50 - 11:20

TOMMY J. BELL
Bank One, 11:35 - 11:45

FRANK BELONGEY
Freeport McMoRan
7:00 - 7:30

ROSE BIANCO
Lupin Gallery, 7:00 - 7:30

ALLISON BODIN
Bank One, 7:00 - 7:30

BRADY BOLDIN
Freeport McMoRan
11:30 - 12:00

KIMIKO BOURNEGDO
Atrium, 6:30 - 7:00

LAUREN BOURNEGDO
Freeport McMoRan
10:50 - 11:00

ANDREW BRADER
Garage, 8:00 - 8:30

LAURA BRADLEY
Lupin Gallery, 9:10 - 9:50

DIANA BREWER
Freeport McMoRan
10:55 - 11:10

EMERUETTE BRIDGES
Garage, 8:00 - 8:30

LUPIN CALLERY
Rehearsal Hall, 9:00 - 9:15

ANN BURR
Bank One, 9:20 - 9:50

ROSE BURCH
Lupin Gallery, 11:05 - 11:20

DIANA BURKER
Freeport McMoRan
10:25 - 10:40

LUPIN CALLERY
Rehearsal Hall, 9:00 - 9:15

CHRISTIAN CHAMPAIGNE
Lupin Gallery, 9:50 - 10:00

M.C. CHEESE
Freeport McMoRan
7:45 - 8:00

CARLA CHOSA
Freeport McMoRan
9:30 - 9:50

NATALIE CHOSA
Freeport McMoRan
9:30 - 9:50

MICHELE CLAYTON
Lupin Gallery, 7:50 - 8:00

ELIZABETH COON
Lupin Gallery, 9:00 - 9:15

DEIRDRE COHEN
Lupin Gallery, 9:00 - 9:15

MELISSA CYNCA
Freeport McMoRan
8:45 - 9:15

STACEY Dautrive
Freeport McMoRan
10:25 - 10:40

NINA DOMINGUE
Bank One, 10:20 - 10:50

LUPIN CALLERY
Freeport McMoRan
10:20 - 10:50

BRANDON DILLON
Garage, 8:00 - 8:30

Louisiana Children's Museum Sunday, 2:00

NINA DONOGHUE
Bank One, 7:00 - 7:30

ALEXIS DUNN
Freeport McMoRan
7:00 - 7:30

MYTHIA DUNN
Garage, 8:00 - 8:30

Louisiana Children's Museum Sunday, 2:00

PETER GABBAR
Rehearsal Hall, 9:00 - 9:15

BOB GAULT
Lupin Gallery, 8:10 - 8:20

ALAN GILLERY
Garage, 7:30 - 7:45

LILLIAN GRAY
Lupin Gallery, 9:00 - 9:15

Freeport McMoRan
10:25 - 10:40

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<td>Garage</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:00</td>
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<td>Jane Guild</td>
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<td>Laura Huel</td>
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<td>Sunday, 2:00</td>
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<td>Emko Honjo</td>
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<td>6:30 - 7:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Torregiano, III</td>
<td>Freeport McMoran</td>
<td>8:00 - 8:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisina Children's Museum</td>
<td>Sunday, 2:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patty K. Turner</td>
<td>Rehearsal Hall</td>
<td>10:45 - 11:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Turner</td>
<td>Freeport McMoran</td>
<td>9:30 - 9:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan VanMeter</td>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>8:00 - 8:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeport McMoran</td>
<td>Louisiana Children's Museum</td>
<td>Sunday, 2:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noriko Waite</td>
<td>Atrium</td>
<td>6:30 - 7:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Welch</td>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>7:30 - 7:45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sueellen Wilkins</td>
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<td>10:45 - 11:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Lea Williams, Jr.</td>
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<td>11:30 - 12:00</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Garage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Sunday, 2:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giselle Wellek</td>
<td>Lupin Gallery</td>
<td>8:30 - 8:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embry Wine</td>
<td>Lupin Gallery</td>
<td>10:35 - 10:55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip Zwerling</td>
<td>Lupin Gallery</td>
<td>7:40 - 8:00</td>
</tr>
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Organizational Chart, DramaRama, Inc.