Issue 1, Volume 1: April 2012

Sponsor Profile: The MFA Playwriting Program at Spalding University

by
Tara Goldstein

The Spalding MFA program has been essential in my playwriting career. When I started the program, I felt as though I knew how to make a cake, but I didn’t know how the ingredients could be mixed, refined and flavored. Attending Spalding immediately put me in a world of the best writers in the country, and a group of friends who will be lifelong pals and professional peers. It was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made.

Brian Hampton, New York City, USA

The two and a half years I spent in Spalding’s MFA in Playwriting program were without a doubt the most intensely instructive and formative years of my professional life. The atmosphere at Spalding somehow manages to be both challenging and nurturing. If your sensibilities are New York or Chicago theatre, they’ve got you covered. If your sensibilities are regionally focused, or experimental, or something-as-yet-unlabeled, they’ve got you covered. Spalding’s instructors vary wildly in their philosophies and teaching styles, except on one point: they want you to be a better writer. They want you to succeed.

Tommy Trull, North Carolina, USA

WiT’s first sponsor is the MFA Playwriting Program at Spalding University located in Louisville, Kentucky in the United States. The program is a four-semester, brief residency program which means that students can pursue a Master’s in Fine Arts degree from anywhere in the world. Each semester of the program begins with an intense ten-day residency in Louisville. During the residency students and faculty spend 10-12 hour days in playwriting workshops, lectures, discussion groups and staged play readings. At the end of the residency, students continue working on their degree from home through independent study, one on one, with a faculty mentor.
Over the four semesters, students are expected to write two full-length plays and several one-acts. They are also encouraged to both read and attend performances of classical plays, modern plays and alternative works. Because theatre making is a collaborative art form and the act of hearing a script read aloud is crucial to its development, all students receive a professional reading of one of their plays with local actors in Louisville. It is also possible for students to spend one of the four semesters studying screenwriting.

Professional playwrights and screenwriters who have already been produced but who want to earn a graduate degree so that they can teach playwriting and/or screenwriting at college and university have the option to inquire about completing the program in three semesters instead of four.

The faculties that teach Playwriting and Screenwriting at Spalding have a rich variety of writing backgrounds and experience. They include:

**Sheila Callaghan** (playwriting):
*Dead City, That Pretty Pretty; Or, The Rape Play, Fever/Dream (see American Theatre interview)*. Sheila was on the writing staff of Showtime’s *The United States of Tara*.

**Helena Kriel** (playwriting, screenwriting):
*Pigs on Passion, Arachnid and I Can’t Wait To Tie You To The Sofa.*

**Kira Obolensky** (playwriting):
*Raskol; Modern House; Lune, pronounced looney; Alice in Wonderland*

**Eric Schmiedl** (playwriting):
*Plainsong, Ghosts of Treasure Island, Eventide*, and many more.

**Charles Schulman** (playwriting, screenwriting):
*The Fartiste, Angel of Death, The Birthday Present, The Ground Zero Club, The Apollo Comedy Hour*

**Sam Zalutsky** (screenwriting):
*You Belong to Me, SuperStore, Stefan’s Silver Bell, Boy’s Briefs, Smear.*

For more information about the MFA Playwriting Program at Spalding, visit their website: [http://spalding.edu/academics/mfa/](http://spalding.edu/academics/mfa/)

Or contact them at:

**MFA Office:**
Spalding University  
851 South Fourth Street  
Louisville, KY 40203
TEL: (502) 873-4400 or (800) 896-8941, ext. 4400
FAX: (502) 992-2409
MFA in Writing
mfa@spalding.edu