

Share Report Abuse Next Blog»

Create Blog Sign In

NEW YORK THEATER REVIEW

THE NEW YORK THEATER REVIEW IS AN ANNUALLY PUBLISHED COLLECTION OF PLAYS AND ESSAYS. NYTR WAS LAUNCHED IN 2005 TO HELP INCREASE RECOGNITION OF DOWNTOWN NEW YORK THEATER ARTISTS AND PRODUCTIONS. WWW.NYTR.ORG

CONTACT THE EDITOR AND REVIEWERS

nytrpressinvites@gmail.com

TOTAL PAGEVIEWS

~~40307~~

WE LIKE YOU, DO YOU LIKE US?

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=699863053#!/pages/New-York-Theater-Review/79469247175>

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2011

Crystal Skillman and Andrea Day on GENTRIFUSION and CRAWL



GENTRIFUSION: an installation of new work

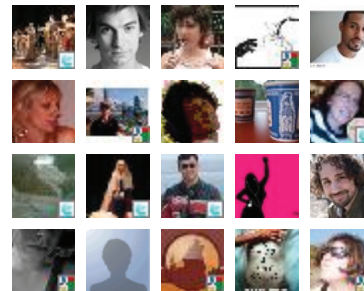
Red Fern Theatre tackles the divisive subject of gentrification in New York City's neighborhoods. 6 award-winning playwrights, 3 stellar directors, and 19 actors from every background use their experience as artists living in the city to push beyond the bounds of political correctness and speak to the heart of what really goes on in our changing neighborhoods, for better or for worse. From Crown Heights to Washington Heights, long time residents and the new crop of "gentrifiers" are given voice in these commissioned new

FOLLOWERS

Follow

with Google Friend Connect

Followers (54) [More »](#)



Already a member? [Sign in](#)

FACEBOOK SHARE

1 shares
[Share](#)

UPTWEET

0 uptweets
uptweet

short plays. Join the conversation, and hear what your neighbors are saying.

Playwrights include: Carla Ching, Joshua Conkel, Michael John Garcés, Jon Kern, Janine Nabers and Crystal Skillman

Directors include: John Giampietro, Colette Robert, and Moritz von Stuelpnagel

Artistic Producers: Andrea Day and Kel Haney

Executive Artistic Director: Melanie Moyer Williams

Full Cast List in Alphabetical Order:

Sheldon Best *, Rajesh Bose *, Tim Cain *, Molly Carden, Wayne T. Carr *, Salvadore Chevez, Gilbert Cruz *, Andrea Day, Nathan Hinton *, Devin Norik *, Eugene Oh, Gio Perez*, Casey Robinson, Michael Schantz, André St. Clair Thompson, Federico Trigo *, Megan Tusing, Tai Verley, and Tiffany Villarin

January 27 - February 13, 2011

The LABA Theatre At The 14th Street Y

344 East 14th Street between First and Second Avenues
4/5/6/N/R/Q to Union Square; L to First Avenue

Thursdays at 8 p.m.

Fridays at 8 p.m.

Saturdays at 8 p.m.

Sundays at 3 p.m. (Super Bowl Sunday, February 6 at 2pm)

Additional performance on Monday, February 7 at 7pm.

Tickets are \$25 and are now available online at www.theatermania.com or by calling 866.811.4111. Tickets may also be purchased in-person at the theater box office ½ hour prior to the performance.

Running Time: 120 minutes (with intermission)

BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ 2011 (63)

▶ May (13)

▶ April (9)

▶ March (15)

▼ February (6)

Storm Still reviewed by Casey York

OHIO THEATRE FINDS NEW HOME IN THE WEST VILLAGE

Libby Emmons reviews Eric Meyers THE SISTER

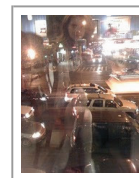
A Skillman double header

Gentrifusion reviewed by Jody Christopherson

Crystal Skillman and Andrea Day on GENTRIFUSION an...

▶ January (20)

▶ 2010 (130)



JODY CHRISTOPHERSON

(editor and creator of this blogspot) is an actress and writer based in NYC. Member

Independent Theater Bloggers Association. "IN THE SPIRIT OF BRINGING MORE VISIBILITY TO OFF-OFF BROADWAY WE'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME PEOPLE, COMPANIES, PRODUCTIONS WE'VE BEEN SEEING AS WE SEARCH FOR SCRIPTS AND ESSAY TOPICS FOR THE NYTR." NYTR PUBLISHES 3 NEW PLAYS, 3 ESSAYS AND 3 CRITIQUES ANNUALLY. COPYRIGHT ©2010 NEW YORK THEATER REVIEW ALL RIGHTS



Actress, Producer Andrea Day

RESERVED Contact Jody at
nytrpressinvites@gmail.com

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)

NYTR: Why do you make theater?

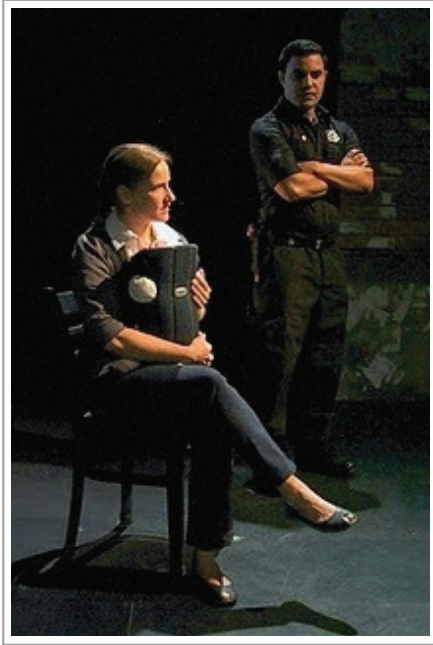
ANDREA DAY: Hmm...me, personally? Lots of reasons. For the release. For the surprise. For the ability to say something bigger than myself, perhaps something that I might not even believe in but learn to believe, for a time. For the synthesis of people and ideas, and a visceral way to tap into a shared consciousness. For the people, the beautiful push of creativity and openness and genuine effort despite the zilch pay, rough schedule, and inevitable disappointments. Because ultimately, I love the business of play. GENTRIFUSION has been such a fantastic project for me as both an actor and a producer precisely because of the people. We throw around the word "collaborative art" so often when talking about theater it almost seems cliché but then you are in the thick of it and you suddenly realize - damn, what a supreme group effort this really is. To create a moving, unified artistic statement with 6 writers, 3 directors, 6 designers, 19 actors, plus a production team? That IS collaboration. Take a look at the fantastic (huge!) line up of people involved in this production here:

http://www.redferntheatre.org/p_gentrifusion.asp

As for Red Fern: Red Fern Theatre has such a smart, generous mission. All plays produced address social issues from local to global, and each production is paired with a philanthropy whose work relates to the issue of the play. A portion of the proceeds from each play produced goes to the designated philanthropy. Its inspiring to do good work, and know that someone else's good work will benefit as well. In honor of the 5 year anniversary of Red Fern and the city-wide scope of GENTRIFUSION, Red Fern is partnering

with all 12 past show philanthropies. You can take a look at them here:

http://www.redferntheatre.org/red_fern_theatre_philanthropies.asp



Andrea Day and Federico Trigo in "(2) 11". Photo by Jordan Popalis

NYTR: Can you talk a little about where the idea from this project came from or developed?

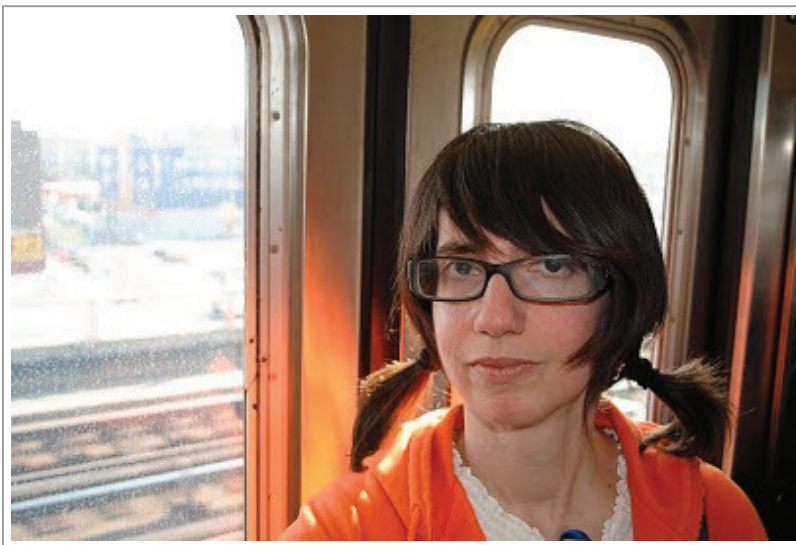
ANDREA DAY: Red Fern produced a series of commissioned short plays on a theme last January called +30NYC, which was an exploration of where New York might be 30 years in the future. It was a great success and brought together such an exciting group of working artists that there was no question that it should be repeated in the 2010-2011 Red Fern season.

The theme of GENTRIFUSION came out of a narrower concept of looking at one house and the stories of various generations in that house. That piqued my interest and got me thinking on a broader scale about gentrification in neighborhoods and the different ways people are affected by that change, both good and bad. This is something that particularly resonates with me. I live on the Crown Heights/Prospect Heights border, and for my "day job" I rent apartments - usually to artists looking for cheap rent, and usually in my neighborhood or neighborhood like mine. You really get to know and love a place that way - I've met so many people, newcomers

and old timers, and heard incredible stories. I wanted to create an artistic statement that tapped into these stories, to tell the truth of what really goes on as a neighborhood changes, the incredibly diverse points of view - the building supers, the deli owners, the investors, and the skinny jean hipsters. Gentrification is such a loaded word. There are entire organizations devoted to fighting it, it has become synonymous for loss of culture and history, and yet - it is a reality. And is it really all bad? I think that depends on who you ask. I figured, who better to tackle this word and all the baggage that comes with it, than a group of artists who know first hand what it's like to live in the midst of this change? Luckily (Red Fern Artistic Director) Melanie Williams and (Co-Artistic Producer) Kel Haney thought it was a good idea, too, and with their help, smarts, and hard work we launched the project last Fall.

NYTR: How did you choose writers?

ANDREA DAY: (Red Fern Artistic Director) Melanie Williams, (Co-Artistic Producer) Kel Haney, and I have been lucky enough in our careers to come into contact with a wide range of exceptionally talented new playwrights. We then looked for a spectrum of writers who we hoped would speak to the topic of gentrification in different ways. The GENTRIFUSION writers are men, women, gay, straight, white, non-white, native New Yorkers, and New York transplants, and their work is just as diverse as they are. These 6 plays are a fascinating kaleidoscope of the New York experience - touching and funny and smart and true.



playwright Crystal Skillman

NYTR: Talk to me about the word gentrifusion and your take on it...

CRYSTAL SKILLMAN: For me, I love how that word sums up Andrea's original awesome idea: to take on the huge subject of gentrification by asking playwrights to craft new, short plays inspired by that theme which are fused together to make one night. The result is this show called Gentrifusion that the wonderful Red Fern Theater Company is running for three weeks, which features writers honestly exploring the effects of changing communities, of those gaining and losing homes - this issue from both sides. My goal as a playwright (reflected in plays like Birthday, The Vigil, Sleeping World and even my comedies like Hack! and Killer High) is to reflect the world around us and all its complications though the lens of a more personal, intimate story told in an inventive way. The opportunity to be involved was very exciting to me as I always want my audience to sit down and see a world they can relate to. The result of my take on this theme is my play, Crawl, about a younger brother who shows up to face his older brother about selling the Brooklyn home from their childhood. It's deceptively simple, but as their fight ensues it's clear how complicated their relationship is, how personal it is. It's a personal play for me, as it's set in Brooklyn where gentrification exists all around me. At the same time, I'm realizing as I get older that family means more to me than ever, yet, it seems that you have to come to terms with the family you have, not what you wished they could be. The title, refers to the pub crawl the brothers had the night before, but it's also what I learned one has to do to accept their own family. One has to let go of pride and past expectations. One has to crawl. The issue of gentrification seems the same to me from both sides struggling to hold on or let go - to really hear each other and move forward we need to lose the importance of being the one who is right, who has all the answers, to find a way to embrace change but preserve community. That's what I love about the whole night. All the playwrights (and it's a writer rockstar line up: Carla Ching, Joshua Conkel, Michael John Garces, Jon Kern, Janine Nabers) have created such diverse, truthful, funny as hell, touching, crazy wonderful plays. There's a "queen" stealing a moment with an adopted baby in a once all gay city neighborhood; the story of zip code 11211 is given the "our town treatment"; two old friends start to connect just as one is about to leave the city; three characters are afraid to leave their apartment when they hear the ghosts of

the past (and present); an ex-Park Sloper mom moves into a neighborhood that isn't ready to change as much as she seems unable to. We sure as heck don't have all the answers but have tried our best to raise emotional questions about the impact of change to our neighborhoods - for good and bad.



Nathan Hinton and Sheldon Best in "Crawl" by Crystal Skillman from GENTRIFUSION. Photo by Jordan Popalis

NYTR: Best part about the process . . .

CRYSTAL SKILLMAN: It's been so cool to see the whole show be built piece by piece and over a relatively short period! When Andrea first asked me to be involved in November (!), I realized what a gold mine she was for research/inspiration as she shared with me her own stories showing houses around Franklin Ave., which became a big part of the play for me. The minute co-producer Kel Haney introduced me Colette Robert, I just had this amazing feeling we were going to create something special. We got so excited when we snagged rock star actors Nathan Hinton, who I first worked with at the New Harmony Project, and Sheldon Best, we've become friends after working with Vampire Cowboys, though this is the first time he's working on one of my plays! Working with Colette and them, the play went to a whole other level. All contributed so much to the play and artistically we were so supported as we played. Melanie Moyer Williams who is the Artistic Director of Red Fern is just amazing. We have a set. With a working door. A real freakin' awesome set and design team who just perfectly highlights each play with their work. And I'm working with some of my favorite playwrights and directors and actors in the indie world. The truly best part in the process of creating this show is we've created

something so, so diverse. These are stories - and characters - you rarely see in the theatre. To me it's indie theater doing what only it can do: tell stories that seem to be lost from the more commercial side of theater and do so in kick ass imaginative ways.

NYTR: You're a busy woman, what all are you working on?

CRYSTAL SKILLMAN: I'm currently writing Geek a new full length play on commission for the wonderful Vampire Cowboys, about two girls racing though a japanime con in Ohio to get the signature of their childhood idol. As they race through the crazy Dante Inferno-esque con they find themselves facing what they they've railed so hard against: the onslaught of adulthood knocking on their door with all the horrible truths it brings, as they face the loss of a friend and their own mistakes. It's a very dynamic, action-packed (of course!), personal story for me as a life long geek using fantasy as the armor against harsh reality. I'm also a part of some great upcoming events as I'm the guest playwright at [New York Maddess](#) Feb. 21st at Primary Stages, where I'll be giving out a theme a week before and a great group of very brave playwrights will create new short plays read that night. On the publishing front I have some great news: Birthday and Nobody will be published by Sam French this spring, joining the shelf with [Out of Time and Place](#), the anthology of Women's Project lab alumni that features The Vigil, which won the NY IT Award this year. It's an amazing time development wise-- the best way I can describe it is that I feel like every play I'm writing is speaking to the other - it's a whole new way of working and it's all happening so fast! I think it's partly thanks to the experience of learning so much in recent productions like Vigil at the Brick with Impetuous, Birthday both here and in London, and Hack! and partly thanks to being inspired by the directors who keep kicking my ass like Colette, John Hurley, Daniel Talbott. One of my upcoming projects is with Daniel - we're working on my play Sleeping World which we'll do a member workshop of at EST later this year. So excited about it. And there's two new site specific commissions coming up: a mini series for [Theater in Van](#) to be directed by David James Jackson that will most likely debut this summer and one for Rising Phoenix Rep's amazing [Cino Nights](#) at Jimmy's No. 43 this fall.

POSTED BY JODY CHRISTOPHERSON AT 7:04 PM 

LABELS: [ANDREA DAY](#), [CRYSTAL SKILLMAN](#), [RED FERN THEATRE COMPANY](#)