



LOOKING FOR LILITH  
Theatre Company

# The Lilith Lowdown

Annual Newsletter

September 2008

## Women of Will

By Kathi E.B. Ellis, Shannon Woolley

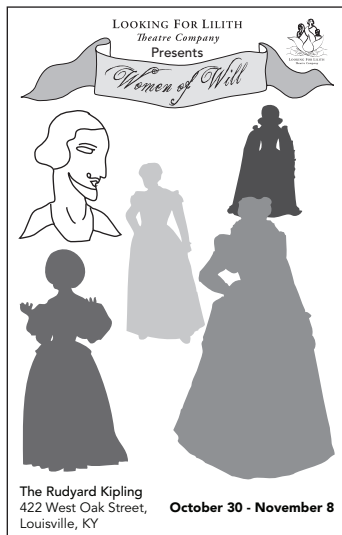
### William Shakespeare: Looking for Lilith, what's the connection?

Why should a theatre company dedicated to retelling women's stories through historical research and oral histories contemplate a production from the pen of a four hundred year old male icon? It's because his female characters are complex, subtle, and savvy, and often succeed in complicated disguises, ruses, and schemes when their male counterparts fail.

During Shakespeare's time, women did not perform on the stage. And yet, in the centuries since, female actors have sought out Shakespeare's women's roles. These roles have defined the careers of the female actors who played them, and in turn these actors have defined these roles. It's ironic that roles originally written for male actors have become linked with the emotions of the women they embody: Juliet's fervor, Cordelia's fidelity, Lady Macbeth's passion, among others. One might speculate that because Shakespeare was not inhibited by writing roles for 'real' women and the places they inhabited in society, but rather was writing to the strengths of male company members, he thus created truly human characters which female actors in succeeding generations have fully embraced and explored.

Regardless of the gender for whom these roles were written, the relationships explored by Shakespeare throw a light on Shakespeare's times and by extension reflect on women's roles in today's society. By showcasing the talents of Looking for Lilith Theatre Company members in Shakespeare's female roles, we are celebrating the accomplishments of women in the field of performance,

while at the same time exploring the dynamics of gender relations in some of Shakespeare's greatest works. We will explore how the culture of the time affected the portrayal of the women in these pieces, and how these portrayals in turn affected the culture of the time! And it is in this way that Lilith and Shakespeare can find common ground with this collection of scenes adapted by Kathi E.B. Ellis. These women, these



relationships, the politics and institutions explored in these scenes are characters and situations that we will recognize across the centuries.

- **Women of Will Performances** •••••
- October 30, 31 at 7:30PM •
- November 1, 6, 7, 8 at 7:30PM •
- Matinee November 8 at 2:00PM •
- **The Ruyard Kipling** •
- 422 West Oak Street, Louisville, KY •
- \$15, \$10 for students and seniors •
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Contents	
1	WoW / Triangle Project
2	Guatemala / TFSP / Strangers
3	Outreach / Conferences
4	How to help LFL

## "The Triangle Project"

By Kathi E.B. Ellis, Shannon Woolley, Laura Morton

"The Triangle Project" (working title) was born out of Kathi reading David von Drehle's book, Triangle, The Fire That Changed America. She knew that the stories although tragic, were also dramatic, and that Lilith's process of creating dynamic, powerful theatre was the home for this emerging project. A lunch meeting between Kathi, Shannon and Trina began the journey.

The Triangle tragedy led to significant strides in workplace safety and labor rights. Nonetheless, there are still fires, accidents and labor rights abuses that occur even now and it's that which gives this story an immediacy for today. Kathi went into the project knowing these women's stories must be told and that Lilith's process could create richly-drawn, complex, fun, tragic characters and situations recognizable to us, as well as memorialize the 132 women who died on March 25, 1911.

In the process of facilitating the creation of "The Triangle Project", Shannon believes she came to know the women

cont'd pg.3 col 3

## Perseverance Pays Off!

By Jennifer Thalman Kepler

**LFL** is proud to announce that on July 8th, LFL's Guatemala partners shared their first ever public performance!! In July, LFL artists Jennifer Thalman Kepler and Trina Fischer traveled to Guatemala for 8 days. The trip was scaled back from the planned three weeks due to inadequate funding. Despite this challenge, the trip was a huge success.

LFL hosted a four-day retreat, bringing together two groups of women from different sides of the country. The participants worked together to create a 40-minute play using Bible stories about strong women and stories from their own lives. This play was performed for an attentive audience of 40 people at a local church. These women have now been working with LFL for 4 summers, building confidence, a sense of community as well as their storytelling and theatre skills. When the project started, the women never imagined they would perform in public. Through their dedication and courage and LFL's determined and patient guidance, the women were able to accomplish this success.

Another exciting development this summer is that our Guatemalan partners, the Sinódica, have taken even further ownership by taking on project planning responsibilities. The Sinódica has invited LFL to be a part of their long-term plans.

They were able to articulate three goals for our partnership.

1. Expanding the number of women impacted by the project through artistic training as well as workshop planning and facilitation training for the organization's regional leaders.
2. Continued artistic training and more public performances through the creation of a theatre company.
3. Exchange with women from the USA who have participated in this project with the eventual dream of coming to the USA to perform.



Unidas - closing song of the performance.

*LFL is committed to working with the Sinódica to accomplish these goals. However, we will need considerable financial support to achieve them.*

### Three ways you can help!

- Consider increasing your annual donation.
- Attend or host a Faith Stories Project – USA workshop or retreat.
- Ask your interested friends, workplace, church or other community organization to consider sponsoring a portion of the project.

## Strangers/Extranjeras

By Jennifer Thalman Kepler

Last season, LFL debuted their new script through a series of staged readings. *Strangers/Extranjeras* is a cross-cultural play, which presents the story of a powerful friendship between two very different young women - a generous Mayan from remote Guatemala, and an academic, optimistic volunteer from the US suburbs. The project was inspired by the experiences of playwrights Jennifer Thalman Kepler and Charity Thompson who lived as volunteers in Guatemala. Jennifer and Charity have begun revisions on the script. LFL will produce a full production of this new work, **June 11-14, 18-20, 2009 at the Rudyard Kipling**, directed by playwright Jennifer Thalman Kepler. We are currently seeking one Latina and one Euro-American actor to play the two principal roles. We will hold auditions in the spring.

## The Faith Stories Project

By Jennifer Thalman Kepler

This fall, LFL will kick-off the Faith Stories Project USA (FSP-USA), an extension of our on-going project in Guatemala. This project allows women in both countries to share with one another their faith journeys and the challenges they as women have encountered along the way. It also provides an opportunity for women to explore their creative voices by working together to create scenes of each other's stories. Participating women may have the opportunity to travel to Guatemala to meet and work with our partners there. Proceeds from the FSP-USA workshops will help fund FSP-Guatemala.

This season LFL will host several one-day "Taste of the Faith Stories Project" workshops in both Louisville and the Washington DC Metro Area. Dates will be announced on our website. LFL is also offering half day and full day workshops as well as weekend retreats to faith institutions and women's groups. We are excited to work with women of any faith tradition.

If you are interested in learning about workshop dates and times or if you know of a faith institution or women's group that may be interested in a workshop or retreat, please contact, *Community Outreach Director, Jennifer Thalman Kepler at [jennifer@lookingforlilith.org](mailto:jennifer@lookingforlilith.org), or call phone number 502-410-1252.*



Encouraging a young woman in distress.

## Community Outreach Expands!

By Jennifer Thalman Kepler

This summer LFL held its first Summer Drama Day Camp!! During the week of June 11-15, LFL hosted one session for 3-5 year olds and one session for 6-11 year olds at Casa Latina. The camp was such a huge success that we offered a second camp the week of August 11-15 for 3-5 year olds. We are looking forward to offering more Summer Drama Day Camp options next summer.



Exploring "What it's like to be a girl."

The 2008-2009 school year is about to begin and we are thrilled to be continuing our long-term residency at The dePaul School. As a part of this residency we will teach a month of drama in both the fall and spring semester, a month of Spanish through drama in the winter and a week of drama in the summer program. This drama program is tied into the curricular topics that students are studying in other classes. They also provide a fun and creative way to learn and practice important life skills such as conflict resolution, teamwork, communication skills and problem solving. We are excited to build on the work we did with students this past year.

After a year working at The dePaul School, we have developed an impressive amount of curriculum around core content subjects such as: The Underground Railroad, Colonial America, Westward movement/life on the frontier, Kentucky pioneer history, World War II and the Solar System/Space Exploration. We have a few other residencies booked for this school year but we are actively pursuing other K-12 residencies in both public and private schools throughout Jefferson

County. If you know of a school that might be interested in one of our residencies, please contact *Community Outreach Director, Jennifer Thalman Kepler, jennifer@lookingforlilith.org, 502-410-1252.*

## Retreats & Conferences

By Trina Fischer

This August, we once again had a wonderful time at the 32nd Annual Meeting of Alternate ROOTS ([www.alternateroots.org](http://www.alternateroots.org)), a member services organization of Southern artists dedicated to community-building and fighting oppression in all its forms. In keeping with this year's special focus on Theatre, Shannon and Trina shared an excerpt of "The Triangle Project" and received wonderful affirmations, support and feedback. As always, the performances and art shared by other artists there, as well as the workshops and meetings, were inspiring, challenging and invigorating.

After this refreshing retreat-like experience, we are off again to booking conferences this fall. These booking conferences are high pressure situations where we invest a great deal of time, money, and energy seeking to book our touring productions. One great benefit we have is being a part of SQUIDWORKS, a managing network of performing artists who work in community and performance settings to advance positive social action through quality arts residencies. The artist members of SQUIDWORKS are committed, supportive and hard-working. Check it out at [www.squidworks.org](http://www.squidworks.org)!

In September, we will attend the Performing Arts Exchange (PAE) in Atlanta. LFL will have an exhibit booth and participate in an Alternate ROOTS Independent Showcase. In January, we will attend the Association of Performing Arts Presenter's Conference (APAP) in NYC. Last January at APAP, SQUIDWORKS was mentioned as an exciting new model of touring artist management and many folks stopped by the booth to say they were glad to see us back. The hope is that now the work will start to come in as a result of all this interest. Keep your fingers crossed for us!

## Donate!

*Help keep LFL's wonderful projects afloat!*

Send your tax-deductible donations to:

LOOKING FOR LILITH  
THEATRE COMPANY  
312 CRESCENT COURT  
LOUISVILLE, KY 40206

## "Triangle" cont'd

who suffered this tragedy not as victims, but as human beings with rich lives, whose great gifts were lost to our nation.

She observed her fellow actors/creators bringing to the performance a deep understanding of the life and times of the immigrant women of New York City, as well as a commitment to collaborative story-telling that makes this ensemble piece so dynamic.

Assistant Director Laura Morton observes that though the world continues to change around us, we are all so much alike. The trials and relationships and ambitions that create our lives today are similar to those that created the lives of the young Triangle women. It was this realization and appreciation that made these women so much more real and clear to her and all the collaborators and why their unnecessary deaths are so painful. Laura's proud that we are putting a face to the number and for seeing their life's stories, however modest or ambitious, as worthy of being told.

The responses from the audience that came out to support the first public reading of this new work demonstrated that they were both enlightened and touched. We look forward to welcoming our audiences to the full production of "The Triangle Project" in March 2009!

## URGENT SUPPORT NEEDED!

By Shannon Woolley

We are pleased to have been awarded The Kentucky Foundation for Women's "Arts Meets Activism" grant this season. We received \$6,150 (our largest grant yet from KFW) to support the creation of "The Triangle Project"!

On a somber note, the dire economic climate has caused many foundations to suspend grant-making this season. LFL was also negatively impacted by the Louisville Metro Council's decision to drastically cut funding for independent and community artists. This year, the majority of our funding will be generated from our loyal donors, as well as from earned income from performances and residencies. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation directly to Looking for Lilith Theatre. In addition, if you make a donation to The Fund for the Arts (FFTA) through your workplace, please consider specifying that your FFTA

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donation go to Looking for Lilith Theatre by indicating "Looking for Lilith" in the memo line, or by contacting FFTA and asking them to give support to independent and community artists.

## Wanted: Corporate Sponsors, You Can Help!

By Kelly McNerney

LFL is pleased to announce its new Corporate Sponsorship Program. LFL offers flexible categories of giving to corporations in exchange for ad space, tickets to LFL productions, and LFL "Communication and Conflict Resolution through Drama" workshops offered in the workplace. Please contact [Kelly@lookingforlilith.org](mailto:Kelly@lookingforlilith.org) if you know of a corporation and/or organization that could sponsor LFL and benefit from these incentives.

In compliance with the State of Kentucky's Charitable Gaming Commission, LFL will be holding an AMAZING RAFFLE throughout our 2008-2009 season with exciting prizes such as box seats

to the Oaks and a golfing day at Valhalla. If you would like to donate a specialty prize such as these for LFL's raffle, please contact [Kelly@lookingforlilith.org](mailto:Kelly@lookingforlilith.org). Raffle tickets will go on sale in Nov/Dec 08 and will be available till March 09. A drawing will be held at the opening night of "The Triangle Project."

You can help LFL by bringing guests to these productions, connecting us with a corporate sponsor, buying raffle tickets, and making an annual donation. And of course, word of mouth is the best way to increase ticket sales! Through your networking we can share LFL's dynamic productions and vital Community Outreach.

**Thank you for your continued support in the many ways you contribute to LFL! Wishing you a Happy Fall!**



### Join our e-mail list!

Receive e-vites for shows and events!  
To join e-mail [trina@lookingforlilith.org](mailto:trina@lookingforlilith.org)

**more info: [www.lookingforlilith.org](http://www.lookingforlilith.org)**



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