A HISTORY OF PLAYWRIGHTS' WORKSHOP MONTREAL: 1963 - 1988

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ABSTRACT

Founded in 1963, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal has served the English-Canadian playwriting community for over twenty-five years. An integral but often ignored part of the nationalistic alternative theatre movement, PWM has developed and supported the work of hundreds of English playwrights both within and outside of the Montreal area.

This study examines the work of PWM in an historical context, and as revealed in the organization's records and in contemporary reports. The written documentation is supplemented by interviews with persons who have worked with PWM. A number of these have made important contributions to Canadian dramaturgy on a national scale.

RESUME

Fondé en 1963, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal sert la communauté des autuers dramatiques anglo-canadiens dupuis plus de vingt-cinq ans. Partie intégrante, mais souvent ignorée du mouvement théatral nationaliste alternatif, P.W.M. développe et soutient le travail de centaines des auteurs dramatiques anglophones à l'interieur et a l'extérieur de le région montréalaise.

Cette étude vise à examiner le travail de P.W.M. dans un context historique, tel qu'elle apparait dans les archives de l'organisation et dans les rapports actuels. La documentation écrite est complétée par des entretiens avec quelques participants au travail de P.W.M. Parmi ceux-ci, plusieurs ont apporté des contributions d'une importance nationale a la dramaturgie canadienne.

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Introduction

The history of indigenous Canadian theatre, a theatre created by Canadians and for Canadians, and focusing more or less on Canadian themes, has been inextricably tied to the development of Canadian playwrights. Concern with the nurturing of Canadian drama was evident before the turn of the century,[1] and continued into the twentieth century with such undertakings as the Dominion Drama Festival, the work of Herman Voaden, Dora Mavor Moore's New Play Society and the Little Theatre Movement, to note only some of the better-known examples. Although they did not produce a body of work substantial enough to constitute a full-fledged Canadian drama, these endeavours led to the creation of the professional regional theatres. The alternative theatres, often nationalistic in outlook, date from the late nineteen-sixties and -ly nineteen-seventies. Prior to the evolution of the alternative theatres and the vital and substantial volume of Canadian drama they helped produce, however, the lack of Canadian-penned plays was of immense concern to many in the Canadian theatre and arts community. The Canada Council's Annual Report for 1960/61 states:

> The health of the theatre cannot depend only upon its actors, directors and designers. It is vitally dependant upon its playwrights and upon the quality of the work they produce.... The Council is of the opinion that living theatre demands living playwrights and that the Canadian theatre demands Canadian playwrights.[2]

The scarcity of Canadian drama led to the formation, in 1963, of the first still-existent organization in Canada solely devoted to the development of the Canadian play and playwright outside a producing theatre context: Playwrights

Workshop Montreal.

This study will devote itself primarily to an examination of the history of this organization. The Workshop, which began with a handful of Montreal writers brought together by three members of the Western Quebec Regional Drama Committee of the Dominion Drama Festival (Justice Edouard Rinfret, Norma Springford and Doris Malcolm), matured between 1963 and 1988 into one of the most active play development centres in the country. Its dramaturgical resources are now being extensively utilized by numerous theatres. Theatre Passe Muraille, Edmonton's Theatre Network, the Manitoba Theatre Centre and the Centaur Theatre all developed work at PWM, using the Workshop's dramaturgs, during the 1988-89 season. Programs such as the Playwrights Retrospective, Looking East, Farther West, Field Dramaturgy and Expanding Horizons involve the Workshop in play development and theatre activities at both local and national levels.

PWM workshopped over 330 plays, and supplied written or verbal critiques of many hundreds more, in the twenty-five years examined in this study. Over seventy-five of these plays went on to professional or semi-professional productions, and many others received readings or staged readings at the Workshop itself. The Workshop also presented twenty-eight original plays in studio or full productions. PWM has developed scripts by important Canadian playwrights like Carol Bolt, Tom Cone, Sheldon Rosen, Aviva Ravel, David Freeman, Ken Mitchell, Rene-Daniel Dubois, René Gingras, Maryse Pelletier, Paul Ledoux, Bryan Wade, Alun Hibbert, Kent Stetson, and Tomson Highway, among many others. Since its establishment Playwrights Workshop Montreal has been an integral part of the struggle for a permanent and essential body of Canadian drama.

The study begins with an examination of the

organization's origins, progressing to an analysis of the activities of the Workshop over the first ten years of its existence. This period, stretching from 1963 to 1972, is separated into two phases, 1963 to 1966 and 1966 to 1972. The basic structure and aims of the Workshop remained relatively constant during this period, which can be considered the Workshop's founding developmental era. The next three years of PWM's evolution, from 1972 to 1975, represent a fundamental turning point in the organization's development. During this period, the Workshop hired its first part-time Artistic Director and attempted to become a full producing theatre. This venture involved a massive expenditure of funds to purchase and convert a building into a theatre with rehearsal rooms, workshop areas, and classrooms. PWM's failure to establish itself in this location had a profound effect on all subsequent developments. Since 1975, PWM's direction has been predominantly defined by the interests and philosophies of its various Artistic Directors. An analysis of the influence of the Artistic Directors, each of whom served a two to three year tenure, and their activities with the Workshop serves as a framework for PWM's evolution from 1975 to 1988. The conclusion will attempt to locate the importance of PWM in the sphere of Canadian drama/play development, to consider what its future role may be, and to summarize what can be learned from the history of an organization that has tenaciously existed on the margins of Canadian theatre for twenty-five years, while continuing to provide an important service to writers both within and outside the Montreal area.

The history of such an organization cannot be discussed in isolation. It is conditioned by local, national and international developments, and in turn influences the environment of which it is a part. In order to place PWM

within this context, this history will be preceded by a brief examination of play development practices in Canada and abroad. For the sake of this examination, play and playwright development will be broken down into four categories; development through production in the professional theatre, development through festivals and competitions, development in educational institutions, and development in independent development centres. These categories are of course arbitrary and much cross-over exists between them. The creation of a new field of theatre arts in North America, developmental and production dramaturgy, is of immense importance to the evolution of PWM, and will also be considered. New play dramaturgy, coming to the fore as both a philosophy and a practice during the nineteen-seventies, strongly influenced the course of the Workshop. Many of Canada's top dramaturgs have served either as Artistic Directors at PWM or worked there on individual projects. Finally, some attempt will be made to summarize original play production in Toronto and English-Montreal theatres during the three decades prior to the founding of PWM.

A number of broad issues and questions form a backdrop to PWM's efforts at play and playwright development: Is there a preferred way for a playwright to learn his or her craft? To what degree can playwriting be taught, or is it simply a matter of trial and error through repeated efforts? Who should be responsible for developing plays and playwrights? Professional theatres? Government arts bodies? Universities or theatre training centres? Self-help agencies and independent development centres? The playwright him- or herself? To what extent should the playwright be involved in other theatre activities? When is a play a "finished product"? What "works" and what doesn't work in a play is often a matter of conflicting opinion;

whose judgement should be accepted as valid when two equally well-educated and experienced critics differ? How much attention should be paid to the author's conception and the integrity of the script; should a script be followed like a musical composition, or is it simply a "blueprint for performance"? Have the playwright and the text been privileged as the primary source for theatre, to the detriment of other models of play creation? Is production necessary for a playwright to fully assess the strengths and weaknesses of a script? Does the first production of a new play warrant more attention and sensitivity to the "author's vision" than subsequent productions? Is a new script more likely to be misinterpreted, and the novice writer suffer abuse and harm, in a production situation as opposed to a non-production development situation? Is there a difference between producing a new play for the playwright's development and the production of new plays to enhance a theatre's visibility and status, and to display the skills of the director and actors? Should public visibility be a requirement for a play development centre? Would this shift the onus of responsibility for the centre from the playwright to the community? How is successful play and playwright development to be gauged, and how can the "net results" of developed activity be determined in a non-producing development centre? Through outside productions? The number of scripts submitted? Testimonials from writers? Responsiveness and openness to the community and local concerns? Interest in the centre by the general community? The level of non-government funding? These issues are complex and remain sources of contention in the Canadian and international theatre communities. It is hoped that this study will contribute something towards their investigation.

In my research I have made extensive use of the PWM

archives, and I am greatly indebted to the staff of PWM for their assistance, and for the accessibility and thoroughness of these records. Particularly helpful were the Annual Reports and Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Directors, Canada Council Grant applications and financial and programming records, correspondence, newsletters and press clippings, and By-Laws and Letters of Patent. Interviews were conducted with founding members Carol Libman, Dan Daniels, and Aviva Ravel, with former Artistic Directors Bob White, Brian Richmond, Per Brask, Michael Springate, and Rina Fratecelli, and with former Presidents of the Board of Directors George Szanto and Alun Hibbert. Unfortunately, I have been unsuccessful in locating Roy Higgins, the first Artistic Director, and AD through the critical 1972-74 period. No record of any current address for Mr. Higgins exists at PWM, nor have the Canada Council, Theatre Ontario, the Canadian theatre journals (CTR and Theatrum), nor the major Canadian play developing theatres (the New Play Centre, Factory, Passe Muraille, Tarragon and Toronto Free) been able to supply a current address. My hope is that the information supplied by Mrs. Libman, other members, and the PWM archives, together with the perspectives offered by the Artistic Directors who came after Higgins (all of whom were aware of the effects, if not the details, of the de la Commune project), will be sufficient for my analysis of this period. Time and financial constraints have made it difficult to interview enough playwrights to reconstruct in optimum detail the writer's experience at PWM; however Libman, Daniels, Ravel, Szanto, Brask, Hibbert and Springate are all writers with plays developed by the Workshop (over thirty scripts among them), and their information has been supplemented by published interviews with other writers.

NOTES

1.See Eugene Benson, and L.W. Conolly, English-Canadian Theatre (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987) 11-23, for a brief survey of these efforts. Benson and Conolly's bibliography (40-41) provides detailed sources for the reader interested in further information.

2. The Canada Council Fourth Annual Report for 1960-61: 33.

Chapter One

Background

A mystique surrounds the act of playwriting, generated perhaps by the romantic notion of the writer as isolated visionary. This mystique tends to remove the playwright from the theatre and creates an image of the struggling artist alone in his or her studio.[1] The craft of playwriting is difficult and demanding, and the actual experience of writing for the theatre is often very different from this romantic image. In the professional Canadian theatre, a good example of the rigours of play development can be found in the progress of George Ryga's The Ecstasy of Rita Joe, as it was prepared for its original 1967 production at the Vancouver Playhouse.

Ryga's Rita Joe became the most celebrated of a number of original Canadian plays staged in recognition of the 1967 Centennial. George Ryga was a writer of both radio and television drama, but the limited opportunities for stage production in Canada meant that only a one-act adaption of his television play, Indians, and a full-length play, Nothing But a Man, had been staged prior to the Playhouse production of Rita Joe.[2] Joy Coghill, Artistic Director of the Vancouver Playhouse, described the first draft of Rita Joe as more "a kind of poem . . . great spurts of poetry," than a recognizable play.[3] Coghill and Ryga contacted George Bloomfield, who agreed to direct, and Ryga began working on the first of several very different subsequent drafts.

The difficulties Ryga encountered in rewriting the play are reflected in these drafts. When Coghill received the fourth, she was "horrified" to discover that "the style had changed totally into almost an American play of the thirties." Ryga had inadvertently transformed his script

into a "poor Odets instead of something quite new and exciting."[4] Following an emergency meeting in Toronto, Ryga "holed up" in Bloomfield's apartment for two and a half weeks to iron out a final draft. With Bloomfield's help, Ryga "took selective speeches, episodes, [and] concepts from all the different drafts, cutting out all the elements that were undramatic, simplistic or distracting, and restructuring what remained into a theatrically coherent whole."[5] The final draft was strong enough to survive the rehearsal process with only two scenes being edited or slightly altered.[6]

The development of Rita Joe illustrates the extent to which any given script may need revision before or during the rehearsal period, and the necessity of constructive criticism for the development of new work. In Canadian theatre, similar examples can be found in the work of Bill Glassco with David French and David Freeman, or Guy Sprung with David Fennario.[7] Thornton Wilder asserts that playwrights must recognize that "the theatre is an art which reposes upon the work of many collaborators."[8] Wilder contends that the successful dramatist "through working in the theatre gradually learns not merely to account for the presence of the collaborators, but to derive advantage from them."[9]

The playwright must also learn to be his or her own toughest critic. William Archer, whose Play-making: A Manual of Craftsmanship remained the standard playwright's guide for decades, advises the writer "to keep his material fluid as long as he can."[10] "The playwright may all of a sudden see that a certain character is superfluous," he contends,

> or that a new character is needed, or that a new relationship between characters would simplify matters, or that a scene that he has placed in the first act ought to be in the

second, or that he can dispense with it altogether.[11]

After Ibsen had written much of Rosmersholm, Archer notes, he decided that Rosmer's two daughters could be dispensed with, that Beata's childlessness should be the main cause of her tragedy, and that Rebecca and Rosmer should not be married.[12] Discerning what should be kept or discarded, what is theatrical and what isn't, how to make optimum use of the stage and the "collaborators" in the theatre is the playwright's challenge. Understandably, due to lack of experience, it is a challenge usually beyond the novice dramatist's skill.

While most critics will agree with Wilder that the best way for the playwright to learn his or her craft is "through working in the theatre," the opportunity for such work is limited by the amount of new work being staged. Most major theatres, because of the financial risks involved, rarely produce original work. The general trend in North America since 1945, argues Peter Hay, "has been for the theatre to alienate and exclude living and local playwrights."[13] As recently as 1982 Sharon Pollock complained that the Canadian playwright "remains outside the stage door," and is seldom seen as "an essential or integral part of the theatre process."[14]

In Canada, the major professional theatres, the "regional" houses and the Stratford and Shaw festivals, have generally included only a small percentage of original work in their repertoires. The Stratford and Shaw festivals are primarily interested in staging classics, while the occasional new Canadian play is presented at, for example, Stratford's Third Stage. The regionals' programming policy has become known as the "three C's": contemporary, classic, and Canadian. Contemporary international hits form the majority of most of the regionals' seasons, supplemented by the odd classic and, less often, a Canadian play.[15] The

rationale behind this programming was, according to the former head of Theatre New Brunswick and the Vancouver Playhouse, Walter Learning, a sort of "play-of-the-month" philosophy. "We had to work within the widest possible spectrum," Learning said in reference to TNB.[16]

Most of the thirteen regionals were founded in the late 'fifties and 'sixties. The relative scarcity of Canadian content (with some notable exceptions) in the major theatres, and their disinclination to foster new work, gave rise to rebellious feelings among Canada's struggling playwrights. In July of 1971 ten playwrights were invited to discuss their plight at Stanley House, "the [Canada] Council's pleasant think tank in the Gaspé."[17] Out of this conference came a series of recommendations designed to assist the Canadian playwright and to entrench firmly and permanently the production of original Canadian drama in the repertoire of Canadian theatres. The Gaspé recommendations were examined and amplified at a meeting of thirty Canadian playwrights held at Niagara-on-the-Lake in August, 1971.[18]

The first of the Gaspé recommendations insisted that the Canada Council and all grant giving agencies "make it their policy that the theatre in Canada become predominantly Canadian in content."[19] This was to be achieved through the Council's theatre programs and support policies. The second Gaspé recommendation was quite specific as to how the Council's support policies should be altered. It stated that not later than 1 January 1973 "any theatre receiving funds will be required to include in its repertoire at least one Canadian work in each two works it produces."[20] Another Gaspé recommendation suggested that the Council continue to support "small companies, try-out centres and groups devoted to the presentation of new work through readings and workshop productions."[21]

The fifty-percent Canadian content recommendation generated a storm of debate and reactionary outrage among

theatre practitioners and critics across the country. Reaction to the quota scheme ranged from nationalistic theatre critics' and artists' applause to censure, sarcasm and prophecies of doom from conservative factions. Bill Thomas, in a reaction typical of the latter group, wrote in the Victoria Colonist:

> If it ever happens, then critics should also get Canada Council grants for sitting through the plays. . . . Forcing the public to sit through a season made up of half a program of Canadian plays would be just about the best way to kill the theatre forever.[22]

In contrast, Zelda Heller of the Montreal Star, a continuous supporter of PWM's efforts and backer of the quota system, wrote:

> The next few years can decide not what Canada has to say, but whether it has anything to say. Or whether, as David Gardner of the Canada Council puts it, theatre in Canada is going to be just "another international satellite" of the Broadway-London theatrical axis: and watch its remarkable theatrical development gradually fade away from lack of native nutrients.[23]

The quota system, which was never implemented, may have been an extreme response to a difficult situation; yet, judging from the lack of Canadian content in professional theatre programs during the 1971-72 season, the playwrights had legitimate cause for concern. Of the thirty-seven theatres and companies receiving Canada Council grants, only seven staged seasons of 100% Canadian content. Of these, only the Charlottetown Festival, which received $150,000 for its standard season of light Canadian musicals, was allocated a grant over $10,000. Ten companies presenting no Canadian works received almost 30% of total grant

disbursements, including $385,000 to the Stratford Festival, $175,000 to the Neptune Theatre, $55,000 to the Centaur Theatre, $36,000 to the Shaw Festival, and $30,000 to Theatre New Brunswick. Canadian plays represented only 17.6% to 33.3% of the repertoire of another twelve companies, which received 55% of total grant allocations. The fifteen companies presenting 50% to 100% Canadian content (including the seven cited above) received only 16% of total grant disbursements; the lion's share went to Charlottetown, followed by Le Trident ($70,000), George Luscombe's Toronto Workshop Productions ($65,000), Théâtre de Quat'sous ($28,000) and Théâtre Populaire du Quebec ($25,000). Of the remaining companies staging 50% or more Canadian content, including the Factory Theatre Lab, Theatre Passe Muraille, Studio Lab and Montreal's Revue Theatre, only the Young People's Theatre received more than $10,000 ($12,000).[24]

The Gaspé and Niagara conferences laid the foundation for the creation of the Playwrights Circle (1971), which evolved successively into the Playwrights Guild, Playwrights Co-op, Playwrights Canada and finally the Playwrights Union of Canada. This organization was assisted by the Canadian Theatre Centre, which was established in 1956 as the Canadian arm of the International Theatre Institute. The CTC expanded its operations in 1965 to include a national program of administrative consultation, publication and communication. The CTC also enthusiastically promoted the work of Canadian playwrights, generated interaction between the Canadian theatre community and those of other countries, and published The Stage in Canada / La Scéne au Canada until its dissolution in 1972.[25]

The lack of Canadian content and conservative tendencies of the major theatres during the 'sixties gave rise to the alternative theatre movement. While the alternative theatre was diffuse and varied, ranging in style

from the West Coast counter-culture psycho-dramas of Vancouver's Tamahnous Theatre to the popularly-based and politically-oriented Mummers' Troupe of Newfoundland, the focus of the English Canadian alternative theatre was in Toronto. Five companies were predominant among the Toronto alternatives during the 'sixties and 'seventies; Luscombe's Toronto Workshop Productions, Paul Thompson's Theatre Passe Muraille, the Toronto Free Theatre, Bill Glassco's Tarragon Theatre, and Ken Gass' Factory Theatre Lab. While Luscombe's and Thompson's companies used a variety of ensemble techniques to create plays, the Tarragon, Toronto Free and Factory Theatres concentrated on text-oriented work.[26]

The Factory Theatre Lab (later shortened to simply the Factory Theatre) was founded by Ken Gass in 1970. The Factory's Charter declared that its primary objective was to "provide a situation for the production, including publication, of Canadian written theatre and the development of Canadian playwrights."[27] The Factory quickly proclaimed itself "The Home of the Canadian Playwright" and aggressively began to develop and stage new work. Playwrights whose first efforts were fostered by the Factory include George F. Walker, Tom Cone, David Freeman, Michael Hollingsworth, Hrant Alianak, John Palmer, Louis del Grande, Bryan Wade, and Jackie Crossland, among many others. New directors and dramaturgs were also given experience and exposure at the Factory, including Eric Steiner, Paul Bettis, David McIlwraith, Cheryl Cashman, Alan Richardson, Bob White and Rina Fraticelli. In its first fourteen years, the Factory "processed" over 2000 plays, most of these original works.[28]

The Factory played a central role in introducing new play dramaturgy and the "workshop process" to the Canadian theatre. The Factory brought together writers, directors, actors, dramaturgs, and other theatre artists, and through

trial and error honed a variety of play development systems. These ranged from simple consultations to group discussions to open or closed readings and low budget full productions. The Factory initiated the workshop process, a period of time ranging from a day to a week or more during which the writer worked on his or her script with a dramaturg, director and group of actors. The Factory's early Works festivals and later Brave New Works festivals presented as many as ten to fifteen new plays in scaled-down productions over a short period, from several days to two or three weeks.[29]

The Factory's concentration on developing original and experimental work was not without its detractors and hazards. In 1971, Performing Arts in Canada suggested that Gass' "courtship with reality has yet to pass the flirting stage" in his "ambitious policy of producing only Canadian plays."[30] Some critics, including Bill Glassco, thought that the young Factory's low-budget productions and sometimes rushed development practices may have done more harm than good to some plays and playwrights. In 1972, a dispute with Actors Equity almost forced Gass to close the theatre. Funding was always a problem, and towards the end of the 'seventies the Ontario Arts Council "began making portions of their grants contingent upon greatly improved box office," forcing the Factory to try "to find the Canadian middle road."[31]

The Ontario Arts Council's increasing frugality reflected a general tend in funding bodies at the time. An emphasis on grant-receiving organizations' showing visible results and obtaining non-government funding was part of the provincial and federal government's increasing austerity measures for the arts. "By making grants conditional upon box office and corporate fund-raising results," Gass wrote in 1979,

> the arts councils undoubtedly think that they are adjudicating theatres on the basis of

> their community support. On one hand this may be so, but it is also a strong incentive to appeal to the lowest common denominator and to simply do what has been proven will sell.[32]

Continuing financial pressure forced the Factory to exist without its own theatre space for two years in the early 'eighties.

Creating original Canadian theatre that "sells" became the objective of the Factory's chief rival in Toronto, the Tarragon Theatre. Tarragon was founded by Bill Glassco in 1971, partly in response to his experience directing two plays at the Factory the year before. Glassco found the atmosphere at the Factory chaotic, and felt that the bare-bones production techniques sometimes did not do justice to the plays in development. While a new play should be "produced modestly" because of the financial risks, Glassco asserts that "if a playwright is to learn from the experience, and if his play is to have a chance of further life," then it should be "produced with as much care and expertise as possible." "This is not easy to do," Glassco contends, "but if it is not done, the end results can be more harmful than beneficial to the writer." "To nurture Canadian playwriting talent is Tarragon's primary aim," he writes. "Canada and its theatres need their own plays. . . . Part of Tarragon's function will be to act as a testing ground for new plays, to provide a source from which other Canadian theatres can draw."[33]

Tarragon's early success was built on quality productions of work by David French, David Freeman and James Reaney, and English translations of Michel Tremblay's plays. Tarragon's tendency towards naturalistic drama made it the most conservative of Toronto's alternatives, but also the most stable and popular. During its second season, Glassco staged a new play festival sponsored by the du Maurier

Foundation, based on the Factory's Works festival. Described as an organizational nightmare, the festival received bad reviews and poor houses. This was Tarragon's first and last attempt at a festival format; it switched to public readings for its script development program a year later.[34] Tarragon's script-reading program evolved under Urjo Kareda, who succeeded Glassco in 1982, into the Tarragon Playwrights Unit.

Tarragon's Playwrights Unit is made up of six writers with work-in-progress, whose scripts have been submitted to the Tarragon. The writers meet collectively with the Tarragon's artistic staff every two weeks for a six-month period to examine their work-in-progress, perform dramaturgical exercises, and table new work. One-on-one consultations occur simultaneously, and are continued for a six month period after the Unit is dissolved. Kareda sees the Unit's function as "a process that will help to draw the play from its hidden places in the writer's mind." He stresses that it is important "not to impose, not to prescribe, not to shape the raw material too early." Ideally, the Unit will lead to productions of some writers' scripts. "The first production of a new play," Kareda contends, "has to be the writer's production, presenting the writer's vision of the play as interpreted by the most gifted collaborators possible."[35] Tarragon has produced plays from Unit writers Joan MacLeod, Don Hannah and Colleen Murphy. While the Unit has achieved "a reputation as one of the most important new play development opportunities for promising young playwrights in Toronto, if not in Canada," it has been criticised for offering productions only to plays with naturalistic styles and favouring naturalism in its play development.[36]

The idea that playwriting can be taught through exercises, constructive criticism and the analysis of work-in-progress, and that playwrights can learn from the

experience of having their work produced, did not begin with the Factory or Tarragon theatres. George Pierce Baker is perhaps foremost among the American pioneers of play and playwright development. In his English 47 classes, begun in 1905, and with the 47 Workshop (1912) at Harvard University, Baker was one of the originators of playwright development in North America. The Yale Drama Department and the Yale University Theatre, both founded by Baker, continued this work. Yale has produced many of America's top theatre artists, and is widely acknowledged as the best training centre for theatre professionals and playwrights on the continent.

The 47 Workshop and English 47 classes were a significant part of a larger movement to nurture indigenous American drama and theatre of a literary, artistic and non-commercial nature. The Provincetown Players, New Playwrights Theatre, Carnegie's Laboratory Theatre, many of the Little Theatres, the Group Theatre and Theatre Guild each in its own way was an important part of this campaign. All owed much to the "art theatre" movement in Europe. The financial hardships of producing only original or experimental work, and the internal divisions this programming generated, caused the collapse or near collapse of several of these companies.

Baker was clearly influenced by one of the best-known literary theatres -- Yeats', Lady Gregory's and Synge's Abbey Theatre. In fact, it was from Coole Park, Lady Gregory's home, where he was spending the weekend with Gregory and Yeats, that Baker wrote a letter outlining the principles of the 47 Workshop.[37] The primary aim of the literary theatre movement in Ireland, according to Yeats, was to create a body of indigenous drama reflecting that country's unique character and identity.[38] Baker hoped that the Abbey would serve as a model for a similar movement in the United States. (The Abbey was also suggested as an

inspiration for Canadian drama and theatre in 1938 by John Coulter, an Irish-Canadian who had several plays staged there.[39])

Baker's process of play development in the classroom was straightforward; the script was read, aiming for "essentially an imaginative recreation of the play at hand," and then criticised "around the table." Baker's objective was to "make everything he could understand about the author's intention crystal clear." His approach was described as simple and businesslike, going "directly to the object of study in a determined and common sense analysis of structure and substance," and employing "no affectation, no tricks, no special terminology or mystification." "He went at each script," said one of his early students, "as though it might contain the world's biggest gold nugget."[40]

Baker's most important message to his students was that "drama is essentially action." "Characterization is not the basis of drama. . . ," Baker argued, "even characterizing speech is not necessary to the drama; but illustrative action is."[41] In order to help his young writers incorporate action into their work and to gain further insights into the strengths and weaknesses of their plays, Baker created "a trying-out place": the 47 Workshop. Baker's 47 Workshop was one of the early prototypes for both the experimental theatre and the play development centre in North America.

Baker emphasized that the Workshop was primarily an educational tool to give his writing students an opportunity to learn from productions of their scripts. Audiences were at first restricted to "students and a few trusted friends of the cause."[42] Baker was interested in audience reaction to Workshop plays, and encouraged written comments at the end of performances.[43] The 47 Workshop was also used to experiment with new European methods of staging. Baker strove to "open the eyes of his writers to the new ideas of

mass, color, light, and shadow which he now knew to be as substantial stuff as plot."[44] All experimentation, however, "must be balanced and ultimately subordinate to the playwright."[45] The ultimate goal of the Workshop was to stage plays adhering to and fulfilling the "playwright's purpose".

Baker initiated university playwriting courses and the inclusion of students' work in university theatre productions. As a result, many universities in both Canada and the United States now offer playwriting courses in their theatre training programs. The extensiveness of the programs and interaction between playwriting and theatre students varies widely, however. The National Theatre School, considered Canada's preeminent theatre training facility, did not include a playwriting division in its English section until the early 'eighties. The original NTS playwriting program was unstructured and the writers were left out of many theatre courses, resulting in a very low completion rate. In an attempt to correct this situation the NTS recently reorganized the program so that playwriting students are more actively involved, and must now follow acting stream courses during their first year.[46]

Baker was also a firm supporter of playwriting competitions, to the extent that he insisted the 47 Workshop should not "interfere with, but rather supplement the Craig Prize, H.D.C. [Harvard Dramatic Club] competitions, the Bijou and other such contests."[47] The Craig Prize Play Competition, "the first of its kind in America," offered a $500 award and a one week production to the best play written by a student at Harvard or Radcliffe college.[48]

Competitions and awards have also frequently been used to spur playwriting and theatre production in Canada. As early as 1907 awards were presented for amateur theatre productions in the Earl Grey Music and Dramatic Competitions.[49] Since 1937 the Ottawa Little Theatre One-

Act Play Competition has offered an award to the best unpublished Canadian play submitted. Other well-known competitions have included the Chalmers Canadian Play Awards, Clifford E. Lee National Playwriting Awards and the CBC Radio Literary Competition. Awards are also currently presented for the best original productions in Toronto (the Doras), Vancouver (the Jessies), and Edmonton (the Sterlings). Undoubtedly, the most famous play competition in Canada was the Dominion Drama Festival.

The DDF was initiated in 1932, and from 1933 to 1970, except for the interruption of World War II, brought together amateur theatre groups across Canada in regional and national competitions. Under the guidance of Vincent Massey, the DDF competitions were the first concerted effort towards building a national theatre for Canada. Unfortunately, the DDF was less successful in nurturing Canadian playwriting than in developing directors and performers. Although "it was clear from the first days of the DDF . . . that those who formed its executive believed the encouragement of Canadian-written plays could spark a movement that would lead to a national drama and then to the building of a bricks-and-mortar national theatre," the opposite occurred.[50] It was only after the regional theatre buildings came into being, which in turn generated the alternative theatre, that a body of Canadian plays extensive enough to be considered "a national drama" emerged.

The DDF did its best to encourage Canadian playwrights, in the form of the Sir Barry Jackson Trophy for the best Canadian play in the regional competitions, but as Betty Lee observes,

> amateur groups around the Dominion were not overly enthusiastic about the idea of presenting an unknown drama and perhaps jeopardizing their chances of winning the

> prestigious top trophy or even the best play in English or French. By staging a play that had been a success in London or New York, too, amateurs identified themselves with success.[51]

The DDF was notable for bringing Robertson Davies to national attention and for staging an all-Canadian competition in 1967, but Canadian drama remained "in minuscule proportion to imported work" throughout the DDF's history.[52] Some critics have related the DDF's failure to foster Canadian playwriting to its conservative and often colonial tendencies: "What can you think," John Palmer complained, "of an organization that would give a Sir Barry Jackson Award for a production of a Canadian play?"[53]

The DDF was dismantled in 1970 and replaced by Theatre Canada, which ceased operations in 1978. Amateur competitions still take place in several provinces and in 1988 a national amateur theatre organization, the Canadian National Theatre Festival, re-started. Since 1974 the Quebec Drama Festival has filled the void left by the DDF for the English Montreal amateur theatre. The week-long QDF continues to draw respectable crowds and has introduced several playwrights who have gone on to professional production. Yet, by and large, competitions and festivals have been less successful in fostering Canadian playwriting than the fourth category of play development to be surveyed in this study, the independent development centres. One of the best-known of these is Vancouver's New Play Centre.

In 1969, a year before its demise, the DDF sponsored a nation-wide study of the state of Canadian theatre, which paid particular attention to the nurture of Canadian playwrights and plays. Douglas Bankson, a DDF Governor-at-large and head of the theatre program at the University of British Columbia, recommended that the DDF "establish an Original Play Centre (OPC) in each of its fourteen

regions."[54] The primary function of the Original Play Centres would be "to give playwrights in each region opportunities to practice and develop their craft in theatres of that region."[55] The OPC's development strategy involved a "strong play reading program" leading to a "system of workshop productions and critiques," and eventually to "full productions, publication and distribution of scripts, [and] residencies in the theatre."[56] Bankson acted on his own suggestion by founding, with Sheila Neville, Vancouver's New Play Centre in 1970.

The New Play Centre's mandate was, and is, to service and support, "through a flexible series of critiques, workshops, public readings, playwriting classes and professional workshop productions . . . B.C.'s active playwriting community."[57] In 1972 the NPC hired Pamela Hawthorn as Artistic and Managing Director. Through her work with the NPC, Hawthorn has become one of the country's most respected directors and dramaturgs. The NPC has developed work by Canadian playwrights such as Betty Lambert, Tom Cone, John Lazarus, Tom Walmsley, Margaret Hollingsworth, Sheldon Rosen and Eric Nicol.

The NPC's primary strength has been its graded program of play development. The Centre receives an average of eighty plays a year. These are reviewed by a "Critique Service," where two readers provide a "constructive written evaluation" of the script.[58] The evaluations often place emphasis on "developing the potential theatrical viability of the piece [as opposed to simply assessing its literary qualities]," and a script "may go through several drafts . . . if it remains a productive activity for the playwright." The NPC stresses that rewriting is an "integral part" of its strategy, and its focus is "on the development process over production."[59] Approximately twenty-five plays a year are chosen to progress to a second level, the "Dramaturgical

Discussion" stage, where "a working session is set up between the playwright and a director" to deal with the script on a one to one basis. Again, the focus is on the "theatrical potential," rather than the literary values, of the script.[60]

An average of eighteen plays then proceed to the "Reading Workshop" stage, where the writer "has a chance to 'hear' the dialogue and better evaluate the areas that will need more work" through an "afternoon's workshop with actors and a director." Approximately ten plays a year are then selected to move into "Extended Workshops," ranging from "two afternoons to four or five full days." Again, "the function of these sessions is to provide the playwright with the feedback needed to improve the script." Finally, six plays on average are chosen to receive a "Public Reading" following their Extended Workshops. Using "minimal or no staging," the readings are intended to gauge the response of the theatrical community, as well as that of the general public, and, hopefully, to introduce the play to prospective producers.[61]

Following their dramaturgical development, the scripts with the most potential are presented in either "Workshop Productions" or "Full Productions." The NPC's annual Short Takes and du Maurier Festival presentations are generally workshop productions where six or four plays respectively are "rehearsed and staged with actors and a director without full costumes, sets and lights." Workshop Productions are used to "present more scripts and more writers to the community than would be financially possible if the scripts were all fully produced." Full productions are much rarer: indeed in some seasons the NPC does stage any full productions. Both workshop and full productions are often used to help "scripts that would be difficult to market without having received a first production through the New Play Centre."[62]

The NPC's system of consultations and workshops evolved in tandem with the Factory Theatre's developmental strategies, and both organizations benefited from a frequent exchange of writers, directors and actors. Both these play development organizations, along with many others in Canada, have been heavily influenced by the National Playwrights Conference of the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre in Waterford, Connecticut. The O'Neill Conference, founded in 1965, is generally regarded as the foremost development program in North America.[63]

Every summer, the O'Neill's Artistic Director Lloyd Richards and President George White bring together between twelve and sixteen playwrights whose unpublished scripts have been selected from as many as 1200 submissions. Each playwright is assigned one of six or seven directors eight weeks before the conference opens, and may rework the script prior to the four-week to six-week long "Camp Eugene".[64] Once the conference starts between thirty and fifty actors are brought in, along with technical staff and a half-dozen dramaturgs. There may be as many as "120 theatre people . . . spending sixteen-hour days working on the various scripts" during the hectic summer schedule.[65]

Each script is workshopped for four or five days, followed by two script-in-hand, studio-style performances, using minimal blocking, lighting and simple props. The final performance is followed by a critique, where the dramaturg "attempts to summarize the meaning of the play, its style, its strengths and weaknesses," the director discusses the development of the script, and the playwright talks about "the intent of the work and the experience of working on it."[66] Discussion of the play is then opened to the general audience. The O'Neill's intensive format makes it a challenging and usually beneficial learning experience for novice playwrights. Its stature attracts producers from across the U.S. and secures professional productions for

many new plays.

The O'Neill process has its drawbacks. The intense concentration on twelve to sixteen plays in such a short time span makes for a very rigid schedule, which "sometimes affects the creative work." Allotting the same amount of working-time to each play can be unfair to the more complex pieces. At the O'Neill "the director is king," and determines how much say the writer will have in casting or production decisions. The atmosphere can be counterproductive to writers, who can suffer "from a curious mixture of over-stimulation and too much leisure." No provision is made for the implementation of further revisions once the final performance is completed. The process might also benefit from the increased involvement of dramaturgs with writers and directors in the pre-conference sessions.[67]

While the development process at the O'Neill resembles that of the NPC and the Factory, Peter Hay argues that the O'Neill is significantly different from its Canadian counterparts. The Canadian development centres are predominately regional in focus, Hay contends, whereas the O'Neill selects plays and brings together artists from across the U.S., as well as from other countries, and its success "rests on the broad support it receives from all sectors of the American theatre."[68] The regional orientation and limited scope of the Canadian centres has meant that their plays do not get the same level of exposure as those showcased at the O'Neill. In 1979, Hay pushed for the creation of a Canadian national development centre with a breadth and comprehensiveness equivalent to as that of the O'Neill, without success.[69]

The O'Neill Conference, the New Play Centre, the Factory Theatre and the other American and Canadian organizations that have highlighted play and playwright development as their 'rasion d'être' have made extensive use

of dramaturgs. The precise role of the dramaturg and new play dramaturgy remains unclear, however, despite many efforts at definition since the introduction of dramaturgy to North American and British theatre in the 'sixties. Dramaturgs have been described as literary managers or "literary editors" for the theatre, and are sometimes called "in-house critics", but none of these terms is sufficiently comprehensive. While dramaturgy is ill-understod and under-employed in North America, it has been an integral component of German and other European theatres since the eighteenth century.

Gotthold Lessing is credited with beginning dramaturgical practice with the publication of his Hamburg Dramaturgy (1767-9), which critiqued his own theatre's productions. Dramaturgs have also worked as writers and directors, prominent examples being Tieck, Brahm, Ibsen, Brecht, Kipphardt and Muller. Important dramaturgs in the contemporary German theatre include Deiter Strum and Hermann Beil. The 'Chefdramaturg', the head of the Dramaturgy Department in the German theatre, is usually considered to have as much power and influence as the Artistic Director.

The dramaturg has a wide variety of functions in the German theatre. S/he must ensure that the theatre presents a balanced season, including works from the classical and contemporary repertoires, so that the public can see the major classics over a period of years, while keeping abreast of new voices in drama. One of the dramaturg's most important functions is to watch for opportunities to present world or German premieres. The theatre that cannot show at least one important original play each season loses prestige.[70] The dramaturg is also responsible for casting the company's ensemble and looking for young actors. During productions, a specially assigned production dramaturg provides background material on the play's author, its theme, and its social and political implications. S/he may

adapt or cut scripts and make or improve translations of foreign plays. The dramaturg is responsible for programs, which in German theatres are much more detailed and analytical than the simple notes which usually accompany American or Canadian productions. S/he will also work as the theatre's media liaison.[71]

The drama departments of German universities, according to Martin Esslin, are primarily concerned with producing students who can function as dramaturgs. Their curriculum is designed to give the student the ability to work in several languages, competence in writing and translation, a comprehensive knowledge of classical and modern drama, and the highly developed critical capacities necessary to recognize new writing talent.[72] A dramaturg's familiarity with the history of drama and understanding of many forms of playwriting are cited as his/her greatest strength in constructively criticizing and developing plays.

In England and North America, dramaturgy has often been equated with literary management, but this equation is not fully applicable due to the relatively small number of new works staged in many major British, American and Canadian theatres. Reading scripts submitted to these theatres can be a menial, frustrating and pointless task, Peter Hay observes, if the season ahead has already been established as a mixture of classics, contemporary hits and, perhaps, a new play commissioned from an established writer. "There's little point in being able to spot that one great potential script" out of hundreds, Hay contends, "if the theatre [the dramaturg] is working for will not produce it."[73] While there have been exceptions to this situation (Kenneth Tynan's influence as Literary Manager of the British National Theatre under Laurence Olivier is often referred to), it was prevalent enough in Canada to give birth to the alternative theatres and non-producing development centres.

Dramaturgy, as it has evolved in the North American

theatre, can roughly be divided into two streams: new play dramaturgy and production dramaturgy. The division between new play and production dramaturgy is arbitrary, and a new script that progresses from consultations through workshops to production will have undergone both processes without any noticeable dividing line being drawn. New play dramaturgy is concerned with developing a new script outside of production pressures, and is the type of dramaturgy practised at the O'Neill, New Play Centre, Banff Playwrights Colony and Playwrights' Workshop Montreal. Production dramaturgy can involve either a new play or an established one. In either case, the production dramaturg helps to focus the director's and actors' attention on the author's intentions, as well as on the overall rhythm and direction of the play. The production of an established play may permit some experimentation with or divergence from the author's apparent intentions, in which case the dramaturg strives to keep the central interpretation that has been decided upon by the director and dramaturg from being hampered by unwarranted effects or distractions which may be introduced by the actors or director during rehearsals. While directors have frequently performed the functions of the dramaturg during the development and production of new work, conflicts may arise between the demands of the production and the requirements of the script. Dividing responsibilities with a dramaturg is thought to make the director's job much more straightforward.

Since 1969 the eminent critic Martin Esslin has been a dramaturg at the O'Neill conference. For Esslin the dramaturg's role in the development process is that of the "devil's advocate," challenging the playwright to confront the script's problems and "to rethink situations from the point of view of the audience member who doesn't know the play." The dramaturg, he contends, should force the author "to clarify the deep structure of the play." The good

dramaturg should "know the play thoroughly . . . read it several times, think about it, and do the necessary research." The dramaturg "must have a very good idea of the genre to which the play belongs," Esslin argues, and know "its style in performance, and the deficiencies in the script itself." "The good dramaturg is somebody who, when asked the function of any given word in a script, should be able to say why that word is there," Esslin contends.[74] He cautions that a dramaturg can "overwhelm the author with comments, and very often look as if they were trying to appropriate the play and rewrite it completely." "Finding the right amount of comment, the proper time at which to comment, and an appropriate way in which to comment" is, Esslin believes, the "fine art" of dramaturgy.[75] Fidelity and sensitivity to the "author's vision" is stressed by many dramaturgs as the primary consideration in their work.

Between the late 'sixties, when dramaturgs first made their appearance under that title (rather than literary manager or new play director),[76] and the mid-'eighties, dramaturgy and the workshop process became entrenched as the primary strategy for play development in Canada. Dramaturgs proliferated, and many major theatres began to offer workshops. By 1986 the workshop process was so widespread that the Playwrights Union of Canada held a "Workshop Workshop" during its annual general meeting to assess its influence and examine some pressing problems.

The first area of concern was with the playwright-director/dramaturg relationship. Many writers had experienced unproductive and even damaging workshops when developing their scripts with unsympathetic or indifferent dramaturgs or directors. Establishing good writer-dramaturg partnerships, without losing the critical stance necessary for development to occur, was stressed at the meeting. Finding the right dramaturg for the play was also addressed. A dramaturg who prefers naturalistic drama would not be the

ideal choice for a play that has an expressionist or absurdist style, for example. A clear set of goals on the part of both the writer and dramaturg was considered crucial; many writers may suffer during a workshop if they are unclear as to what elements in the play they want to examine. Clear goals also help in distinguishing useful from irrelevant criticism. Actors, in particular, were identified as particularly hazardous to a writer, since they are often more concerned to enhance their character than the play as a whole. A similar criticism was levelled against directors of new plays who are more interested in displaying their skills than in fulfilling the writer's intentions.[77]

Some development centres were already aware of and dealing with these problems before they were raised at the PUC meeting. At the Banff Colony, for example, the writer was permitted to choose the dramaturg or director s/he wanted to work with, and was encouraged to meet with the dramaturg as frequently as s/he liked before the actors were brought in. Actors were, and continue to be, used primarily for read-throughs, and were given limited opportunity for critical comment.[78]

The popularity of play development in the 'eighties generated a different set of problems in the United States. Andre Bishop, former dramaturg at Playwrights Horizons in New York, a development organization similar to the New Play Centre, states that "developmental" means "focusing on a writer and a play and 'developing' by stretching and refining a particular talent as a voice for the stage."[79] Bishop asserts that many theatres have misappropriated the "developmental" title and, in productions, "misinterpret or, worse, uninterpret a playwright's world, contenting themselves with throwing everything up on the stage and hoping it comes out all right." When a new play fails, Bishop notes, it is usually the writer who is blamed, yet many novice playwrights "don't know that the play is being

ruined or are afraid to speak up if they do."[80] The staged readings at the O'Neill Conference, Martin Esslin observes, are often "very much better than the final productions one sees in the theatre."[81]

In Canada, play development and workshopping became popular as well, but the continuing lack of production opportunities for new plays created other difficulties. The popularity of workshops has led to what Bob White, former artistic director of the Factory Theatre and PWM, terms "the workshop ghetto;" the situation where

> playwrights trot from Saskatoon to Halifax to Vancouver to Kamloops with their plays, spend a week or two with the actors and director, workshop their plays, and the next day get on the bus and head out to the next place for another workshop. We have a repertoire of plays that have eight-hundred workshops and no productions.[82]

Although barbed by White's typical ironic exaggeration, the complaint that too many writers in the 'eighties were receiving too many workshops and far too few productions is not uncommon; Elliott Hayes, a former dramaturg for the Stratford Festival, calls attention to what he terms a plague of "workshopitis."[83]

Pam Hawthorn shares White's and Hayes' concern, and, as one of the pioneers of the workshop process in Canada, finds the situation ironic:

> There's a whole generation of Canadians of which Bob [White] and I are certainly good examples, who have spent twenty professional years convincing everyone in this country that the developmental process of a Canadian play is important, that is, that the workshop has a place. I have the a really strong hunch that we will spend the next twenty

> years of our professional lives saying exactly the opposite, now that it's become fashionable and fundable for everybody and his dog to do workshops across the country.[14]

Hawthorn reiterates that new play development "means that for every successful piece there's got to be a hundred unsuccessful pieces and those hundred unsuccessful pieces have to get up on their feet in front of an audience."[85] Workshops have become fashionable as a way for theatres to develop plays without the financial risks of production. Many critics of the major theatres maintain that these theatres have often used the workshop system to avoid the liabilities of staging Hawthorn's "hundred unsuccessful plays."

Hayes asserts that the enormous success of original Canadian plays in recent decades is for the most part attributable to the efforts of the small, nationalistically oriented alternative theatres. Yet, "the major institutions absorb most of the available arts funding, [and] only very rarely [draw] upon the artistic successes of the smaller theatres." This results in "the ghettoization of indigenous drama, for the works [the smaller theatres] develop rarely move beyond their own network." Despite the many Canadian successes, major theatres still fear losing hard-won funds on uncertain productions, and therefore perpetuate the workshop system.[86]

The appearance of "workshopitis" and the concern that too many plays were being developed without being produced were very much phenomena of the 'eighties. In Canada, in the early 'sixties, opportunities for workshopping a new play were as rare as original productions. The history of new play production in Toronto and Montreal[87] prior to the founding of the first non-producing development centre in Canada, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal, deserves a brief

survey.

Toronto, as the cultural centre of English Canada, became home to a variety of professional and semi-professional English theatre companies in the years following World War II, some of which were interested in, and often dedicated to, nurturing English-Canadian drama. Of these, perhaps the best known was the New Play Society, founded by Dora Mavor Moore in 1946.[88] While the New Play Society concentrated on the production of classics and popular drama from the contemporary international repertoire, a significant number of Canadian works were produced, beginning with Lister Sinclair's The Man in the Blue Moon in 1947. Morley Callaghan's To Tell the Truth was premiered in January of 1949, and remounted at the prestigious Royal Alexandra Theatre in February. Also premiered during the 1949-50 season were new plays by Mavor Moore, Harry Boyle, Andrew Allen and a second play by Morley Callaghan. Perhaps the most enduring of the New Play Society's Canadian scripts was John Coulter's Riel. Throughout the 'fifties the Society regularly staged original Canadian drama, inaugurated a drama school, and assisted in the creation of the Stratford Festival. Unfortunately, the transformation of their space at the Royal Ontario Museum into a union-operated theatre forced the Society out. The lack of permanent quarters seriously harmed the Society's creativity, although it was an influential presence until its dismantling in 1971.[89]

Two other Toronto theatres that occasionally presented original work were the Crest and Jupiter.[90] Both theatres were concerned with the encouragement of Canadian theatre professionals, including playwrights. The Jupiter was the shorter-lived, operating only from 1951 to 1955, but in that time it produced plays by Lister Sinclair, Ted Allan and Nathan Cohen. The Crest, established in 1953, staged new scripts by Robertson Davies, Jack Gray, Mary Jukes, Marcel

Dubé, Ted Allan and Bernard Slade over its thirteen-year lifespan. While both these companies sought to encourage Canadian playwrights, they, like the New Play Society and the DDF, were more successful in developing Canadian actors, directors, designers and technicians.[91]

From the nineteen-thirties through to the 'fifties, Montreal's growing Anglophone population generated a number of theatre companies, the most prominent being the Montreal Repertory Theatre (MRT). The MRT, founded in 1930, engaged in a program which included workshops for the development of original Canadian plays (both French and English), an experimental theatre and drama school, as well as productions of international hits and classics. The MRT won the Sir Barry Jackson Prize twice during the 'thirties, once for a play by founder Martha Allen and again for a French work by Arthur Prévost. During the 'fifties, however, the emphasis on bilingual work and experimental and original productions declined. After a fire destroyed its Guy Street theatre in 1952, it went through several nomadic years before settling into new premises in the Navy League building on Closse Street in 1957. Mounting debts and the sale of the Navy League building in 1961 finally forced the MRT to cease operations.[92] Other English theatres in Montreal during the 'forties and 'fifties included Herbert Whittaker and Charles Rittenhouse's 16-30 Club, Norma Springford's Mountain Playhouse, the Brae Manor Theatre in the Eastern Townships, the Lakeshore Summer Theatre and the Open-Air Playhouse. These theatres were less interested in staging new work than the MRT, and, unfortunately, most had closed their doors by the early 'sixties.

A year after the closing of the MRT and the Mountain Playhouse, in the winter of 1962-63, Springford and other members of the Western Quebec DDF Committee held a meeting to examine the plight of English drama and theatre in Montreal. From this meeting Playwrights' Workshop Montreal

was born.

NOTES

1.Jean-Claude Germain, in an article discussing the differences between the Quebec and English-Canadian theatre, focusing particularly on the integration of the playwright into theatrical practice in francophone theatre, refers to this mystique as "the 19th century tradition whereby the writer writes his play at home and then sends it to the theatre." Jean-Claude Germain, "Canada and Quebec: Beginning the Dialogue," Canadian Theatre Review 34 (Spring 1982): 33.

2.Christopher Innes, "The Many Faces of Rita Joe: The Anatomy of a Playwright's Development," Canadian Drama 10.2 (1984): 145. See also Innes, Politics and the Playwright: George Ryga, (Toronto: Simon and Pierre, 1985).

3.Innes 149.

4.Innes 157.

5.Innes 158.

6.Innes 158.

7.Denis W. Johrston, "Diverting the Mainstream: Bill Glassco and the Early Years of the Tarragon Theatre," Canadian Drama 13.2 (1987): 121-162; "Shaping the Word: Guy Sprung and Bill Glassco," Canadian Theatre Review 26 (Spring 1980): 30-43.

8.Thornton Wilder, "Some Thoughts on Playwriting," The Intent of the Artist, ed. Augusto Centeno (Princeton UP, 1941) 83-98. Reprinted in Playwrights on Playwriting, ed. Toby Cole (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960) 106.

9.Wilder 107.

10.William Archer, Play-Making: A Manual of Craftsmanship, (New York: Dover Publications, 1960) 39.

11.Archer 38.

12.Archer 39.

13.Peter Hay, "Canadians at the O'Neill: Do We Need a National Script Development Centre?" Canadian Theatre Review 21 (Winter 1979) 19.

14.Sharon Pollock, "Canada's Playwrights: Finding Their Place," Canadian Theatre Review 34 (Spring 1982): 35.

15.Mark Czarnecki, "The Regional Theatre System," Contemporary Canadian Theatre: New World Visions, ed. Anton Wagner (Toronto: Simon and Pierre, 1985) 37.

16.Walter Learning, quoted in Czarnecki, 37.

17."Playwrights," The Stage in Canada 6.9 (Jan. 1972): 11.

18."Playwrights" 11; see also A Strange Enterprise: The Dilemma of the Playwright in Canada, a report on the conclusions and recommendations of a Seminar sponsored by The Canada Council at Stanley House, 19 to 23 July, 1971, distributed by The Canadian Theatre Centre; Report on a Playwrights Conference, Niagara-on-the-Lake, August 14, 15, 1971, distributed by The Canadian Theatre Centre; untitled report on the Gaspé and Niagara conferences and the founding of the Playwrights' Circle, Playwrights' Circle and ACTRA, November 1971.

19."Playwrights" 12.

20."Playwrights" 12.

21."Playwrights" 13.

22."Some Comments on the Quota," The Stage in Canada 6.9 (Jan. 1972): 17.

23."Some Comments" 16.

24.Canadian content figures include only mainstage productions. "The Canadian Content of the 37 Theatres supported by the Canada Council," The Stage in Canada 6.9 (Jan. 1972): 14-16. The Canada Council reacted to the Gaspé and Niagara conferences in its Fifteenth Annual Report by noting that "close to 50%, or about 107 of 228 plays to be produced 'mainstage' by Council-supported companies will be by Canadian authors." The Council's report does not, however, discuss dispersement percentages or which theatres presented how many Canadian plays (The Canada Council Fifteenth Annual Report: 1971-72).

25.Anton Wagner, "Introduction," Contemporary Canadian Theatre: New World Visions 11-13.

26.The ensemble oriented companies differed significantly in their approaches and methodologies. Toronto Workshop Productions (1959), a left-wing company strongly influenced

by Luscombe's involvement with Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, evolved some of its most successful plays from non-theatrical texts and other sources. Primary examples are its adaptation of Barry Broadfoot's Ten Lost Years and Chicago '70, based on the proceedings of the "Chicago Seven" conspiracy trail. Although TWP was mostly interested in working-class rather than Canadian issues, it did produce nine original Canadian plays during the 'sixties, and was the first English-Canadian company to employ a full-time dramaturg/writer: Jack Winter (see Alan Filewod, Collective Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) and Mira Friedlander, "Survivor: George Luscombe at Toronto Workshop Productions," Canadian Theatre Review 38 (Fall 1983): 44-52).

Theatre Passe Muraille used significantly different methods of play development. In the collective creation of Passe Muraille's The Farm Show, Paul Thompson took his company to live for six weeks in the farming community of Clinton, Ontario. Through meeting and conversing with the local inhabitants, Thompson wanted to "build a play out of what we could see and learn." There was no fixed text; rather the play "developed out of interviews, visits and improvisations. Most of the words were given to us by the community along with their stories." (Robert C. Nunn, "The Meeting of Actuality and Theatricality in The Farm Show," Canadian Drama 8.1 (1982): 42-54.)

The innovative approaches to theatre and play development used by these companies have tended to preoccupy analysts of the Canadian theatre scene, particularly in the two books devoted to the alternative theatre, Filewod's Collective Encounters and Renate Usmiani's Second Stage: The Alternative Theatre Movement in Canada (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), as well as in the Canadian Theatre Review. (For a recent account of the early Toronto alternatives see also Denis W. Johnston, Up the Mainstream: The Rise of Toronto's Alternative Theatres, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).) While much has been written about the plays produced by the text-oriented theatres, little has been written about these theatre's developmental methods (with a few exceptions, such as the CTR's Winter 1986 issue on new play development). There remains no detailed published account of the evolution of play development methods and the workshop process at the Factory Theatre Lab or the New Play Centre, for example.

Since the early 'eighties the original major Toronto alternatives have often been considered to represent the established theatre in that city, although most continue to emphasize the production of original Canadian plays. A new group of experimental companies -- a sort of alternative to the alternatives -- has arisen in the last ten years. Predominant among these are Sky Gilbert's Buddies in Bad Times, Richard Rose's Necessary Angel, the clown based

collective Theatre Columbus, and the feminist collectives Nightwood and Company of Sirens.

27. Program Philosophy, Factory Theatre, n.d.

28. Program Philosophy; Ken Gass, "Introduction," The Factory Lab Anthology, ed. Connie Brissenden (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1974) 7-10; David McCaughna, "Factory Theatre Lab: Always too Close to Collapse to Appreciate Being Pioneers," Scene Changes 3.1 (Jan. 1975): 7-8.

29. Program Philosophy; McCaughna, "Always too Close"; Ken Gass, "Toronto's Alternatives: Changing Realities," Canadian Theatre Review 21 (Winter 1979): 132.

30. "What's Going On," Performing Arts in Canada (Winter 1971): 5.

31. Gass 132.

32. Gass 132.

33. Undated press release, datestamped 27 Sept. 1971, on microfiche "Tarragon Theatre - History," Metropolitan Toronto Library, quoted in Denis W. Johnston, "Diverting the Mainstream: Bill Glassco and the Early Years of Tarragon Theatre," Canadian Drama 13.2 (1987): 132.

34. Johnston 145.

35. Urjo Kareda, "They Also Serve Who Only Stand and Wait For Rewrites...," Canadian Theatre Review 49 (Winter 1986): 8-10.

36. See Michael Devine, "Tarragon: Playwrights Talk Back," Theatrum 9 (Spring 1988): 13-22. As the Tarragon Unit's writers are the only ones whose reactions to a specific theatre's development process have been documented, it is difficult to know if their comments might be applicable to other development centres. Many of the playwrights interviewed by Robert Wallace and Cynthia Zimmerman in The Work: Conversations with English-Canadian Playwrights (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1982), as well as the "second generation" writers included in Geraldine Anthony's Stage Voices (Toronto: Doubleday, 1978), have had work produced by the developing theatres -- Factory, Tarragon, Passe Muraille, TWP and others, along with the New Play Centre and PWM. While these writers often discuss in detail the formation of their dramas in terms of structure, theme, character, setting, etc., for the most part little emphasis is placed on dramaturgical development practices.

37.Wisner Payne Kinne, George Pierce Baker and the American Theatre, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968) 166-167.

38.See Hugh Hunt, The Abbey, Ireland's National Theatre, 1904-1978 (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1979) 17-19; Lennox Robinson, Ireland's Abbey Theatre: A History 1899-1951 (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1968) 1-11.

39.John Coulter, quoting himself in Stage Voices, ed. Geraldine Anthony, 19. Coulter was pleased to observe that this ideal seemed to have been achieved by 1978, through "the evidence of new plays, Canadian plays; plays Canadian in the sense that they are the work of Canadians, written by, for, and about Canadians [Coulter 39]." Mavor Moore was also a continuous and eloquent spokesman for an independent and non-colonial Canadian drama and theatre. See his "A Theatre for Canada" (University of Toronto Quarterly 26.1 (Oct. 1956): 1-16) and "History of English Canadian Amateur and Professional Theatre" (Canadian Drama 1.2 (1975): 60-67). Ann Saddlemyer compares the movement for indigenous drama and theatre in Canada with the founding of the Abbey in her article "Thoughts on National Drama and the Founding of Theatres," Theatrical Touring and Founding in North America ed. L.W. Conolly (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982) 193-211.

40.Kinne 90-91.

41.Kinne 107.

42.Kinne 167.

43.Kinne 169.

44.Kinne 179. Baker was clearly influenced by the new expressionism underway in European theatre, a movement that also strongly influenced his most famous pupil, Eugene O'Neill, and O'Neill's Canadian contemporary and fellow Baker student, Herman Voaden; see Sherrill Grace, "A Northern Quality: Herman Voaden's Canadian Expressionism," Canadian Drama 8.2 (1982): 1-15.

45.Kinne 181-182.

46.Personal information from NTS playwriting program graduates Guy Rodgers and Louise Arsenault.

47.Kinne 167.

48.Kinne 145.

49.Betty Lee, Love and Whisky: The Story of the Dominion Drama Festival (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973) 65-75.

50.Lee 288.

51.Lee 288.

52.Lee 295.

53.John Palmer, no source indicated, quoted in Lee, 294.

54.Douglas Bankson, "Some Observations and Proposals Addressed to the DDF Committee Studying the Original Play in Canada," un-published typescript, PWM archives, 6.

55.Bankson 6.

56.Bankson 7.

57.New Play Centre: Fact Sheet (New Play Centre, n.d. (approximately 1984)) n.p. See also Denis Johnston and Jerry Wasserman, "The New Play Centre: Twenty Years On," Canadian Theatre Review 63 (Summer 1990): 25-28.

58.New Play Centre: Outline of Activities and Support Services, July 1984 (New Play Centre, 1984) 2-3.

59.NPC: Outline of Activities 2-3.

60.NPC: Outline of Activities 2-3.

61.NPC: Outline of Activities 2-3.

62.NPC: Outline of Activities 2-4.

63.Hay, "Canadians at the O'Neill" 19. The O'Neill Conference is one of a large number of play and playwright development organizations in the United States. Others include the Playwrights Horizons, the Playwrights Unit of the Actors' Studio, the Iowa Playwrights Workshop, the Sundance Institute, and development programs run by many universities and theatres. Again, unfortunately, very limited detailed or comparative information has been published on the development processes of these organizations. The Canadian interest in the O'Neill Conference is reflected in three articles that have appeared in Canadian theatre journals; the Hay piece, Simon du Toit, "Long Days Journey at the O'Neill Centre," (Theatrum 9 (Spring 1988): 27-30), and Jennifer Merin, "The O'Neill Idea," (Canadian Theatre Review 6 (Spring 1975): 130-132). The information on the O'Neill Conference used in this

chapter is found in these articles and two issues on dramaturgy in Yale journal Theater; 10.1 (Fall 1978) and 17.3 (Summer/ Fall 1986).

64.Hay, "Canadians at the O'Neill" 19; Martin Esslin, "Dramaturgy at the Magic and the O'Neill: An Interview with Martin Esslin by Mark Bly." Theater 17.3 (Summer/Fall 1986) 20-21.

65.Hay, "Canadians at the O'Neill" 20.

66.Hay, "Canadians at the O'Neill" 20-21.

67.Hay, "Canadians at the O'Neill" 25. It is important to note that this information is based on Hay's article, written in 1979. While Esslin's interview (1986) does not contradict Hay, it is not as detailed. It is very possible that the development process, which tends to be fairly fluid at most centres, may have been altered to correct some of these problems during the 'eighties.

68.Hay, "Canadians at the O'Neill" 23.

69.Hay, "Canadians at the O'Neill" 23-25. In Canada the Banff Playwrights Colony is the closest equivalent to the O'Neill Centre. Unlike the O'Neill, the Banff Colony concentrates on established playwrights, although beginning writers have occasionally been involved or invited to participate as "observers." During the 'eighties, under Artistic Director and writer John Murrell, Banff focused on developing plays at a close to "production-ready" state by "advanced-level playwrights," effectively eliminating the novice playwright from its program. Many of the plays developed at Banff will have already been optioned for professional production. See Brian Brennan, "Finishing School: The Banff Playwrights Colony," Canadian Theatre Review 49 (Winter 1986): 30-35.

70.Martin Esslin, "The Role of the Dramaturg in European Theatre," Theater 10.1 (Fall 1978) 48-49.

71.Esslin, "The Role of the Dramaturg" 48-49.

72.Esslin, "The Role of the Dramaturg" 49.

73.Peter Hay, "Dramaturgy: Requiem for an Unborn Profession," Canadian Theatre Review 8 (Fall 1975) 43-46.

74.Esslin, "Dramaturgy at the Magic" 21-22.

75.Esslin, "Dramaturgy at the Magic" 23.

76.The work of four dramaturgs in Toronto in 1975 is briefly surveyed by David McCaughua in "Behind the Scenes, Dramaturges Shape the Future of Theatre," (Performing Arts in Canada 12.1 (Spring 1975): 33-34). McCaughua looks at the work of Jack Winter with TWP, Alan Richardson at the Factory, Bena Shuster at Tarragon, and Peter Wylde at Toronto Arts Productions.

77.Jan Selman, "Workshopping Plays," Canadian Theatre Review 49 (Winter 1986) 15-23; Betty Jane Wylie and John Lazarus, "A Playwright's Guide to Workshop Survival," Canadian Theatre Review 49 (Winter 1986) 24-29.

78.Brennan 35. Banff's selection of experienced playwrights gives them this leeway; the novice playwright, of course, in most cases would not know any dramaturgs.

79.Andre Bishop, "Dramaturgs in America: Eleven Statements," Theater 10.1 (Fall 1978): 17.

80.Bishop 16.

81.Esslin, "Dramaturgy at the Magic" 22.

82."The Role of the Director in New Play Development: Panel Session One: 16 May 1987," Canadian Theatre Review 52 (Fall 1987): 9.

83.Elliott Hayes, "Stasis: The Workshop Syndrome," Canadian Theatre Review 49 (Winter 1986): 36.

84."The Role of the Director" 12.

85."The Role of the Director" 12.

86.Hayes 39.

87.This background survey will consider only Montreal and Toronto, although important work was being done elsewhere. The plays of Gwen Pharis Ringwood in various prairie provinces is an obvious example, not to mention the Little Theatres in Ottawa, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Halifax, and particularly Voaden's Sarnia Little Theatre. The French theatre in Quebec will not be considered as it would deserve an extensive examination and is, for the most part, outside of the context of this study. The Centre d'essai des auteurs dramatiques, however, will be looked at in relation to PWM in later chapters.

88.See Bill Tepper, "The Forties and Beyond: The New Play Society," Canadian Theatre Review 28 (Fall 1980): 18-33; David Gardner, "Dora Mavor Moore (1888-1979)," Theatre

History in Canada 1.1 (Spring 1980): 5-11. Moore, like Baker, was very familiar with Yeats and Gregory's work at the Abbey Theatre, and was Yeats' guest when in Ireland in 1937 (Gardner 9).

89.Tepper 18-33.

90.The Jupiter Theatre was founded by a group of CBC Radio actors, including Lorne Greene, Len Peterson and John Drainie. The Crest Theatre was founded and operated by Donald and Murray Davis.

91.See Canadian Theatre Review 7 (Summer 1975), a issue dedicated to the Crest Theatre, and Jill Tomasson Goodwin, "A Career in Review: Donald Davis, Canadian Actor, Producer, Director," Theatre History in Canada 10.2 (Fall 1989): 132-151; also Audrey M. Ashley and Boyd Neil, "Ontario," Contemporary Canadian Theatre: New World Visions 143-144. Prior to World War II many amateur companies were active in Toronto and other large Canadian cities. The Workers Theatres, prominent amongst the amateur companies in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and the prairie provinces, sometimes staged original work. The best known of these is the collectively created Eight Men Speak. See Toby Gordon Ryan, Stage Left: Canadian Workers Theatre 1929-1940, (Toronto: Simon and Pierre, 1985).

92.Phillip Booth, "The Montreal Repertory Theatre: 1930-1961, A History and Handlist of Productions," unpublished M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1989, 25-121.

Chapter Two

Foundation - 1963

> If anyone had to repeat what we did twenty-five years ago, they wouldn't get into it. At the time we didn't know what we were in for, which was probably a good thing.
>
> Carol Libman

In 1960 Carol Libman, an aspiring Montreal playwright, was desperate to have her scripts developed or produced. A friend, Norma Allen, suggested she get in touch with Powys Thomas, head of the English section of the newly-opened National Theatre School. Libman wrote Thomas what she described as a "heartbreaking letter"[1] outlining her plight. Thomas telephoned to say that while he sympathized with her situation, the fledgling NTS had no space available for a playwrights' centre, although something might be done in a few years. Libman, like other English playwrights in Montreal, continued to write plays and file them away.

Two years later Thomas rang again, this time to ask if Libman was aware that the Western Quebec Regional Drama Committee of the Dominion Drama Festival was organizing a meeting of all local playwrights, directors, and other theatre people. This meeting was spearheaded by three members of the Western Quebec DDF Committee, Justice Edouard Rinfret (Chairman), Norma Springford, and Doris Malcolm. It was part of their three-item agenda, formulated in the Fall of 1962, to do something concrete about the state of English theatre in Montreal which was described by Libman as "a desert."[2]

The first step was to create a committee to organize existent English-language drama groups. "Our first

thought," Justice Rinfret explained, "was to have a committee which would coordinate the work of every little theatre group in and around Montreal. In all, forty-one groups and individuals interested in theatre were contacted and a Drama Guild established."[3] The second step was the organization of a committee, called the Playwrights Liaison, formed to encourage Canadian playwrights. Under the leadership of Norma Springford and Doris Malcolm, this committee, which organized the meeting Libman attended just prior to Christmas 1962, would eventually engender Playwrights' Workshop. The third committee was devoted to the regeneration of professional English theatre in Montreal.[4]

The meeting organized by the Quebec DDF committee took place at the National Theatre School, then located at 1191 Mountain Street, and was chaired by Robert Russel of the NTS. During the meeting Powys Thomas explained the type of assistance that could, and could not, be expected from the National Theatre School and offered interested writers the opportunity to sit in on some of the acting classes. Guy Beaulne and Mervyn Rosensweig summarized the requirements for suitable television scripts. Stuart Gilman, a writer with two plays scheduled for production by the Circle Theatre,[5] suggested that playwrights with pieces in "workable condition" submit them to that theatre. Finally, a number of the writers present expressed the opinion that some form of play-reading workshop should be formed.[6] Libman describes this meeting as "chaotic:"

> Everybody agreed we had to do something, and it was everybody else's fault. The writers were screaming at the directors. Guy Beaulne was directing something called Shoestring Theatre [a CBC Television drama series]. The moment poor Guy walked in, everybody jumped on him. The actors weren't getting enough

work, the writers scripts weren't being read or produced.[7]

Libman estimates attendance at this meeting at well over one hundred people,[8] most of whom wanted to vent their frustration at the lack of opportunity for work in English theatre in the city. For most, however, talk did not translate into constructive action. The next meeting at the NTS, on 8 January 1963, attracted less than a dozen people.

This meeting, although small, confirmed the need for a playwrights' workshop. Norma Springford and Doris Malcolm represented the Quebec DDF committee, and Robert Russel again represented the NTS. A general format for developing scripts, which would remain in place for the next several years, was agreed upon. This procedure entailed a reading of the script by qualified actors (ACTRA or EQUITY members were permitted by their unions to work without fee), followed by a discussion of the work by those present. The reading would be coordinated by a moderator, who would read the play in advance, present an analysis after the reading concluded, and chair the general discussion. The writers present at this meeting included Dan Daniels, Carol Libman, and Eve Sevack, who formed a pro-tem writer's committee to further consider matters of format and organization. Daniels and Libman, the only two writers who had attended both meetings, were given first opportunity for readings. The first official reading was scheduled for 29 January at the NTS.[9]

At the third meeting Daniel's script A Typical Canadian Family was read by ACTRA players, and the subsequent discussion was moderated by Justice Rinfret. A business meeting followed during which the Playwrights' Workshop was officially launched. Daniels was elected as its first chairman while Libman agreed to serve as secretary. Libman, Daniels, Eve Sevack and John Whelan (who was then writing for television) volunteered for the executive committee. An

advisory committee (Victor Knight, Norma Springford, Doris Malcolm, Justice Rinfret, and an unnamed member of the NTS) was established to assist in the progress and development of the organization. Springford put forward a nineteen-point organizational plan defining the workshop format and the function of the Executive Committee, which was formally adopted. Springford's plan would become the basis for PWM's first By-Laws in 1966. Montreal Art Productions volunteered to finance one original production a year;[10] and in March of 1963 they staged Maxine Fleischman's Osiris' Cry at the DDF Western Quebec Regional Festival. Although this play was not workshopped, Fleischman was a member of PWM.

Once Springford's format was established it proved more or less successful over the next several years. From January to June 1963 nine plays were read and critiqued: Daniels' Canadian Family, Carol Libman's Jigsaw, Barbara Snelson's House Without Stairs, plays by Barry Ferguson, Dick Martin, Dave Mitchell and Eve Sevack, along with two pieces by Robert Sherwood (not the American playwright), The Nightmare and Lost Articles. Snelson's House Without Stairs and Libman's Jigsaw were both selected for production by the Circle Theatre, and Lost Articles was given a production by Mary Morter's Instantheatre. Moderators from the Montreal theatre community included Rinfret, Charles Rittenhouse, Earl Pennington, Guy Glover, Guy Beaulne, Eugene Jousse and Victor Knight. The readings attracted audiences of fifty or more people, and interest appeared to be sustained.[11]

The public attention given to the venture, the involvement of many of Montreal's top English theatre artists, and the early success in initiating productions signalled a promising start for the fledgling development centre.

NOTES

1.Carol Libman, personal interview, 24 April 1989.

2.Libman interview.

3.Linda Randal, "Valiant Effort Being Made to Revive English Theatre," The Gazette[Montreal] 23 Feb. 1963: 11.

4.Randal 11.

5.The semi-professional Circle Theatre was founded and operated by Marie-Lousie Holtz, a German actress newly arrived in Montreal, in various venues around the city in the mid-sixties. Holtz was very interested in producing new work, and staged a variety of scripts by PWM members.

6.Summary of the First Meeting of the Proposed Playwrights' Group, 18 Dec. 1962, PWM archives.

7.Libman interview.

8.Libman's Montreal Star article on the foundation of PWM gives the figure as "over fifty people." Carol Libman, "How the Playwrights' Workshop was Launched in Montreal," The Montreal Star 6 July 1963: 25.

9.Summary of the Second Meeting of the Proposed Playwrights' Group, 8 Jan. 1963, PWM archives.

10.Minutes of the Third Meeting of PLaywrights' Workshop [minutes untitled], 29 Jan. 1963, PWM archives.

11.Libman, "Workshop was Launched".

Chapter Three

1963 - 1966

> Within the first two years of [PWM's] establishment, whatever [playwriting] awards were being given out in Canada were being won by the playwrights of Montreal.
>
> Dan Daniels

Although Dan Daniels may be accused of overstatement, and invoking a somewhat misleading causal relationship (Patricia Joudry, for example, was at this time a Montreal playwright winning awards, but she never became a PWM member), that Playwrights' Workshop Montreal enjoyed certain competitive successes over the next few years is undeniable. By the close of the 1965-66 season, an impressive list of plays by PWM members had been designated for productions and/or received awards. Carol Libman's Jigsaw, along with its Circle Theatre production, was broadcast by Shoestring Theatre, a CBC television showcase in Montreal; her Reluctant Hero also received a Circle Theatre production.[1] The Rich are Always with Us by May Cutler was produced by Marianopolis College. Aviva Ravel's Song in the Furrows and Goodbye were staged by Circle Theatre, her Soft Voices at the Theatre de la Place, Shoulder Pads at Instantheatre (both in English and French), and her half-hour radio play You Can't Rush the Messiah was aired by station CFMB. Yet another Ravel play, Mother's Day, was produced by the Young Israeli School of Montreal. Robert Sherwood's Lost Articles was produced by Instantheatre in Place Ville Marie (a lunchtime theatre group in the Théâtre de la Place), and Daniels' The Audition was staged by the Hertel Mountain Theatre in Beloil. Maxine Fleischman's Osiris' Cry was translated into French as Pain-Beurre and produced by

Théâtre de La Place in Place Ville Marie. This is the first instance of PWM encouraging a play translation, an aspect of bicultural communication which was to grow in importance to the organization during the 'seventies and 'eighties. Two television plays by John Whalen, Liferaft and Special for the Wedding, were produced by Shoestring Theatre, and Marjorie Morris' The Swap Shop was adapted for national CBC radio. A number of children's plays were also presented at schools around the city. Daniels estimates that sixteen plays workshopped at PWM had been given productions by the close of the 1965-66 season.[2]

The awards garnered by PWM playwrights, while by no means a majority of all prizes given out in the country, indicate that the organization had established a foothold as a play development centre of some significance. Daniels' The Audition was named "best new Canadian play" in the Western Quebec Regional DDF of 1965, while taking second place honours in the National Playwriting Seminar Awards in London, Ontario. Fleischman's Bird in the Box took second prize in the latter contest, while Ravel's The Adventures of Mendel Fish took first honourable mention.[3] Robert Yachnin's The Sound of Goodbye tied for first place in this competition in 1964. Robert Shirley's Pi won third prize in the 1965 Ottawa Little Theatre Competition, and Mac Reilley received an honourable mention for his Express.[4]

PWM's achievements over its first three years are highlighted in the organization's records, and were obviously highly encouraging to its members. Between January 1963 and the close of the 1965-66 season, the Workshop developed forty-five plays using the reading-discussion format. In the fall of 1964 the PWM development program was enhanced by the inclusion of a festival of "concert readings".

The first Playwrights' Festival, running from Wednesday, 21 October to Friday, 23 October 1964, was held

at the Théâtre de la Place in Place Ville Marie. The rationale behind the event was explained by Dan Daniels in his summary of the organization's activities for the year:

> We hoped to achieve three things with our Festival; one, to show the public that Canadian plays were available; two, to encourage producers in the fields of radio, television, and film to start looking towards local talent; and three, to push local theatre groups into staging Canadian works. If the plays had any talent we would succeed, and if they didn't, we really wouldn't be any worse off than where we already were.[5]

The first evening involved a presentation of three one-act plays: Tevia Abrams's Cool Cage, Robert Sherwood's Lost Articles, and Libman's Jigsaw. The following two evenings were given over to full-length plays, The Peacemongers by Ray Cunnington and Daniels' The Audition. The plays, selected from scripts workshopped to that point by PWM, were chosen by a jury made up of Victor Knight, Norma Springford and Marcel Dubé (the francophone Quebec playwright second only to Gratien Gélinas in importance during this period).[6] Directors for these productions included prominent Montreal theatre artists Walter Massey, Victor Knight, and Paul Brennan.

The concert readings were script-in-hand mini-productions using simple blocking and props, similar in form to the scaled-down productions of the O'Neill Conference, the Workshop Productions of the New Play Centre, and indeed the type of production currently used by PWM in their staged readings. The fact that people were turned away from the 100-seat theatre every evening was extremely encouraging to the playwrights, and indicates that the festival was a solid success. Prophecies that the relative invisibility of the organization and the effect of limited advertising (only

press notices and private letters of invitation were sent out) would result in negligible attendance went unfulfilled. Reaction to the productions was "mixed," according to Daniels, but "there was a general sense of appreciation and excitement expressed; some people became aware for the first time that there was a body of local dramatists."[7]

Daniels' credits the festival with the selection of Jigsaw for radio and stage production and the subsequent productions of Lost Articles and The Audition. The outside productions and presence of directors and producers in the audience indicates that the second and third objectives of the festival were, at least in the eyes of the membership, satisfactorily met. The first objective was judged as fulfilled by the attendance and reactions of the audiences. The substantial results of the first Playwrights Festival helped the organization establish a more solid and secure presence over the next two years.

The 1964-65 season also witnessed another important innovation, the first writing course for novice members. The course's aim was to stimulate writing for the stage and interest in the theatre, objectives similar to those of G.P. Baker's playwriting courses at Harvard. PWM's membership had burgeoned to over one hundred, many of whom had little or no practical playwriting or theatre experience. The Board of Directors stipulated that full membership was contingent upon the submission of a full-length script within one year of an individual's application for membership; otherwise the new member received Associate Member status. The Associate Member category was designed for people who wished to support the organization but were not budding writers. The writing course was created to assist new members interested in playwriting who had difficulty in fulfilling the full-membership requirement.

The Creative Course on Playwriting was divided into two semesters; in the first student-written short exercises

introduced newcomers to some of the complexities of the theatre, and in the second students grappled with the challenge of preparing full-length scripts. The first semester, funded by the Western Quebec DDF through a grant of $480 ($80 of which was returned at the close of the course), was conducted by Walter Massey. Massey, although not a writer himself, was selected for his wide experience in the theatre and specifically for his awareness of the demands the theatre made on dramatists. The second segment of the course was conducted by John Whalen, who was considered to be the most prolific and established of the PWM writers, and the person most proficient in the structure of the "well made" play. This semester built on the foundation laid by Massey, moving from short pieces to fully developed scripts. Daniels estimates the participants to have numbered around twenty. Due to lack of demand or questionable results, the course was not offered during the 1965-66 season.[8]

The Workshop's readings were held at a variety of locations between 1963 and 1966. Following the loss of their space at the NTS when the school moved to new quarters on St-Laurent Boulevard, PWM spent the first half of its second season at the Mansfield Book Mart, where they continued to meet every two or three weeks. By January of 1964 they had acquired space one evening a week at the Théâtre de la Place, which was unused on Monday evenings. The 1965-66 season began with a move to the Ignace Bourget School on Mountain Street, close to the former location of the NTS. PWM's sojourn at the school was short lived. By February of 1966 they had located and began to refurbish their first independent venue, the upper two floors of a three-story building at 282 Ste-Catherine Street, close to Place des Arts.

The space was not large, and low ceilings were a problem, but the central location was considered ideal. The

middle floor was used as a lobby and office space, the upper floor for workshop and production work. Payment of the rent was a perpetual struggle since routine fund-raising strategies proved insufficient to cover increased expenses. Until now funds consisted of little more than membership fees supplemented by an occasional small grant from the DDF. In order to keep the space open, additional income was aggressively sought: movement classes were given, much to the irritation of the shoemaker on the ground floor; one summer the space was rented to a group of theatre students from Vermont; and an individual even rented living quarters there, in violation of its status as a non-residential location. Fire regulations were another problem, but the fire department was out-manoeuvred by a variety of methods, including dipping curtains in a fire-proofing solution, the formula supplied by the NTS.[9] A city permit to operate as a "private club" was applied for, but in order to sign the lease the workshop needed to become an officially-recognized institution. Thus on 12 April 1966, "the petition of the Playwrights' Workshop (Montreal) Inc., was approved by the Director of Companies Branch of the Department of the Provincial Secretary of the Province of Quebec;" and the Playwrights' Workshop became incorporated as a non-profit company.[10]

The incorporation of PWM necessitated the creation of the group's first official set of By-Laws. The first By-Law stated that the Workshops' objectives were:

> To encourage writing for stage, radio, television and films; to help members to perfect their craft; to disseminate such material to members as to production needs of drama groups, playwriting competitions, markets and, if possible, to produce second readings or productions of particularly promising scripts, after they have undergone

prerequisite "first reading."

The first twenty By-Laws in effect rendered official the structure already in place. The hierarchy and duties of the Board of Directors were set out, the principal positions being President, First and Second Vice Presidents, Treasurer, Recording, Corresponding, and Membership Secretaries, Script Coordinator, Chairman of Script Reading Committee, Publicity Manager, representative to the Western Quebec DDF Committee, and Past President. These officers were responsible for the functioning of a number of operational committees which coordinated the activities of the Workshop: the Financial Committee, Script Reading Committee, Production Committee, Catalogue Committee, Rental Committee, and House, Social, Telephone and Mailing Committees. Membership categories were identified as Writing Member, Associate Member, and Honorary Member (currently the only honorary member of PWM is Carol Libman). The tradition that only writing members could hold voting positions on the Board of Directors was made official.[11]

A Catalogue Committee was created to prepare a comprehensive listing of plays workshopped during the first three seasons. One thousand copies of the catalogue were printed during the summer of 1966, and distributed to professional and amateur companies throughout the country. Members were hopeful that the information would arouse interest in possible productions, but reaction fell short of expectations. It should be noted, however, that this catalogue was one of the first such compendiums of contemporary English-Canadian drama produced by a development agency, and significantly predates the first catalogue produced by the Playwrights' Co-op in the early 'seventies.[12]

The procedure for script workshopping and development was also spelled out in the By-Laws, with little change in the formula evolved over the first three seasons. By-Law

Twenty stated that only Writing Members could submit scripts for readings or productions, or inclusion in the catalogue, although an Associate Member could alter his/her status to that of Writing Member by submission of a script along with payment of a Writing Member's fee. Scripts were to be given readings in order of submission; however, the Script Reading Committee was given leeway "to provide an interesting program for the members."[13]

Article Twenty-two of the By-Laws stated that "If a majority of the Playreading Committee decide that a script is not ready for first reading, it shall be returned to the writer together with some criticism." Dan Daniels was strongly opposed to any elimination or ranking of a script prior to a public reading, and asserted that the Workshop should be open to any writer desirous of a reading.[14] Other leading members did not share this view, however. Aviva Ravel believed that public readings and criticism would often be disadvantageous to the writer, that he/she "could be very discouraged, and [the effects of the reading were] quite devastating for many people, who would afterwards stop writing."[15] Article Twenty-three made provision for a grievance procedure in case of rejection, and the possibility of re-submission upon the rewriting of the script.

Finally, Articles Twenty-Four to Twenty-Six outlined the procedure for workshop-readings; the writer would be responsible for obtaining the services of a director and cast, with the assistance of the committee if necessary, and the Script Coordinator was expected to select a moderator or panel for discussion of the work. If the script was judged to be of sufficient merit, then the writer would be given the opportunity to rework the play, assisted by a director, with a view to a second, better-rehearsed reading or studio production.[16]

During the 1965-66 season the workshop experimented

with various forms of moderation for first readings. The consensus found that a single moderator or two-member panel worked fairly well; a panel of more than two members became unwieldy, the final panelists often added little to what had already been said and discussion from the floor was frequently curtailed to accommodate panelist's comments. Moderators participating in the course of this season included Norma Springford, Professors P. Traci of Sir George Williams University and I. Borwick of McGill, CBC television producers Gary Plaxton and Brian O'Leary, and stage directors Paul Brennan, Jack Crisp and Howard Ryshpan.[17] A degree of interaction between PWM and the academic and professional theatre communities was beginning to take place.

The Interim Report for 1965-66 concluded with the hope that it would shortly be possible "to secure the service of directors (through special financial assistance for this project) to work directly with the playwrights of promising scripts."[18] The next few years would see the expansion of PWM's development practices through a system of studio productions and other programs. The first three seasons admirably set the stage for the continued stability and growth of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal.

NOTES

1. Reluctant Hero had been written well before the founding of PWM, and had won top honours in the 1956 Ottawa Little Theatre Canadian Playwriting Competition.

2.Dan Daniels, The Third Season, unpublished typescript, a summary of the first three seasons of PWM, supplied to the author by Daniels.

3.To give some indication of the level of competition, Tom Grainger won first prize in this contest and Joudry third and forth honourable mention. "5 of 7 Playwright Awards Garnered by Montrealers," The Gazette [Montreal] 3 June 1965: 15.

4.Daniels, Third Season.

5.Daniels, Third Season.

6.The inclusion of Dubé in the screening panel, as well as French productions of Fleischman and Ravel plays, indicates that intercultural communication was occurring through the efforts of PWM.

7.Daniels, Third Season.

8.Daniels, Third Season; personal interview, 17 May 1989.

9.Libman interview.

10.Interim Report 1965-66 Season, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal, 25 April 1966, PWM archives.

11.General By-Laws of: Playwrights Workshop Montreal (Inc.) [1966], PWM archives, 1-8.

12.Interim Report 1965-66. The decision by the Co-op to list in its catalogue only plays produced in Equity houses was a source of rancour for Dan Daniels, and perhaps other writers at PWM and elsewhere in the country. Daniels points out that there were virtually no Equity stages during the 'sixties producing English-Canadian plays in Montreal. The exclusion of non-Equity produced plays thus eliminated such successful (within the relative conditions of the period) Montreal writers as Ravel, Sherwood, Daniels, Fleischman, Reilley and Libman from the possibility of reaching a broader audience. Michael Springate shares Daniels' view that the lack of opportunity for these writers was damaging to their development, and feels that both Daniels and Ravel could have benefited from a chance to work with a producing theatre in Toronto [Michael Springate, personal interview, 21 May 1989].

13.General By-Laws 10.

14.The growing selectivity of PWM in the coming years would lead to Daniels' disenchantment with the organization, and his eventual withdrawal from its activities [Daniels interview].

15.Aviva Ravel, telephone interview, 4 May 1990.

16.General By-Laws 10.

17.Interim Report 1965-66.

18.Interim Report 1965-66.

Chapter Four

1966 - 1972

> Writers need an environment in which to work and mature -- a theatre environment. . . . We must not be afraid to try. And we must not be afraid to fail.
>
> Charles Godlovitch

In retrospect 1967 now stands as a watershed year in the history of indigenous Canadian drama. The centennial year witnessed the production of sixty-two Canadian plays in French and English in the all-Canadian Dominion Drama Festival, professional Canadian productions of Gélinas' Yesterday the Children Were Dancing, Reaney's Colours in the Dark, Henry's Lulu Street, Coulter's The Trial of Louis Riel, Ryga's The Ecstasy of Rita Joe, and the successful New York run of Herbert's Fortune and Men's Eyes.[1] The nationalistic fervour generated by these productions was infectious, and gave members of PWM the incentive to explore new methods of play development and entrench their presence as a play development facility.

PWM members continued to achieve a measure of success in amateur productions, with six plays presented in regional DDF competitions from P.E.I. to Alberta. Mac Reilley's A Tower for Tommy took first prize in the 1967 Ottawa Little Theatre Playwriting Competition, with Honourable Mentions going to two plays by Marjorie Morris and a play by Wilfred Werry. The adjudicator described Reilley's work as "a first rate piece of theatrical magic" and "the only play in the competition that uses imagination as the sole technique."[2] Robert Yacknin's The D.P.'s and Tevia Abrams' And No Ceremony were runners-up in the local CBC affiliate's Centennial Competition, and both were subsequently

broadcast. Fifteen new plays, three full-length and twelve one-act, were given readings during the 1966-67 season, and a workshop on script development through improvisation was conducted. Perhaps the most significant event of the season, however, was the first PWM foray into full stage production of its own work.[3]

The writers did not leap into production without caution. They decided to mount a bill of three one-act plays for a run of three nights, from 20 April to 22 April 1967. The first Playwrights' Showcase featured Robert Shirley's Pi, Marjorie Morris' The Slumber Room, and Carol Libman's The Clearing. This selection may have reflected the Workshop's desire to give writers who had not had work picked up by companies entered in the DDF a chance at production. Of the six PWM plays presented in the DDF centennial competitions, Aviva Ravel and Mac Reilley penned two each, and the remaining two were Daniels' The Audition and Fleischman's The Bird in the Box. The Showcase was partially financed by a $600 grant from the DDF's Professional Directors' Plan, to cover the directors' fees, and a $300 grant from the Gallery Players. When box office receipts were taken into account, the production almost paid its way.[4] Critical response to the plays was mixed, but most reviewers recognized that the actors were unpaid semi-professionals and this was PWM's first attempt at full production. The PWM executive believed the venture achieved its two principal goals: the presentation of PWM work in a production format (which entailed the establishment of an ad hoc production arm), and the creation of an opportunity for writers to learn from this experience. The experiment was deemed sufficiently worthwhile to deserve repetition, and a second Showcase was scheduled for December, 1967.

This Showcase ran for four evenings, 6, 7, 9 and 10 December, becoming the first production to be staged at the newly opened, 225-seat Saidye Bronfman Centre theatre. The

three one-act plays selected for this production were Reilley's A Tower for Tommy, Tevia Abrams' And No Ceremony, and Robert Shirley's Aunt Mariska. Martin Malina of the Montreal Star gave the plays mixed reviews; the performances and direction received positive comments but his reaction to the scripts was uniformly negative. Malina's kindest remark was reserved for A Tower for Tommy. "Reilley's play," he wrote, "stands out as the most imaginative of the trio -- plot out of Beckett, Pinterish dialogue with the neo-logical wit of N.F. Simpson -- also the most interesting."[5]

The Abrams' play was a surrealistic vision of war played out by two combatants in the future. Thematically it reflected the concerns expressed in Libman's The Clearing, in which the representative of an unnamed foreign superpower attempts to compensate the members of a village for losses suffered when the village was bombed. Allusions to the American invasion of Vietnam, at its height during this period, are obvious in both plays and illustrate Workshop members' attempts to grapple with contemporary social issues. Absurdist leanings in the dramas of Reilley and Daniels also reveal their engagement, albeit largely derivative, with trends in international theatre.

In 1968-69 PWM began to present "studio productions" in its space at 282 Ste-Catherine Street. These productions went beyond the standard staged readings. Actors were required to memorize their lines and the performance utilized a minimal set with some props. In November of 1968 Carol Libman's Follow the Leader and Aviva Ravel's No More Ketchup were produced in this manner. Libman's play had won second prize in that year's Ottawa Little Theatre Competition, while Ravel's work had taken fourth prize. The Ravel play, along with Dan Daniels' The Inmates, went on to full production at the Revue Theatre.[6] Other studio productions during the 1968-69 and 1969-70 seasons included The Death of God by Dick Martin, Mac Reilley's The Road,

Paul Hartwick's Down to Brass Attacks, June O'Brien's Christmas Dinner, and Catherine Reed's Venerable Hunters.[7]

Early in 1970 the rent at 282 Ste-Catherine, raised "one last time," reached a level the PWM Executive deemed unreasonable. In April PWM moved into basement quarters at the Centaur Theatre where they rented space for an office, rehearsal studio and meeting area. The lack of production facilities (at the time Centaur had only one theatre and made "full use of it themselves")[8] meant PWM would stage its plays at various locations until a new studio space was found at 461 St-Sulpice in 1972.

A children's play by Frances Freedman, The Old Man and the Robot, was staged in the Centaur's lobby for two afternoon performances in May of 1971. Earlier that spring PWM staged a studio production of Charles Godlovitch's Thunder on a Distant Mountain at 108 Ste-Catherine Street, a small theatre space only a short distance from their former location. This play ran for four evenings in March of 1971. Two one-act plays were also produced in conjunction with Arleigh Peterson's Revue Theatre: Stonechild by Judith Nelson and Graveyard by Gaby Yancovics.

In November of 1971 two one-act plays were produced by PWM at the Pendulum Theatre, the former Théâtre de la Place, in Place Ville Marie. One With the Druids by Godlovitch and Breakthrough by Joanne McManus were both given positive press reviews. The following March (1972) two more one-act plays were produced by PWM in the same theatre -- Gérard Rejskind's Upward not Northward and Retribution by Mac Reilley. All four plays received positive reviews. In 1970 seven of Reilley's one-act plays were published by Vantage Press of New York. All of these plays had been workshopped, and three staged, by Playwrights' Workshop Montreal. Godlovitch's Timewatch and Ravel's Black Dreams were published in the collection, Contemporary Canadian Drama, which appeared in 1974.[9] Several plays by other PWM

members were published during the 'sixties and early 'seventies. In June of 1972 Carol Libman's Holiday from the Dark was mounted by PWM at the Centaur Theatre, and received highly favourable reviews. It was, like most PWM productions, offered free of charge to the public (entrance fee to early Showcase productions was a nominal $2.00). One reviewer even stated that the no-charge admission policy was "demeaning" to the quality of the work and performances.[10]

A summary of open readings and productions presented by PWM between 1966 and 1972 is as follows:

Year	Readings	Productions
1966-67	15	3
1967-68	13	3
1968-69	13	3
1969-70	4	4
1970-71	8	4
1971-72	*n.a.	5
Total	43	22

* information not available

In the six year period detailed above Playwrights' Workshop Montreal presented over sixty-five original plays. This achievement becomes even more impressive when one takes into consideration the minimal funding of the organization, the fact that until 1972 PWM had no paid staff whatsoever, and the complications involved in generating original English-Canadian drama in a city where French Quebec was striving to discover its own voice, both culturally and politically.

The organization remained sparsely funded during the 1966 to 1972 period, despite increased visibility and public involvement. In 1968, following its incorporation, PWM received its first government grant -- $2000 from the Quebec Department of Cultural Affairs. Carol Libman attributes this assistance to the establishment in 1965 of PWM's

francophone sister organization, the Centre d'essai des auteurs dramatiques (CEAD), which legitimized the presence of PWM in official eyes.[11] The following year PWM received its first Canada Council operating grant of $1200. The Annual Report for the 1969-70 season offers a detailed account of PWM's financial situation in the middle of this six year period; the Quebec grant remained steady at $2000, the Canada Council supplied $1200, and the Professional Directors' Fund of the DDF donated $750. All other income, including donations, membership fees, collections at the door, small profits on productions (less then $200), and sublets of their space, totalled less than $1000. The most serious expense of the season was the rent, which totalled over $2000. Total productions costs that season (the year PWM cut back on production activity) were under $500, excluding $750 paid to directors from the DDF grant. Thanks to the reduction of activities the organization finished the season over $3000 in the black.[12]

The second PWM Showcase, the first production at the Saidye Bronfman theatre, offers a typical example of production costs. Expenses totalled less than $750, with $500 going towards rent and lighting. The props budget for the combined three one-act plays was under $10, with $50 allocated to costumes.[13] Like all theatrical organizations, PWM always walked a very thin financial line, a line that would be precariously trodden in the two years following the close of the 1971-72 season.

Playwriting courses were reinstituted during the 1969-70 season, and carried on throughout the following year. Titled "The Image Process and the Playwright," the course was designed to help novice writers incorporate theatrical devices in their work. The most successful script to come out of the course was Frances Freedman's children's play, The Old Man and the Robot.[14]

Other events over these seasons included various

lectures and presentations by theatre professionals and playwrights. Paul Mann, actor, director and teacher in New York, and Chairman of the Theatre Faculty at the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay (and a relative of the Libmans), gave a lecture on "The Responsibility of the Theatre Artist" in the summer of 1967. Carol Libman invited Mann to the Workshop whenever he came to Montreal and funds could be arranged. He would then lead an analysis of the Workshop's latest efforts. Libman describes one such event in October of 1972:

> He came up and did a weekend seminar. We got a Canada Council grant for this. We did four plays, one on Friday night, two on Saturday, and one on Sunday. They had been quite well rehearsed, some had been mini-productions that we had done. He discussed them from the point of view of the writing, the acting, and everything else. These were captivating sessions; Paul was a top theatre man, he knew his stuff. The Moscow Art Theatre had given him a Seagull to direct -- that shows you his stature. Some people hated him, others thought it was the most invigorating thing they'd ever been to, although exhausting.[15]

John Herbert was also invited to lecture at PWM, and dealt with issues similar to those treated by Mann. Other events included lectures by Professors Berwick and Springford on Brecht and Canadian Theatre respectively, and an evening dedicated to Asian Theatre coordinated by Tevia Abrams, whose work with the United Nations had familiarized him with this area. The event included the performance of two Indian Village plays, described as "most interesting and enjoyable."[16] While these many events indicate a general expansion of the Workshop's activities, PWM's development practices were also being significantly modified.

The most visible change was the inclusion of studio productions. While these productions helped to increase the Workshop's profile, their "primary function" was "a learning experience for the authors . . . through work with a professional director before and during rehearsals."[17] The reading program, although beneficial to the extent that playwrights were given the opportunity to hear their work and receive feedback, had several shortcomings. The time and monetary constraints imposed on the readings meant that writers could not obtain as much response from directors as they wished, although a small amount of pre- and post-reading criticism was available. These constraints also made it difficult to develop vital long-term writer-director relationships. Studio productions offered more intensive scrutiny of the work and gave writers time to develop dramaturgical relationships with directors. Unfortunately, the lack of original English-language play production in Montreal meant that even the most gifted and co-operative directors were often unfamiliar with the problems of novice dramatists.

During this period the Workshop become increasingly self-critical and concerned about the quality of its play development and the work presented to the public. Studio productions, while perhaps the optimum development process for a play in the advanced stages of formation, were expensive, a heavy drain on energy, and not suitable for less advanced plays. The Executive felt that "too many scripts, simply not ready for public readings were being read, when, what was really required, was a thorough critique of the play."[18] Taking their cue from the CEAD, the Workshop began to use round-table discussions as an alternative form of play development during the 1969-70 season.

During round-tables a script's author would sit down with "two or three Workshop writers and at least one person

from the Montreal theatre milieu."[19] The play was given a closed critique that would, hopefully, expose its areas of weakness to the writer.[20] The final decision as to whether the play would be given a public reading remained with the writer, however. The use of round-tables and studio-productions prefigures the type of consultational dramaturgy that would become standard play development practice during the 'seventies. A total of five round-table discussions took place that year, ten the following season, and six in 1971-72.

Readings, round-tables, studio productions and playwriting courses all helped to broaden the Workshop's dramaturgical efforts. By the end of the nineteen-sixties PWM's program was beginning to resemble those which would evolve at development organizations like the Factory Theatre and New Play Centre. Yet several problems still plagued the Workshop. PWM was run by the Executive and various committees. While this structure was democratic, it meant that writers had no specific individual they could turn to as the "chief dramaturg"; a single voice that represented the Workshop's leadership and could be relied on for a long-term, focused critical vision. All development centres employ a large number of dramaturgs to work with their writers, but continually successful organizations have also had a single leader who shaped and defined the organization's methods of operation, and who was ultimately responsible for its dramaturgy. G.P. Baker at Harvard and Yale, Lloyd Richards at the O'Neill, Pam Hawthorn at the New Play Centre, Ken Gass at the Factory and Bill Glassco at Tarragon are obvious examples. Recognition of the need for a focused direction and a single artistic director would lead to the hiring of PWM's first AD in 1972.

Another problem was related to public support and visibility. The organization had grown to the point where it needed public funding to survive. Although the

Workshop's primary aim was to nurture playwrights and develop plays, a certain amount of public profile was needed to support developmental operations and expand programs. Public profile was also desirable in order to make plays in development known to prospective audiences and theatres. The success of development centres like the O'Neill, the Factory and the New Play Centre has been linked to their public stature. All three organizations use their studio productions, in part, to maintain profile, and despite their visibility the latter two have, on occasion, encountered severe financial difficulties. PWM would shortly discover that increasing its profile while losing sight of its primary goals could have extremely damaging repercussions.

A third problem was related to outlets for developed plays. As mentioned above (see Background), in 1969 the Dominion Drama Festival sponsored a nation-wide dialogue on the state of Canadian theatre and playwriting, and Playwrights' Workshop Montreal was not slow to make its voice heard. The Western Quebec Regional DDF Committee created a Playwriting Study Group under the Chairmanship of Carol Libman. PWM representatives to the Study Group included Dan Daniels, Marjorie Morris and Charles Godlovitch. In one of the first examples of interaction between English and French development centres, the Centre d'Essai des Auteurs Dramatiques was represented by two of its prominent founding members, Robert Gurik and Marc Gélinas. Yvonne Heenan represented the Western Quebec DDF Committee.

The principal focus of this Study Group was on the DDF's capacity to foster greater communication between PWM and the CEAD, and between these organizations and other play development centres and theatres, both amateur and professional, outside the Montreal area. It recommended some restructuring of the established DDF competition format, as it was felt that "distribution of prizes is

usually the end of the play as far as the organizers of the competition are concerned."[21] It was suggested that the DDF urge provincial governments to force those theatres receiving provincial funding to produce more original drama. This goal would be achieved through a series of grants to both the theatres and the playwrights.[22] The Study Group's recommendation foreshadows the 50% Canadian content quota suggested by the Gaspé conference in 1971. In Montreal two years later, the debate around the Canadian content issue would focus on the official English-language regional theatre in the city, the Centaur.

The Centaur evolved out of Mary Morter's and Jack Cunningham's Instantheatre (founded in 1965), a noon-hour company staging plays at the Théâtre de la Place. Instantheatre produced a number of original Canadian plays, including two by members of PWM.[23] Under Artistic Director Maurice Podbrey, the Centaur presented its first production, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, on 28 October 1969, and quickly established itself as the preeminent, and with the exception of the Saidye Bronfman Centre Theatre (1967 to 1982), only fully professional English theatre in Montreal. The Centaur's early success was due, in part, to its concentration on international drama. No Canadian work was staged by the Centaur until 1973 (one play that season), with the exception of a play on the Sir George Williams University riot entitled The Great White Computer, by Peter Desbarats, in 1969.

The Centaur introduced Canadian fare to its patrons only when it had consolidated its position in the community. In 1974, the Company purchased and renovated its theatre space in the Old Stock Exchange building on Saint François-Xavier Street. From 1975 onwards Podbrey supported and presented the work of Montreal dramatist David Fennario and maintained a writer-in-residence. Works by other Canadian authors began to appear more frequently, although like the

vast majority of other regional theatres, indigenous drama at the Centaur occupied less than a predominant position in the repertoire.[24] It is probable that limiting its program to international drama helped insure the theatre's financial stability in its early years. Although the Centaur generously housed Playwrights' Workshop from 1970 to 1972, many members may have felt more gratitude if some of PWM's plays had found their way onto Podbrey's stage.

The lack of Canadian content at the Centaur was a concern for members of PWM and others in the Montreal community. With the furore that surrounded the announcement of the Gaspé recommendations in the summer of 1971, the issue became a matter of public debate in Montreal in October of that year. A series of letters were exchanged in the Montreal Star between Maurice Podbrey and Professor Henry Beissel, arising from the paper's coverage of the quota controversy. Beissel, the author of Goya who would later join the PWM Board and develop his play Improvisations for Mr. X at the Workshop, began the discussion in a letter which stated, in part:

> A look at the two professional theatres in Montreal quickly reveals their failure in this respect [the performance of Canadian plays]. Centaur offers us eight plays: two British, two French, one German, one Irish, one Greek, and one South African play. The Bronfman Centre gives us five plays: two U.S., one British, one German, one South African play. In other words, of the 13 plays this season, not a single one is Canadian.[25]

Maurice Podbrey responded that, despite working "very hard, even within the context of establishing a new theatre in Montreal, to find and commission new plays," he had been so far unsuccessful, and that it would "take time and work"

before Canadian plays could reach the Centaur stage.

In the course of the debate Beissel raised the question of staging French plays in translation. Podbrey stated, in regard to French Canadian plays, that they were "simply not available for production in Montreal in English -- for political reasons." It "would be extremely difficult to represent the French Canadian life and language with any degree of authenticity in English," he continued, and maintained that the "attempt could be embarrassing and even offensive."[26] Although not mentioned by name, Podbrey's arguments appeared to focus on translations of Michel Tremblay's plays, which the author would not allow to be performed in English in Quebec.

Beissel responded to Podbrey's challenge to "overcome his shyness and name playwrights and plays" by listing playwrights Robertson Davies, James Reaney, Wilfred Watson and George Ryga.[27] He went on to assert that the political difficulty of presenting French Canadian plays in Montreal, "applies to only a very few -- indeed, so far as I am aware, to a single Québécois playwright [Tremblay]." There was, Beissel argued, a large body of important Québécois drama available aside from Tremblay's work. Finally, the issue, he asserted, "is not 'new plays' so much as Canadian plays, and <u>these are available</u>. New plays will be forthcoming in proportion to the exposure that our playwrights will get on our legitimate stages."[28]

Beissel's criticisms and Podbrey's response reflect the nation-wide debate over the lack of indigenous Canadian drama in regional theatres. Also, they focus this debate within the milieu of English theatre in Montreal, and highlight the issues which had, almost ten years earlier, engendered the creation of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal. These concerns, of perennial importance to PWM members, were summarized by the President of the Workshop, Charles Godlovitch, in a brief presented at the Canadian Theatre

Centre's annual meeting in 1971.

"Theatre is a collective, co-operative endeavour," Godlovitch argued. "Without ongoing theatre . . . what need have we for producers, directors, actors, technicians - or audiences?" Yet while the situation for theatre artists in Canada was often difficult, they were in "a better position than . . . the playwright." Playwrights were deemed unnecessary: "Companies in this country have demonstrated that they can get along without home-grown writers."[29]

Godlovitch then listed sample responses of the "few Artistic Directors" in Montreal who consented to read new scripts:

> (a) 'It is raw, unfinished material requiring much more work.' to a blunt (b) 'You have no talent.' or from the perplexed (c) 'It may have possibilities - but I just don't know.' to (d) 'If I had time and a budget I just might try this.' and unsaid (e) 'No Canadian has ever written a truly outstanding play.' (By which is meant critical acclaim in New York, London, Paris, Stockholm - anywhere but here.)[30]

Godlovitch admitted that quite often these comments were accurate, that most plays submitted were "raw and unfinished and require much work," and some, indeed, were "mediocre and display[ed] little talent." He also accepted the fact that "producing companies do not have the risk capital or incentive for a good effort at new work." However, he argued, most directors "have had no experience at sweating out, fashioning, wroughting a new script into good theatre in concert with the writer and actors." Most directors were unwilling to "trust their own judgement with a new, raw play," and were comfortable only "when the guidelines and 'Worth' of a piece have already been established." These directors are also, understandably, concerned with filling

their theatres and would rather "stick with the pre-sold" rather than "court disaster."[31]

In the meantime, Godlovitch continued, "we sit and wait for a native Miller, Williams, Pinter or Albee to burst upon the Canadian theatre scene, full-grown in his creative capacities." The likelihood of this taking place was small: "long before this becomes a possibility, the nascent genius will not be writing for the theatre - here - and perhaps, not anywhere." Only so much could be done without a theatrical facility in which Canadian playwrights could hone their craft:

> Most of the active writers in the Playwrights' Workshop would dearly love to be released from quarantine. Most believe that their proper and natural habitat is a theatre company where one can find real, live actors and directors with whom one can work in workshop or in studio. The cry now is for a place to work and for people to work with. Everyone recognizes that an accomplished director or actor, in addition to endowed talent, is the end product of years of training and on-the-job experience. Very few seem to understand that the playwright (unlike the novelist who pays his dues in other ways) must have the same opportunity for a meaningful working experience. There is really no other way.[32]

Godlovitch summarized the history of PWM and its efforts to nurture original English drama in Montreal. He discussed the evolution of the concert reading program, the movement into round-table discussions, and PWM's efforts at mounting their own productions. "Playwrights' Workshop," he insisted, "with limited financial resources, time and active workers, can go only so far. The next step is up to the

professional, regional and community theatres." He found the quota proposal a positive gesture, yet he worried that companies would "grab for only the older, tried Canadian works;" or if new work was presented badly, artistic directors might rationalize: "well, we tried - there just isn't anything," and thus "do a disservice both to themselves and to Canadian writers." "Writers need an environment in which to work and mature - a theatre environment," he concluded.

> This means time and money must be budgeted for the development of new work. We must not be afraid to try. And we must not be afraid to fail. We can no more expect instant success in the theatre than in any other endeavour.[33]

Charles Godlovitch's perceptions on the state of the Canadian playwright in 1971 echoed those of other concerned figures, and his brief came at a crucial juncture in the history of both Canadian theatre and Playwrights' Workshop Montreal itself. The quota debate focused the attention of many otherwise uninterested parties on the lack of original Canadian drama on the nation's stages. In Toronto, the Factory, Tarragon and other alternative theatres emphasized their dedication to staging original Canadian drama. In Montreal the work of numerous young Québécois playwrights was being staged.

The desire to become a more visible part of the nationalistic theatre movement motivated much of the Workshop's activities in the coming three seasons. Godlovitch's words, "We must not be afraid to try. And we must not be afraid to fail," assume a certain ironic poignancy and prescience when considered in the light of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal's evolution over the next few years.

NOTES

1.Jerry Wasserman, ed., Introduction, Modern Canadian Plays (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1985) 9.

2.Adjudicator's listing of award winners, 28th Annual Playwriting Competition, Ottawa Little Theatre, 1967.

3.Annual Report from the President of the Playwrights' Workshop Montreal Inc., 12 June 1967, PWM archives.

4.Annual Report 1967.

5.Martin Malina, "At Bronfman Centre: Workshop Presents Three One-Act Plays," The Montreal Star 7 Dec. 1967: 35.

6.Arleigh Peterson's Revue Theatre was a semi-professional company operating in the late sixties and early seventies. Primarily interested in experimental and abstract theatre, emphasising the use of music, movement and lighting effects, Peterson would also stage some new work. His wife, Cynthia Hendrickson was the company's choreographer. The Revue Theatre was located in a small playing space on de Maisonneuve Blvd. near Guy Street, which later housed the Phoenix Theatre. Aviva Ravel was also involved with the Revue Company. [Ravel interview.]

7.Annual Reports of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal for 1968-69 and 1969-70, plus the Libman interview and news clips, PWM archives.

8.Annual Report 1969-70.

9.Joseph Shaver, ed., Contemporary Canadian Drama (Ottawa: Borealis Press, 1974).

10.Lawrence Sabbath, "Showcase for Playwrights," The Gazette [Montreal] 19 Nov. 1971.

11.Libman interview.

12.Annual Report 1969-70.

13.Notes from the meetings of 25 Oct. and 1 Nov. 1967, Budget re performances at Saidye Bronfman Centre, PWM archives.

14.Jack Kapica, "Therapy for the budding playwright," The Gazette [Montreal] 18 March 1972: 45.

15.Libman interview. She is referring to a seminar run by Mann on 29, 30 Sept. and 1 Oct. 1972 at PWM.

16.Annual Report 1969-70.

17.Annual Report 1969-70.

18.Annual Report 1969-70.

19.Annual Report 1969-70.

20.Annual Report 1969-70.

21.Carol Libman, "Playwriting Study Group - DDF - Dec. 1969," unpublished typescript, PWM archives: 4.

22.Libman, "Playwriting Study Group" 3-6.

23.History of Instantheatre, unpublished typescript; Joan Irwin, "An Instant Success: Story of Our Noontime Theatre," The Montreal Star 4 Oct. 1965.

24.Alexina Scott-Savage, "Maurice Podbrey: Front and Centaur," Montreal Mirror 23 Sept. - 6 Oct. 1989: 9; Marianne Ackerman, "The Second Stage," Saturday Night July 1989: 65-67.

25.Henry Beissel, "Where are Canadian plays?" The Montreal Star 23 Oct. 1971: B7.

26.Maurice Podbrey, "Flag-waving is easier than finding satisfactory Canadian plays," The Montreal Star 26 Oct. 1971: 8.

27.Beissel also indicates Ryga'a Captives of the Faceless Drummer, about the FLQ Crisis in October 1970, "surely belongs to a Montreal theatre." It eventually received productions at the Saidye Bronfman Theatre and the Lennoxville Festival.

28.Henry Beissel, "Colonial attitudes in theatre," The Montreal Star 6 Nov. 1971: C7.

29.Charles Godlovitch, President of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal, summary of brief to the Canadian Theatre Centre, 1971, n.pag.

30.Godlovitch brief.

31.Godlovitch brief.

32.Godlovitch brief.

33.Godlovitch brief.

Chapter Five

1972 - 1975

> The Workshop is a unique child, with its own attributes and talents, a child that has taken twelve long years to get this far in its development. It is having a rough twelfth year, but if it does not survive, there won't be another child like it to take its place.
>
> Gerard Rejskind.

The three-year period from the summer of 1972 to the spring of 1975 was the most adventurous and decisive in the history of PWM. It included the amalgamation of Playwrights' Workshop with a new and very different unit, the Theatre Workshop; the investment of large amounts of time, energy and money in the creation of two new theatre spaces; and the eventual near-collapse of the organization.

In the summer of 1972 PWM moved from the Centaur's basement to 461 St-Sulpice in Old Montreal, a loft above Stache's Restaurant and across from Notre-Dame Cathedral. The St-Sulpice building comprised two floors of rehearsal, classroom and studio space, reminiscent of the Ste-Catherine Street location PWM had rented during the 'sixties on Ste-Catherine. Although the St-Sulpice building was a welcome change from the cramped quarters at the Centaur, the Executive did not consider it more than a temporary venue. In his Annual Report for 1973, President Gerard Rejskind informed members that at an Executive meeting in July of 1972 it was decided that "a new and permanent home should be sought, possibly with the room to install a small theatre."[1] A search for such a space then ensued, and although Rejskind had "predicted at the time that such

quarters could be found within two weeks," it was only in March 1973 that the next PWM headquarters, at 410 St-Pierre Street in Old Montreal, was discovered.[2]

This building was a three story edifice with room for offices, studio workshops, classes and rehearsals, and a projected 100-seat theatre on the ground floor. It was rented for $775 per month, a reasonable but not insubstantial amount at the time.[3] During the summer of 1973 the Executive learned that the City of Montreal would not allow them to build a theatre in the building, or, in any case, 'not under conditions that we would find acceptable."[4] This site served as the home to the Workshop for less than a year.

Down the street from 410 St-Pierre, another building became available, for sale rather than lease. Once owned by the Grey Nuns, in later years it had housed the Catholic Sailor's Club. By 1973, however, it had stood vacant for five years, and was being sold for just over $37,000. One of the building's attractive features, aside from its space (superior to 410 St-Pierre), price and promise of permanence, was a small stage on the ground floor that had earlier served the Club. The stage, it was thought, would allow the ground floor to be readily converted into a 200-seat theatre. In January of 1974 the Playwrights' Workshop Theatre Centre, located at 329 de la Commune Street, officially opened its doors. Along with these multiple changes of venue, substantial alterations were underway at all levels of the Workshop between 1972 and 1974.

The most prominent and decisive change lay in the creation of a production and teaching wing for PWM, originally called Theatre Workshop '72. This group, a distinct body from that of the playwrights' unit, was placed under the direction of Roy Higgins. The Executive viewed the Theatre Workshop as a place where PWM's scripts could go on to further development through studio and full

productions, envisioning a relationship somewhat similar to that of Baker's English 47 classes and the 47 Workshop at Harvard. The Theatre Workshop would also be a source of increased revenue through its classes and productions.

Roy Higgins was in his late twenties when he arrived in Montreal to take charge of the theatre apprenticeship program and acting classes at La Poudrière Theatre on Isle Ste-Hélène. Before coming to Montreal he had been a prime mover in the creation of three companies in Ontario: the Great Pine Ridge Festival in Newcastle, the Orono Youth Theatre (both of which had folded by 1974), and the Belleville Theatre Guild.[5] While at La Poudrière, Higgins became involved with PWM as a director of the 1971 production of Godlovitch's one-act <u>One with the Druids</u> and the June 1972 production of Libman's <u>Holiday from the Dark</u> at the Centaur (both to a positive critical response), among other assignments. When La Poudrière discontinued its apprenticeship program in 1972, Higgins approached PWM to investigate a joint venture between that organization and his teaching/production group.

Higgins was, by all accounts, a dynamic and ambitious individual, and a surprising teammate for an organization that had remained resolutely cautious in its approach to any production activity. "At the time," Carol Libman admits, "we were a little afraid to venture too far, to risk a whole lot. We were afraid of going under and going to the governments to support us." Higgins' arrival, according to Libman, "really shook Playwrights' Workshop loose."[6]

The timing of the proposed merger could not have been more opportune. PWM's forays into studio production had given members some experience in this area, and they were well aware of the benefits to play development offered by a permanent production base. These were precisely the types of benefits outlined by Charles Godlovitch in his brief to the Canadian Theatre Centre. The advantages for Higgins and

his group were equally obvious. They would be become allied to a government-sponsored organization with an established structure and nationalistically orientated principles.

The opportunity to instigate the only English organization in Montreal comparable to the New Play Centre in Vancouver and the Factory, Tarragon and Toronto Free theatres in Toronto was evident and appealing to both Higgins and the PWM Board of Directors. PWM had, in its own circumspect fashion, been moving in this direction for almost ten years. Convincing the PWM membership that the organization would benefit from, and withstand all the hazards of, becoming a full production and development facility was all that remained.

The evolution of PWM from a limited, localized and often timid script development centre to a full blown theatre and nationally-oriented play development organization took place amazingly quickly. At first, in the summer of 1972, the division between the Playwrights' Workshop and the Theatre Workshop remained distinct, with the PWM Executive in charge of the playwriting section and the overall organization, and Higgins in control of the day-to-day operations of the teaching and production work at the Theatre Workshop. Before the close of the 1972-73 season, however, Higgins had requested that his position be altered from head of the Theatre Workshop to "Resident Director" of Playwrights' Workshop, in effect making him Artistic Director of the whole organization. While in nominal control of both sections of the Workshop, Higgins remained answerable to the Board of Directors. A Manifesto ratified before the purchase of the de la Commune building in the fall of 1973 formalized Higgins' expanded powers as well as the altered structure of the Workshop.

In 1972 the Theatre Workshop's first summer program concentrated primarily on classes for advanced and novice actors. Higgins' plan was to use the income from these

classes to sustain the Theatre Workshop while simultaneously using students as members of his theatre company. The summer program concluded with a production of Arthur Kopit's Indians (an American play about Buffalo Bill and the devastation of American natives in the nineteenth century) at the Centaur. Directed by Higgins, the principal roles were played by Theatre Workshop professionals-teachers, while supporting roles were cast from the ranks of students. Press reaction to the production was varied. Jacob Siskind of The Gazette felt that the amateurs were severely tried and their capacities overestimated, while Zelda Heller of The Montreal Star applauded the company's energy and cryptically observed that "amateurs and children who run in where the experienced fear to tread have certain strengths that their betters can know nothing of."[7]

To the PWM Executive the Theatre Workshop's summer program was a "qualified success"; while it attracted a large number of students and generated visibility for PWM, the final production lost money. The Executive frankly expressed its worry over the failure of the Indians production to pay its own way:

> A further loss was incurred by the summer program's windup project. . . . That it was staged at all was miraculous. But for those of us who were keeping an anxious eye on the ledgers, it was all a little frightening.[8]

This trepidation failed to slow momentum, however, and a full program of Theatre Workshop activities, coupled with traditional PWM script development was planned for the 1972-73 season.

The Theatre Workshop program that season included an assortment of classes, including basic and advanced acting for teenagers and adults, courses in voice, movement, mime and improvisation, scene study, acting for the media and creative drama for children, along with a jazz dance course.

Instructors in Higgins' group included Dorothy Danford, Robert Ozores, June Ozores, Jerome Tiberghien, and Higgins' assistant, Daniel Landau.

Activity in the parent organization during the 1972-73 season was sporadic due to the two changes in location and energies put into setting up Theatre Workshop. Aside from the Paul Mann seminar in October 1972, a seminar on children's theatre was held in February 1973. Nine plays were given staged readings, including the first reading of Sheldon Rosen's The Box (originally Boxes). Of twenty-two scripts received for review that season, nineteen were submitted to round-table analysis, while the remaining three were given private critiques. Another thirty-five scenes or parts of scenes were developed out of the Image Process and Scene Study workshops. The Workshop hoped that some full length or one-act plays would grow out of these.[9] On the whole this was not a production orientated season, but one devoted to restructuring the organization.

Only one production was mounted during the 1972-73 season, Aviva Ravel's A Twisted Loaf. This production deserves special mention as the first attempt at French-English co-production in a Montreal theatre since the 'fifties. Sponsored by the Allied Jewish Community Services and the Saidye Bronfman Centre and staged at the SBC on 21 and 22 March 1973, the first Théâtre-Rencontre, as the project was called, coupled a new one-act play from Playwrights' Workshop Montreal with a one-act play developed by the Centre d'essai des auteurs dramatiques. The purpose of Théâtre-Rencontre was to "promote dialogue between English-speaking and French-speaking theatre people and goers" through presenting co-productions of new works developed by the two official-language development centres.[10] Although presented together and staged cooperatively, the plays were developed as separate units. Serge Mercier's Elle made up the French portion of the bill.

Both the plays and the project concept received favourable press comment. Théâtre-Recontre was repeated in March 1974 when Games Played in a Park by PWM's Diane Harrison was coupled with Vacances d'Ete by the CEAD's Serge Sirois. The project was not attempted in 1975 due to lack of funding from the Department of Secretary of State and changes that had taken place at PWM.

The decision to go ahead with the purchase of the de la Commune building necessitated a delay in the staging of full productions. Script reading by the Playwrights' Workshop and Theatre Workshop classes continued at 410 St-Pierre throughout the fall. A press conference was held in October to advise the public of the acquisition of the Catholic Sailor's Club building. At the time Higgins thought the new theatre would be open for readings by the end of November. He outlined a vague plan for a season of productions and readings, but admitted that he had "no definite ideas for what the upcoming season will look like." Higgins mentioned, however, that he had completed a pan-national tour, and in the process acquired "a lot of excellent scripts." He took pains to assure the press that the new theatre would not be competing with the Centaur or Saidye Bronfman, but would be "unique in its experimentation." Higgins asserted that the Playwrights' Workshop Theatre Centre would emulate the work done at the Tarragon, Factory and Passe Muraille in Toronto. He ignored the fact that these three organizations had very different approaches to play development and production.[11]

In January 1974 the Workshop launched its first public event in the de la Commune building. During the weekend of 18 January, five staged readings were presented over three days, against the background of a continuous open house and art exhibition. The five plays read included Aviva Ravel's Horns, Bill Zaget's Deathfetch and Co., Charlie Duchesne's Hopscotch, Robert Whalen's O, Had I Jubal's Lyre and Tom

Cone's Veils (directed by Robert Reid). The new building was an impressive sight; the ground floor theatre contained "a grand old stage, complete with gilt edging," while the second floor was laid out "like the interior of an old ship, complete with wooden ribbings and pillars, set off by an old bar" (a discotheque was one of the money making ideas proposed for the summer of 1974). The third floor housed offices, costume rooms and Theatre Workshop classrooms. The fourth floor attic was used for storage space. Despite the building's attractiveness extensive renovations remained to be done, including the installation of firewalls and major alterations to the layout of some floors.[12]

In June 1974 Actor's Equity submitted to the Board a list of renovations which were deemed necessary to assure the safety of the staff. These followed a list of recommended renovations prepared by James Stewart, the technical director, at the close of his contract under the Workshop's LIP grant. Stewart suggest that at a minimum new fire extinguishers, a new air circulation system, electrical rewiring, new dressing rooms, washrooms and workshop space, new tools and equipment for the workshop, new internal communications equipment, and a new control booth were needed.[13] The City of Montreal Inspections Department also required the installation of a sprinkler system in areas of the building without one, new exit lights and an emergency lighting system, together with reworked plumbing and other modifications. The cost of these renovations would prove prohibitive, and contributed to PWM's decision to give up the building.

In February 1974 the first full production of two one-act plays was staged: Rosen's The Box and Elinore Siminovitch's Big X and Little Y. Sheldon Rosen's play was a co-development with the New Play Centre in Vancouver, where rehearsals were scheduled to start one week after the Montreal premiere. This is the first instance of a co-

development taking place at PWM, a situation that would become much more common in later years. The press was critical of the scripts, but had a generally positive reaction to the performances.

A play by Board of Directors member and Theatre Workshop student Alan Venable, entitled Balloons, was given a studio production in May. Press reaction was generally positive. In June a full scale production of Merrill Denison's Canadian classic, Marsh Hay, followed. Directed by Higgins and staged by the Theatre Workshop's new "permanent acting company", Marsh Hay generated considerable interest as a production of a classic Canadian drama that had never before been professionally staged.[14]

Outside companies were also making use of the new theatre space. The Beggar's Workshop produced a prison play by Peter Madden called The Night No One Yelled, which was favourably reviewed and went on to receive a Tarragon production. Alexandre Hausvater also presented some of his early experimental work at the PWM Theatre Centre. In the spring of 1975 Robert Yacknin, a long time PWM member, organized the first Quebec Drama Festival of One-Act Plays, held at the de la Commune building. Michael Springate's In the Possession took first prize in the contest, which was one of the last events held in the PWM theatre. On the whole, revenues from rentals did not meet original expectations, nor were they sufficient to make a significant difference to the Playwrights' Workshop Theatre Centre's economic survival.

Earlier in the 1974-75 season a series of staged readings were held. Three plays were read in October, including works by Colin Browne, Murray Napier, and then President Rod Hayward. Paul Mann arrived again for the reading of Michael Springate's A Song for Luca, presented 15 December 1974. A staged reading of Charles Godlovitch's Jonah became the final (and extremely well reviewed)

production of the Playwrights' Workshop theatre. Staged in May 1975, just prior to the evacuation of the building, Jonah was directed by Jerome Tiberghien. Five plays were also given closed readings between August and December, 1974, including works by Ravel, Abrams, Hayward, Bill Zaget, and Laurent Goulet.

Positive reaction to the Théâtre-Rencontre projects led to PWM's first presentation of a Québécois play in English translation. Serge Sirois' Dodo l'enfant do was staged at the Playwrights' Workshop Theatre Centre between 27 March and 13 April 1974. Similar in theme and treatment to Sirois' highly successful Aujourd'hui peut-être, Dodo l'enfant do explores the tensions of the new Montreal French urban poor. Written before Aujourd'hui peut-être, when Sirois was only eighteen, Dodo l'enfant do suffers from the author's inexperience. The play's unevenness and structural difficulties were readily apparent to the audience, especially when exacerbated by the new theatre's technical problems.[15]

Attempts at 'rapprochement' between the two development organizations was difficult at times due to the unsettled political climate in Quebec. PWM was nevertheless aware that it could only benefit from connections witn its sister organization. Throughout the nineteen-fifties and 'sixties the Quiet Revolution created a newly politicized and culturally aware francophone population. The growing desire for an identifiable Québécois culture helped the CEAD to establish itself as the preeminent play development centre in Quebec. The linguistic and political climate meant that the CEAD was always in a far better position to receive support from the Montreal community than PWM. The Workshop was also aware that both organizations were competing for a limited pool of government funds. By joining in co-developments with the CEAD the Workshop hoped to show that it could play a useful role in bridging the gap between the

"two solitudes". A cross-cultural role would also help in assuring continued financial support from the provincial and federal governments. Given the linguistic tensions of the time, Playwrights' Workshop, as an English organization, was always appreciative of the lack of bias in the Quebec government's funding.

The goals of the CEAD were similar to those of PWM: "to bring together authors to encourage playwriting, and to promote productions of original plays on our stages."[16] One account of the CEAD's creation indicates that founding member Jacques Duchene had "attended a session of the Playwrights' Workshop, was impressed by the English undertaking and... conveyed his feelings to his author-friends."[17] Originally called the Atelier des Auteurs Dramatiques, the name was changed to Le Centre d'Essai at the recommendation of the Quebec government, which feared confusion between the earlier name and Playwrights' Workshop.

Cooperation between PWM and the CEAD in the 1969 Dominion Drama Festival Playwriting Study Group led to increased contact between the two organizations. The Théâtre-Recontre projects and the production of the Sirois play were by far the largest cooperative efforts to this point. CEAD Executive Secretary Claude des Landes' participation as a member of PWM's Advisory Board contributed to the success of Théâtre-Rencontre, and Des Langes was also instrumental in the translation and production of the Sirois play. Unfortunately, once PWM ceased its production activities in 1975 little interaction took place between the two groups until the 'eighties.

Three plays workshopped during PWM-CEAD co-operatives went on to publication. The Ravel play produced in the first Théâtre-Rencontre, A Twisted Loaf, along with her Soft Voices, was published by Simon and Pierre in A Collection of Canadian Plays, Volume III, in 1974. The PWM translation of

Sirois' Dodo L'enfant do was also published by Simon and Pierre, and Diane Haaison's Games Played in a Park appeared in Performing Arts in Canada. These joined a number of other PWM developed or produced plays reaching publication between 1972 and 1975, including Carol Libman's Follow the Leader (Alive Press), Tom Cone's Veils (Performing Arts in Canada), Elinore Siminovitch's Big X Little Y (Playwrights' Co-op) and Sheldon Rosen's The Box (New Play Centre / Fineglow).

On 1 October, 1973, a Manifesto was passed by the Board of Directors. This Manifesto amended the previous Constitution and By-Laws to take account of the new organizational structure. PWM's original guiding principles appeared to be maintained: the organization's primary concern was still to "encourage the playwright's free expression and his quest for experimentation and development." The Manifesto stipulated that trained theatre personnel, actors, directors, designers, etc., be "made available for this purpose." The primary aim of the Theatre Workshop was thus to raise "the level of professional standards for the performing artist and to use him directly in relation to the playwright." The final objective was the creation of "a new audience... to maintain the highest professional standards of such an operation and to support its ongoing development."[18]

The wording of the Manifesto's objectives was significantly ambiguous. At a workshop meant to be a development centre for playwrights, what happens when playwright development conflicts with the training of theatre artists or the raising of the level of their "professional standards"? Who determines what these standards are, and why are they important for an organization whose first priority is to develop plays? Why was the organization supposed to create an audience to maintain these high "professional standards" and "its

ongoing development" rather than an audience for new drama, as the Factory Theatre's Manifesto stipulates? Doesn't this statement give priority to the growth of the theatre over the development of writers? Such ambivalences are carried on throughout the remainder of the document.

The Manifesto formalized the merger between the Playwrights' Workshop and the Theatre Workshop. The Catholic Sailor's Club building was affirmed as the nexus for this combined venture. A "flexible" program of full-length plays, Friday and Saturday midnight performances of more unfinished or experimental work, and other, non-theatrical events (including poetry readings, musical and dance performances), was established. There appears to have been little awareness that maintaining "a varied program dealing with the arts on many levels" might conflict with the goal of developing new plays.[19]

The Manifesto emphasised a national rather than a local orientation: "Playwrights' Workshop and its varied facilities will be available Canada-wide." (The logistical difficulties of moving the Workshop back and forth across the country seem to have escaped notice.) PWM's original By-Laws had, in fact, not given the organization any specific geographical mandate: municipal, regional, provincial or national. A national mandate was perhaps implied, as the DDF committee that initiated PWM was attempting to encourage "Canadian" (rather than English-Montreal or English-Quebec) playwrights. Whether or not the Workshop's original mandate was by default national, its very limited funds and Montreal location meant that until this time its play development was restricted to local writers. Nonetheless the Board supported the inclusion of a national mandate in the Manifesto and had earlier agreed to Higgins' 1973 summer cross-country tour, where seeking out scripts was one of his primary objectives. Higgins returned with plays by two writers then working with the New Play

Centre: Sheldon Rosen (The Box) and Tom Cone (Veils).

Cooperation and exchange between PWM and other Canadian theatres and play development centres were emphasized in the Manifesto, and constituted another goal of Higgins' tour. The CEAD received special mention in the Manifesto.[20] The Manifesto also stated that PWM would seek out publishers of Canadian plays, promote publication and production, and set up a service to collect royalties. Had all of this taken place, the Workshop would have resembled an amalgamation of a theatre school (like the NTS), a development centre / producing theatre (like the Factory), and script publication and critique service (like the Playwrights Co-op).

The Manifesto included guidelines for script development. A submitted script would be read by one member of the "top professional staff" of three persons (presumably including the Artistic Director and the assistant AD, but this is not explicitly stated), and a member of the "playwrights' committee", one of three PWM writers. The play was then critiqued and returned or sent on to "a full discussion by the six members of the professional staff and the playwrights' committee." If the play was rejected at this point the writer could receive a round-table critique if desired. Plays accepted by the full committee would pass on to development with a director and members of the Theatre Workshop through "readings, improvisation, or any other method chosen by the members involved," or might be given a staged reading with an audience and general discussion. A third option for an accepted play would be full production "depending on the program [for the season?] and the play's suitability."[21]

The screening process outlined in the Manifesto resembles those used by other development centres, such as the New Play Centre. It had several weaknesses, however, which would become readily apparent during the coming season. One weakness was the necessity for the play that

passed the first reading level to be circulated and read by all members of both the "professional" and "playwrights" committees. The amount of time this required was excessive, and simply getting all six committee members together would eventually prove difficult. Another problem was the continued reliance on a committee system of evaluation, and the lack of a single dramaturgical voice represented by a "chief dramaturg", despite the presence of an Artistic Director. A further weakness lay in the description of the rehearsal process for new plays going into full production. "Whenever possible," the Manifesto states, "the playwright shall be invited to all rehearsals, and shall be given priority in determining script changes." At a centre dedicated to developing new plays, the playwright's presence at all rehearsals and "priority in determining script changes" should be a given, not something to be aimed for "whenever possible." There is, once again, a detectable ambivalence in the wording of this section.

The Manifesto made provision for a "Playwrights' Workshop Theatre Club." The Theatre Club was created to generate additional revenue for the Workshop and act as a subscription base, with memberships sold for $5.00 each. The subscription entitled members to reduced prices on productions, readings and other events, a monthly newsletter, and related privileges. The Executive hoped that a minimum of one thousand memberships could be sold to generate $5000 in pre-season revenues. A total of $3,400 was in fact raised through Theatre Club memberships, indicating a membership of 680.[22]

The Manifesto briefly described the responsibilities of the artistic and administrative staff. The position of Artistic Director had a job description equivalent to that of Higgins' position as Resident Director. Higgins was henceforth designated as the Artistic Director of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal. The Artistic Director held

the traditional powers and responsibilities of the position. The AD was responsible for the administration of

> all production activities, including the selection of directors, actors, technicians, etc., the development of scripts; he will serve as a guide to the Theatre Workshop training section, and he will have responsibilities for all ongoing programs of the Playwrights' Workshop."[23]

That "the development of scripts" is not given as the Artistic Director's first responsibility, and is in fact sandwiched between a variety of other tasks, indicates the reduced emphasis on play development even at this early stage in Higgins' tenure.

Higgins received a salary of $8000 as Artistic Director for the 1973-74 season. In the Proposed Budget for 1973-74 his responsibilities as "Resident Director" were presented in more detail. This document stressed that Higgins should be "deeply involved in the development of all scripts" and attend all round-table discussions. If his absence was unavoidable he should submit a written critique. He was also required to direct the "three major productions planned for the season;" and if he should prove unable to direct any of the major productions, his salary would be reduced by $1000 for a full-length play or $500 for a one-act. This money would then be paid to the director hired to replace him. The same conditions applied to studio productions.[24] Whether this penalty clause was ever invoked is not recorded.

The Artistic Director was answerable to the Board of Directors. The Manifesto required the Board to be expanded to include Theatre Workshop members or other persons "who represent this larger community [i.e. the theatre and general community -- exact figures were not given]." The requirement that Writing Members should always be in the

majority was maintained, and the Executive traditionally consisted of Writing Members. The eighteen-person Board that passed the Manifesto, elected in June of 1973, was entirely comprised of Writing Members. An Advisory Board "of active theatre people in Canada" was established to provide counsel on "effective ways of maintaining funding and promoting the Workshop program."[25]

Other positions were also created by the new Manifesto. Daniel Landau, Higgins' right-hand at the Theatre Workshop and a member of the original La Poudrière group, became Assistant to the Artistic Director. Landau's salary was not stipulated in the proposed budget, but may have been included in the $19,170 earmarked for Theatre Workshop instructors. The Theatre Workshop was given a full-time administrator, Lesley Rust, at a salary of $5200. Carol Libman was designated Administrator for the Playwrights' Workshop, although her title remained Executive Secretary in the proposed budget; her salary was $2100. A general secretary was hired at $2500.[26]

Total expenditures in the projected 1973-74 budget came to $71,588. The projected income totalled $44,442, excluding a Local Initiatives Program (LIP) grant. Theatre Workshop tuition fees were expected to contribute a total of $30,525, the bulk of the income. To generate this sum the Theatre Workshop needed to attract 300 students at $100 per head, a somewhat unrealistic figure. The highest recorded enrolment totalled 180 students. The net projected deficit came to $27,146, undoubtedly an unpleasant sight to a money-conscious Executive concerned with balancing a budget tens of thousands of dollars higher than anything the organization had previously envisioned, with expenditures over seven times those of 1969-70.[27]

The LIP grant, while helping temporarily to alleviate some of the deficit problems, could not be used for capital expenditures. LIP funds could only be applied to salaries

and productions. Of a projected $50,000 production budget for 1973-74, $20,000 was committed to salaries for the Artistic Director and technical and support staff, $15,000 to salaries for professional actors, and $14,000 for production and related costs. The LIP grant covered $41,000 of this budget while PWM was required to make up the balance.[28] Free admission to all performances funded by the LIP was a further stipulation of the grant. A letter of complaint from Higgins to the Board of Directors in April of 1974 refers to $4000 of LIP money used for capital expenditures. The LIP committee insisted these funds be repaid before more funds would be forthcoming.[29] Despite the LIP grant the Workshop found itself in a position of severe indebtedness at the close of the 1973-74 season.

An energetic schedule of events was maintained throughout the summer and fall of 1974, including most of the standard Theatre Workshop courses, poetry readings and music performances. Despite the appearance of stability, however, the organization was perilously close to ruin. Before the annual meeting in June Roy Higgins departed. Many of the original staff had already resigned in frustration. The LIP grant expired in July, and funds were insufficient to maintain the numerous employees accumulated over the year. The economic situation was precarious from the moment the de la Commune building was purchased, and intensified throughout PWM's occupation of the premises. Difficulties with late payments were common, even for salaried employees working under the LIP grant. It was evident that PWM, even with a cutback in activities, could not survive financially as a Theatre Centre. Early in 1975 Theatre Workshop was disbanded, the building sold, and Playwrights' Workshop Montreal itself very nearly disappeared.

The expansion that took place with the establishment of

Theatre Workshop in 1972 created a situation ripe for conflict and animosity. The Theatre Workshop itself shortly evolved into two very distinct bodies -- the acting school and the professional production company. Under the now very broad umbrella of the Playwrights' Workshop three different entities contended to satisfy disparate and often conflicting goals. The playwrights maintained that the development of original scripts should be paramount, with an emphasis on their own and other Montreal-generated works.

Meanwhile the Theatre Workshop students were interested primarily in enhancing their stage technique. This goal was not easily reconciled with or satisfied by studio productions of new and therefore naturally flawed plays, supplemented by sporadic collective creations. The students also found themselves in competition with a newly formed group of professional actors hired specifically to perform as the in-house troupe of the PWM theatre centre. The professionals were principally interested in the establishment of a new and viable theatre. Neither the production of rough and untried original scripts nor the training of would-be actors seemed the ideal route to this goal.

Roy Higgins, as the nominal head of each of these bodies, and the person responsible for reconciling these objectives, was in a difficult, if not impossible, position. That he was often targeted as responsible for creating conflicts did not help his position; nor did his obvious bias in favour of the creation of a multi-focused theatre centre as opposed to a play development centre. Play development was seen by Higgins as an key function of the centre, but not its 'raison d'être'. Higgins was also obliged to contend with an anxious and jittery Board of Directors. Entirely composed of Writing Members, who shared Higgins' ideal of what the Playwrights' Workshop Theatre Centre could be, the Board maintained that play development

should take precedence over any other activity.

Conflicts between the three sections of the Workshop ruined any chance at the unified front needed to combat the financial crisis of 1974, and were highly visible within months of the opening of the de la Commune building. Clashes over programming, debates about the amount of time dedicated to play development, and communications problems within and between the three main bodies of the organization were blatantly apparent. These and other problems were discussed and itemized at a Board Executive meeting on 10 March 1974. The primary concern was that the Workshop was "moving towards an organization for professional theatre, to the detriment of its proper function of developing playwrights."[30] A breakdown in communications was responsible for critical morale problems.

> [2] Members of the Workshop, while being told by the staff that they are failing in their responsibilities, feel "left out," often not called upon to participate.
>
> [3] An alienation has developed between the Executive Committee and the writers they represent on one hand, and the Workshop staff and company on the other.[31]

Conflicts over programming and the script-selection process were also a source of concern. "The choice of plays for readings and productions," the Board complained, "is effectively out of the hands of the Writing Members of the [play selection] committee."[32]

The Board recognized that it was partly responsible for these difficulties. The lack of "an effective system of sub-committees" through which "members can be fully involved, problems dealt with, and burdens lifted from the omnipresent shoulders of Carol Libman" was underlined. Added to its other woes was the realization that the Theatre Workshop school was "found wanting by many of its students."

Theatre Workshop students complained of being "excluded from vital production activities." The Board's opinion was that if something was not done to correct this situation, the Theatre Workshop school would "soon lose support."[33]

The March Executive Committee meeting found two principal causes for the Workshop's troubled state. The first was the organization's devolution into three different bodies with conflicting goals and policies, a problem not simplified by the fact that "the writers organization bears the liability for all three, and the responsibility to direct them." The second was that: "In the flurry of activity around the LIP grant and the purchase of the new building the most basic of playwright development functions have been eroded and neglected."[34]

The lack of clear definition in the division of powers between the Board and the Artistic Director was one of the primary sources of conflict. Higgins was acutely aware of this problem and often pressed the Board for greater control over programming and policy, and representation on the Board by non-Writing Members. In a letter to the Board dated 10 March 1974, the day of the Executive Committee meeting, Higgins wrote: "I don't understand this attitude of holding onto the voting right by Writing Members and see that that's where most of the problems exist."[35] In a letter the following month Higgins made his demands for greater control succinct and specific:

> As Playwrights' Workshop exists today the Artistic and Administrative staff have no real power to make or implement any practical artistic or administrative decisions. Because of this, all members of the staff feel a deep sense of frustration and non-achievement... Therefore we propose that the Artistic Director, as head of the professional staff, should not only be

included on the Program Selection Committee but also be the major influence on that group.[36]

Higgins went on to argue that as Artistic Director, the Board hired him for his expertise, judgement and taste in just these areas. They should therefore be willing to trust his judgement and relinquish control over programming. "In order for Playwrights' Workshop to develop as a playwrights' service," he argued, "the concerts or readings, studio productions and showcases must be incorporated by the Artistic Director into the overall aims of the season."[37]

Higgins' push for official control over programming was also an attempt to head off criticism of his programming policies. In theory he did not have official power to make programming decisions and was expected to implement plans formulated by the Program Selection Committee. In practice Higgins made numerous unilateral programming decisions which, due to lack of time for debate and consultation, he was able to carry out. When Board members complained of his heavy-handedness and his absence from committee meetings, Higgins attempted to placate them by asserting that "under very trying circumstances" they had pulled off "the impossible here," and they should be "proud" rather than critical of his conduct. His inaccessibility was often attributed to theatrical exigencies: "we do have deadlines in the theatre too," he contended.[38]

Higgins' frustration with the Board, and the Board's difficulties with Higgins, reached their peak in March and April of 1974. In a letter dated 8 April he pushed for a complete restructuring of the Board along the lines recommended by a committee set up by the Advisory Board, which suggested a transfer of power to Higgins and the theatre staff and, as Higgins wished, immediate admission of non-Writing Members to the Board. He further insisted on the immediate hiring of a new "full-time professional

theatre administrator," repayment of the LIP funds spent on capital expenditures, and remittance of salaries owing to some staff members, including Libman, administrator Joan Lawrence and several instructors. "An all out effort must be made by the Executive and Professional staff to find people immediately for the Board" he pressed at the close of the letter. This was termed "urgent and very necessary."[39]

Higgins confrontational style did little to help his cause. He submitted his resignation once, at the end of March, but it was not accepted. In a spirit of reconciliation the Board promised "to meet with Roy as soon as possible with a view to redefining his duties."[40] His letter of 8 April indicates that any simple "redefinition" of his duties would not be sufficient. Higgins closed this letter by stating that his recommendations must be acted upon within ten days. He would then make his decision "on whether to remain as Artistic Director based upon what action has been taken."[41] Higgins' demands struck the Board as unreasonable, and his intransigence, coupled with a fresh programming conflict over his insistence on staging Marsh Hay, prompted the Board to ask for his resignation. It was received before the Annual Meeting in June. With Higgins' departure went many members of his side of the organization, and a general reorganization and reduction of the professional staff followed.

The proposed production of Marsh Hay was identified by Board members as symptomatic of the schism that existed between Higgins' vision of the organization and their own. While many members agreed that Denison's play was a neglected Canadian classic, it was not an original script developed through the PWM process. Higgins never seemed to recognize the Workshop's vital function as an original script development centre. In his March letter, he insensitively suggested that the theatre present "fairly commercial shows" (presumably excluding untried original

plays) that would "draw large houses" and thus "assure an income for our technical and office staff and for the theatre."[42] His insistence on considering the production of non-original and even non-Canadian work (i.e. Indians) as a way of sustaining the theatre and creating an audience was inconsistent with the organization's stated goals and mandate. The Board was properly concerned that funding organizations (principally the Canada Council) were beginning to point this out. One has only to compare the number of original plays produced by PWM during the 1973-74 season (three one-act plays, including the Theâtre-Rencontre production of Games Played in a Park, one full-length play, Balloons, plus five staged readings) with the number of original productions at the Factory (seven full-length plays, along with seventeen plays presented as readings or staged readings) to see how far down original production and play development were on Higgins' list of priorities.

Higgins' personal conflicts with key members of the Board also intensified throughout the season. Problems over a lighting board designed by Gerard Reiskind led to a major blow-up and was the topic of the first part of Higgins' March letter. Both Past-President Charles Godlovitch and Rod Hayward, the next President, found working with Higgins difficult, and Hayward refused to have Higgins involved with any of his own scripts.[43] Members of both the professional staff and the Board complained about Higgins' lack of organization and inability to complete the many projects he began. Carol Libman, however, remained Higgins' staunch defender throughout the de la Commune difficulties.

Libman was placed in the difficult position of being the only Board member involved with the theatre centre as a salaried employee. As such she often functioned as liaison between the Board and the organization's other bodies, and much of the animosity between these groups was borne on her shoulders. Libman found her situation increasingly

stressful, and she was unable to write due to lack of time.[44] During the Board discussions concerning Higgins, Libman pointed out that "she was getting up at 5 a.m. to worry about finding funds to keep the Workshop afloat, and the only other person who did that, and who cared that much, was Roy." Higgins indicated in his March letter that he and his staff were working long hours for very little money, while most Board members were very rarely seen around the theatre.[45] During an April Board meeting Libman added that when Higgins asked for volunteers from the Board to help Libman in December 1973, his request had been met with silence.[46]

The criticism levelled by Higgins at the Board was not without justification. Gerard Rejskind, in his outgoing message as President during that troubled season, lambasted the Board for its lack of concern and involvement. He indicates that of out eighteen members, only Carol Libman and himself had perfect attendance records at meetings. Charles Godlovitch had an "excellent record", and a handful of others had "pretty good [attendance] .. lately." The remainder of Board members were fundamentally uninterested and inactive, at a time when urgent problems required their immediate attention. He noted that three members had "actually never been to a Board meeting in their lives!" When reviewing the new Board's slate of members, Rejskind observed that it contains "some good people . . . [but] comes recommended by the Board that got everything into its present mess."[47] Rejskind recognized that keeping the Workshop afloat over the coming season would be an immense task, one that a Board similar to the last would be incapable of handling.

In spite of the numerous problems facing the organization, the new Board attempted to keep the Theatre Centre alive. The desperate need for a restructured Board was addressed by newly-elected President Rod Hayward during

the Annual General Meeting of 10 June 1974. A series of sub-committees was established which attempted to put right the omissions of past administrations. A new Script Development Commit ee was appointed, made up of four members of the Board and the Resident Director (although a Resident Director is included in these plans, in fact the Workshop hired directors only on a project basis from July 1974 onward). A Theatre Workshop Committee comprised two Board members, two instructors and two students. A Special Activities Committee was established to deal with programs not directly connected with play development, production, or the theatre school. Its function was to be primarily "educational" rather than "financial", and was made up of a Board member, a Writing Member and a student. The House Committee was responsible for all matters related to the upkeep, rental and use of the building, aside from those activities under the direction of other committees. A Public Relations Committee was appointed to handle publicity and act as "market researchers for playwriting members." Their mandate included the distribution of scripts to "producing or publishing organizations." A Membership Secretary was to organize membership drives and maintain lists of writing and associate members.[48]

The most glaring omission from this new structure was the lack of a Fund Raising Committee. Even after the pressing need for Board-directed fund-rasing had been stressed by both Carol Libman and Roy Higgins, the Board seemed hesitant to devote any sustained effort to it. Fund-raising became one of the Treasurer's many duties. Quickly recognizing the inadequacy of this situation, Hayward abolished the traditional Vice-Presidency and created two new Vice-Presidential posts in October 1974. The First Vice-President was placed in charge of fund-raising, but this stop-gap measure was much too little, much too late. By December the sale of the building was being debated and

appeared inevitable.

The new Board was no more successful than the old in motivating its members or effectively dealing with the financial, structural and logistical difficulties of the organization. In a general statement presented to the Board dated 15 October 1974, Rod Hayward said:

> This Board has already served one-third of its mandate without accomplishing either the goals it set for itself when it was elected or of fulfilling the aims of the Manifesto which justifies the existence of the Playwrights' Workshop.[49]

Despite Hayward's and others' attempts at restructuring and fund-raising, the financial situation did not improve. At the end of the year the building was sold for $65,000. This was sufficient to pay off almost all debts, except the amount owning to Carol Libman in unpaid salary.

Only minimal activities took place in the spring of 1975, followed by an auction on 10 May to sell disposable items in the de la Commune building. After some negotiation Nahum Ravel, head of the Saidye Bronfman Centre and Aviva Ravel's husband, provided the Workshop a few feet of space in the SBC. PWM acquired a corner of a projection booth, with room enough for their files and a desk. It was a home, but quite a change from the Catholic Sailor's Club, and all the possibilities that building had promised only eighteen months before.

NOTES

1.Gerard Rejskind, Report of the President: Playwrights' Workshop Montreal Inc., 26 June 1973, PWM archives.

2.Rejskind report 1973.

3.Rejskind report 1973.

4.Gerard Rejskind, Report of the President: Playwrights' Workshop Montreal Inc., 10 June 1974, PWM archives.

5.Jack Kapica, "Playwrights' Workshop: Giving Canadians a Break," The Gazette [Montreal] 23 Feb. 1974: 48.

6.Libman interview.

7.Zelda Heller, "Risking Indians Pays Off for Group," The Montreal Star 14 Sept. 1972: B9; Jacob Siskind, "A Blow to the Conscience," The Gazette [Montreal] 14 Sept. 1972.

8.Rejskind report 1974.

9.Rejskind report 1974.

10.Canada Council Report, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal, Spring 1974: Supplement 1, Sheet 1, PWM archives.

11.Jack Kapica, "Two Drama Workshops Plan All-Canadian Theatre Club," The Gazette [Montreal], [c. late Oct.] 1973.

12.Fran Halter, "Playwrights Write On," The Georgian Supplement [Sir George Williams University, Montreal] 5 Feb. 1974: 14.

13.James Stewart, letter to the Board of Directors, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal, 25 June 1974, PWM archives.

14.A semi-professional production of Marsh Hay was staged in April of 1974 at Hart House Theatre in Toronto. Although the entry on Marsh Hay in The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre gives the Hart House date as June 1974 (and omits any mention of the PWM production), the Montreal press clippings from this period indicate this information may be incorrect. See Myron Galloway, "Play Takes Grim Look at Poor Farm Family: Marsh Hay Neglected for 50 Years," The Montreal Star 17 June 1974: C-8.

15.Jack Kapica, "Workshop Play Still Needs Work," The Gazette [Montreal] n.d. [27 March 1974?].

16.Jean-Claude Germain, "A Trying Centre for Playwrights," The Stage in Canada 5.4 (Aug. 1969): 7. Antonine Maillet, Jean Barbeau, Michel Garneau and Robert Gurik all had work developed and read by the CEAD. The March 1968 CEAD reading of Michel Tremblay's Les Belles-Soeurs was a watershed moment in Québécois theatre and launched his career. See also Dominique de Pasquale, "Le Centre d'Essai des Auteurs Dramatiques," The Stage in Canada 7.1 (Sept. 1972): 10-11; Elaine F. Nardocchio, Theatre and Politics in Modern Quebec (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986) 49-53.

17.Lawrence Sabbath, "French Playwrights Organize Workshop Drama Group," The Gazette [Montreal] [c. November] 1966.

18.Manifesto, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal, 1 Oct. 1973, PWM archives.

19.Manifesto 1973.

20.Manifesto 1973.

21.Manifesto 1973.

22.Manifesto 1973 and Minutes of General Membership at Playwrights' Workshop Montreal, 329 de la Commune, 10 June 1974, PWM archives.

23.Manifesto 1973.

24.Proposed Budget for 1973-74, PWM archives.

25.Manifesto 1973.

26.Manifesto and Proposed Budget 1973.

27.Proposed Budget 1973-74.

28.LIP Grant Breakdown, 1973, PWM archives.

29.Roy Higgins, letter to Board of Directors, 8 April 1974: 1, PWM archives.

30.Minutes of Meeting, Board of Directors Executive Committee, 10 March 1974: 3, PWM archives.

31.Minutes, 10 March 1974: 3.

32.Minutes, 10 March 1974: 3.

33.Minutes, 10 March 1974: 3.

34.Minutes, 10 March 1974: 3.

35.Roy Higgins, letter to the Board of Directors, 10 March 1974: 2, PWM archives.

36.Higgins letter, 8 April 1974: 2.

37.Higgins letter, 8 April 1974: 2.

38.Roy Higgins, letter to the Board of Directors, 10 March 1974: 2, PWM archives.

39.Higgins letter, 8 April 1974: 1-2.

40.Minutes of meeting, Board of Directors Executive Committee, 31 March 1974: 2, PWM archives.

41.Higgins letter, 8 April 1974: 3.

42.Higgins letter, 10 March 1974: 2.

43.Minutes of Meeting, Board of Directors Executive Committee, 2 May 1974: 1, PWM archives.

44.Libman interview.

45.Higgins letter, 10 March 1974: 2-3.

46.Minutes of Meeting, Board of Directors Executive, 22 April 1974, PWM archives.

47.Rejskind report 1974.

48.Minutes, 10 June 1974: Appendix.

49.Rod Hayward, Statement and Proposal to the Board of Directors, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal, 15 October 1974: 1, PWM archives.

Chapter Six

1975-1978

> Given the organization's history over the past few years, this return to the basics of workshop programming is a radical step. However, re-organization and re-thinking of the role of the Playwrights' Workshop in Montreal and the country as a whole is necessary for sheer survival.
>
> Bob White

The de la Commune failure left Playwrights' Workshop Montreal in an extremely tenuous situation. Although the building's sale averted bankruptcy, morale among members was sinking rapidly. By the June 1975 annual meeting, nine members had resigned from the Board, including President Rod Hayward, Past-President Charles Godlovitch, Robert Yacknin, Bill Zaget, and Larry Kent. Of the three new members added in 1975, one (Paul Hartwick, a Writing Member during the late 'sixties) was named Vice-President, and another (Wayne Robbins) became Treasurer. Laurent Goulet, Treasurer over the past two difficult seasons, was made President. Carol Libman remained as Secretary, and all sources agree that it was Libman's energy and determination which kept the organization together.

The failure of the Theatre Centre, and the misdirection of its efforts, also jeopardized funding from the Canada Council, PWM's principal source of income.[1] In April 1975, Rod Hayward received a letter from Canada Council Theatre Officer Linda Trott. "While there is no doubt that the individual members of the Workshop are dedicated and hard working," she observed,

> it's equally obvious that the level of

> professional service for writers provided by the Playwrights' Workshop is considerably less than the two other organizations of a somewhat similar nature -- the Playwrights Co-op in Toronto and the New Play Centre in Vancouver. . . . If you wish to continue to receive operating grants from the Council you will have to carve yourself out a role in the development of the playwright, and demonstrate that the services you provide are at least as good as those offered by the other organizations and theatres whose concerns are similar to yours.[2]

The Board was well aware that its function as a play development organization had suffered drastically from 1973 to 1975. The threat of a Council funding cut demanded a response more permanent and dramatic than a mere return to the old system of round-table critiques and sporadic staged readings. If the organization were to survive the setbacks incurred over the Theatre Centre years, it would need to alter radically its traditional approach and find new energies and a renewed sense of direction. This new direction was discovered by happy coincidence.

Carol Libman, then working as Public Relations Officer for the Saidye Bronfman Centre, met and fell into conversation with Alan Richardson, a dramaturg with the Factory Theatre Lab who was in Montreal to direct for the SBC Theatre. Libman, curious about new play dramaturgy, questioned him about his role at the Factory and Richardson outlined the responsibilities of the dramaturg in a workshop situation and the practice of new play dramaturgy as it had been incorporated and developed by the Factory. Libman immediately recognized that Playwrights' Workshop could benefit profoundly by following the example of its Toronto counterpart.[3]

In PWM's 'Request for Assistance to the Canada Council' for 1975-76, the need for a dramaturg is explicitly stated and his/her qualifications described:

> [We] feel that a Dramaturg (not an Artistic Director) would be of great assistance.... He or she would have to realize that the orientation is not to immediate production; [we need] someone with a wide range of knowledge and interest in various types of theatre; someone who could accept the non-production orientation of much of his work; who could assimilate the reports of all readers of scripts and convey this information to the writer; who could attract directors willing and able to work with different writers; and be particularly endowed with intelligence; patience and sensitivity.[4]

The dramaturg's primary responsibility would be the organization of workshops "devoted exclusively to the exploration of the script... for the purpose of discovering its strength and weaknesses."[5]

The Council responded favourably to the goals and objectives laid out in the application, and approved a $12,000 grant for the 1975-76 season, equivalent to the amount received for the previous year. The Council cautioned that "unless it can be demonstrated that you are successfully moving towards these goals in the coming year, [we] would have to consider very seriously the continuation of grants to your organization."[6] The Council's David Peacock expressed his conviction that the Workshop was "at a new turning point" in its evolution, and that "the leadership of a competent artistic director" was vital to an organization aiming to integrate itself into "the professional theatre context" and improve "the service that

it gives to the playwrights."[7] By the fall of 1975 PWM had initiated an intensive search to locate this individual. New play dramaturgy was in its infancy in Canada, and there were a limited number of suitable candidates. According to Libman, as the search progressed one name repeatedly arose: Bob White.[8]

White, a native Montrealer, was a graduate of Loyola College, where he had been involved with the school's drama group. Later he completed a Master's degree in Theatre Arts at the University of Alberta. Between 1972 and 1975 White worked as dramaturg with various theatres and organizations in Toronto, particularly the Factory Theatre Lab and the Playwrights' Co-op. Suffering from "burn-out" after serving as a reader and dramaturg for the Co-op during its hectic 1974-75 season, White recouped his energies in the summer of 1975 by travelling around Europe. "Desperately looking for a job" on his return to Canada in the fall, White applied for the dramaturg position with Playwrights' Workshop, but then withdrew his application when the post was offered to him.[9]

The causes of White's reconsideration lay principally in his perception of Quebec's political/cultural environment. He felt that "there wasn't going to be much growth of English culture within the context of what was happening there politically." Toronto, on the other hand, was very much the locus of English new play development, and White decided that it "was the place to be in terms of energy." Following his interview with the PWM Board White concluded that a return to Montreal would be detrimental to his artistic development.[10] But the PWM Board was not easily deterred.

White's qualifications and experience were precisely what PWM was looking for, and the Canada Council itself found Bob White an appropriate choice. The Board sent Anne Sniderman to Toronto to try to convince White that his goals

and those of the organization were compatible. Sniderman, a determined and flexible negotiator, forged an agreement whereby White was hired on a part-time basis, leaving him time to return to Toronto to pursue outside activities.[11] White began working as Playwrights' Workshop's first professional dramaturg in November, 1975.

The reestablishment of the Workshop as a credible play development centre was White's top priority throughout his tenure. In his report to the Canada Council following his first six months at the organization, White succinctly diagnosed the Workshop ills. The Workshop faced, as he saw it, two principal problems: (1) The situation of original play development in Montreal, where "there is no production house -- professional or otherwise -- consistently interested in producing new work [in English]." This resulted in the "disastrous experience of 329 de la Commune," which "reflected the frustration of attempting to become professionally viable without sufficient expertise and direction." White found that "much of the bad will generated by that experience still haunts the Workshop." Compounding this problem was (2) the perception by "many observers" of PWM as "a social club for would-be playwrights." This image, White stated, "while not totally unfounded, fails to take into account the realities of theatre in this city." The tendency for the Workshop to become a showcase for its members reflected their inability to find pubic venues for their work elsewhere.[12]

White's prescription for the organization's malaise involved a "return to the basics of workshop programming," and a view of itself "as a service to playwrights and the theatre as a whole." Achieving these goals required a new "quality of service;" a program of dramaturgical consultations and workshops that "must be consistent, critical and work-provoking." In the past, White contended, workshops had tended to be "showcases for the writers and

actors involved." White's assessment, if somewhat harsh, identifies a confusion between "workshop as development" and "workshop as performance" between 1963 and 1974, which ultimately led to the Theatre Centre trauma. White emphasized that from this point on workshops were to be seen neither as performances nor ends in themselves.[13]

White's emphasis on workshopping as an element in a larger process, rather than a "goal", was a reaction to PWM's traditional focus on workshops and readings as the organization's primary activities. PWM's principal methods of script development between 1963 and 1975 were readings or studio productions, which functioned as short or longer workshops. The additional critical input offered by round-table discussions (following their introduction in 1968), along with reader's commentaries, were helpful to writers but often lacking in continuity or depth of analysis.[14] From now on, White maintained, "extensive consultation with the dramaturg and the process of working through a number of drafts" would be a "prerequisite before workshops of any kind will be considered."[15] The continual presence of the dramaturg as a critical reader and resource person was one of the most significant additions to the Workshop's services following 1975.

Beyond ensuring a "higher calibre" of scripts reaching the workshop stage, the dramaturgical critique also offered an "acid test for the writer." If the playwright had the "stamina, desire, and, most importantly, talent" to accept critical appraisal and rewrite a script many times, then that writer had "one of the essential tools for being a playwright." Several writers had already "fallen by the wayside" due to the rigours of this process, but "in the long view," White concluded, "this is all for the best."[16] Writers who passed the test of a severe dramaturgical critique would find White a staunch defender of their texts once they progressed to a workshop. As a dramaturg and

director of new plays, White has always seen himself as a "defender" of the work; making sure the playwright sees his or her play on the stage "as they wanted to see it."[17] Alun Hibbert recalls that in his first workshop, Bob White acted as dramaturg and was "excellent at keeping clear the line of what the playwright's responsibilities were, and what the director's [and actors'] responsibilities were."[18] In this workshop White served "very much as a go-between, a protector of the writer's intent and integrity," and was "an excellent intermediary, especially with a new writer who knew nothing about what he was doing."[19]

To further reorient the workshop process away from performance, White stipulated that workshops would no longer be "public events". Workshop sessions would now be closed to all except for "limited numbers" of PWM members and other interested professionals. Experiments with "informal readings" between November 1975 and March 1976 showed that the presence of "too many friends and relatives -- of playwrights and actors alike" tended to undercut the developmental aspects of the workshop. In closed workshops the focus remained "centred on dramaturgical problems and not those of production."[20]

White insisted that PWM's new quality of service depended on its attracting high calibre actors and directors. In the past the Workshop had been "fortunate to have many fine and dedicated performers contribute their services to Workshop programmes;" but PWM could no longer "survive on . . . favours and charity." The organization's credibility in the artistic community must depend on its ability to pay those artists "contributing to the development of scripts and the Workshop" at acceptable rates; "only when the Workshop becomes a place to work," White argued, "will members of the theatrical community take the work seriously."[21] From this point on professional actors and directors would be paid according to standard

Equity wage scales.

Finally, White created a variety of workshop formats to meet the needs of scripts in varying degrees of development. Scripts reworked to the satisfaction of the dramaturg could be given extended, forty-hour "intensive workshops" designed to offer the playwright the "opportunity to have his script thoroughly examined, tried and perhaps even re-written" in an exhaustive, week-long exploration. These "intensives" were the Workshop's most expensive activities, requiring funds to pay a full cast and director for forty or more hours. The bulk of the $4,000 budgeted to programming for the 1975-76 season was designated by White, with the Board's approval, for intensive workshops. Other workshop formats ranged from simple "cold readings" for "the immediate benefit of the playwright who needs to hear how his play sounds" to one day or week-end-long sessions "where other problems [could] be approached."[22]

White's strategies to redirect and resurrect Playwrights' Workshop Montreal proved effective. The organization's credibility as a play development centre was firmly reestablished by the summer of 1976, and was reflected in a $3000 increase in its Canada Council grant. The extensive pre-workshop consultations and versatile workshop formats also proved successful and extremely durable; although each dramaturg who succeeded White had his or her individual dramaturgical methodology, the basic framework of in-depth pre-workshop consultations and short or intensive workshops remained intact from 1976 onwards. By the end of White's first season, "at least ten solid, long-term writer/dramaturg relationships" had been established.[23]

The decline in script submissions following the Theatre Centre breakup was also reversed. During the 1975-76 season White received and reviewed over fifty plays, a rate that remained constant through the following two seasons. All

reviewed scripts were discussed personally with the author if he or she lived in the Montreal area; otherwise a letter of critique was sent. The centralization of evaluative and screening power in the hands of the dramaturg was a significant shift from the reading committee format used until 1975. Although less democratic, this centralization was required for the Workshop to offer continuous, unified dramaturgical criticism. When script submissions increased substantially in later years, the reading committee format was occasionally revived, but final decision-making powers always remained with the dramaturg. A submission fee of $20.00 per script was now charged ($15.00 for one-act plays), which entitled the writer to Workshop membership as well as a critique. Paid-up Writing Members of the Workshop could submit up to two plays per year with no submission fee. This submission fee and membership policy were maintained, with some variations, over the next ten years.

White reported in July 1976 that eight short workshops and three intensives had been undertaken since his arrival. Receiving intensives were Anne Sniderman's Emily, a finalist in the 1976 Clifford E. Lee Competition, Rod Hayward's The Disciples, and Bill Zaget's Horseplay. Short workshops were given to Carol Libman's Holiday from the Dark (first directed by Higgins at the Centaur in 1972), Laurent Goulet's Death by Drowning,[24] directed by Rina Fraticelli, and Paul Ledoux's Kill Them. Ledoux's play was subsequently given a three-day run by the Atheatrical Company at the Factory Theatre Lab, and a week-long run at the Powerhouse Gallery in Montreal.

The following season, in line with White's interest in longer workshops, ten intensives took place. These included Paul Ledoux's The Dada Show and George Szanto's After the Ceremony. Eight scripts, including another Ledoux play, Ragdoll, and the first draft of Carol Libman's Wintersong, received short workshops. Aviva Ravel's The Dispossessed,

staged at the Saidye Bronfman Centre in June 1977, was given a six hour short workshop in preparation for the SBC production. The workshop was directed by Sean Mulcahy, who directed the original production.

White became concerned during his second year at the Workshop that some PWM members were "Sunday playwrights," people who were uninterested in actively engaging in theatre as performance, who were outside the current trends and demands of the Canadian theatre, and content simply to talk about the "literary value" of their plays. After his involvement with the Factory Lab, White found this distance from the realities of performance a "shock;" in Toronto

> it was nothing but hands on . . . plays were disposable . . . if they worked you ran them, as in the case of Creeps, and the stinkers you got off there as soon as possible. But you didn't worry about literary value so much as keeping the theatre going.[25]

On his arrival in Montreal White became active in the English fringe theatre on St-Laurent Boulevard. In order to broaden the styles of theatre being treated at the Workshop, White encouraged people he met in the fringe theatre to become involved with PWM. This led to the development of Paul Ledoux's work and his election to the Workshop's presidency in 1977.[26] White also encouraged McGill University Professor George Szanto's involvement with PWM; Szanto had started his own company, the New Heritage Theatre, in San Diego, California, and "had some idea of what play development was all about."[27] Szanto was Vice-President during Ledoux's term as President, following which he took over the presidency for the next five years.[28]

A Visiting Playwrights Program was initiated during the 1976-77 season, funded by a $1500 Canada Council grant. These funds covered living expenses for two playwrights for a week each, as well as expenses for the directors of their

choice. Under this program, intensive workshops were given to Brian Wade's Tanned, directed by Wade himself, and Glenn Bodyan's Fandango, directed by William Lane. Both plays went to Toronto productions.

Unfortunately, the initiation of the Visiting Playwrights Program was accompanied by "an awful lot of flack" from some Board members.[29] Their hesitancy was understandable, however, given the "haunting" effect of the Theatre Centre trauma on the organization. Some members no doubt associated White's desire to bring in outside writers with Higgins' similar efforts, and were determined to avoid a return to that unhappy era. White also encountered resistance when he brought in Toronto actors experienced in new play development. The lack of original English production in Montreal meant that few actors in the city were familiar with the demands of new play dramaturgy. Again, White's actions may have reminded some members of the events of Higgins' tenure.

The 1977-78 season witnessed an even greater stress on long workshops, with only one short workshop given to Brian Macdugall's Carnival. James DeFelice's Take Me Where the Water's Warm received an intensive workshop under the Visiting Playwrights Program, and was subsequently produced by Edmonton's Northern Light Theatre. A movement towards non-traditional styles continued this season, following the arrival of experimental writers such as Ledoux and Szanto. Two of the intensives were co-written: The Tangled Web by Bruce Bailey and Richard King, and The Trial of the Rosenbergs by Peter Madden and Brian Rintoul. The Madden/Rintoul play was commissioned and staged by the SBC Theatre. The same season brought PWM's first workshop of a collective creation: Fat by Thirteen Jackies (the Thirteen Jackies were Odette Oliver, Tanya Rosenberg [Tanya Mars], and Bob White).

Perhaps the shortest-lived of White's decisions was his

ban on public performance of workshopped plays. White's elimination of public performances was a logical reaction to the Canada Council's funding-cut threats. PWM could not be accused of putting performance ahead of play development if the Workshop did not present any work to the public. Eliminating performances also permitted the Workshop to refocus its energies towards play development following the failure of Theatre Centre. In his description of the new Workshop program White had allowed for what he termed an "open rehearsal" following a week-long workshop. This "rehearsal" was "primarily addressed to interested professionals," and was in no way a "reading or any other kind of quasi-performance."[30] Yet by the close of the 1976-77 season it was evident to White that some form of culminating stage production or showcase was needed. PWM writers wanted, naturally enough, to place their work before an audience, even if only in a staged reading format.

In his 1977 Dramaturg's Report, White points out that the policies of the Centaur and the Saidye Bronfman Theatre offer only "minimal opportunities for production of new work," while "the major need of writers associated with the Workshop is professional production." White also felt that the Workshop had a moral obligation to its community to produce its scripts; "the production of the work of English-speaking Quebecers will provide a window on English-language culture for our French-speaking fellow citizens," he maintained. The problems of producing new English drama in Montreal remained formidable, however, and White made it clear that the Workshop "did not intend on launching such a program unless we can secure sufficient financial backing," together with "support from the community and other theatrical organizations."[31]

Support for a PWM production plan, financial or otherwise, was difficult to find. The Workshop looked to the Canada Council for both approval and funding. Between

1975 and 1978 government funding had increased steadily: PWM's Canada Council grant increased a total of $6000, from $12,000 to $18,000; their Quebec grant increased from $5000 to $8000. Aside from writer's fees there was little other income, and all of this money was allocated to workshops and White's small salary. The Council responded positively to the production idea in principle, so long as it did not interfere with PWM's developmental practices, but was reluctant to supply funds. It suggested that, like Vancouver's New Play Centre, PWM seek its production funding from outside sources. Unfortunately, Playwrights' Workshop was in a significantly different position from that of the New Play Centre (or the smaller theatres famous for developing new work in Toronto and elsewhere), to which it was often compared. As a minority service organization operating within the dynamic but highly competitive Quebec theatre environment, the Workshop faced immense difficulty locating non-government backing. Once again the necessity for corporate and private funding and the heightened profile this requires would become a source of conflict for the organization.

White's final season at PWM closed with Carl Hare's direction of Carol Libman's Wintersong. Following a week long intensive workshop, Libman's play became the first PWM-sponsored production since the collapse of the Theatre Centre. After discussions with both the Canada Council and the Ministère des Affaires Culturelles du Quebec, it was obvious to PWM that production plans would have to be very modest indeed. A showcase format similar to that used in the late sixties was devised, using minimal mise-en-scène and props and running for only four evenings. Wintersong was staged in early June, 1978, at the National Theatre School on St-Denis Street. Although the production met with mixed reviews, White felt that it "proved to be a successful extension of the already established workshop program."[32]

Two showcase productions, he thought, might be attempted the coming season. By then, however, he had accepted the position of Workshop Director at the Factory Lab.[33] With his departure in June, and the arrival of new dramaturg Per Brask, another shift in emphasis was imminent.

White left behind an organization significantly different from the one which hired him in 1975. The Workshop he took charge of that November was floundering in the aftermath of its failure at becoming a production house, held together only by the concerted efforts of a few individuals. It was unsure of its ability to survive, threatened by government funding cut-offs, and desperate for leadership. The Workshop White left in June 1978 was securely on its feet, sure of its purpose, direction and financial support, and on its way to becoming a major force in the nurturing of new Canadian drama. White's success in opening the Workshop to writers from outside the province laid the foundation for PWM's maturation into a pan-national dramaturgical service centre. The introduction to the Board of such writers as Ledoux and Szanto also signalled a new orientation, and shifted the organization away from what White perceived to be a generally conservative and "egocentric" attitude.[34]

The debt owed White by the organization, and his contribution to the development of new Canadian drama as a whole, was recognized at Playwrights' Workshop Montreal's Twenty-fifth Anniversary Gala in 1988. During this evening of celebrations Bob White was presented with the National Play Development Award.

NOTES

1.The Council supplied approximately seventy percent of PWM's income during the 1974-75 season.

2.Linda Trott, Assistant Theatre Officer, letter to Rod Hayward, 10 April 1975, PWM archives.

3.Libman interview.

4.Request for Assistance to the Canada Council, 15 July 1975: Supplement 1, Sheet 5, PWM archives.

5.'Request for Assistance', 1975.

6.David Peacock, Head, Canada Council Theatre Section, letter to Carol Libman, 22 Sept. 1975, PWM archives.

7.Peacock letter.

8.Libman interview.

9.Bob White, personal interview, 27 April 1989; Myron Galloway, "Talk With a Dramaturge," The Montreal Star 22 Nov. 1975: D-12.

10.White interview.

11.White and Libman interviews.

12.Bob White, Playwrights' Workshop: Interim Report to Canada Council, 15 March 1976, PWM archives.

13.White Report, March 1976.

14.Michael Springate, whose A Song for Luca was developed during the 1974-75 season, found the PWM evaluation process for submitted scripts extremely rigid and impersonal prior to White's arrival. Evaluation would place the work upon a grid, assigning, for example, "two out of ten in character, six out of ten in dialogue, and zero out of ten in interest." The play was returned with this evaluation, and usually without any personal contact. Springate also felt that there was "a definite hierarchy of play classification," and if "your play didn't fit into that hierarchy then it could be rejected completely." Springate interview.

15.White Report, March 1976.

16.White Report, March 1976.

17."The Role of the Director in New Play Development: Panel Session One: 16 May 1987," Canadian Theatre Review 52 (Fall 1987): 9.

18.Alun Hibbert, telephone interview, 10 May 1990. Hibbert is referring to a workshop with Bob White on his play October's Soldiers (originally titled Bug Out). White received the script the month before he left for the Factory Lab, and took it with him to Toronto. Hibbert believes the workshop of Bug Out was one of the first in the Factory's long-running and very successful Brave New Works series.

19.Hibbert interview.

20.White Report, March 1976.

21.White Report, March 1976.

22.White Report, March 1976.

23.Report on Activities 1975-76 and Proposed Program for 1976-77: 2, PWM archives.

24.Goulet's one-act Death by Burning took first prize in the 1976 Ottawa Little Theatre National Playwriting Competition, and his Death by Drowning received third prize in the same contest.

25.White interview.

26.Ledoux was then working as a bartender at the Powerhouse Gallery, the centre of English fringe activity in Montreal. The Powerhouse was used by Ledoux to stage his Kill Them, and was the venue for Michael Springate's Painted Bird company.

27.White interview.

28.Szanto reports that he first heard about PWM when he came to Montreal in 1974. He found the Theatre Centre activity at the time "naive compared to what I had been doing [in California]." Two years later Carol Libman called Szanto, informed him that the Workshop had hired White and was "starting anew." Szanto met with White, found him "a very bright young man, very energetic" and capable of "[getting] things done." Szanto became progressively more involved with the organization from 1976 onward, and was a key figure during the Brask and Richmond years. George Szanto, personal interview, 17 May 1989.

29.White interview.

30.White Report, March 1976.

31.Dramaturge's Report on Activities 1976-77, Proposals 1977-78: 2-3, PWM archives.

32.Bob White, letter to Walter Learning, Canada Council Theatre Officer, 27 June 1978, PWM archives.

33.Bob White became Artistic Director of the Factory Theatre in 1979, remained with the Factory until 1987, then moved to Alberta Theatre Projects to become Associate Artistic Director responsible for new play development.

34.White interview.

Chapter Seven

1978-1982

> I think it would be foolish to attach every workshop process to a production, simply because without the research and development the writer doesn't grow, nobody does. This is the incubator....
>
> Per Brask

> My focus was strong production capability.... There is the concern that playwrights need to have their scripts developed in isolation, to have their concerns supported in isolation; I believe that's a very admirable argument. But I didn't see that that was my function or what I could do for PWM.
>
> Brian Richmond

Between 1978 and 1982 two very different artists took control of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal. Per Brask was hired in the summer of 1978 to replace Bob White; Brian Richmond took over from Brask in the summer of 1980. Both men were important to the Workshop's evolution, but in sharply contrasting fashions.

Following the departure of Bob White, the Workshop began to search for a replacement dramaturg. Pleased with the redirection undertaken by White, the Board wanted someone who would sustain PWM's "professionalization" by continuing to expand the Workshop's program of high quality consultational and workshop dramaturgy. The candidate who most closely matched their requirements was Per Brask, a Danish dramaturg who had worked in the Canadian theatre for several years.

Born in Copenhagen, Brask held a degree in dramaturgy from the university in Aarhus, Denmark. Perhaps the only dramaturg in Canada with a degree in this field, Brask was trained in "both the theoretical and practical aspects of the theatre," and had served a demanding apprenticeship in "the reading and analysis of plays from all over the world down through the ages."[1] Following an acting stint in Europe Brask arrived in Canada in 1975 to teach acting at the Manitoba Theatre Centre. From Manitoba he moved to Toronto, where he worked as dramaturg for various companies (particularly the Open Circle Theatre) before moving to Montreal and PWM in 1978.

Brask's education left him firmly convinced of the benefits of consultational dramaturgy and the workshop process. The emphasis at Aarhus on both developmental and production dramaturgy meant that Brask was able to articulate fully his own dramaturgical approach and philosophy, including what Alun Hibbert considers to be his particular European-socialist stance.[2] Dramaturgical analysis implies an examination of the author's intentions and the overall effect of the text, its character development and motivation, structure and plot, language, verbal and stage images, and the like. According to Brask, one of the key features of the process is a painstaking analysis, on the part of the dramaturg, of "the way in which the playwright looks at the world".[3] In Brask's dramaturgy, the surest way for the dramaturg to comprehend the author's created world is to engage in a process of intense exploration in much the same way as "an actor in a realistic drama would have to get behind the eyeballs of the character in order to create an intricate and fulfilling performance."[4]

Brask stresses that understanding "the world" of the play implies a recognition that drama and theatre are "acts of communication" in society; and "the moment you have an

act of communication you have a responsibility for what that communication is to do, and what it's about." For Brask, this entails "a bottom line ethical responsibility in the stage's relationship to its audience and the act of communication that takes place." At times, this "ethical responsibility" has led Brask to say, "this is not a play for me to work on, I suggest you go to so-and-so." This does not mean that Brask avoids working on "lighter pieces," rather that all his consultations and workshops "have had one thing in common: they have attempted to pursue that relationship with the audience in some kind of interesting, innovative and committed way."[5] Brask's preference for socially responsible drama guided the selection of plays developed by the Workshop during his tenure.

Despite any philosophical differences Brask and White shared an essentially functional attitude towards their dramaturgical practice. Brask states that it is "finally... the usefulness of the function that's at stake, rather than any particular theory about what it should be," and the dramaturg should put him or herself into "a relationship with a production or a play [in development] which is deemed to be the most effective."[6] The transition between White's tenure and Brask's was a smooth one: "There wasn't very much difference between what Bob White was trying to do and what I was trying to do. Certainly we were doing many of the same things in terms of the kinds of workshops." White's conflicts with the Board over the Visiting Playwrights Program and the employment of actors from outside Montreal succeeded in opening the Workshop to non-local artists, initiating a shift from a local to a national focus, a shift continued by Brask and later dramaturgs. White was, Brask insists, "the trailblazer, the builder of the institution as it now stands."[7]

White's success in reestablishing PWM's credibility is reflected in the number of scripts received during the year

after his departure. Brask reported that over two hundred scripts arrived at the Workshop between August 1978 and July 1979. All scripts were reviewed by Brask and given a critical response, either in the form of a letter or meeting. Forty scripts received extended consultations, ranging from two to twenty letters and/or meetings.[8] The following season the number of submissions decreased, but remained above the one-hundred mark. The decrease was in fact welcomed by Brask, who was then able to deal with the scripts "in a more profound manner."[9] Carol Libman observed at the time that submission levels appeared to be cyclical, increasing one year then decreasing the next,[10] although the submission level never fell below one hundred annually after White's tenure.

Per Brask conducted six workshops during his first season: David Freeman's Jungle of Lilacs (directed by New York's Alex Dmitriev); Michael Hollingworth's Broken Record; Henry Beissel's Improvisations for Mr. X; Amanda Hale's Threshold; Carol Libman's A Rare Day in June (also called Still Waters, workshop directed by Paul Mann); and Ken Mitchell's The Shipbuilder. The 1979-80 season saw five workshops: Damn You, Joey by Freeman; Under Coyote's Eye, another Beissel script; The Family Way by David Freeston (later to be produced as Birth Rite, under the pseudonym Elliott Carroll); Just Another Love Song by Lib Spry; and A Man's Reach by George Szanto (directed by Dmitriev). All of these scripts received closed, intensive workshops. The number of workshops decreased during the 1979-80 season, due to a decline in submissions, and a cutback in funding from the Quebec government.[11]

Perhaps the most exciting venture of Brask's tenure was the "International Exchange Program" set up between PWM and the Playwrights' Lab of the Actors' Studio in New York. Brask relates that the exchange came about "completely fortuitously," through his connections with the Open Circle

Theatre in Toronto. Toronto's Open Circle Theatre staged a play by Israel Horowitz (head of the Actors' Studio's playwriting unit) in the mid-seventies. Through this production Brask and Horowitz became acquainted. Horowitz went to Montreal in 1978, and stopped to visit Brask at the Saidye Bronfman Centre (where PWM remained in residence). Brask reports that he and Horowitz

> talked about Playwrights' Workshop Montreal and... about the unit at the Actors' Studio. We both scratched our heads at the same time and said, why don't we do something - send a couple of New York playwrights to Montreal, and a couple of Montreal playwrights to New York. That's exactly what we proceeded to do.[12]

Brask spent January and February of 1979 preparing for the exchange, and in early March, Brask, George Szanto and Henry Beissel travelled to New York for three-day workshops of two plays, culminating in public readings. Szanto's After the Ceremony was presented on 11 March, 1979, and Beissel's Improvisations for Mr. X was staged the following evening. The New York contingent to Montreal was made up of playwrights Richard Vetere and Bruce Serlen. Vetere's Rockaway Boulevard was workshopped for several days then presented 23 March, 1979, and Serlen's The Consoling Virgin was workshopped during the same period and staged a night later.

The New York experience was, according to Szanto, "immensely professional." Following some initial confusion (the Playwrights' Lab, due to a breakdown in communications, was not expecting the Montreal group that week), the direction of Szanto's script was assigned "a very dynamic young Black woman." Within two days the actors were booked and "a fully staged performance" was prepared. Szanto was very impressed by the professionalism of the director, who

was capable of instructing the actors and interpreting the text without even "glancing" his way. The final days of the workshop were ones of "intense activity," but activity directed towards the performance of the play rather than an investigation of the script itself; "it wasn't a workshop of the play," Szanto felt, but rather "a workshop for the actors." The actors' teachers critiqued the direction and performance of the play, but the script itself "wasn't mentioned at all."[13]

Exposure to the Actors' Studio's methods was nonetheless an "intriguing experience," and one which, for the Americans, generated "many concerns and debates" over their emphasis on performance rather than script development.[14] Brask felt that the experience "caused a lot of discussion, a lot of pushing back and forth," which was ultimately "fruitful."[15] Both Szanto's and Beissel's plays were "stylistically challenging" and outside "the standard practices of American naturalism," further fuelling the debate at the Studio, described by Brask as "the temple of American naturalism."[16] Both American plays workshopped in Montreal were less adventurous than the Canadian scripts, although Brask describes Serlen's play as more "challenging" than Vetere's.[17] Szanto, admitting to a certain anti-naturalistic bias, felt that both the American scripts were "pretty kitchen sink."[18] Although the exchange was meant to be an annual event, contact with the Actors' Studio was never reestablished.

Beyond its educational possibilities, Brask viewed the New York exchange as a chance to introduce Canadian plays and playwrights to the American market. His dedication to developmental dramaturgy and the workshop process was informed by a belief that "part of the dramaturg's work is to help market plays and further the careers of promising playwrights."[19] To this end Brask hoped that his connections with some of the Toronto theatres would be

helpful. He also suggested that the Workshop distribute a newsletter containing synopses of recently workshopped plays to Canadian Equity theatres. A newsletter was subsequently produced semi-annually in 1979 and 1980, with the Factory Lab and New Play Centre joining PWM in the 1980 mailing. Again, when Richmond replaced Brask this project fell by the wayside.

The very existence of the newsletter indicates the continued keenness of Workshop members to have their plays staged. Their interest in performance received an unexpected push as the result of a 'volte-face' by the Canada Council in 1979. The Workshop, like the Factory Theatre and New Play Centre, suddenly faced demands from a "reconstituted" Council to produce "results." The Council informed PWM that henceforth it would "be viewing applications through competitive standards."[20] After expressing its satisfaction with Bob White's reorientation of the Workshop away from performance and towards playwright service and development only three years earlier, the Council's new stance caught Brask and the Board by surprise. In 1980 the Council increased its pressure, demanding enhanced "visibility" for PWM through public performance. The pressure on all "service organizations" was intensified by freezes or cuts in Council grants. PWM was fortunate to have its Council grant frozen (at $20,000), but Brask recognized that the Workshop would need to increase its "public participation" without "diminishing in any way the development part of our program" if it were to avoid an outright cut.[21]

The Council's demands came at a point when a number of plays nurtured by the restructured Workshop were receiving professional productions. Bob White indicates that several scripts developed during his tenure went on to production in Montreal and Toronto, and the involvement of Toronto artists such as William Lane and Brian Wade in the Workshop program

"helped to spread the word about the organization, and forced people to have a look at the scripts."[22] Elliott Carroll's The Family Way (Birth Rite) was set for production at Montreal's Phoenix Theatre in October 1980; Szanto's After the Ceremony was also slated for a Phoenix production during the 1981-82 season, and his Mixed Marriage was scheduled for the Saidye Bronfman's 1980-81 season; Hollingsworth's Broken Record was scheduled for a Toronto production; and Libman's Still Waters was under option by the Harold Clurman Theatre in New York.[23] But the Council was not satisfied with extra-Workshop productions; it wanted the Workshop itself to become more visible to the taxpayer.

The Quebec government was also insisting that the Workshop assume a higher profile on the Montreal theatre scene. PWM responded to Quebec by pointing out that four of the six plays workshopped during the 1978-79 season were written by Quebecers, seventy-five percent of its dramaturgical consultations were with Quebec writers, ninety-five percent of the actors hired for workshops that season were resident in Quebec, its dramaturg provided services to the Centaur and Saidye Bronfman theatres and taught at the National Theatre School and Concordia University, and many of its members were active in local theatres. All was to little avail; both levels of government were determined that grant-receiving bodies must produce tangible and visible results.

The problem of raising PWM's visibility was removed from Per Brask's hands in the summer of 1980. Muriel Gold's departure from the Saidye Bronfman Centre left the Artistic Director's position open, and Brask was awarded the job. He was already familiar with the SBC from his consultational work on SBC scripts, as well as the proximity imposed by the SBC's continued housing of PWM. Brask formed a search committee with Szanto and Libman, and PWM set about finding their third dramaturg in five years, a task complicated by

their awareness that the organization required someone with strong administrative capabilities and the ability to attract the community in order to meet the new challenges set by the government. It appeared that they needed an artistic director as much as a dramaturg. The candidate whose talents seemed most nearly to match their demands was Brian Richmond.

Richmond was a founder and first Artistic Director of Saskatoon's Persephone Theatre from 1974 to 1976. Between 1976 and 1980 Richmond worked as a freelance director and teacher. Living primarily in Vancouver, Richmond staged over twenty productions of original plays for such companies as the Vancouver Arts Club, the Green Thumb players and the Axis Mime Theatre. While at the Persephone Richmond developed and directed Ken Mitchell's Cruel Tears, and discovered that "the creative work involved in developing new material was more exciting than merely directing established works."[24]

The first major event of Richmond's tenure was, for the most part, already organized before his arrival: PWM's Festival of New Canadian Plays was the Brask administration's response to the government's pressure for visibility. The festival was originally scheduled to coincide with the Montreal visit of British playwright Arnold Wesker, who had agreed to act as adjudicator. Wesker was originally scheduled direct the Saidye Bronfman production of his The Merchant at Place des Arts in the spring of 1980, but financial problems at the SBC forced the cancellation of the production. By that time Carol Libman, responsible for organizing the PWM side of Wesker's visit, had already established a strong rapport with the writer. She was determined that the PWM-Wesker event would go through.[25]

A series of speaking engagements were set up to fund

Wesker's Canadian visit in October 1980. These included lectures at the SBC, Concordia University, the National Theatre School, York University and the University of Toronto. The PWM Festival took place over four evenings at the close of Wesker's speaking tour, from 28 October to 31 October 1980. The four staged readings were Szanto's After the Ceremony, Mitchell's The Shipbuilder, Jackie Crossland's First Contact, and David Freeman's Damn You, Joey. The Festival cost the Workshop slightly over $6000 ($3700 of which went to actors' salaries), offset by a $2400 special grant from the Quebec Department of Cultural Affairs and just over $1000 in ticket sales and donations. Wesker attracted press coverage in both Toronto and Montreal. His presence and critical contributions to the scripts led PWM to consider the event a success. The Festival, however, was obliged to share the spotlight with another PWM-generated event taking place concurrently -- the Phoenix Theatre's production of David Freeston's Birth Rite. For the first and perhaps last time in its history, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal was competing with itself for publicity.

Birth Rite ran from mid-October to mid-November 1980. A play about two couples, one straight and one gay, it focused upon crucial questions related to commitment and child-rearing in the interacting lives of the four characters, and was described as a "thought-provoking... astonishingly well-written and haunting comedy."[26] Critic Myron Galloway pronounced Birth Rite the "Best Original Play," and it tied for second place as "Best Production," of the 1980 Montreal English theatre season (which in Galloway's grouping included productions by the Centaur, SBC, the Lennoxville Festival, and the Piggery, as well as all semi-professional and amateur productions).[27]

The Birth Rite production, directed by Brian Richmond, was a major breakthrough for the Phoenix, a small semi-professional company founded by Maxim Mazumdar and Greg

Peterson in the mid-seventies. Artistic Director Peter Lonergan took over from Mazumdar and Peterson in 1977, and in 1979 the Phoenix moved from its cramped quarters above a barbershop in Town of Mount Royal to the small theatre space on de Maisonneuve Boulevard that had held the Revue Theatre.[28] Prior to Richmond's arrival and the injection of PWM talent and funds, Myron Galloway indicates that the company presented mostly "hit and miss semi-amateur productions" on "an almost non-existent budget." The production of Birth Rite signalled that the Phoenix should now be "taken seriously as a company capable of mounting first class professional theatre."[29]

The Phoenix production was in effect a PWM-Phoenix co-production, and laid the foundation for a close working relationship between the two organizations over the next twelve months. From Richmond's standpoint, the readiest route to public visibility for PWM was through full production of its own scripts. Upon his arrival, Richmond began examining possible "liaisons with theatres in the city" in order to re-establish PWM's direct involvement in production.[30] Confronted with the Centaur's and SBC's continued disinterest in original play production, he perceived the Phoenix as the most likely candidate for a co-operative venture with PWM. Richmond saw the Phoenix as "a struggling company... just developing an interest in new work." Despite "financial problems," it was in a position to "become a good alternative theatre to the Centaur," and some form of PWM-Phoenix alliance, according to Richmond, "seemed to be quite natural to both the Board and myself."[31]

The opportunity to direct Birth Rite gave Richmond a chance to demonstrate his strengths and interests to both groups. According to Richmond, he moulded Birth Rite into a play with a satisfying production format, although this moulding required continual modifications to the script's

ending "right up to afternoon of opening night."[32] The play's almost unqualified success gave Richmond the opportunity to propose a PWM-Phoenix merger.[33] He had already passed the idea by Lonergan, who immediately saw the advantages to his company. Negotiations between PWM and the Phoenix began in late October and were completed by early December. As unlikely as it may have seemed five years before, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal was back in the production business.

The PWM-Phoenix alliance permitted close interaction between the two organizations; it was not, however, a complete amalgamation of the two groups nor as ambitious a project as the Theatre Centre venture. The first item of the agreement concerned the PWM-Phoenix co-production of original work. The Phoenix season would include three plays developed by PWM, one of which would be selected "exclusively by Playwrights' Workshop through its dramaturg," while the remaining two works would be "jointly agreed upon by the Phoenix Theatre and the dramaturg of Playwrights' Workshop, in consultation with a committee set up for that purpose."[34] Each Phoenix co-production would be underwritten by PWM to the extent of $3000. The 1980-81 season would be viewed as an "interim year" leading up to full implementation of the agreement the following season. The Birth Rite show was to be considered the first experimental co-production of the interim year, supported, Richmond estimated, by $2200 of PWM funds.[35] The Phoenix agreed to mount one more PWM production during the 1980-81 season.[36]

The second item of the agreement concerned the sharing of administrative and workshop space. The Phoenix, aside from renting the theatre on de Maisonneuve, had obtained accommodations in the former Kensington School (to become known as the NDG Cultural Centre) in Notre Dame de Grace. The Phoenix section of the Centre consisted of "four large

rooms and some smaller rooms." Plans were under consideration to create set construction and storage space, rehearsal halls, administrative and meeting offices and reading rooms. PWM arranged to rent their section of the Centre from the Phoenix for $1000 per year, and moved their operations from the SBC to the Centre on 15 December 1980.[37]

The final area of agreement concerned the sharing of administrative resources. At the time PWM's staff consisted of the dramaturg and a part-time administrative assistant (Carol Libman), who worked approximately two days per week. Turning PWM into a producing operation required a larger administration; in Richmond's view it was "immediately obvious" that the organization was "attempting to do too much with too small a staff." PWM's "static nature" was, Richmond asserted, partly the result of its "administrative structure;" the organization was lacking in "accurate financial recording and control [Richmond's emphasis]," and needed "a dynamic and growth oriented notion towards fund-raising."[38] At the time of Richmond's arrival funding was almost entirely supplied by the federal and provincial governments; municipal, private and corporate donations were practically non-existent. "Any organization," Richmond declared, "that wants to compete for public attention and money must also have the ability to project a dynamic and alive image of itself through the publicity sources available to it."[39]

The Phoenix merger gave Richmond the opportunity to restructure the administration. The Phoenix, he pointed out, "already employs staff members which perform all of the functions" needed by PWM.[40] The Board decided that fund-raising and routine clerical work could be handed over to the Phoenix, and publicity for both organizations would be handled by Carol Libman, who became PWM-Phoenix Publicity Manager. The Board resisted Richmond's efforts to gain

financial control, however, and insisted that David Freeston, PWM's Secretary-Treasurer, continue to hold the purse-strings. Intense skirmishes over money provided the backdrop for more profound conflicts between Richmond and the Board in the months ahead.

The PWM-Phoenix merger remained an arms-length affair during the 1980-81 season. PWM continued its own operations, and Richmond explored several new areas of activity. A Monday Night Readings series was initiated, returning to the 'sixties practice of a brief workshop-rehearsal followed by the public presentation of what was almost a cold-reading of the play. The audience was invited to comment on the play after the reading. Nine Monday evening readings took place at the Phoenix Theatre that season, including Nieces by Colleen Curran, Re-Union by Peter Madden, and Still Waters by Carol Libman. Despite a postal strike one hundred and seventeen scripts were received and reviewed.[41]

Three long workshops were undertaken, all in preparation for PWM-Phoenix co-productions. Although considered developmental workshops, they became in effect pre-production rehearsals for the new works. Birth Rite was given an extended workshop in Toronto following its Phoenix production in preparation for a national tour. Although venues were arranged in Vancouver and Edmonton, the tour failed to materialize due to "lack of organization" by the Phoenix Theatre and its inability to supply the "large deposit" required by Actor's Equity.[42] Two extended workshops were undertaken in preparation for the PWM-Phoenix co-production of David Rimmer's Moonshot. The first workshop took place in Toronto because the actors cast for the production (Richard Partington and Patricia Phillips) were both appearing in Toronto's Onstage '81 Festival. The second took place in Montreal immediately prior to the opening of Moonshot. The shift to a production emphasis in

these workshops became the substance of a "philosophical" conflict which strained the relationship between Richmond and the Board.

Richmond had originally planned three thirty-hour workshops, three twenty-hour workshops and three ten-hour workshops for the 1980-81 season, but only the Freeston and Rimmer pre-production workshops actually received intensive attention. Three plays received short, five to ten hour workshops: Aviva Ravel's Second Chance, Madden's Re-union and Alun Hibbert's Playing the Fool (originally Rachel's Boy). Playing the Fool, originally a one-act play, was expanded to two-acts following consultations between Hibbert and Richmond. The workshop for Playing the Fool had been scheduled to last three days, but after preliminary read-throughs Hibbert realized the second act was seriously flawed, and cancelled the remainder of the workshop to allow him to re-draft the final act. Hibbert had "quite a number of discussions" with Richmond about the play, both before and after the workshop, and acknowledges Richmond's contribution to what became his most commercially successful drama.[43]

The second PWM-Phoenix co-production, Moonshot, mirrored Birth Rite's critical and popular success. Moonshot was written by David Rimmer, who had staged a successful adaptation of George Orwell's 1984 with the Phoenix the year before he joined PWM. Rimmer replaced Henry Beissel as PWM's Vice-President in 1981, and remained in that post until 1985. Staged during June and July, 1981, Moonshot focused on a former astronaut who becomes disenchanted with the destructive aspects of space-age technology and is silenced by the Establishment when he attempts to address his concerns to the American public. An ambitious project, much of the play's impact was achieved through the contrast between a simple pastoral set (a cottage on Cape Cod) and multiple video screens and a large

film screen used to present actual film footage of the 1969 moon landing. The play was described as "fascinating" by Le Devoir and "an important milestone" by the Sunday Express;[44] unfortunately, a later production at Vancouver's Waterfront Theatre did not fare as well. The Moonshot production demanded considerable technical expertise and pre-production research.[45] Although the video equipment was donated by Sony, and film footage supplied cost-free by NASA, the expenses of such a complex production were a drain on both financially-troubled partners.

Earlier in the season the two companies received an $8000 du Maurier Arts Council grant, to be split evenly between them. Although the Phoenix bore the brunt of fiscal responsibility for productions, PWM contributed financially through workshop-rehearsals and shared resources and personnel. By July of 1981 the Phoenix had not remitted to PWM $1000 of the du Maurier grant, and owed the Workshop an additional $1200 in funds "not spent on readings," almost $2000 in telephone expenses, and $800 for Carol Libman's salary; in all over $5000. The original PWM-Phoenix agreement had stipulated that the Phoenix would earmark $5000 of the joint fund-raising effort for PWM, but the Phoenix was not able to meet this obligation either. By August 1981 the Phoenix owed PWM over $10,000.

The financial stress and personal tension caused by the co-productions affected the integration of the two organizations. PWM's relationship with the Phoenix became more distant as the season progressed, fortunately for the Workshop. The Phoenix's financial troubles became critical by the close of September 1981, and the company folded in early October. The disassociation of the two groups meant that the Phoenix's demise was not a fatal blow to PWM, but it did cost the Workshop a substantial sum in unremitted funds, and closed off the organization's most hopeful production outlet.

The publicity garnered through the Phoenix co-productions to some degree satisfied the Canada Council's demand for visibility, but in terms of its financial and artistic well-being the Workshop, in the fall of 1981, found itself in almost the same position as one year earlier. Not only was it without a production outlet, but it was without a home of its own. And some Board members were beginning to voice the Workshop's age-old concern over the sacrifice of play development to production values. The Workshop had given Richmond a "free hand" for his first season,[46] and Richmond had responded by presenting PWM with two successful productions. But these successes had entailed a considerable shift in emphasis: the White/Brask system of consultations and developmental workshops had been replaced by workshops geared towards immediate production requirements. The Board's concern over the thrust of the workshops was temporarily allayed during the 1981 Annual General Meeting, where "it was agreed that the two main aspects of our program must be balanced: the development and the production for the public."[47] Yet the Board was willing to "give Brian as large a mandate as possible for 1981-82," and new options for production began to be explored, including the possibility of three independent Equity productions.

An ambitious financial campaign was launched following the 1981 AGM. The Workshop's budget for the previous season was under $40,000, but plans for the 1981-82 season called for a budget of over $120,000. With revenues from the Canada Council remaining stable at $28,000, and grants from Quebec and the City of Montreal totalling only $10,000, the new budget required that $50,000 be returned in ticket sales from the three full productions, and almost $20,000 had to be raised through private and corporate donations. Expenses would be split between the three productions (costing almost $30,000 each, total $80,000), with $23,000 going towards

workshops and readings, and $17,000 for administration.[48] Considering that the Workshop had received very little funding outside its government grants, even in the previous year of higher public profile, these objectives were extremely ambitious. The close of the 1981-82 season revealed that the Workshop had received only slightly over $50,000 in revenue ($12,000 more than in 1980-81), with expenses totalling $48,000. Income from grants was as expected (Canada Council: $28,500, Quebec: $6000, Conseil des Arts de Montreal: $1500). Although the du Maurier Council generously chipped in $8000, donations and ticket sales totalled less than $4000.[49]

The failure of the Phoenix and the disarray that ensued (PWM's administration moved into in a spare room in Richmond's house), the growing discontent among Board members, the Workshop's inability to achieve its financial goals, and the projected costs of staging Equity productions took their toll on Richmond's plans. Even though the Board was exploring production or co-production possibilities as late as November 1981, by March 1982 Richmond had tendered his resignation, although he agreed to oversee the first Playwrights' Workshop Spring Writes festival of staged readings. It is worth noting, however, that amid the disharmony which accompanied Richmond's departure, the Workshop continued to receive and review an average number of scripts, and workshopped or presented readings of thirteen of them. These included two works by Richmond's close friend Ken Mitchell (Gone the Burning Sun and Sarah Binks, both of which went on to professional productions), Ralph Burdman's Eye to Eye, and Dr. Smyrichinsky's Brother by Denis Foon.

PWM's Spring Writes festival, modeled after the Factory Theatre's Brave New Works series, was presented between 29 May and 11 June 1982 at the National Theatre School. All plays in the festival were given two staged readings.

Mitchell's Gone the Burning Sun opened and closed the festival, and was accompanied by Burdman's and Foon's plays along with Neil Kroetsch's I Like It Here. Four plays by Concordia University Theatre and Creative Writing students made up the remainder of the bill: The Group by Nancy Clark, Mobile by Ian Stephens, Cloaks by David Murray, and Everyday the Sky is Blue by Gary Jewell.

Many aspects of the Richmond administration's history recall the Higgins years: PWM again launched itself as a production organization, increased its public profile, and merged with another theatre body. As with the Higgins' administration, financial overextension and conflict between the Board and the Artistic Director occurred. The roots of the problem again lay in a fundamental difference between the Board's and the Artistic Director's vision of the function, purpose and capabilities of the organization. Once more the Board was willing to subordinate its priorities only to a limited degree to the Artistic Director's vision. There were, however, also many differences between the two administrations: Richmond's plans were far less grand than those of Higgins (he did not suggest that PWM could hope to be another Factory Theatre, although he felt that the PWM-Phoenix alliance might evolve in that direction); he proposed co-productions with an established company rather than independent ventures (although this was a goal in the 1981-82 season); he did not suggest that PWM could support its own building or permanent acting company; and he was always dedicated to the production of new work. But like Higgins, misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication characterized Richmond's tenure from his arrival at PWM.

Richmond's initial perception of PWM at the time he was hired was that of an organization "looking for more of an artistic director than a dramaturg... They were looking for

someone with producing skills as well as play development skills."[50] Because he was experienced in both areas he considered himself, and feels that the Board considered him, the "perfect candidate" for a development centre looking to move into production. Richmond maintains that he had never been "a proponent of, or had much of an interest in, simply the process of the development of scripts [outside of production];"[51] and although Richmond claims that he made this obvious to George Szanto, Per Brask, Carol Libman and the rest of the Board before he was hired, Szanto insists that "it wasn't clear at all."[52] Richmond correctly assumed that PWM was interested in him because of his production experience, but was mistaken in thinking that the organization was willing to subordinate its development interests to a production focus. Yet by December of 1980 Richmond was publicly proclaiming that his "basic aim" was to get the Workshop "into the game of producing."[53]

Conflicts between the Board and Richmond during his first season centred primarily on the financial costs of the PWM-Phoenix co-productions. Richmond was initially unaware of how little money the Workshop had for production; his "first shock" on arriving was "the [small] size of the budget."[54] Had he been aware of the budget's limitations he may not have accepted the dramaturg/artistic director position. With over half the budget committed to his own and the assistant's salary, there was "very little money left to do anything at all."[55] Nonetheless, Richmond spent whatever funds were available, and, according to Szanto, some funds that were not available, on the two PWM-Phoenix productions.

Disagreements also arose over the cost and location of the Moonshot and Birth Rite pre-production workshops, the use of actors from western Canada, the costs of the Moonshot set and background work, and similar disbursements seen as "not particularly helpful to PWM [in a developmental

capacity]."[56] By the close of the Moonshot production Richmond was "spending money that PWM didn't have,"[57] and a bank overdraft was required to keep the Workshop afloat from November 1981 to January 1982 when the next Canada Council grant instalment arrived. Temporary debt is a fact of life for many companies, but for PWM it meant courting disaster. The demise of the Phoenix, and its cost to PWM, was a reminder of the perilous position of any company attempting Equity productions of new English plays in Montreal. Also, the PWM Theatre Centre failure was not so far behind that its negative financial ramifications were forgotten. By early 1982 Richmond realized that the Board would no longer support his production plans, and that his "free hand" would be limited in the future. This, according to George Szanto, led to Richmond's decision to resign.[58]

Behind the financial disputes lay a deeper conflict between Richmond's vision of the Workshop as a centre for new drama which would provide a theatre for and give voice to the anglophone community of Montreal, and the Board's (as represented by its President, George Szanto and former dramaturg Per Brask) concept of the Workshop as a service organization for developing plays and playwrights. Although Richmond felt that this struggle "was a healthy conflict," by the winter of 1981-82 he "simply didn't want to participate in that dialectic any more."[59]

The productions of Birth Rite and Moonshot once again became the focus for this conflict. Richmond felt that he was moulding the plays into good theatre while giving a voice to English Montreal artists and using the productions to establish PWM's profile. Szanto and other Board members supported Richmond's efforts so long as they did not jeopardize the development of the plays according to the intentions of the playwrights. In the pre-production workshop of Birth Rite, however, Szanto felt that Richmond ignored Freeston's wishes and made him "do some stuff he

didn't want to do" so that the end result was "spectacular instead of delicate." A similar situation occurred with Moonshot; Rimmer's play "had some real difficulties," but he "could have worked those through given the kind of space and freedom a workshop could provide." Unfortunately, Richmond's desire to "have the play perfect for production as soon as possible" led to two workshops which "were disasters, for the play, for [Rimmer], for Brian and probably for PWM as well," according to Szanto.[60] Ultimately, Richmond was unable to convince the Board that the demands he made on Freeston and Rimmer were necessary for the improvement of their plays, and that he had placed the writer's intentions ahead of his own. His obvious disinterest in play development outside of production was also a perpetual source of friction.

Szanto locates much of the responsibility for the Workshop's problems with the Canada Council, although he recognizes that the Workshop could not have continued to exist without the Council's support. After insisting that PWM become the type of service organization that White and Brask had formed, the Council abruptly demanded that PWM become a producing theatre. "If we would have workshopped ten plays a year and six of them were produced in legitimate Equity houses across the country, and three of them were very successful, the Council would have left us alone," Szanto believes, but because "that didn't happen . . . the Council tried to turn us into something that we weren't, or at least kept us somewhere in that paradox between visibility and invisibility, and production and development." The Council's demands might have been met if "they would have [given] us the money to be a producing theatre, or to be visible to the community," but additional funding was not forthcoming (although the Board "confronted them on this a few times").[61]

The Council also appeared insensitive to PWM's position

as a minority English service organization in Quebec and the particular difficulties created by that situation. In the spring of 1982 the search for a dramaturg who could meet the needs of the Workshop, satisfy the demands of the Canada Council, and turn PWM's atypical situation in Montreal to its advantage, began.

NOTES

1.Myron Galloway, "Workshop's Brask Keeps Local Theatre Scene Alive," The Gazette [Montreal] 6 April 1980: 41.

2.Alun Hibbert, telephone interview, 10 May 1990.

3.Per Brask, telephone interview, 7 May 1990.

4.Brask interview.

5.Brask interview. Michael Springate recalls that in several conversations he had with Brask about playwriting, he appreciated Brask's emphasis on "the idea that plays are not artifacts, not 'fine art,' but are in fact designed towards their audience." Springate also shared Brask's socialist political stance, and although Springate felt his work was too "esthétique" for Brask's tastes, he appreciated Brask's socially oriented (as opposed to the traditionally formalistic consideration of plot, character, etc.) critical approach [Springate interview].

6.Brask interview.

7.Brask interview.

8.Activity Report - 1978-79 Season, PWM archives.

9.Playwrights' Workshop - [Minutes of] Meeting of Monday, 28 Jan. 1980, PWM archives.

10.Meeting 28 Jan. 1980.

11.The Method of Work at Playwrights' Workshop, August 1979, PWM archives.

12.Brask interview.

13.George Szanto, personal interview, 17 May 1989.

14.Brask interview.

15.Brask interview.

16.Brask interview.

17.Brask interview.

18.Szanto interview.

19.Minutes - Playwrights' Workshop, 28 Sept. 1978, PWM archives.

20.Playwrights' Workshop - Minutes of Meeting, 9 Jan. 1979, PWM archives.

21.Meeting, 28 Jan. 1980.

22.White interview.

23.Annual General Meeting Playwrights' Workshop, 6 July 1980, PWM archives.

24.Myron Galloway, "Playwrights' Workshop's Brian Richmond: A Boost for Local Theatre," Sunday Express [Montreal] 2 Nov. 1980.

25.Libman interview.

26.Myron Galloway, "Birth Rite an Astonishing Homegrown Theatre Work," Sunday Express [Montreal] 26 Oct. 1980.

27.Myron Galloway, "Theatre: The 10 Best of 1980," Sunday Express [Montreal] 28 Dec. 1980: 20.

28.See Myron Galloway, "Phoenix Set on Developing Professional Musical Theatre," The Montreal Star 12 May 1975: A-14; Bruce Bailey, "Phoenix Will Replace Revue," The Gazette [Montreal] 7 July 1979.

29.Galloway, "Richmond: A Boost".

30.Richmond interview.

31.Richmond interview.

32.Galloway, "Richmond: A boost".

33.Maureen Peterson of The Gazette offers a more restrained critique than Galloway, but warrants that "the work merits whatever further effort [that is] required to bring it to maturity." Although "the production has flaws," (which are

then enumerated in detail), Peterson admits that "one can see that much serious work has gone into Brian Richmond's staging." Peterson, "Birth Rite shows intelligent work," The Gazette [Montreal] 3 Nov. 1980: 29.

34.Minutes of Board Meeting, 10 Dec. 1980, PWM archives.

35.Brian Richmond, letter to PWM President George Szanto, 12 Nov. 1980.

36.Due to the sometimes questionable quality of earlier Phoenix productions, Richmond emphasized that "the quality of productions be of concern to both organizations," and quality control agreements "similar to that used for the co-production of Birth Rite" be arranged for all future co-productions. Minutes of Extraordinary Board Meeting, 22 Oct. 1980, PWM archives.

37.Minutes, 10 Dec. 1980.

38.Richmond letter.

39.Richmond letter.

40.Richmond letter.

41.Playwrights' Workshop Minutes of Board Meeting, 18 March 1981; [Minutes of] Annual General Meeting, 17 Aug. 1981; [Minutes of] Board Meeting, 17 Aug. 1981; Report from the Dramaturg, 17 Aug. 1981, PWM archives.

42.Board Meeting, 17 Aug. 1981.

43.Playing the Fool was first commissioned by the Centaur following Hibbert's success with October's Soldiers in Toronto. The Centaur decided not to produce the play once presented with a final draft, but it was picked up by the 25th Street Theatre in Saskatoon, and presented there in January of 1982. Maurice Podbrey viewed the Saskatoon production, changed his mind about the play and staged it at the Centaur the following year. Hibbert interview.

44.Jacques Laure-Langlois, "Moonshot: une création Montréalaise bien rendue," Le Devoir 3 Juillet 1981; Myron Galloway, Moonshot out of this world," Sunday Express [Montreal] 3 July 1981.

45.Marien Lewis, the woman responsible for the video aspects of the production, spent a week at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington and then joined Rimmer and Richmond at Canadian Film Institute in Ottawa to prepare the video footage for the play. Maureen Peterson, "Five People

Handle Moonshot Controls," The Gazette [Montreal] 11 June 1981: 70.

46.Szanto interview.

47.Annual General Meeting, 1981.

48.Projected Budget for 1981/82, PWM archives.

49.Statement of Revenues and Expenses, 30 Sept. 1982, PWM archives.

50.Richmond interview.

51.Richmond interview.

52.Szanto interview.

53.Maureen Peterson, "Richmond Seeks Theatre 'for Love of It'," The Gazette [Montreal] 27 Dec. 1980: 54.

54.Richmond interview.

55.Richmond interview.

56.Szanto interview.

57.Szanto interview.

58.Szanto interview

59.Richmond interview.

60.Szanto interview.

61.Szanto interview.

Chapter Eight

1982-1985

> It was all driven by a very clear idea that this organization had to see itself as a professional organization -- it had to have the basic ingredients of a professional theatre organization. . . . More profoundly it reflected a growing feeling that to do justice to a play we had to stop seeing it as a piece of literature. We had to start seeing it as a blueprint for movement, a blueprint for performance.
>
> Rina Fraticelli

With the departure of Brian Richmond the search for a dramaturg/artistic director began once more. The economic impossibility of turning Playwrights' Workshop Montreal into a producing theatre had been proven, it appears, for the last time, and the "philosophical" conflicts embedded in the production versus development debate seem to have been put to rest. A return to Bob White's concept of the "professional service organization" was agreed upon, although the necessity of creating a broader funding base and a minimal level of public visibility was also recognized. As its artistic leader the Board wanted someone with a proven record of new play dramaturgy, an in-depth comprehension of the Quebec, Canadian and international theatre scenes, and the energy, drive and vision needed to redefine the Workshop and discover that elusive middle ground between play development in isolation and play development through production. The person the Board selected was Rina Fraticelli.

A native of Montreal's Ville Emard district, Fraticelli graduated with degrees in theatre and literature from Loyola

College and the Université de Montréal. She became familiar with PWM during White's tenure and directed several readings while the Workshop was at the Saidye Bronfman Centre. Her career as a professional dramaturg continued in Toronto, where she worked for a variety of theatres, as well as Playwrights Canada, before joining Bob White at the Factory Theatre. Strongly influenced by White, Fraticelli acquired "a combination of theatrical sense and literary sense and logical-structural ability, [an] editorial kind of ability," during her stay at the Factory.[1] She has consistently described herself as a "literary editor" for the theatre, formulating her style of dramaturgy on the foundations laid by White, whom she considers Canada's "leading dramaturg." Fraticelli arrived at Playwrights' Workshop in August 1982.

Her first priority that summer was to find the Workshop a home, to "establish a professional place where playwrights could drop into - where they could feel that it was their own place." An office was rented at 2071 Boulevard St-Laurent, in an old building on the corner of Ontario Street, which then housed La Licorne cafe-theatre. PWM's equipment, consisting of only a typewriter, a filing cabinet, and some boxes,[2] was moved there from Brian Richmond's home. Fraticelli describes the office as a "pathetic room," accessible only by a back entrance that was "home to all kinds of derelicts." Undeterred by Alun Hibbert's protestation that she "couldn't stay [there], it's not safe," a corridor that often was "full of urine," and the inconvenience of an inoperative bathroom, Fraticelli insisted that "we just had to have an office," and the St-Laurent Street location "was all we could afford."[3]

Alun Hibbert had joined the PWM Board of Directors during Richmond's tenure, replacing George Szanto as president of the Workshop in February 1983. Szanto, who led the Board throughout both the Brask and Richmond tenures, and for a time assumed the duties of the Playwrights Canada

chairmanship as well, became increasingly aware that administrative work "had taken immense amounts of time that I should have put into my writing;"[4] and when he made it clear that he would be "edging away" from the Workshop's administration, Fraticelli asked Hibbert if he would be willing to accept the presidency. Although the Richmond era had left Hibbert feeling "very negative" about PWM, Fraticelli, he states, "convinced me that I could be helpful to the organization."[5] Hibbert replaced Szanto as president at the Annual General Meeting of 1 February 1983, the first AGM since August, 1981 (the AGM had been delayed to give Fraticelli time to set up her administration). David Rimmer remained as Vice-President, while Carol Libman once again assumed the Secretary-Treasurer post, replacing David Freeston.[6] The Fraticelli-Hibbert administration was to evolve into one of the "good tandems" that mark PWM's periods of growth and productivity.

In the spring of 1983 Fraticelli established an agreement with the Théâtre Experimental des Femmes (TEF) to share office and studio space in a large renovated warehouse above a garage at 4379 Rue du Bullion, in the Plateau Mount-Royal district. Described by Fraticelli as "a perfect theatre space," despite the hindrance of low ceilings, it provided "all the space we needed for any type of workshops or rehearsals or improvs or readings." The TEF could not afford the space on its own, and was unable to use it five days a week. As PWM did not need to occupy the area full-time, Fraticelli felt that joint tenancy was an ideal arrangement.[7] The partnership lasted until the spring of 1985, when both companies were evicted prior to the sale of the building. Fraticelli's last major project as Artistic Director was to find the Workshop a new home at 4001 Rue Berri, only a few blocks from the du Bullion location, in a warehouse space similar to the one they shared with TEF.

The establishment of a home independent of the Saidye

Bronfman Centre and the Centaur, and shared with an avant-garde experimental feminist company, was an important part of Fraticelli's transformation of the Workshop. PWM "had to have the basic ingredients of a professional theatre organization," she concluded, the primary ingredient being its own identifiable space.[8] The new quarters also signalled the Workshop's recognition of a physical dimension in play development: "the move reflected the growing feeling that to do justice to the play we had to stop seeing it as a piece of literature." The workshop process, as it had evolved during the 'seventies, had seen "too great a tendency... for heads to be bowed over a table dissecting words." While by no means an opponent of "a fine editorial process," Fraticelli maintained that an over-concentration on literary considerations can "lead to great damage theatrically." The Workshop had been moving to a position where it was deemed important for "the playwright [to see] his or her words in action," an attitude to the script which views it as "a blueprint for movement, a blueprint for action." The reestablishment of a PWM studio was designed to create "that kind of support where the playwright had more and more access to actors, access to stage facilities." Even if plays were staged before they were fully polished, still "the playwright is developing through the process," Fraticelli argued.[9] During the February 1983 AGM Fraticelli reasserted her conviction that the writers would be "best served" by "strengthening the foundations of the Workshop... [through] workshops, readings and dramaturgical consultations."[10]

Canadian new play dramaturgy in the nineteen-eighties, as Fraticelli saw it, was moving towards a "people learning in the theatre" approach. And an integral part of that learning process was "putting on the play," if only in a staged reading situation. The goal of script performance in a play development context is not to create a full

production or give voice to the community, although this may also be a factor, but to permit the writer to experience the audience's reactions to the script, to learn when it is bored or engaged, when the lines work or don't work, when the actors are confused or readily realizing the characters the author intended.[11] Fraticelli believes that the writer can receive sufficient feedback in a staged-reading situation to gauge an audience's reaction with some accuracy:

> I think you do need a space with some bleachers, a good forty by forty space with some blacks. But with seventy-five people in the audience and that minimum of physical space, you've got what you need. I don't think you can do it in an office or around a dining-room table, but I think you can do it in a small studio.[12]

From the outset Fraticelli was alert to the Workshop's precarious financial status: "a certain amount of money" was clearly essential to support the "critical mass of work, the critical mass of people" the Workshop required to be effective. Upon her arrival at PWM, she spent "a lot of time talking to the playwrights and the Board of Directors, looking really hard at the amount of money we had."[13] It became clear that the Workshop needed some degree of public visibility if its work was to be adequately funded. Over the next three years Fraticelli dedicated her energies to three major tasks: to find the balance between developmental work and visibility through PWM showcase readings and events, to forge direct connections with the English theatre community outside Quebec and the French theatre community in Quebec, and to present to these communities a body of PWM-developed work suitable for production.

Fraticelli's initial concern was "to get a lot of movement going," to depart from an annual showcase structure

which presented "one big cluster of plays once a year" preceded by "ten months" of "very cerebral dramaturgy with the classroom playwriting experience." As an alternative, Fraticelli proposed a season that combined two or three public events with readings and a slate of development workshops. The fall of 1982 and the first six months of 1983 were spent reorganizing the Workshop. By the end of the summer of 1983 fifteen plays had been given workshops of various lengths (between one day to one week), and four had received readings. Plays workshopped that season included Survival by Carol Bolt, Canadian Comedy by David Freeman, Sex and Violence by George Szanto, and Wintersong by Carol Libman. Fraticelli workshopped Jan Kudelka's American Demon for two days prior to its production at Theatre Passe Muraille; Michael Springate's Historical Bliss was workshopped before being produced by Springate's own company; Ottawa's Great Canadian Theatre Company workshopped their collective creation Womanspirit before staging the play; and performance artists David and Stephanie Roche workshopped their Sibling Show.[14] Perhaps the most exciting event of the season was PWM's first attempt to take its work to Toronto through a PWM small-scale production.

Two one-act plays, Helen Weinzweig's My Mother's Luck and Jovette Marchessault's Night Cows (from her trilogy Triptyque Lesbien, translated by Yvonne Klein), were presented by PWM as part of the Factory Theatre's Brave New Works festival in early May, 1983. Both plays were scaled-down studio productions, as was standard for the festival, and required only minimal props and sets. Only two actresses were needed for the Weinzweig play and Night Cows was written for a single performer. Pol Pelletier, a founder of the TEF, played in both shows.[15] Both plays presented a feminist vision of women, although from profoundly different perspectives. The Weinzweig work,

evolved out of her own short story after prompting by Fraticelli, concerned "a strong, independent working-class woman . . . living in Toronto during the depression . . . [contending] with several parasitic [ex-]husbands while trying to support a sixteen-year-old daughter."[16] The Marchessault play was a "phantasmical . . . poem-like recital describing a cosmic orgy [of] 'all breasted creatures'." A play that focued on lesbian themes, an Ottawa reviewer reported that "the wincing of all the 'unliberated' heterosexuals in the audience was almost audible as Pelletier . . . exposed us to the pleasure and glory of lesbian sexuality."[17] Fraticelli's gamble on taking the plays to the Brave New Works festival and her connections with the Great Canadian Theatre Company paid off in full productions of both works in Ottawa in September of that year. Both plays were again presented together in the first PWM showcase festival of staged readings since Brian Richmond's Spring Writes festival of 1982. The first Theatreworks festival took place at the National Theatre School's Salle André Pagé from 6 November to 13 November 1983.

My Mother's Luck and Night Cows made up the playbill for the first two evenings, followed by Ralph Burdman's Eye to Eye, Carol Bolt's Survival, and finally Alun Hibbert's A Majority of Two. Each play was presented twice. The success of the staged readings owed a great deal to Fraticelli's ability to draw top quality actors and directors into the workshop/reading process. Along with Pelletier's work on the Weinzweig and Marchessault plays, Jackie Maxwell, who would replace Bob White as Artistic Director of the Factory Theatre, directed Steven Bush, David Bolt, Susan Hogan and Nicki Guadagni in Survival, and Eric House and Jennifer Phipps appeared in A Majority of Two, directed by Hibbert. Undoubtedly the 'tour de force' of the festival was David MacIllwraith's direction of Eye to Eye,

which featured internationally known stage and film actress Monique Mercure and Jean-Louis Roux, then Director-General of the National Theatre School, a co-founder, with Jean Gascon, of the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, and one of Quebec's preeminent francophone actors and directors.[18] The appearance of these important Québécois figures in a workshop-reading of an English play signalled a new level of recognition for PWM, and perhaps a new age in the evolution of English theatre in Montreal.

Two of the plays presented in this Theatreworks festival illustrate the strengths and long-term consequences of PWM's workshop process. Hibbert's A Majority of Two had been commissioned by the Centaur, and was scheduled for production in February of 1984. The play was set the Montreal suburb of Lachine and dealt with the reactions of an older anglophone couple to the new Quebec. Hibbert maintains that the PWM staged reading "was more successful -- certainly to me, and I think also in terms of audience response -- than the following Centaur production."[19] Hibbert's perceived contrast between the successful PWM reading and the unsuccessful Centaur production highlights the degree to which a script is affected by production values and the talents of the performers involved; it also underlines the fact that even the "minimalist" style of performance offered by a staged reading can often be effective theatre, as well as an opportunity for the writer to gauge the script's strengths and weaknesses.

The history of Ralph Burdman's Eye to Eye offers a useful reminder that play development results are not always immediately visible. Although much of the Workshop's efforts are premised on the idea that the benefits of the Workshop experience might not be apparent in the writer's work until some time afterwards, the same delayed effect may be noted in some of the plays workshopped. Such was the case of Eye to Eye, which received its first PWM reading

under Brian Richmond, and continued to be developed by Fraticelli. Burdman's play, centred on the relationship between Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, was described by Fraticelli as a "story about a private day in the life of a public couple."[20] Along with Carol Bolt's Survival, Eye to Eye was presented in Toronto prior to its Theatreworks reading when the two plays formed the Montreal half of an informal exchange between Playwrights' Workshop and the Factory Theatre. The engagement of artists of Mercure's and Roux's calibre attests to the quality of the writing in Eye to Eye, and Fraticelli believed the play stood a strong chance of being selected for professional production. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of all involved, no productions arose from either the Montreal or Toronto readings, and Burdman was forced to shelve the script. Several years later Jean-Louis Roux was looking for works to stage at the Café de la Place, the prestigious cafe-theatre in Place des Arts. He recalled working on Burdman's play, contacted the author, and had the play translated into French. Roux and Mercure repeated their Workshop roles in the Café de la Place production (entitled Tête à Tête), which received wide critical acclaim and proved popular enough to convince Roux to stage an equally successful production of the original English version in the same theatre.

In January of 1984, Fraticelli reintroduced the Monday Night readings of "first drafts." These short workshop-readings were designed simply to allow the playwright a chance to "hear what he or she [has] written." Drawing between forty and fifty people per reading, the success of the series encouraged Fraticelli to create the FreeFall readings of early drafts. FreeFalls, scheduled sporadically throughout the season, offered the writer a chance for a one-day workshop of a script coupled with a public reading and some audience feedback. Several of the FreeFall readings

presented during the 1983-84 and 1984-85 seasons would go on to Theatreworks festivals and outside productions.

PWM's next major project, called Special Event '84, took place between 5 and 13 May of that year. The first presentation was a collective creation co-sponsored and developed by PWM and the Factory Theatre: This is for You, Anna. Written and performed by a collective comprised of Banuta Rubess, Maureen White, Ann MacDonald, Sue Khurri and P. Nihols, the play concerned the highly publicized trial of a German woman who shot her daughter's murderer and explored issues surrounding women, violence and justice in contemporary society.[21] The play was produced at the Theatre Passe Muraille and the Great Canadian Theatre Company, was also presented in women's shelters and community centres, and published in The Canadian Theatre Review.[22] An Evening with David Roche presented "comic monologues" by the Montreal-born performance artist for two evenings, followed by two staged readings of PWM workshopped English translations of new Québécois plays: René Gingras' Syncope and Moman by Louisette Dussault.

PWM conducted workshops and/or presented readings of another fifteen plays during the 1983-84 season, aside from those included in the Theatreworks and Special Events festivals. Plays by popular Canadian playwrights Tom Walmsley and David Freeman, and PWM members Peter Madden, Susan Poteet and Carol Libman were developed. Lise Vaillancourt's Marie Antoine and Karen Joy Seidman's Baby Doll were workshopped and went on to productions. Peter Madden's translation of Léo Levesque's When I Said That... She Started to Laugh was workshopped, as was another collective creation, Latinas, by Joanne Gormley and Collective Latinas. In all, twenty-one plays were treated by the Workshop that season: eight in-house (no public reading) workshops, eight extended workshops with readings, and five short workshop-readings.[23] Fraticelli had geared

the 1983-84 season "towards visibility on a national level;" the following year, her last with the Workshop, would be directed "more towards Montreal."[24]

Premiere Performance was the first major event of the 1984-85 season, and was designed to enhance the profile of the Workshop among the English and French communities through the presentation of new, high quality, timely performance pieces. Entitled "L'ere Nucleaire - Dream of a Millennium," the November 1984 Premiere Performance featured over thirty artists involved in a dozen performances ranging from contemporary dance and music to poetic recitations with performance art. All twelve pieces were united by the theme of nuclear warfare and life in the nuclear era. Most of the work was created by women, and all but two invited productions were passed by a jury before inclusion in the festival. The only PWM member performing in the event was Colleen Curran, whose Nuclear Hollywood used vintage film clips to explore its topic. Other participants included Brigitte MacKay, Elizabeth Langley, Sylvia Spring, Jo Lechay, Eugene Lion, Gurney Bolster, Ann Carrier, Jean-Guy Gaudreault, Mario Bruyere and Claude Lemarche. Approximately half of the works were primarily verbal and of these three used English and three French. Originally intended as a "changing festival every fall," Premiere Performance was not repeated after Fraticelli left PWM.[25]

The last major event of Fraticelli's tenure was the 1985 Theatreworks festival, staged at PWM's du Bullion studio between 8 and 30 March 1985. The festival began with the screening of a National Film Board production on the new Nicaraguan theatre, followed by a lecture by Alan Bolt, Nicaragua's premier playwright. The film featured Niztayolero, Bolt's company. The first PWM-staged reading took place a week later, on 14 and 15 March. Film critic Will Aitken's Sunset Harbour was a realistic fable of self-discovery, focusing on the interaction between a teen-age

boy and an elderly woman at a convalescent home. Aitken's play was followed by a one-woman show, I, Rigoberta Menchu by Susan Poteet. Poteet's play focused on the politicization of a Mayan woman, and featured Lorena Gale, Artistic Director of the Black Theatre Workshop, as Menchu. Pure Virtue by Tanya Mars, a play about Elizabeth I, presented from the perspective of the aging monarch, accompanied Poteet's play. Don Shapiro's Thelon Winter followed on 20 and 21 March. Based on the diaries of Edgar Christian, the story centred on three English adventurers trapped in the Arctic. Maureen White and Banuta Rubess, two of the women who performed in the Anna collective, returned to PWM to workshop The Woman Who Slept With Men to Take the War Out of Them, presented on 23 and 24 March. William Kuhns' The Zen of an Intelligent Machine was offered on 28 and 29 March. A reworking of the Frankenstein myth in the context of modern technology, cybernetics and human responsibility, Kuhns' play proved the most successful of the group staged that spring. Maurice Podbrey, on the strength of the PWM staged reading, optioned the play for the next Centaur season. From there it went on to professional productions in Edmonton, Toronto and Los Angeles. The final presentation of the festival was Razz M' Jazz, a musical created by the Black Theatre Workshop.[26] Although not given a PWM workshop, the play's inclusion in the festival and Gale's presence in Poteet's play, signalled a renewed connection between PWM and the small professional and semi-professional English companies in Montreal. These relationships would be extended in the years following Fraticelli's tenure. The Shapiro, Kuhns and Mars plays were subsequently presented in the Factory Theatre's Brave New Works Festival between 4 and 8 April 1985.

Eleven plays received workshops and/or readings during the 1984-85 season aside from those presented in the March festival. These included scripts by the well-known fiction

writer Elizabeth Spencer, together with plays by Linda Ghan, Guy Rodgers, Pat McDougall, John Boyle and David Murray. Ann Diamond's (Ann McLean) dramatic treatment of her epic prose-poem A Nun's Diary was workshopped, and would eventually be adapted by Robert Lepage for the premiere production of Marianne Ackerman's Theatre 1774, Echo. Colleen Curran's Amelia Earhart Was Not a Spy was workshopped and subsequently produced by Solar Stage Theatre in Toronto. Helen Weinzweig expanded her one-act My Mother's Luck into a full length play, Joseph and Lily, Lily and Joseph, which Fraticelli workshopped in Toronto. Three Québécois plays were given English translation workshops, and an English Canadian script received a translation workshop in French. This effort became the genesis of the Transmissions project, PWM's long-sought but never-realized entrée to the French theatre community.

Since the termination of the SBC's Théâtre-Rencontre project, the Workshop had made several attempts to engage the francophone community through PWM's sister organization, the Centre d'essai. Bob White, Per Brask and Brian Richmond had each explored some possibility of exchange with the CEAD, but found little success. Richmond had succeeded in exchanging scripts with the CEAD and proposed a joint venture, but the project was abandoned when no government funding could be located. On the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the CEAD, in February of 1980, Carol Libman represented PWM at a panel discussion on the development of playwriting and theatre in Quebec since the quiet revolution. The panel featured major CEAD alumni Michel Tremblay, Robert Gurik, Jean-Claude Germain, Marc F. Gélinas, Serge Mercier and Jean-Luc Bastien. Libman's invitation to the event suggested that PWM's existence in the Montreal play development milieu was recognized. No other significant contacts between the Workshop by the CEAD took place until Fraticelli's tenure. The bilingual

dramaturg was able to convince the French theatre community in general, and the CEAD in particular, that the Workshop was sincerely interested in francophone culture: her connections with such groups as the TEF, such figures as Roux and Mercure, and her unflagging interest in translation workshops for new and adventurous French plays bore witness to her, and the Workshop's, genuine desire for co-operation. Fraticelli, it should be noted, was fortunate to come on the scene when she did. After several decades of self-discovery, the now-secure Québécois theatre of the early 'eighties was becoming interested in what the rest of Canada was doing, and in showcasing its own products elsewhere. The CEAD was as interested in working with PWM as PWM was in collaborating with the CEAD.

Following work on Marchessault's Night Cows, solid contact with the CEAD was established with the workshops of René Gingras' Syncope, winner the Governor-General's Award for French drama in 1983, and Lousiette Dussault's Moman during the 1983-84 season. The play's translator, Linda Gaboriau, became the CEAD's dramaturg and its author proved to be that organization's most successful writer during the 'eighties. Gingras' play was produced at the National Arts Centre in September 1985, and under the title Breaks by the Actors' Theatre of Toronto during the 1987-88 season.[27] Moman, an extremely popular play in French, went on to productions by the Piggery and the Great Canadian Theatre Company. In 1984-85 another English translation of a Marchessault play, The Edge of the Earth is Too Near, Violet Leduc, was workshopped and presented, along with the Shapiro, Kuhns and Mars pieces, at the Factory's 1985 Brave New Works festival. A translation workshop was also given Michel Frémont-Coté's Le Deprime / Terminal Blues under the sponsorship of the National Arts Centre in preparation for their Ottawa production. The first official Transmissions workshop treated the English version of Marie Laberge's

C'était Avant la Guerre à l'Anse à Gilles, and the French version of George F. Walker's Zastrozzi.

The Transmissions project was initiated during Fraticelli's final season at the Workshop, but came to fruition only in the autumn of 1985 and the winter of 1986. Although Michael Springate had by now succeeded her, Fraticelli returned as the PWM dramaturg for the translation workshops, with Linda Gaboriau as her CEAD counterpart. Funded by a Canada Council Explorations grant totalling $26,000.00, the project encountered a number of unforseen difficulties. John Murrell, the author of Memoir and Waiting for the Parade and head of the Banff Playwrights Colony, was originally slated to translate the Laberge play, but had to back out due to other commitments. Murrell was replaced by Alan Brown, who had translated over twenty-five works by Québécois writers. Larry Lillo, first hired to direct the Laberge workshop, was also forced to withdraw. Due to scheduling problems two directors had to be employed at differing stages of the play's development: Kim McGraw, Artistic Director of the Prairie Theatre Exchange, and Mary Walsh, a writer, actor, director and founding member of Codco. Walker's play fared considerably better: translated by René Gingras, the Zastrozzi workshop was directed by André Brassard, the Artistic Director of the National Arts Centre's French Theatre who was known for his premier productions of Michel Tremblay's work. L'anse à Gilles was presented at PWM in the afternoon of 9 February 1986 and Zastrozzi at the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui in the evening of the same day. Both plays were then staged at the Toronto Free Theatre on 28 February, and at the National Arts Centre on 1 and 2 March. Although the Ottawa and Montreal readings were well attended, the Toronto presentations drew disappointing numbers.[28]

Fraticelli's interest in workshopping translations arose from her feeling that "both the English and French

communities deserved to know more about each other's theatre" and the concern that "translators were treating theatrical texts in a very literal fashion." She noted with some alarm that "we had very accurate translations, but not always [ones that were] dialogue oriented." The difference might be compared to that between "the way one writes a personal letter and the way one speaks to different kinds of people."[29] The value of a translation workshop, like a new play workshop, lies in the writer/translator's opportunity to hear and see the work staged, to engage the performance, as well as the literary, aspects of the script. Fraticelli and the CEAD, after some effort, persuaded the Canada Council in 1984 to fund translation workshops. Until now the Council had funded translation projects, but not their theatrical exploration. With the Council's recognition of the value of these workshops, and the input of funds, PWM and the CEAD hired top quality artists and toured the plays. Fraticelli felt that it was "a really interesting experience," one that lead to greater recognition of the Workshop among the French community and established concrete ties with the CEAD.[30] The Transmissions project was one of several Fraticelli initiated to enhance PWM's profile and extend its services to playwrights.

With the help of government funding, a semi-annual newsletter was established in 1984. The Works created a permanent communications link between the PWM administration, its membership and the outside community. Numerous earlier attempts to launch a regular newsletter had foundered due to changes in administration, location and economic conditions.

Playwriting courses were resumed during the 1983-84 and 1984-85 season (courses had been briefly offered during Richmond's tenure). Although the course attracted fourteen students in its second season, it was discontinued on the grounds of insufficient interest. Writing courses offered

in the universities and colleges appeared to satisfy this need. A Playwrights Circle under the direction of Peter Madden was initiated during the 1984-85 season, but drew only four participants. The Playwrights Circle was designed as a periodic, informal gathering of writers to read and critique their work. A similar group called the Playwrights Confer was later initiated by Michael Springate, but this group too was eventually discontinued due to lack of interest. In September of 1983 the Workshop, along with the Factory Theatre, Tarragon, Toronto Free Theatre, Playwrights Canada and the Guild of Canadian Playwrights, held discussions with the New Dramatists group of New York concerning a possible U.S. exchange program. Unfortunately, nothing substantial developed for the Workshop. PWM had more success when it followed the Canada Council's advice to investigate exchange programs with East Coast play development centres, culminating in the Looking East project. This led to PWM's creation of several pan-national programs following Fraticelli's tenure. Ironically, the Workshop itself had suggested just such an exchange to the Council during Brask's tenure, but was denied funding.

A Resource Centre was opened during the 1984-85 season, under volunteer David Saunders. Designed as "an outreach program to bring up PWM's public visibility," it was hoped that the centre would attract people from outside the Workshop by supplying a library of Canadian and international theatre reference books and a body of published Canadian play texts.[31] Again, however, the Workshop found itself in competition with well-equipped libraries at the universities and the National Theatre School. Despite efforts at expanding the Centre during Michael Springate's administration, it never became the attraction the Workshop had envisioned.

A Sunday afternoon reading series of internationally-known plays was another program designed to attract the

general community. Selecting scripts that were deemed unlikely ever to be staged in Montreal, such as works by Sue Townsend, Caryl Churchill, Liz Lockhead, and David Hare and Howard Brenton, Fraticelli hoped the Workshop might simultaneously attract a broader audience and fulfil an educational function. Sunday afternoon readings were held during the 1984-85 and 1985-86 seasons, but generally attracted only small numbers. One of the more successful of Fraticelli's public initiatives was the annual PWM Dance-Auction, first held in December of 1984. Intended to be both the Workshop's major fund-raising event and a way to introduce PWM to outsiders, the 1984 Dance-Auction was hosted by Erika Ritter and netted over $3000 in profits. The revenue, although considerable for such an event, constituted only a small percentage of the Workshop's total income.

Fraticelli's efforts resulted in a phenomenal growth in funding between 1982 and 1985. By reestablishing PWM's reputation as a professional service organization, increasing the number of PWM-generated scripts proceeding to full production, intensive fund-raising, and a variety of events aimed at raising the Workshop's profile, she managed to secure for the organization in 1984-85 an income twice that of 1981-82, and almost four times the 1979-80 total. Thanks to Brian Richmond's efforts to increase the Workshop's visibility, revenues swelled by over $20,000 between 1980 and 1982, from $28,000 to just over $50,000. Expenses were approximately equivalent to revenues during Richmond's tenure, although a $5000 deficit in 1981 which was not recovered in 1982 (along with the $5000 owing from the Phoenix Theatre) limited Fraticelli's first season, 1982-83. Fraticelli was able to build on the Richmond's financial base through aggressive fund-raising and increased government grants. Canada Council income more than doubled during her administration, growing from $28,000 in 1982 to

$30,000 in 1983, $43,000 in 1984, and $58,000 in 1985. Quebec government grants fluctuated during these three years, dropping from $6000 in 1982 and 1983 to only $1500 in 1984, and then rising again to $8000 in 1985. The last Quebec increase may reflect the impact of PWM's translation projects.

The increase in non-government revenues during Fraticelli's tenure is the most pronounced of her financial achievements. In 1980 the Workshop received virtually no funding beyond government grants, despite Brask and White's best efforts. Richmond attracted in 1982 a du Maurier Council grant, which accounted for $8000 of the almost $10,000 in non-government funds. The loss of the du Maurier grant resulted in a decrease in contributions of almost $6000 in 1983; a total of only $3,250 was received that year. The Workshop recovered in 1984, again receiving almost $10,000 in donations: foundations -- $7500, corporations -- $1,175, individuals -- $1,019. Unprecedented growth took place during the fiscal year closing in June, 1985, when PWM recorded over $23,000 in donations: foundations -- $14,000, corporations -- $6,750, individuals -- $2,925. In all, total revenues increased from $42,400 in 1983 (a drop of $8000 from 1982, equal to the amount lost from du Maurier), to over $112,000 in 1985.

Predictably, given the increased activity, expenses kept pace with revenues. The Workshop closed its 1982-83 season over $4000 in the red, and with a $2000 deficit on its 1983-84 season. The expanded income in 1985 helped close the gap, and that year PWM finished over $3000 in the black, with expenditures totalling almost $109,000. Major expenses for 1984-85 included $33,000 in staff salaries, $35,000 in artists' salaries, $14,000 for Premiere Performance, and almost $20,000 in office, rent, and travel expenses. Staff and artists' salaries increased from $22,000 and $21,000 respectively in 1983-84, indicative of

PWM's expanded activities and the hiring of full-time Administrator Corey Castle and technician Catherine Cahill on a part-time basis. Rina Fraticelli's salary ranged between $15,000 and $20,000 during her three years with the Workshop. Like Richmond, Brask and White before her, she supplemented this modest income with part-time teaching positions and other outside employment.[32]

The increase in non-government funding was the result of substantial effort by Fraticelli, her small staff, and some dedicated Board members. Fund-raising became "a real drain" on the time and energy she would have preferred to give to developmental work: "a good thirty-five to forty percent of what was easily over a sixty-hour week" went to generating financial support. Her position with the Workshop became an amalgamation of "dramaturg, artistic director, administrator and chief financial officer;" and time was never sufficient to allow her to do any one job to her complete satisfaction. A "committed" PWM dramaturg, she insists, will of necessity "personally subsidize the work."[33] The effort spent redirecting the Workshop took its toll; she submitted her resignation in January 1985, and left the position that summer. Fraticelli's "burn-out" clearly demanded a close look at the structure of the administration.

Fraticelli's decision to leave the Workshop, she emphasizes today, was not exclusively the product of exhaustion. There was also a nagging awareness that "there can be a conflict -- although there isn't necessarily a conflict -- between developing a play and developing a playwright." She became concerned that in the process of workshopping a play, the dramaturg may indeed hinder rather than help the playwright's development of his or her craft. "As the more experienced participant" in the process, having completed "dozens or hundreds of workshops," Fraticelli began to worry that the dramaturg

> could short-circuit the playwright's process and say, for example: 'This scene's never going to make it in the final play.' or 'You've started a line here that bears no relationship to any of your themes.' or 'This character doesn't work.' I might be wrong or I might be right, but whichever I'm still short circuiting that person's process. . . . Somebody else is doing the learning for you and the learning isn't coming from your own professional development.

Fraticelli noted in a recent interview that the Workshop now seems to have found a sound middle ground between play development and public profile. Any attempt to make the Workshop into a "full theatre," she feels, would be "disastrous" because, as history has shown, "the city cannot generate the level of financing able to sustain it." Her own dream while working with PWM was to open a small cafe-theatre, a place to experiment with and show new work without the pressures of a large theatre or a subscription season. A cafe-theatre would also give Montreal's English theatre community a much needed "centre, a cafe, a place to drop into... subsidized generally by activities, by rentals, by beer and by coffee."[34] Fraticelli thought the empty garage below the de Bullion Street studio would have made a perfect cafe-theatre, but could not generate sufficient interest in the idea.

When she first joined the Workshop, Fraticelli recognized that it needed to "make a leap to the level of a small but substantial service organization with an eye to Canada and an eye to French Quebec." Not to make this "leap" was to risk sliding "back into being an adjunct of the Saidye Bronfman Centre, an adjunct of the Centaur, an adjunct of a community reading program." The deliberate n·turing of a national and cross-cultural focus was

necessary for the Workshop's continued health and growth, although it meant that Fraticelli was "building the building while building the furniture," and by 1985 that effort was "just too much."[35] Her foresight and commitment between 1982 and 1985 today allows PWM to occupy a position at the forefront of new play dramaturgy in Canada. Fraticelli notes with justifiable satisfaction that

> if you look at [PWM] over the last seven years a phenomenal amount has happened to that organization. It's a nationally recognized institution. The links to the east and west are very clear. It hasn't fallen into the trap of subsidizing real-estate. It has a real link to the French community on different levels. Frankly, I don't think that looking at things in perspective, there are too many other theatrical institutions that could point to anything close to that in terms of real substantial evolution.[36]

The year before Fraticelli left, the Workshop lost another valuable member. Carol Libman, the only original member to have remained with PWM since its inception, and the mainstay of the Board of Directors through a variety of hard times, announced that she was leaving Montreal for Toronto. During the 1984 Annual General Meeting, Libman was honoured by the creation of PWM's Carol Libman Award for best play workshopped by the centre each season. The following year Michael Springate suggested that the Resource Centre should be renamed the Carol Libman Resource Centre. After expressing her thanks to the membership, Libman paid tribute to Playwrights' Workshop Montreal's newfound stature and position, declaring herself "delighted that after twenty-one years the organization has finally grown up."[37]

NOTES

1.Rina Fraticelli, personal interview, 2 Nov. 1989.

2.Alun Hibbert, telephone interview, 10 May 1990.

3.Fraticelli interview.

4.George Szanto, personal interview, 17 May 1989.

5.Hibbert interview.

6.Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Playwrights' Workshop, 1 Feb. 1983, PWM archives.

7.Fraticelli interview.

8.Fraticelli interview.

9.Fraticelli interview.

10.Minutes AGM, 1 Feb. 1983.

11.Fraticelli interview.

12.Fraticelli interview.

13.Fraticelli interview.

14.Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors of Playwrights' Workshop, 15 June 1983, PWM archives.

15.Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors of Playwrights' Workshop, 22 Feb. 1983, PWM archives.

16.Michelle Lalonde, "Profundity and Humour at GCTC," The Fulcrum [Ottawa] 29 Sept. 1983: 17; for a discussion of Pelletier's work with Weinzweig, see Carol Corbel, "Theatrical Venture a Meeting of Two Minds," The Globe and Mail 4 May 1983: 19.

17.Lalonde 17.

18.Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors of Playwrights' Workshop, 28 Nov. 1983, PWM archives; Carol Libman, "Playwrights' Workshop Showcases New Works," Montreal Calendar Magazine November 1983: 14-17.

19.Hibbert considers this piece to be his "best written play . . . [and] most sophisticated work to that point." Yet he felt that the "entire [Centaur] production was lacking," for which he blames himself, to a degree, in thinking that "the

other people involved knew more than I did about what was going to make a good play -- when it came to production." Critical response to the Centaur presentation was generally negative, leading Hibbert into "a bit of a trough" during which he was unable to write for almost a year [Hibbert interview]. See also Marianne Ackerman, "Old Anglos Never Die -- Nor Do They Exist at the Centaur," The Gazette [Montreal] 3 Feb. 1984: D5.

20.Libman, "Playwrights' Workshop Showcases": 15.

21.Marianne Ackerman, "Theatre Festivals Cross Cultural Barriers," The Gazette [Montreal] 18 April 1984.

22."This is for You, Anna: A Spectacle of Revenge," Canadian Theatre Review 43 (Summer 1985): 127-173.

23.Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Playwrights' Workshop, 18 June 1984, PWM archives.

24.Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors of Playwrights' Workshop, 28 Aug. 1984, PWM archives.

25.Sylvie Tourangeau, "L'ere Nucleaire - Dream of the Millennium," Parallelogramme 10.3: 26-27; "Performance Art Invades Workshop," The Montreal Downtowner 31 Oct. 1984.

26.Marianne Ackerman, "Tremblay's 'Albertine' Tops Centaur List: Workshop Presents Festival of New Works," The Gazette [Montreal] 26 Feb. 1985: C10.

27.Both Gingras' Breaks and René-Daniel Dubois Don't Blame the Bedouins (workshopped by PWM during the 1985-86 and 1986-87 seasons) were published in English in the collection Quebec Voices: Three Plays. The assistance offered by PWM to the translations is not mentioned, however. See Robert Wallace, ed., Quebec Voices: Three Plays (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1986).

28.Transmissions: Final Report, 7 April 1986, PWM archives.

29.Fraticelli interview.

30.Fraticelli interview.

31.Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors of Playwrights' Workshop, 21 Jan. 1985, PWM archives.

32.Statements of Revenues and Expenditures for the Years Ended 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, PWM archives.

33.Fraticelli interview.

34.Fraticelli interview.

35.Fraticelli interview.

36.Fraticelli interview.

37.Minutes, AGM 1984.

Chapter Nine

1985-1988

> Four years ago it was concluded that we could be a high-quality national play development centre. This really begins to build on where everyone else has gone. The fact that Bob went on, Per went on, Brian's doing this. . . . We now have a long tradition helping us to be a national play development centre offering the best dramaturgy.
>
> Michael Springate

The Board of Directors, more than satisfied with the results of Rina Fraticelli's directorship, began, in the spring of 1985, to search for a dramaturg/artistic director who would build on solid foundations laid between 1982 and 1985 and further extend the range of services and programs offered by PWM. Michael Springate, a writer, actor, director and dramaturg who had been intermittently involved with the Workshop since the early 'seventies was the candidate chosen as Fraticelli's successor. Springate built upon Fraticelli's groundwork to firmly establish Playwrights' Workshop Montreal as the foremost non-producing script development centre in Canada.

Born in Quebec City, one of eight children of an English-Canadian father and British mother, Springate was raised in Montreal's French-speaking, working-class Rosemount district. After only a few months of university Springate dropped out to work at a variety of day jobs, while becoming involved in Montreal's small but lively English fringe theatre. Springate started his own company, Painted Bird, and worked with the Montreal Experimental Theatre group. In the early nineteen-eighties he accepted a position as an acting instructor at Concordia University.[1]

Like Bob White and Rina Fraticelli, Michael Springate spent his youth in Montreal; the successes of their administrations may be at least partially due to the dramaturgs' understanding of the hazards of staging original English drama in Montreal, as well as their sensitivity to the problems of the English community.

On taking artistic control of the Workshop Springate had several major goals: to sustain PWM's primary function as the only English play development centre in Quebec while maintaining firm connections with the French theatre; to permanently establish PWM as a development centre with a national orientation, rather than a local or regional focus, through modifications to the Workshop's Constitution and expanded pan-Canadian programs; to find a more prominent role for the Workshop in the Montreal English theatre; to continue the strong financial growth witnessed over the previous five years; to expand and reorganize the administration and Board of Directors into more effective bodies; and to shift from a "project" to a "program" development policy.[2]

In Springate's view PWM had moved from a program to project orientation between 1975 and 1985, reflecting a shift in priorities from development to visibility. Like Bob White with the Factory Theatre's Brave New Works festivals and Pam Hawthorn with the New Play Centre's du Maurier festivals, Rina Fraticelli had striven to steer a path between development and visibility with her Theatreworks festivals. The advantage of the festival format for presenting workshopped plays lies in its capacity to generate an atmosphere of intense activity over a short period, and to use this atmosphere to attract the theatre community (particularly out-of-town artistic directors who can see several offerings over a few days), the press and the public. Coordinating the development of plays for a festival can, however, be artistically gruelling and

administratively difficult, as a variety of plays with often very different needs must be prepared at almost the same time. Springate's first major decision as Artistic Director was to dispense with the festival format and spread the Theatreworks over the whole season.

Springate felt that by separating the Theatreworks into individual units he could offer writers greater dramaturgical concentration. The shift to a year-long program would also be logistically and administratively less difficult, and financial resources could be planned and allocated on a unit by unit basis. As an event geared towards enhancing PWM's profile, however, the festival format seemed preferable. Springate was concerned that some visibility might be lost due to the change, but felt that the Theatreworks presentations would still attract an audience. He maintained the FreeFall and In-House (closed) workshops in their original formats.

The 1985-86 season, Springate's first with the Workshop, allowed him limited scope for innovation. The major undertaking of the season, the Transmissions project, had been arranged, and continued to be directed by Fraticelli, who had also planned most of the first half of the season's program prior to leaving her post. Programmatic flexibility was further confined by a shortage of funds, due in part to an accounting error which added $1700 to the previous fiscal year's expenses. A decrease in revenues during the 1985-86 season left PWM with an $8500 shortfall in Cash-on-hand at the close of the year. Limited monies forced the cancellation of Theatreworks workshops, but a number of Freefalls and In-house workshops were undertaken.

Six plays were presented in Freefall staged readings, and another play received a special closed workshop and invitation-only reading. Springate's own play, Dog and Crow (originally A Common Man), was the first Freefall that year.

A play about Ezra Pound and his involvement with Fascist Italy, Dog and Crow was subsequently produced by Richard Rose and The Necessary Angel Company at the Factory Theatre in January, 1988. The second Freefall staged reading was Alun Hibbert's Oedipus drama, Rough Idle (first entitled Dead Weight), originally scheduled to be directed by Joann Green of Washington's Kennedy Centre. Unfortunately Green was forced to cancel and Hibbert himself took over the directing duties. Several years in the making, Rough Idle received consultations from both Fraticelli and Springate and became PWM's contribution to the first Looking East exchange program with Nova Scotia's Mulgrave Road Co-op. Hibbert describes this work as one of the many Canadian plays that "everybody wanted to workshop but nobody wanted to produce."[3] Rough Idle was eventually staged by Hamilton's Theatre Terra Nova in September, 1989.

The remainder of the season saw Freefalls of David Freeman's dystopian fantasy Scar, and English translations of Chinese writer Xie Min's Why I am Dead and Cremations, adapted by Jia-Lin Peng and Henry Beissel and later produced in Toronto under the title The Phoenix Cafe by Cahoots Theatre Productions. Martin Kevan's translation of René-Daniel Dubois' challenging and experimental Don't Blame the Bedouins was given a workshop and staged reading. A closed workshop reading of Fred Ward's Somebody Somebody's Returning, a complex play with a surrealistic style, was undertaken towards the end of the season. Maurice Podbrey, who had rejected the play earlier, changed his mind about the script's worth and it was staged the following year at the Centaur. PWM received one hundred and sixty-five submissions during the 1985-86 season, twenty-four of which warranted extended dramaturgical consultation. The Playwrights' Union of Canada sponsored readings by two distinguished Canadian writers, George Ryga and John Lazarus. Joan Schenkar, a feminist, experimental playwright

from New York, also read and discussed her work. Nine plays were read as part of the Sunday International Series.[4]

Springate brought two scripts by members of the Association of Producing Artists company to the Workshop that season. Springate had worked with APA founders Jack Langedijk and Harry Standjofski while at Concordia. Standjofski's No Cycle featured a series of vignettes derived from the Japanese Noh Theatre. The collective creation To The Moon dealt with the physical and psychological abuse of women by their spouses. While No Cycle was a part of PWM's Freefall series, To The Moon was presented at PWM for three consecutive evenings under Springate's 4001 Program, an effort to make the Workshop's studio space available to outside companies for special projects. Both plays were eventually given full productions by the APA at the Elysée Theatre on Boulevard St-Laurent. PWM hosted three more outside productions under the 4001 Program: Songs of Gods and Songs of Humans by Doubletake Theatre; Le Rêve de Mephisto by Toronto's Actors' Lab Theatre; and Buck It, a play by Carolyn Combs and Elizabeth Verral, two women from Concordia University's theatre program. All three works received full, if somewhat scaled-down, stagings.

The 1986-87 season was the first totally designed by Springate, and introduced the reconstructed Theatreworks. A full-cast staging of Martin Kevan's translation of Dubois' Don't Blame the Bedouins and Kent Stetson's Warm Wind in China were the fall, 1986 Theatreworks offerings. Dubois' play, winner of the 1984 Governor-General's Award for French Drama, was critically acclaimed when presented by Dubois as a one-man performance piece. Later he rewrote the play to be performed by a full cast, and it was this version that Kevan translated into English. The translation of Don't Blame the Bedouins, a play that relies heavily on the inventive use of unusual language, was an impressive feat.

The previous season's Freefall reading had used only two performers (Harry Standjofski and Diane Fajrasl) to present the entire script, while the Theatreworks full-cast staging featured almost a dozen performers. The ambitious 1986 production, unfortunately, appeared confused and lost much of the impact of the two-handed staged reading, although the workshop eventually resulted in a professional production of the Kevan translation by Manitoba's Prairie Theatre Exchange.

Kent Stetson's Warm Wind in China was one of the first plays in Canada to treat the AIDS epidemic with any degree of popular success. Centring on the trauma of a man dying of the virus' effects and the conflicts that develop when his lover attempts to adopt the dying man's son, the play explores interrelational and generational issues, as well as the personal and social problems involved with AIDS. The PWM workshop, directed by Toronto's Eric Steiner, spawned four professional productions. The first was at Ottawa's Théâtre de l'Isle, in a French version translated by Ronald Guevremont. That this play should receive its first production as Comme Un Vent Chaude de Chine indicates the level of interest the French sector was now taking in PWM's activities. Stetson's play was again produced in French in Montreal, by the Neptune Theatre in his native Nova Scotia and by Rising Tide Theatre in St. John's, Newfoundland. Stetson also received a commission to adapt the play for the screen.

PWM's two Theatreworks in the spring of 1987 featured a reprise of Harry Standjofski's No Cycle and a collective creation, The Last Will and Testament of Lolita. Developed by Banuta Rubess and Maureen White, two Toronto artists familiar with PWM from earlier workshops, along with Peggy Thomson and Louise Garfield, the play presents an ironic vision of contemporary society from the point of view of Nabokov's famous character, now much older and wiser. The

workshop of The Last Will and Testament of Lolita was sponsored by Toronto's Nightwood Theatre, and the play was subsequently produced by Theatre Passe Muraille. A third play, Frank Martirano's Too Old to be Young, was originally slated to receive a Theatreworks workshop as part of the PWM--Nova Scotia playwrights exchange, but was cancelled when conflicts arose with the Maritime contingent's schedule.

Six Freefall workshop-readings were undertaken during the 1986-87 season. The first presentation was another Governor-General's Award winner in a French to English translation -- Maryse Pelletier's Pas de Deux for Obstinate Voices. Translated by Louise Rinquet, the play uses Quebec's struggle for independence to background social and personal conflicts. Pelletier's drama was followed by Pan Bouyoucas' Lionel and Thomas Morrison's Succession. Both plays use the traditions of the Theatre of the Absurd to explore their subjects. The spring brought Freefalls of Fred Ward's P.A., Don Druick's Someone Sleeps Somewhere, and Colleen Curran's Miss Balmoral of the Bayview. The Druick play went on to a production by Toronto's Mercury Theatre, while the Curran work was staged at the Blyth Summer Festival.[5]

Springate organized In-house workshops for six more plays. Patricia Rodriquez' Lily of the Mohawks was workshopped before being staged by the revived but short-lived Saidye Bronfman Centre Theatre. The Knocks by Andrew Johnston was co-workshopped with Youtheatre before that company's production of the play. Spooks, yet another script from the prolific Colleen Curran, received a closed workshop before being produced at the Kawartha Festival. Per Brask and George Szanto returned to PWM to work on their play Bagman, which went on to a production in Winnipeg. Another familiar name returned to the Workshop that season when Aviva Ravel's Are You My Mother was developed in a workshop directed by Springate. Robert Majzels' Prodigal

Son was the final In-house script to be treated. Two well known playwrights read from and discussed their work in the Playwrights-on-Tour series: Paul Ledoux, former PWM president and, at that time, chairman of the Playwrights' Union of Canada; and Ruth Smilie, Artistic Director of Edmonton's Catalyst Theatre. A total of one hundred and seventy-six scripts were submitted to PWM during the season.[6]

The 1987-88 season, Springate's last with the Workshop and the final one to be fully dealt with in this study, continued and expanded the established program. Twenty-four plays received either In-house, Freefall or Theatreworks workshops. The experience of the previous two seasons led Springate to conclude that "the best work was done in the closed workshops;"[7] consequently, he shifted his resources away from Theatreworks presentations to In-house workshops during his final year. Only three plays were presented as Theatreworks: a reprise of Majzels' Prodigal Son; Saskatchewan writer Connie Gault's Sky; and Don Druick's Where is Kabuki. Gault's play explores the trauma experienced by a sixteen-year-old girl impregnated by her father who deludes herself and her young husband into believing that the conception was immaculate. Described as a "beautiful and complex script, a first play by an accomplished fiction writer who has an impressively clear sense of theatre," Sky received productions at both the 25th Street Theatre and Edmonton's Theatre Network.[8] Druick's play, set in the playwrights' room of Tokyo's famous Kabuki-za Theatre in nineteenth century Japan, explored "the dichotomy between the spiritual aspiration for harmony and the human passion for conflict and discordance."[9] Where is Kabuki went on to professional stagings by both Vancouver's Touchstone Theatre and Toronto's Buddies in Bad Times. All three pieces were given two staged readings at both PWM and the Maison de la Culture, the former Kensington School in

N.D.G. and one-time home of PWM and the Phoenix Theatre.

Seven Freefall workshop-readings took place that season, including the French version of Stetson's Warm Wind In China, Marion Andre Czernieke's Soldat Hans Stumpf, Al Bras' The Death of Mayakofsky, and PWM president Guy Rodgers' A Killing Frost on St-Zotique. Maureen Hunter's Beautiful Lake Winnipeg received a Freefall workshop and then a Theatreworks presentation the following season before its premiere at the Manitoba Theatre Centre. Hunter's Queen of Queen Street also went on to a production by Winnipeg's Agassiz Theatre following a 1988-89 PWM workshop. Two plays by Montreal writers received productions by Imago Theatre following Freefall readings at PWM: former Gazette theatre critic Marianne Ackerman's L'Affaire Tartuffe and Louise Arsenault's Simply Bivouac.

Fourteen plays received In-house workshops, including scripts by former NTS English section head Joel Miller, Miriam Packer, Pat McDougal, Steven Faigelman and George Elliot. Well-known playwright Margaret Hollingsworth (Ever Loving, War Babies) had her drama The Green Line developed, as did Kim Selody, whose script was entitled Effective Dreams. Dwight Bacquie's Marvin: Dream of a Lifetime was workshopped prior to its production by Montreal's Black Theatre Workshop. Marvin went on to a lengthy run in Toronto. The Nova Scotia portion of the PWM-Nova Scotia playwrights exchange was finally completed with the development of Silver Donald Cameron's The Prophet at Tamtramar, co-workshopped and produced by The Ship's Company of Parrsboro. Keith Dorland's The Child and Joan Egilson's Over Easy also went on to productions following their In-house workshops, as did David Fennario's Neil Cream. Philip Fine's Age, another co-development with Youtheatre, was produced by that company.[10]

Two of the most significant workshops of the 1987-88 season took place behind closed doors. Gratien Gélinas,

writer, actor, director and Quebec theatre pioneer, brought for refining the English translation of his play The Passion of Narcisse Mondoux. Gelinas' presence at PWM was yet another sign of the Workshop's recognition by the French sector. The English translation of The Passion of Narcisse Mondoux, featuring Gelinas and his wife, played at both The Piggery and the Saidye Bronfman Centre in Montreal, and went on to tour a variety of locations in Canada and the United States, including Broadway.

The quality of PWM's dramaturgical service was further highlighted by Tomson Highway's arrival at the Workshop for an In-house session in June, 1988. Highway, a Native-Canadian playwright whose successful first script, The Rez Sisters, was hailed as a landmark in Canadian theatre, brought to Montreal for revision the sequel, Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing. More overtly political and lacking the cohesiveness of The Rez Sisters, Dry Lips nonetheless went on to receive a host of Dora awards for its Theatre Passe Muraille production, including the award for best new play.

As the above survey indicates, PWM-developed plays going on to post-workshop productions increased dramatically through the nineteen-eighties. By the close of the decade the Workshop could point to thirty professional productions, in theatres ranging from Vancouver to St. John's, of scripts developed during the 1987-88 and 1988-89 seasons alone.[11] Michael Springate, in a recent interview, attributes this accomplishment to the determination of PWM's dramaturgs to open the Workshop to writers from all regions of Canada. His predecessors' subsequent positions in theatres and play development centres elsewhere in Canada forged connections with these areas and helped establish PWM's credibility.[12] Not the least of the Workshop's, and Springate's, accomplishments was the rewriting in May 1987 of the Constitution to reflect PWM's sense of national mission.

PWM's mandate had, in fact, been pan-Canadian since the 1973 Manifesto of the Higgins administration. The Higgins Manifesto was considerably outdated, and in 1987 Springate and the Board revised the By-Laws to eliminate this obsolescence. While in practice the organization had vacillated between a local and a national focus, as determined by the priorities of the Artistic Director, officially the 1973 Manifesto was still in force. One of Springate's most important contributions to the Workshop was the decision to aggressively and permanently declare PWM a dramaturgical service organization for the whole of Canada, and to update the Workshop's Constitution to reflect this stance. The Board of Directors even went so far as to vote that the organization's name be changed to Playwrights' Montreal: A National Play Development Centre. The new name was never adopted, however, and Playwrights' Workshop (Montreal) Inc. remains the official title according to the revised Constitution.[13]

The 1987 Constitution was fundamentally a return to the basic premises of the 1966 By-Laws, in a modified, updated and simplified form. The Aims of the organization, as stated in the new By-Laws, were an amalgamation of the guiding principles of the 1966 Constitution and the nationalistic orientation of the 1973 Manifesto. The Aims of the new Constitution, derived from the 1966 By-Laws, stated that PWM would: "encourage writing for stage, radio, television and film" (although only stage plays had been workshopped since the 'seventies); "help members to perfect their craft;" and "disseminate material to members as to the production needs of theatres, playwriting competitions, and markets." The 1973 Manifesto contributed two more Aims to the 1987 By-Laws: the Workshop would "provide a non-commercial milieu to encourage playwrights' free expression, and his/her quest for development;" and would "develop ways of making available trained actors, directors, and allied

performing artists to aid in the development of scripts by Canadian writers."[14]

The closing words of the Workshop's new first By-Law, which stipulated that its goal was to develop "scripts by Canadian writers," was an affirmation of PWM's national mandate. Springate notes that the Workshop was able to articulate a national mandate by default because "nobody had managed to mandate PWM to its region." The CEAD, for reasons discussed earlier, capably filled that position for the francophone majority's theatre. Whereas other development centres had clear regional or provincial mandates -- the New Play Centre and Alberta Theatre Projects are Springate's examples, but even the Toronto theatres developing new work tend to advantage writers from their own region -- PWM had never been officially tied to its immediate community, although the need to develop Montreal's English playwrights was the motivation for the organization's founding. Overshadowed by the French theatre and the CEAD, PWM's singular situation meant that it could not become a major force in national play development if it focused solely on its own community. The organization was only able to achieve sustained and significant growth when it moved from a regional to a national focus. Through balancing a local profile with play development on a national scale, Fraticelli was able to secure the level of funding that enabled Springate to offer PWM as a uniquely positioned dramaturgical service for the whole of Canada.

The national mandate, according to Springate, meant that the Workshop was now in a position to "select the best plays... from wherever they came."[15] While this policy was not new, budgetary limitations and time constraints over the years had dictated that plays chosen from outside Montreal should be by writers known to the dramaturg. Springate asserts that one of PWM's greatest services is the genuine opportunity offered to novice writers from all regions of

the country to have their work developed and appreciated. There are many playwrights whose work is ignored by their regional theatres, Springate argues, or if it is developed, it is done "purely on a political basis;" i.e., given a workshop in order to avoid the risk of a production. By making PWM more open to writers from other areas, Springate contends, these writers receive not only dramaturgical assistance, but the stature lent by an organization with PWM's reputation. Kent Stetson, a member of the Mulgrave Road Co-op, had his play, Warm Wind in China, rejected by Nova Scotia's regional theatre, the Neptune. Following the PWM workshop and the interest generated by the staged reading, the Neptune decided to mount the play. A similar scenario occurred with Connie Gault's Sky. After an initial rejection by theatres in Saskatchewan, Springate sent the workshopped script to the Artistic Director of the 25th Street Theatre, who responded with great interest. Springate maintains that so long as the Workshop can continue to serve writers from other regions in this manner, its standing as a national development centre will be enhanced.[16]

Thanks to the adoption of a national mandate, the interest of writers from other regions in PWM, and out-reach programs such as Looking East and Farther West, the Workshop made firm connections with theatres in various areas of the country. Originating from tentative efforts towards a Maritimes exchange during the Brask administration, the Looking East program finally took shape at the close of Fraticelli's tenure. Under Springate's management Looking East resulted in exchanges and co-development projects with three Nova Scotia theatres: the Mulgrave Road Co-op, the Ship's Company, and the Neptune Theatre. Kent Stetson, author of Warm Wind in China, was made writer-in-residence at the Neptune during the 1988-89 season. He returned to the Workshop that year for a Theatreworks treatment of his

Queen of the Cadillac, a Neptune-PWM co-development.

The success of Looking East spurred Springate to create Farther West, a similar program aimed at forging connections between PWM and western-Canadian theatres. Once Connie Gault's play had been accepted by the 25th Street Theatre on PWM's recommendation, 25th Street's Artistic Director, Tom Bentley-Fisher, requested the Workshop's assistance in the continued revision of Sky. Requests for ongoing involvement in workshopped scripts as they reached the production stage led to the creation of PWM's Production Dramaturgy program following Springate's tenure. Other co-development projects included work on Effective Dreams by Kim Selody, Artistic Director of Vancouver's Axis Mine Company, and collaborations with Vancouver's Touchstone Theatre, the Prairie Theatre Exchange, the Saskatchewan Playwrights' Centre and the Manitoba Association of Playwrights. Aside from Looking East and Farther West, PWM continued its long-standing relationship with Toronto's theatres, including the Factory Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, Toronto Workshop Productions, Nightwood Theatre and Buddies in Bad Times.[17]

In addition to the national mandate, the 1987 Constitution made significant changes to the structure of the PWM membership and Board of Directors. One alteration concerned the classification of PWM's Associate Members. The original 1966 Constitution created three types of membership: Writing Members, Associate Members and Honorary Members. In 1966, Writing Members were defined as "such persons who are engaged in writing scripts for the stage, radio, television and films;" Associate Members were persons "acting and planning the program of the association but who are not actively engaged in dramatic writing;" while Honourary Members were permitted to enjoy "all the rights and privileges of membership without payment of dues." Members in the later category were without voting privileges and could not hold active office.[18]

Although the 1966 By-Laws provided for non-writers, the stipulation made shortly thereafter, that membership was contingent upon the submission of a script, effectively barred non-writers from active participation in the Workshop. While this policy led to occasional conflicts, most noticeably during the Higgins administration, it meant that writers were in ultimate control of the Workshop, and that PWM's focus remained on script development rather than production or other considerations, despite detours during Higgins' and Richmond's tenures. It was an unfortunate side-effect of this policy, however, that non-writers who might be prepared to assist the Workshop were often deterred. In the 1987 Constitution Springate reinstated Associate Membership as an important part of the PWM structure, and permitted Associate Members to sit on the Board of Directors.[19] The 1987 By-Laws defined Associate Members as persons

> who are not actively engaged in dramatic writing, who have been invited by the Board to sit as members of the Board of Directors. These members may vote as members of the Board but shall not be eligible to vote at General Meetings, stand for elected office, or be an Officer of the Board.[20]

The reinstatement of Associate Members began during the 1985-86 season, when Rina Fraticelli, translator Maureen Labonté, and actor/director Brian Dooley, the person responsible for the PWM-coordinated Young Playwrights Program at the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, sat on the Board as Associate Members. During that season an Advisory Board, consisting of persons with business or community connections interested in assisting the Workshop, was also created. In 1985-86 the Advisory Board comprised Judith Brown, an Accounts Executive with Les Cooperatives Les Nuages; Alan Hellez, Librarian; Robin Heilig,

Information Officer with the Federal Business Development Bank; Bryan Amyot, President of Amyot Sales Agencies Ltd.; and Sheila Moore, Information Officer with Alliance Quebec. Guy Rodgers, PWM Secretary-Treasurer, Chartered Accountant and graduate of the NTS playwriting program, was the Executive's liaison with the Advisory Board. The following season Springate merged the Advisory Board with the regular Board of Directors.[21]

The alterations to the PWM membership and Board of Directors were an integral part of Springate's effort to open the Workshop to non-writers and broaden PWM's base of support. Despite the resistance of some Board members, Springate felt that these changes, along with the 4001 program and other projects, were essential in "opening up PWM to the academic community, to the alternative arts community, and to the young theatre community." Not the least of the benefits of an enlarged membership, as Springate saw it, was a substantial increase in revenue. Writing Members concerned that ultimate control of the organization should remain in the hands of playwrights were reassured by the stipulation that Associate Members could not hold office and Writing Members would always form a majority of the Board of Directors. The effects of these changes were clearly visible by 1988, when seven of the sixteen Board members were non-writers. At the close of the decade, only thirty of the total membership of one hundred and eighty were designated as Writing Members.

Springate's tenure saw the greatest turn-over in members of the PWM Executive since the 'seventies. During the 1985-86 season the Executive was comprised of President Alun Hibbert, Vice-President Susan Poteet, and Secretary-Treasurer Colleen Curran. In January 1986 Hibbert resigned, citing a desire to spend more time on his writing. Susan Poteet replaced Hibbert as Acting President, Curran became Vice-President, and Guy Rodgers took over as Secretary-

Treasurer. This executive remained in place during the 1986-87 season. The 1987-88 season began with Poteet as President, Rodgers as Vice-President, and Joel Miller as Secretary-Treasurer. Poteet went on sabbatic leave from her teaching position at Dawson College and left the city in January, 1988. She was replaced by Rodgers, while Miller moved to the Vice-Presidency. The Secretary-Treasurer position remained vacant, although Don Druick was named to the Executive as Member-at-Large. In restructuring the Board, Springate created a variety of committees to supervise and control programs and policies. These included committees for Play Development, Space and Writers-in-Residence, National Mandate, Production Horizons, Community Relations, Fund Raising, Script Reading and Theatre Relations.

In addition to an enlarged Board and membership, the Workshop increased its administrative and artistic staff between 1985 and 1988. Springate proved adept at attracting government funding for this purpose. Rina Fraticelli admits to having underestimated the Workshop's capacity for growth when, in her final letter to the Canada Council as PWM Artistic Director, she concluded that with a Dramaturg and an Administrator, PWM had reached its full potential.[22] In September 1986 Springate acquired a Canada Employment and Immigration Section 38 grant, permitting PWM to hire temporarily an additional three staff members. Francessca Bonaconsa was made Coordinator of the Carol Libman Resource Centre, Catherine Cahill became Technical Director, and Judith Brown assumed the post of Administrative Assistant for Fund Raising.[23] Since 1986 there has always been one assistant, and usually several, working with the Administrator. In 1987, Corey Castle left PWM to join Elsa Bolam's Geordie Productions.[24] Catherine Cahill replaced Castle as PWM Administrator.

The additional staff permitted the Artistic Director

and Administrator to dispense with many of their less important tasks. Like Fraticelli, Springate recognized that the Artistic Director was more often an Executive Director, with most of his time taken up by duties not directly related to dramaturgy. Springate responded to this perception by hiring an Associate Dramaturg whose duties included replacing the Artistic Director when s/he was unavailable for workshops, and fostering the various outreach programs underway with theatres and playwrights' associates in other parts of the country. William Horrocks occupied this position for two seasons beginning in 1987, and was then replaced by Paula Danckert, who had worked with Pam Hawthorn at the New Play Centre before joining PWM on a part-time basis. Horrocks, one of the founders of the Manitoba Association of Playwrights, also did much of the leg-work for the Farther West program. During the 1987-88 season PWM also acquired the services of a Guest Dramaturg, Shelley Tepperman, funded as a training experience through Theatre Ontario. Tepperman was involved with PWM's outreach program to Montreal's Spanish writing community.[25]

Springate initiated a range of programs, projects and events designed to give the Workshop a more substantial role in the Montreal English theatre. Each of these was also used to help increase the Workshop's profile and/or raise funds in the context of specific, program-related objectives. The Playwrights Retrospective and the New Music New Text programs were both created to assist visibility and to help in forming a more "critically aware" community. The Anglo-Quebecois Theatre Colloque placed PWM in the centre of an attempt to unite the diversified English theatre in Montreal. The Expanding Horizons Professional Development Seminars gave the Workshop a role in continuing the education of all types of theatre professionals. The Dance-Auction, renamed Winter Rites, and the new Playwrights

Cabaret served visibility, as well as fund-raising, functions. The Playwrights-on-Tour program was expanded into the Writers Series, and included poets such as Daphne Marlatt and Betsy Warland, as well as playwrights.

Both the Playwrights Retrospective and the New Music New Text series were created to combat what Springate terms the "incredible lack of [critical] stances and exposure to playwrights and playwriting - even Canadian playwrights" in the Montreal English community, and to foster a critical awareness and appreciation of playwriting. Springate asserts that the creation of a critically-aware public is vital to the "development that allows dramaturgy to happen."[26] The Playwrights Retrospective evolved from the Sunday International Reading Series, which had a similar objective, but was generally attended by only a small number of PWM regulars. The Retrospective, set up in a week-long special event format, attracted a larger and more varied audience and replaced both the educational function of the International Series and the visibility function of the Theatreworks showcase. It also helped the Workshop form ties to other artistic and academic bodies in Montreal.

The stated intention of the Retrospective was "to direct, for a period of a week, the community's interest towards a particular playwright or movement in Canadian playwriting."[27] The first retrospective occurred early in 1987 and focused on the work of the little known, but highly prolific and successful playwright, television and radio writer, Patricia Joudry. Readings and critical discussions of Joudry's work took place at PWM, the National Theatre School and Concordia University's Simone de Beauvoir Institute.[28] The 1988 Retrospective examined the life and work of the avant-garde Québécois playwright and poet Claude Gauvreau. Events in the Gauvreau Retrospective occured at La Place aux Poêts, La Théâtre de la Rallonge, La Conservatoire d'Art Dramatique and PWM. The Gauvreau

Retrospective was funded by the Quebec government as part of a Quebec-wide celebration of the fortieth anniversary of Le Refus Global (Gauvreau was one of the original signatories), and represents another important stepping-stone in cross-cultural 'rapprochement' fostered by PWM.[29]

By the close of the 1987-88 season plans were also underway for the next Retrospective, a celebration of the life and work of George Ryga, author of the seminal play, The Ecstasy of Rita Joe. Coordinated by PWM, the Ryga Retrospective became a national event which included productions of his work in Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal. Local activities included readings and exhibitions at the National Theatre School and a variety of presentations and discussions at PWM. Canadian theatre luminaries Ken Gass, George Luscombe, John Juliani, Paul Thompson and Don Rubin branched out from the discussion of Ryga's importance to Canadian theatre to consider the threats to original and innovative work like Ryga's in the nineteen-nineties. The Ryga Retrospective closed with Ryga's Wake, a loving and respectful remembrance of Ryga through performance and song by his daughter Tanya and many friends.

The New Music New Text series was designed to expose Montreal's English theatre and general communities to "the work of living, active composers who innovatively use text in their compositions," and to attract people interested in music and performance to the Workshop. Another goal of the series was to induce English dramatists to explore new approaches to their work, through the incorporation of musical structures and strategies in their texts. Funded by the Music Section of the Canada Council, the series was organized by playwright, composer and flautist Don Druick, and featured composer-performers such as Druick, Helen Hall, Robert Gelinas, Lisle Ellis and Allan Crossman.[30]

The New Music New Text series was less directly related

to play and playwright development than the dramaturgy programs or the Retrospective. The Workshop supported this series, however, because of the added visibility it offered, and because it was relatively simple to organize and required only small funds. A undertaking with similar attributes was the Expanding Horizons Professional Development Program. Used to further heighten PWM's profile in the Montreal theatre community, the Expanding Horizons seminars focused on various aspects of playwriting and theatre craft and technical development In addition to exposing PWM members to theatre professionals like German dramaturg Michael Hamburger, the seminars promoted interaction between the playwrights and other theatre artists and continued the Workshop's evolution into an all-round professional service organization for the Canadian theatre.

Perhaps the most important event in creating a new and heightened role for PWM in Montreal's English theatre was the Anglo-Québécois Theatre Colloque. Inspired by the Toronto Theatre Alliance, the Colloque created, for the first time, a unified voice for English theatre in Quebec. Springate described the colloque as a forum "to discuss the development of English professional theatre in what I think is the absolutely valid belief that there will not be an improvement in English-French relations until the English population develops its own indigenous cultural voice."[31] The Colloque met on 7 April 1986 and brought together thirty-one groups (a total of sixty-six individuals) with an interest in English theatre in Quebec, including representatives from the professional, semi-professional and amateur theatres, universities and colleges, theatre and playwrights organizations (Equity, PUC), the press and the government.[32] The Colloque was successful, Springate asserts, in placing PWM at the fulcrum of English Quebec theatre, in forging a united Anglo theatre community, and in

making all levels of government more aware of the need for English theatre in Montreal. He indicates that following the Colloque many English companies became involved with the Conseil Québécois du Théâtre, and provincial and municipal funding for Anglo companies, including PWM, APA, Geordie, and Imago, was increased.[33]

PWM combined fund-raising and visibility in two events, the popular Dance-Auction and the Playwrights Cabaret. The Dance-Auction, renamed Winter Rites, continued in the format created by Fraticelli and earned the Workshop $4000 to $5000 every season. Springate created the Playwrights Cabaret in 1987 as a spring fund-raising counterpart to the Winter Rites event. The Cabaret featured revue-style performances of selections from plays developed by PWM and other sources. Guest artists included Maryse Pelletier, Andy Jones, Margaret Hollingsworth, Joanna Noyes and Michel Perron.

The capital raised by these events was a small but important part of PWM's revenues. Thanks to hard work and PWM's aggressive and diversified program, the Workshop continued to achieve exceptional financial growth during Springate's tenure. In 1985-86 the revenue increase was minimal, from $112,000 to $118,000. While revenues rose by only $6000, expenses increased by over $10,000, from $109,000 to $118,500. A major disappointment that season was a marked decline in foundation and corporate donations. From an all-time high the previous season of $20,700, foundation and corporate donations fell to a total of less than $900 in 1985-86. Fortunately, special project grants from the Federal Department of Communications and Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs helped make up the shortfall. The Canada Council operating grant decreased slightly, from $58,000 to $55,700, but this was more than compensated for by a doubling of the Quebec government grant from $8,000 to $16,000. In all, government funding passed the $100,000 mark for the first time that fiscal year.[34]

Revenues rebounded during the 1986-87 season, although government grants totalled only $85,000, a reduction of $15,000. The Canada Council grant was down by $5000 at a total of $50,500, while the Quebec government contributed another $14,500. The City of Montreal chipped in $3000, $2000 less than the previous season, while other government income accounted for an additional $13,000. Significant non-government revenues compensated for the decrease in government funds, surpassing the 1984-85 high of $37,000 by $16,000, for a total of $53,200. Of the $22,500 raised in donations, $13,500 came from foundation grants and almost $7000 was earned by the Dance-Auction and the Cabaret. Another $30,000 was earned through rentals, sponsored workshops, membership and administration fees, box office and other sources. Total revenues for the 1986-87 season came to $139,000, while expenses totalled $136,000.[35] Springate notes that the shift to a national mandate resulted in the Workshop's acquisition of a Laidlaw Foundation grant of $10,000. Laidlaw grants are available only to Ontario-based or nationally oriented arts bodies, and PWM is the only theatre organization outside Ontario to receive Laidlaw funding.[36]

Revenues increased dramatically again during the 1987-88 fiscal year to reach an unprecedented total of $175,000, almost a nine-fold increase over the $20,000 budget of 1980. Contributions from government agencies totalled $121,700, a rise of $36,000 from the previous fiscal year. Much of this increase was due to a discretionary grant of $35,000 from the Quebec Ministère des Affaires Culturelles to cover costs of the Claude Gauvreau Retrospective. $10,000 in unexpended Retrospective funds were returned to the Quebec government. The Canada Council granted PWM $53,500, while the annual Quebec grant increased to $20,000, and the Montreal Arts Council grant doubled to $10,000. Expenses for the season totalled $179,000. Of the $29,000 earned in donations

during 1987-88, $12,000 came from foundations and $13,500 from fund-raising events.[37] A sizeable increase in events fund-raising was directly attributable to a special event that took place that season -- the 25th Anniversary Gala, which celebrated of PWM's quarter-century of success as a unique Canadian play development centre.

Sponsored by the Bank of Montreal, the Gala was held on 1 November 1987 at the Centaur Theatre. Preceded by a reception, featuring Spanish wines courtesy of the Spanish embassy, the Gala was hosted by long-time Montreal actors Linda Sorgini and David Francis. Following the format of the Cabaret, the Gala was comprised of excerpts from PWM-developed plays that went on to professional productions, including work by Aviva Ravel and Carol Libman, as well as more recently developed scripts. Music performances from the New Music New Text series were also presented, and the National Play Development Award was given to Bob White. Many of PWM's early stalwarts were on hand, including Ravel, Libman, Dan Daniels and Walter Massey among others, as well as an impressive collection of artists who had been involved with the Workshop throughout the 'seventies and 'eighties. The Gala was an opportunity for the organization to pause and look back over its twenty-five years of dedicated, but often unrecognized, behind-the-scenes service to Canadian playwrights and the Canadian theatre. It was also a long overdue salute to the efforts of a vast number of individuals who, while hoping for some assistance with their own playwriting, gave selflessly of their time and energy to keep the idea of original English drama alive in Montreal.

From its inception in 1963 PWM's primary aim has been the nurturing of English-language Canadian drama. The Workshop's success in achieving this goal has been documented in this study. Beginning in 1963 with a small band of dedicated writers, ably assisted by local theatre artists, the Workshop evolved over the ensuing twenty-five

years into a service organization that now offers high-quality, professional dramaturgical support to playwrights from across the country. "What makes [PWM's] longevity particularly remarkable," wrote Michael Devine, dramaturg for the Factory Theatre, in the July 1988 issue of Performing Arts in Canada, "is the fact that the company exists outside the English-Canadian mainstream and that it does not produce a season of plays." Playwrights' Workshop Montreal has been, Devine contends, "and remains, the true home of the Canadian playwright, a centre of play development."[38]

NOTES

1.Michael Springate, personal interview, 21 May 1989; Ray Conlogue, "Extravagant Use of Language Rubs Off," The Globe and Mail 6 Jan. 1988; Mary J. Martin, "Playwrights' Workshop: Work and Plays," Montreal Mirror 11 Dec. 1987 - 7 Jan. 1988.

2.Springate interview.

3.Alun Pibbert, telephone interview, 10 May 1990.

4.Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Playwrights' Workshop, 17 June 1986; The Works, PWM newsletter, Sept. 1985 and Jan. 1986, PWM archives.

5.This small Ontario theatre festival has premiered most of Curran's plays (several workshopped by PWM), including her most successful, Cake Walk.

6.Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, Playwrights' Workshop Montreal, 17 June 1987; The Works, PWM newsletter, Sept. 1986 and Jan. 1987, PWM archives.

7.Springate interview.

8.Marina Endicott, "Saskatchewan: Sky," Theatrum 13 (April/May 1989): 44.

9.The Works, Jan. 1988.

10.Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, Playwrights' Workshop
Montreal, 17 June 1988; The Works, PWM newsletter, Sept. 1987
and Jan. 1988, PWM archives.

11.Productions of Plays Developed -- 1987-88 and 1988-89, PWM information bulletin, PWM archives.

12.Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors of Playwrights' Workshop, 9 Sept. 1986, PWM archives; Springate interview.

13.Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors of Playwrights' Workshop, 18 Oct. 1987, PWM archives.

14.General By-Laws of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal Inc., 18 May 1987, PWM archives.

15.Springate interview.

16.Springate interview.

17.Michael Springate, letter to Anna Stratton, Canada Council Theatre Officer, 14 Sept. 1987; Springate, letter to Linda Sword, C.C. Theatre Officer, 17 Feb. 1988; Springate, letter to Sword, 3 March 1988; PWM archives.

18.General By-Laws of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal Inc., 1966, PWM archives.

19.It is interesting to note that many of the changes made by Springate had been part of Roy Higgins' plans during his tenure: the opening of the Board to non-writers, the shift to a national mandate, the creation of an Advisory Board, and the active search for scripts from outside the Montreal area, for example.

20.By-Laws, 1987, PWM archives.

21.Springate interview; Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal, 12 Nov. 1985; Minutes, AGM, 17 June 1986; PWM archives.

22.Fraticelli interview.

23.Minutes, 9 Sept. 1986.

24.Geordie Productions rents its office and rehearsal space from PWM, and for a time Castle was functioning as joint Administrator for both organizations.

25.Springate, letter to Linda Sword, 17 Feb. 1988, PWM archives.

26.Springate interview.

27.Springate, letter to Stratton, 27 Feb. 1987, PWM archives.

28.The Works, Jan. 1987; Springate, letter to Stratton, 27 Feb. 1987; PWM archives.

29.Springate, letter to Stratton, 27 Feb. 1987; letter to Sword, 3 March 1988, PWM archives.

30.Springate, letter to Stratton, 27 Feb. 1987; letter to Sword, 3 March 1988, PWM archives; Springate interview.

31.Springate interview.

32."Anglo-Quebecois Theatre Colloque, 7 April, 1986: The Event, The Findings, The Action to Date," 15 May 1986, PWM archives. PWM continued to play a prominent role in the Colloque following the April meeting, and hosted regular gatherings of the Ad Hoc committee for the next two years. A reorganized QDF, renamed the Quebec Drama Federation, took control of the Colloque in 1989.

33.Springate interview.

34.Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the Year Ended 31 May 1986; Fund-raising Summary 1985-86; PWM archives.

35.Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the Year Ended 31 May 1987, PWM archives.

36.Springate interview.

37.Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the Year Ended 31 May 1988, PWM archives.

38.Michael Devine, "Forging Drama at Playwrights' Workshop Montreal," Performing Arts in Canada 24.4 (July 1988): 33.

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

What role has PWM played in the creation of contemporary Canadian drama and theatre? What function has it performed in the Montreal English community? Both questions are complex and difficult to answer with any degree of assurance, yet some observations can be made.

As a non-producing development centre, PWM, unlike the Factory Theatre, Tarragon or Passe Muraille, cannot point to a history of important first productions. In this regard, however, PWM is in a position similar to that of the New Play Centre and the CEAD. Like its sister organizations, PWM's primary importance lies in its work "behind-the-scenes", the creation of a nurturing and supportive environment where playwrights can have their work discussed, analyzed and developed without the pressures and tensions sometimes found in development-through-production. While no development program is sufficient for all writers' needs, PWM's various approaches have proved popular enough to continually attract a large number of writers to the Workshop. This fact, coupled with the significant percentage of PWM-developed plays that have progressed to professional and semi-professional productions, indicates that the Workshop has played, and continues to play, an important role in the creation of drama for the Canadian theatre.

The question of PWM's contribution to the English community in Montreal is more difficult to assess. A number of factors must be considered, the foremost of which has been PWM's capacity to present original drama to the public. Although this naturally leads to the thorny issue of what has become known as the "production versus development" debate, to be examined in more detail shortly, perhaps a

brief survey of the various ways the Workshop has presented its work to the public will partly suffice to respond to this question and prepare the ground for the discussion to follow.

Between 1963 and 1975 PWM presentations usually took the form of readings, staged readings and studio productions, with full productions staged less frequently. The financial stress caused by the failure of the PWM Theatre Centre, and its psychological ramifications, resulted in a near-complete retreat from play presentation between 1975 and 1980. Under Brian Richmond the Workshop staged two successful productions, Birth Rite and Moonshot, and returned to a program of readings and staged readings. These programs were expanded by Rina Fraticelli and her successors into the Theatreworks and Freefall events.

Aside from the five-year hiatus between 1975 and 1980 PWM has been the only organization in Montreal to present original English drama a regular basis. Most early PWM readings and productions were well received and attended, and many Theatreworks presentations have attracted overflow crowds, straining the Workshop's limited seating arrangements. The effectiveness of a staged reading as a theatrical event should not be underestimated. While a script-in-hand staged reading cannot rival a full production, it can nonetheless be impressive as a small-scale studio production. Martin Esslin's comment that the O'Neill Conferences's staged readings were often superior to the full productions he later witnessed should not be forgotten.

PWM has interacted with the English-Montreal theatre and general communities in a variety of ways aside from its many years of public presentation. It has always made use of local actors, directors and technicians, promoting interaction between playwrights and other theatre artists. Since becoming a professional centre PWM has provided work

in an area where English theatre artists are often underemployed. PWM's dramaturgs have often been consulted by both the Centaur and Saidye Bronfman theatres, and have taught at local universities as well as the National Theatre School. Exchange programs with theatres and development centres in other regions have given the public an opportunity to see challenging new work that would otherwise not have been available, and exported the work of Montreal writers. Non-developmental events, such as Premiere Performance, Special Events, Playwrights Cabaret, Playwrights Retrospective, New Music New Text, and Professional Development Seminars have been used to enhance PWM's profile while encouraging interaction between playwrights, other artists, and the general public. The Anglo-Quebecois Theatre Colloque was a PWM initiated alliance of English companies formed to present a unified voice to the Quebec government and the French theatre. Indeed, perhaps the Workshop's most important non-developmental achievement has been the strong connections formed with the Québécois theatre, particularly the CEAD. PWM's contribution to cross-cultural dialogue has been a vital component of its existence in Montreal in recent years.

Any discussion of PWM's role in the English Montreal theatre and general communities and its importance to the Canadian theatre must be placed within the context of the "production versus development" debate. The source of this debate lies in the appearance of what was identified in the Background Chapter as "workshopitis" or, to use Bob White's term, the workshop ghetto. Until the nineteen-eighties any attempt to nurture Canadian playwriting, through production or, as in PWM's case, through non-production development strategies such as workshops, was considered beneficial. By the 'eighties, however, many dramatists and dramaturgs were expressing concern that the major theatres had taken up the

workshop system as a way to circumvent criticism that they were doing too little to support and develop Canadian playwrights. These theatres were accused of using workshops to avoid the financial risks of producing original scripts. As workshopping grew in popularity, the wisdom of developing plays without the goal of a final production, be it at a regional theatre or a non-producing development centre, was called into question.

The label "production versus development" is itself somewhat inaccurate, as it implies that one either produces a script or develops it. In fact the production of any original script generally includes a certain amount of development during the rehearsal process. One of the key issues in this debate, however, is the concern that during the rehearsal process the author's intentions may be overlooked as the director and actors mould the script into a vehicle that reflects their interests and better displays their talents. Defenders of independent (non-production) development argue that the workshop system gives the author ultimate control over the evolution of his or her script, while receiving the benefit of input from a dramaturg, director and actors. Conversely, their opponents argue that without a final production the play has not been fully developed. Independent development, these critics assert, tends to concentrate on the literary aspects of the script while offering limited opportunity to investigate the drama as a "blueprint for performance". Furthermore, the dramatist writes to have his or her ideas presented to the public, not to be workshopped in private.

A third aspect to this debate centres upon the function of theatre in society. Many consider the theatre a place where the community can go to see its problems, conflicts and aspirations given dramatic interpretation. Hamlet's description of the purpose of the theatre has been quoted far too often to require reiteration here. Critics

of independent development centres point out that this fundamental function of drama in society is ignored in the workshop process when the script does not receive a final production.[1] This is the point of view of former PWM dramaturg Brian Richmond.

Richmond, the last PWM Artistic Director to attempt to change the Workshop into a producing theatre, believes that the organization will only be fully valued in Quebec when it presents "new dispositions in playwriting" to the public through production.[2] Montreal's English community needs the leadership of organizations like PWM to "help the community find itself."[3] While admitting that the Workshop can assist the writer with helpful advice and become a "meeting place where new ideas are formed," Richmond contended in 1982 that there was a great risk of it regressing into a "service organization which works for those it serves" and ignores the needs of the community that supports it. Such an organization, Richmond argued, does not permit its worth to be judged by competitive standards, and is "content when it achieves its own self-prescribed level of value."[4]

Bob White, the person perhaps most responsible for moulding PWM into the professional dramaturgical service organization that exists today, has since that time become a vocal opponent of independent play development. White argues that unless "the material and the playwrights are connected to something down the line with a goal to production," then developmental work risks "becoming so self-centred and so academic" that it is "disconnected from the reality of what it is to do theatre." Even in development there should be "no illusions to what [a play's] worth is." White insists that unless it can be gauged that a play "works now," unless it "gets up on stage and people can see it," the development effort exists in a vacuum: "there's no point to it."[5]

Yet White recognizes that the ideal of a production for every play in development is mitigated by the realities of specific situations: "in Montreal it's always going to be extremely difficult [to produce new English work or connect with producing theatres] because of the size of the market." Therefore in Montreal, and even "in Regina and Vancouver to a certain extent," independent centres "do make sense." He feels that cutbacks in government funding and the focus of business sponsorship on high profile activities has created "a world of dwindling resources." This decrease in resources has meant that even fewer theatres are willing to risk original productions. With severely limited opportunities for new playwrights, the response a centre like PWM can offer may be vital for a young writer. White points to the example of Paul Ledoux, who, "because he got his first few plays done [at PWM], and I was there to respond to them," acquired the confidence to eventually script the successful musical satires Love is Strange and Fire, both produced at the Centaur and numerous other theatres.[6]

Critics who support the concept of independent play development, and PWM's position as an independent development centre, include former president George Szanto and dramaturg Per Brask. Through his experience developing and producing original work at the New Heritage Theatre in San Diego, George Szanto discovered that both the writer and the play could be seriously harmed if the "playwright's perspective" is not the first priority during the production process. Szanto recognizes that independent development does not satisfy the important function of drama to reflect and connect with the community, but points out that if the writer is a true playwright, then the experience gained in the independent workshop goes into "the writing of the next play and the next one," some of which will, hopefully, reach an audience.[7]

Per Brask, one of the country's leading proponents of independent dramaturgy, supports Szanto's position. Brask admits that "in the best of all possible worlds" every workshop would eventually lead to a production. Yet this position must take into account, Brask asserts, the fact that play development often requires an extended amount of time and the working through of several drafts, something the production process rarely affords. Brask also points out that many playwrights must pen "three or four plays that may never get seen" but which have to be written and experimented with before a script of sufficient maturity for public presentation is created. The development-through-production position, Brask argues, often favours the development of plays over playwrights: it is the theatre's requirements rather than the writer's concerns that are the primary focus for the producing theatre. The ultimate value of a "research and development" organization like PWM, Brask believes, lies in the freedom and control the laboratory situation offers the writer, qualities the producing theatre is generally unable to grant the emerging dramatist. Finally, Brask argues, it is not one or the other, but both which are needed in the Canadian theatre.[8]

It remained for Richmond's and Brask's successors to negotiate a middle-ground between these two stances. Rina Fraticelli recognized that PWM's foremost responsibility was to the playwright and "research and development", to permit the writer control over his or her material. Yet this situation was mitigated by several factors. In order to allow the writer to view the play as a "blueprint for performance" the Workshop needed to offer at least the minimal attributes of a producing theatre, a studio space with lights, blacks and other equipment. A certain amount of public presentation was also required to permit the writer to gauge how the script worked in front of an audience and to maintain the Workshop's profile in the

community. Fraticelli and her successors, Michael Springate and, currently, Svetlana Zylin, managed to bridge the gap between independent and production development through the Workshop's range of programs. The utilization of PWM's studio space meant that these programs could culminate in Theatreworks or Freefall staged readings, which come close to complete studio productions without the attendant cost. While White and Richmond would argue that staged readings or script-in-hand productions are neither sufficient for complete development of the script nor satisfactory experiences for audiences, the examples of the New Play Centre and the O'Neill Conference, as well as PWM's own accomplishments with these methods, weigh against their case.

PWM's success in bridging the gap between independent development and full production, and its capacity to respond to the needs of both the Canadian theatre and its local community, can be gauged, in part, by the phenomenal growth the Workshop has experienced. From an organization on the brink of dissolution in 1975, PWM regrouped to become one of the nation's leading play development centres by the end of the nineteen-eighties. The Workshop achieved this position at a time when there was immense competition in the field of Canadian play development, and when grave concern was being expressed about the wisdom of supporting independent development at all. This would indicate that PWM has been able to offer a quality of service to Canadian playwrights and the Canadian theatre not available from other organizations or theatres promising similar programs. It also indicates that the Workshop has been able to turn its particular position as an English service organization operating in the heart of the Québécois theatre milieu to its advantage. This feat should not be underestimated, given the number of English companies that have failed or survive only precariously in Montreal. Many English

companies, following the example of the MRT, could have seized on their unique position in the city to forge cross-cultural links, but either did not or were unable to do so, until Playwrights' Workshop.[9]

It is also worth noting that the Workshop's reputation has been built on the success of its overall program rather than the individual achievements of one or more of its writers. Some of Canada's best known dramatists -- David French, George F. Walker, David Fennario and Michel Temblay are obvious examples -- are strongly associated with the theatres or development centres which first supported their work. While PWM has developed scripts by many important Canadian playwrights, it cannot take credit for discovering their talent. PWM's prosperity calls into question the assumption that the creation of a "name" playwright is a valid measure of the accomplishments of a development centre. An issue that generates similar questions, and is perhaps even more significant in light of PWM's current stature, is the fact that many PWM-developed plays reaching professional production were criticized for their "dramaturgical problems".

Michael Springate locates this problem in PWM's history of cultivating new and inexperienced playwrights. A playwright only matures through having "seven or eight produced plays," Springate argues, while the vast majority of PWM's writers have never had a play staged. The experience offered the writer at PWM is a step towards this maturity, but full growth will only be achieved through repeated productions. Most Canadian dramatists with more than a handful of produced plays also have connections with artistic directors at producing theatres, Springate observes, and "no longer need -- or don't know how to make use of -- PWM." That most workshopped plays remained flawed also indicates the limits of dramaturgical influence and the ultimate responsibility of the writer for the work. The

workshopped Marvin: Dream of a Lifetime, Springate notes, still has textual weaknesses, but is now "a hell of a lot better than when it arrived [at PWM]."[10]

The Workshop has become a development centre of national stature despite these liabilities, and in spite of a tumultuous history which included frequent changes of leadership and locale. What further lessons can be drawn from this history? The first appears to be that the Workshop took the right approach to the nurture of original English drama within the hazardous Montreal environment. By concentrating on development rather than production, aside from the forays of the Higgins and Richmond years, PWM avoided the financial risks of attempting to produce new English drama and thereby ensured its continued growth and eventual prosperity.

Could PWM have become a producing theatre concentrating on original work if there had been stronger leadership or a firmer commitment from members and the Board of Directors? The clearest opportunity for PWM to become a producing theatre was in 1974, with the purchase of the Catholic Sailors' Club building. Most observers agree that, had the Workshop managed to hold onto the building, it might have eventually progressed into an organization similar to the Factory Theatre or New Play Centre, where play development strategies could culminate in full productions of deserving scripts. It seems obvious that Roy Higgins did not have the skill or ability to meet the demands that the acquisition of the building placed on the Workshop, and that the programs he developed were at odds with PWM's primary goal of developing original drama. Perhaps another artistic director might have been more successful, or with greater commitment from more Board members a way to keep the building after Higgins' departure might have been found. The fact that no English company has managed to survive while presenting only original drama argues against this.

There is a good possibility that the Theatre Centre would have failed sooner or later.

A prominent aspect of PWM's history is a chronic shift of leadership. No PWM artistic director has served more than a three year term. In contrast to the New Play Centre, where Pam Hawthorn was at the helm between 1972 and 1989, this sort of excessive changeover could be assumed to have a deleterious effect on the Workshop. In fact this is not the case: the alterations in leadership, both in the artistic director's position and in the Board of Directors, have injected fresh energies and ideas into the Workshop on a regular basis. While these changes have sometimes caused tension between the artistic director and the Board, on the whole these frictions have been a positive part of the Workshop's evolution. It was only when an artistic director came into conflict with the Board over PWM's role as a development centre that serious difficulties emerged.

The setbacks encountered during the Higgins and Richmond tenures were due, in large part, to a schism between the artistic directors' and the Board's visions of the Workshop. In both cases the artistic directors attempted to shift the Workshop's focus from play development to play production, and in both cases the Board, while it supported the idea of production, had not agreed that the Workshop should give production priority over development. The results were nearly catastrophic following Higgins' administration, and while the Richmond experiment was far less severe, the disunity of the period had a negative effect on members' morale and the general standing of the Workshop. Perhaps in another city, with other personnel, or with a clearer commitment to production and its attendant costs from the outset, one of these attempts would have succeeded. These administrations illustrate, however, the vital need for plainly stated and mutually agreed upon objectives on the part of both the Board and the

artistic management.

Other lessons to be derived from PWM's history, both in terms of play development strategies and the creation of English drama in Montreal, should by now be readily apparent. While there are many aspects of the Workshop's evolution that are particular to its locale and cultural milieu, other elements offer important examples to those interested in play development nationally and internationally. All that remains is to assess the Workshop's current position and prospects for the future.

During the period in which this study was prepared PWM has been under the artistic direction of Svetlana Zylin. The strong growth achieved by Fraticelli and Springate has been continued by Zylin, who has maintained their development, out-reach and other programs and implemented new ones. The most important of these are Production Dramaturgy (proposed during the Springate administration), which provides continued dramaturgical assistance to PWM-developed plays being readied for production at outside theatres, and Field Dramaturgy, which permits a PWM dramaturg to travel to other regions of the country to offer dramaturgical assistance for new work. Other programs under consideration include residencies for visiting artists, a project to provide several weeks of intensive in-house workshopping for playwrights concerned with creative development not necessarily tied to a specific play and a return to an annual new play festival format in order to give directors and producers from outside Montreal an opportunity to see a number works in progress over a short time span. Zylin has continued to emphasize and expand PWM's cross-cultural initiatives and its various links to the English community in Montreal.

In December 1990 the Workshop moved to yet another venue. The former Strathern School on Jeanne Mance Boulevard was renovated by the City of Montreal to make

available low-cost accommodations for non-profit cultural bodies in the city. At the Strathern Centre PWM has acquired individual offices (until this time a lack of space forced the sharing of cramped offices), a room to house both visiting writers and the Carol Libman Resource Centre, a large meeting room to be used for workshops and small readings, and access to a fully equipped 100-seat theatre. After almost thirty years PWM appears to be in a position to sustain its play development program while staging full productions of original scripts, without incurring financial liability. This new facility can only serve to further enhance PWM's reputation as a development centre of national importance.

At a time when many theatres that have traditionally nurtured Canadian drama are facing economic hardship and uncertain futures, the Workshop appears well situated to continue its remarkable growth and vital function in supporting Canada's playwrights. Playwrights' Workshop Montreal will play a prominent role in the creation of drama for the Canadian theatre throughout the nineteen-nineties and into the twenty-first century.

NOTES

1.For a more detailed description of the production versus development debate the reader is referred, once again, to the articles on workshopping and play development in Canadian Theatre Review 49 (Winter 1986). Another angle on the debate is taken by several critics associated with the CTR, notably Robert Wallace, Alan Filewod and Paul Leonard, who feel that the playwright and the script have been unduly privileged in the Canadian theatre, to the detriment of alternative forms of play creation, particularly collaborative and collective creation. See Wallace's introduction to CTR 49, as well as his and other articles, along with Filewod's introduction, to CTR 55 (Summer 1988), an issue entitled "Collaborations: Rethinking Collective Creation."

2.Brian Richmond, statement on "Playwrights' Workshop: Inertia or Action?" appended to PWM Minutes of Meeting, Board of Directors, 2 March 1982.

3.Brian Richmond, personal interview, 26 April 1989.

4.Richmond, "Inertia"

5.Bob White, personal interview, 27 April 1989.

6.White interview.

7.George Szanto, personal interview, 17 May 1989.

8.Per Brask, telephone interview, 7 May 1990.

9.Montreal is a city with an anglophone population roughly equivalent to that of Edmonton, where a half-dozen companies operate successfully. The overpowering presence of the strong Québécois theatre is often credited with making English production a difficult and risky business. Throughout the 'eighties only the Centaur has managed to present a full season of plays annually. The Saidye Bronfman Theatre has folded twice and the various smaller companies produce only on a very sporadic and nomadic basis.

10.Springate interview.

APPENDIX

LOCATION, EXECUTIVE, AND SUMMARY OF SCRIPTS DEVELOPED AT PLAYWRIGHTS' WORKSHOP MONTREAL: 1963 TO 1988

SEASON: 1963

LOCATION: National Theatre School
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
CHAIRMAN: Dan Daniels
SECRETARY: Carol Libman
TREASURER: n.a.

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Daniels, D.	A Typical Canadian Family	R
Ferguson, B.	Cheevers	R
Libman, C.	Jigsaw	R/OP
Martin, D.	Charlie's Sword	R
Mitchell, D.	The Intricate Triangle	R
Sevack, E.	What a Business	R
Sherwood, R.	The Nightmare	R
Sherwood, R.	Lost Articles	R/OP
Snelson, B.	House Without Stairs	R/OP

SEASON: 1963-64

LOCATION: Manfield Book Mart, Théâtre de la Place
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
CHAIRMAN: n.a.
SECRETARY: n.a.
TREASURER: n.a.

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n.a.: information not available
*Process: R=Reading, SR=Staged-reading, TW=Theatreworks, FF=Freefall, IH=In-House, SW=Short Workshop, IW=Intensive Workshop
*Production: OP=Outside Production, PP=PWM Production

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Abrams, T.	Cool Cage	R
Black, G.	The Facts of Their Lives	R
Boll, N.	The Opportunity	R
Cunnington, R.	The Peacemongers	R
Daniels, D.	The Auditon	R/OP
Grant, D.	Fazar	R
Handbidge, M.	Special Edition	R
Johnson, C. (C. Bolt)	The Day the Shooting Started	R
O'Brien, D.	The Gallows	R
Ravel, A.	Green Harvest	R
Yacknin, R.	The Sound of Goodbye	R

SEASON: 1964-65

LOCATION: Théâtre de la Place
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
CHAIRMAN: Carol Libman
SECRETARY: Barbara Snelson
TREASURER: Hugh Nelson Brown, Tevia Abrams

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Christie, J.	Book of Eve	R
Culter, M.	The Condemned Store	R
Daigneault/Markley	The Dance of the Ostrich	R
Garton, C.	The Nude	R
Libman, C.	The Clearing	R/PP
Morris, M.	The Swap Shop	R/OP
Ravel, A.	The Adventures of Mendel Fish	R/OP
Spiers, D.	Sheila Sells Harols	R
Whelan, J.	Rooftop	R

SEASON: 1965-66

LOCATION: Ignace Bourget School, 282 Ste-Catherine St. W.
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
CHAIRMAN: Carol Libman
SECRETARY: Richard Martin
TREASURER: Manuel Meland

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Abrams, T.	Devil in the Icebox	R
Bronstein, M.	Sketches	R
Fleishman, M.	The Bird in the Box	R
Fleishman, M.	God Bless You, Harold Fineburg	R
Fleishman/Warshaw	I Love You For God's Sake	R
Morris, M.	The Slumber Room	R/PP
Morris, M	Knock, Knock. Who's There	R
Morris, M.	Celia Darling	R
O'Boyle	The Bi-Culturalism of Mr. O'Toole	R
Ravel, A.	The Tuesday Games	R
Reilley, M.	The Wheel	R
Reilley, M.	Express	R
Richardson, G.	Awkward pauses	R
Segal, L.	Why Tina	R
Sherwood, R.	Proximity and The Nightmare	R
Shirley, R.	Zoppo	R

SEASON: 1966-67

LOCATION: 282 Ste-Catherine St. W.
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
PRESIDENT: Carol Libman
VICE-PRESIDENT: Tevia Abrams
SECRETARY: Marjorie Morris
TREASURER: Richard Martin

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Abrams, T.	And No Ceremony	R/OP
Bell, D.	The House Hunters	R
Boyoucas, P.	The Killing Game	R
Daniels, D.	The Web of Our Life is of a Mangled Yarn	R
Fleishman, M.	The Tiger Swallow Tail	R
Fleishman, M.	Mating of Dinosaurs	R
Garton, G.	The Contract	R
Goodman, J.	A Word on the Wall - Vivo	R
Libman, C.	Today I'll Be Fine	R
Libman, C.	The Clearing	PP
Martin, D.	The Death of God	R
Morris, M.	The Slumber Room	PP
Ravel, A.	Sincerely Yours	R
Reilley, M.	The Door	R/OP
Reilley, M.	A Tower for Tommy	R/OP
Segal, L.	Shadows	R
Sherwood, R.	Aunt Mariska	R/PP
Shirley, R.	PI	PP

SEASON: 1967-68

LOCATION: 282 Ste-Catherine St. W.
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
PRESIDENT: Tevia Abrams
VICE-PRESIDENT: Marjorie Morris
SECRETARY: Richard Martin
TREASURER: Manuel Meland

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Abrams, T.	And No Ceremony	R
Daniels, D.	The Inmates	R
Desson, J.	The Happening	R
Garton, C.	Visiting Hours	R
Godlovitch, C.	More Private an Affair	R
Horan, B.	Looking Up at the Wall	R
Libman, C.	Man in the Mirror	R
Loevan, H.	About Jean-Paul	R
McMannus, J.	Goodbye Miss Eiderdown	R
Morris, M.	Sell Her the Moon	R

Nelson, J.	A Certain Place in Time	R
Ravel, A.	No More Ketchup	R/OP
Reed, C.	The Venerable Hunters	R/PP
Reilley, M.	A Tower for Tommy	PP
Sherwood, R.	Aunt Mariksa	PP
Wherry, W.	Bag of Earth	R

SEASON: 1968-69

LOCATION: 282 Ste-Catherine St. W.
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
PRESIDENT: Tevia Abrams
VICE-PRESIDENT: Carol Libman
SECRETARY: Marjorie Morris
TREASURER: Manuel Meland

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Daniels, D.	Images in Triplicate	R
Desson, J.	With All My Love	R
Garton, C.	I Remember	R
Godlovitch, C.	Thunder on a Distant Mountain	R/PP
Hartwick, P.	One Fell Swop	R
Janovics, G.	In Your Local Graveyard	R
Libman, C.	Follow the Leader	PP
Martin, D.	Death of God	PP
Morris, Marj.	Requiem for a Small Boy	R
Morris, Mich.	Lamour à la Rousse	R
Nelson, J.	The Exorcism	R
O'Brien, J.	The Christmas Dinner	R/PP
Ravel, A.	No More Ketchup	PP
Reilley, M.	The Road	R/PP
Reilley, M.	Picnik	R
Sherwcod, R.	Laughoscope	R

SEASON: 1969-70

LOCATION: 282 Ste-Catherine St. W., Centaur Theatre
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
PRESIDENT: Manuel Meland
VICE-PRESIDENT: Charles Godlovitch
SECRETARY: Carol Libman
TREASURER: Lionel Morris

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Desson, J.	Keiros	R
Godlovitch, C.	One With the Druids	R/OP
Hartwick, P.	Down to Brass Attacks	PP
Morris, M.	Three Women	R
Nelson, J.	Shadows and Shelters	R
O'Brien, J.	Christmas Dinner	PP
Reed, C.	Venerable Hunters	PP
Reilley, M.	The Road	PP

SEASON: 1970-71

LOCATION: Centaur Theatre
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
PRESIDENT: Charles Godlovitch
VICE-PRESIDENT: Carol Libman
SECRETARY: Sara Meland
TREASURER: John Jackson

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Abrams, T.	Fragments in the Service of Time, Love and War	R
Freedman, F.	The Old Man and the Robot	PP
Garton, C.	Pillowcases - Afterwards	R
Godlovitch, C.	Countdown	R
Godlovitch, C.	Thunder on a Distant Mountain	PP
Jancovics, G.	Graveyard	PP/OP
Libman, C.	Holiday from the Dark	R/PP
McManus, J.	Breakthrough	R/OP
Nelson, J.	Stonechild	PP/OP
Reilley, M.	Minuet in Jeans	R
Richardson, G.	Night	R
Smith, R.	After the Hill	R

SEASON: 1971-72

LOCATION: Centaur Theatre
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
PRESIDENT: Charles Godlovitch
VICE-PRESIDENT: Gerard Rejskind
SECRETARY: Frances Freedman
TREASURER: John Jackson

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Godlovitch, C.	One With the Druids	PP/OP
Libman, C.	Holiday from the Dark	PP
McManus, J.	Breakthrough	PP/OP
Rejskind, G.	Upward, Not Northward	PP/OP
Reilley, M.	Retribution	PP/OP

SEASON: 1972-73

LOCATION: Centaur, 461 St-Sulpice, 410 St-Pierre
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Roy Higgins
PRESIDENT: Gerard Rejskind
VICE-PRESIDENT: Rod Hayward
SECRETARY: Fran Lew
TREASURER: Al Freedman

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Canale, R.	The Bridge Across the River at the Bay	R
Godlovitch, C.	Jonah	R/PP
Harrison, D.	More Deaths than One	R
Kahane, M.	Coley and Me	R
Lesley, K.	How Green Were My Eneralds	R
Ravel, A.	A Twisted Loaf	PP/OP
Rosen, S.	Boxes	R/OP
Siminovitch, E.	Big X, Little Y	R/PP
Venable, A.	Balloons	R/PP
Zaget, B.	Landsplit	R

SEASON: 1973-74

LOCATION: 410 St-Pierre, 329 de la Commune (Cath. Sailors)
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Roy Higgins
PRESIDENT: Gerard Rejskind
VICE-PRESIDENT: Aviva Ravel
SECRETARY: Sheila Eskenazi
TREASURER: Al Freedman

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Cone, T.	Veils	R/OP
Duchesne, C.	Hopscotch	R
Harrison, D.	Games Played in the Park	PP/OP
Ravel, A.	Horns	R
Rosen, S.	The Box	PP
Siminovitch, E.	Big X, Little Y	PP
Sirois, S.	Dodo l'Enfant do	PP
Venable, A.	Balloons	PP
Whelan, R.	Oh Had I Jubal's Lyre	R
Zaget, B.	Deathfetch and Company	R

SEASON: 1974-75

LOCATION: 329 de la Commune (Cath. Sailors), Saidye Bronfman
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
PRESIDENT: Rod Hayward
VICE-PRESIDENT: Charles Godlovitch
SECRETARY: Heather Goodall
TREASURER: Wayne Robbins

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Allister, W.	The Queen of Hearts	n.a.
Browne, C.	A Gulf Idyll	R
Fleishman, M.	Charlie McCarthy's Monocle	n.a.
Goulet, L.	Death by Burning	R
Hayward, R.	All the King's Horses	R/OP
Katz, G.	The Invisible Wall	n.a.
McMillan, A.	The Spectacle of N	n.a.
Napier, M.	The Soul on the 14th Floor	R
Radwansky	Hilter and Company	n.a.

Ravel, A.	I am Feeling in the Basement	R
Sniderman, A.	The Ectomorph Factor	R/OP
Springate, M.	A Song for Luca	R/OP
Walsh, B.	A Tear for Christie	n.a.
Zaget, B.	Horseplay	R
Zaget, B.	Landsplit	R

SEASON: 1975-76

LOCATION: Saidye Bronfman Centre - 5170 Cote Ste-Catherine
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Bob White
PRESIDENT: Laurent Goulet
VICE-PRESIDENT: Paul Harwick
SECRETARY: Carol Libman
TREASURER: Wayne Robins

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Fuerstenburg, A.	Edith Dances	SW
Goulet, L.	Death by Drowning	SW
Goulet, L.	Never as She Willed	IW
Hayward, R.	The Disciples	IW
Holden, H.	The Bedspread	SW
Ledoux, P.	Kill Them	SW/OP
Libman, C.	Holiday from the Dark	SW
Sniderman, E.	Emily	SW/IW
Wade, B.	Breakthrough	IW
Wolfman, O.	The End	SW
Zaget, B.	Horseplay	SW/IW

SEASON: 1976-77

LOCATION: Saidye Bronfman Centre
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Bob White
PRESIDENT: Laurent Goulet
VICE-PRESIDENT: n.a.
SECRETARY: Carol Libman
TREASURER: Carol Libman

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Bailey, B.	Family Entertainment	SW
Boyden, J.	Fandango	IW/OP
Fuerstenburg, A.	Edith Dances	IW
Hale, A.	The Nursery	SW
Hartwick, P.	Basement	SW
Holden, H.	Will the Real Life Please Stand Up	SW
Ledoux, P.	Ragdoll	SW
Ledoux, P.	Dada Show	IW/OP
Libman, C.	Untitled(Wintersong)	SW/PP
Ravel, A.	Dispossessed	SW/OP
Sniderman, A.	Death of Doctor Porker	SW
Szanto, G.	After the Ceremony	IW/OP
Wade, B.	Tanned	IW/OP

SEASON: 1977-78

LOCATION: Saidye Bronfman Centre
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Bob White
PRESIDENT: Paul Ledoux
VICE-PRESIDENT: George Szanto
SECRETARY: Carol Libman
TREASURER: Carol Libman

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Bailey/King	The Tangled Web	IW/SW
DeFelice, J.	Take Me Where the Water's Warm	IW/OP
Hale, A.	Threshold	IW
Kahan, M.	The Female Persons Show	IW
Libman, C.	Wintersong	PP
MacDougall, B.	Carnaval	SW
Madden/Rintoul	Trial of the Rosenbergs	IW/OP
Ravel, A.	Playmates	IW
Thirteen Jackies	Fat	IW
Zaget, B.	Bea!	IW

SEASON: 1978-79

LOCATION: Saidye Bronfman Centre
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Per Brask
PRESIDENT: George Szanto
VICE-PRESIDENT: Paul Hartwick
SECRETARY: Carol Libman
TREASURER: Carol Libman

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Beissel, H.	Improvisation for Mr. X	IW
Freeman, D.	Jungle of Lilacs	IW
Hale, A.	Threshold	IW
Hollingsworth, M.	Broken Record	IW
Libman, C.	Still Waters	IW
Mitchell, K.	The Shipbuilder	IW/OP
Szanto, G.	After the Ceremony	IW/OP

SEASON: 1979-80

LOCATION: Saidye Bronfman Centre
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Per Brask
PRESIDENT: George Szanto
VICE-PRESIDENT: Paul Hartwick
SECRETARY: David Freeston
TREASURER: David Fresston

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Beissel, H.	Under Coyote's Eye	IW
Carroll, E. (Freeston)	Family Way (Birth Rite)	IW/OP
Freeman, D.	Damn You, Joey	IW
Spry, L.	Just Another Love Song	IW
Szanto, G.	A Man's Reach	IW

SEASON: 1980-81

LOCATION: Saidye Bronfman Centre, NDG Cultural Centre
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Brian Richmond
PRESIDENT: George Szanto
VICE-PRESIDENT: Henry Beissel
SECRETARY: David Freeston
TREASURER: David Freeston

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Beissel, H.	Under Coyote's Eye	n.a.
Bouyoucas, P.	Beauty Cream	n.a.
Carroll, E. (Freeston)	Birth Rite	IW/OP
Carroll, E. (Freeston)	De Capo	n.a.
Crossland, J.	First Contact	SR
Curran, C.	Nieces	n.a.
Freeman, D.	Damn You, Joey!	SR
Hibbert, A.	Rachel's Boy (Playing the Fool)	n.a.
Jewell, G.	Eery Day the Sky is Blue	n.a.
Johannsen, P.L.	The China Man	n.a.
Kroetsch, N.	She's a Show Town For Me	n.a.
Libman, C.	Still Waters	n.a.
Madden, P.	Re-Union	n.a.
Marcellin, P.	Yucatan	n.a.
Mitchell, K.	The Shipbuilder	SR/OP
Murray, D.	Cloaks	n.a.
Ravel, A.	Second Chance	n.a.
Rimmer, D.	Moonshot	IW
Szanto, G.	After the Ceremony	SR/OP
Werebowski, T.	Je Me Souviens	n.a.

SEASON: 1981-82

LOCATION: NDG Cultural Centre, Richmond's home, various
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Brian Richmond
PRESIDENT: George Szanto
VICE-PRESIDENT: David Rimmer
SECRETARY: David Freeston
TREASURER: David Freeston

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Brown, K.	Sparks	n.a.
Burdman, R.	Eye to Eye	SR/OP
Clark, N.	The Group	SR
De, C.	Just Like the Movies	n.a.
Foon, Dennis	Dr. Smyrichinsky's Brother	SR
Jewell, G.	Everyday the Sky is Blue	SR
Kroetsch, N.	I Like It Here	SR
Mitchell, K.	Gone the Burning Sun	SR/OP
Mitchell, K.	Sarah Binks	n.a./OP
Murray, D.	Cloaks	SR
Prager, J.	The Old Cabin	n.a.
Rimmer, D.	Moonshot	IW/OP
Smart, W.	Summer Laughter	n.a.
Stephens, I.	Mobile	SR

SEASON: 1982-83

LOCATION: 2071 Boul. St-Laurent, 4379 de Bullion
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Rina Fraticelli
PRESIDENT: George Szanto, Alun Hibbert
VICE-PRESIDENT: David Rimmer
SECRETARY: David Freeston, Carol Libman
TREASURER: David Freeston, Carol Libman

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Bolt, Carol	Survival	IH
Buchanan, D.	The Outlaw	IH
Bush, S.	Pedro Y el Capitan	IH
Freeman, D.	Canadian Comedy	IH
Great Canadian Theatre Company	Woman Spirit	IH/OP
Giron, A.	Relativity	IH
Kudelka, J.	American Demon	IH/OP
Libman, C.	Wintersong	IH
Marchessault, J.	Night Cows	IH/OP
Poteet/Gormley	Bad Girls	IH

Roche, D. & S.	The Sibling Show	IH
Rosen, J.	Mixed Doubles	IH
Springate, M.	Historical Bliss	IH/OP
Szanto, G.	Sex and Violence	IH/OP
Weinzweig, H.	My Mother's Luck	IH/OP

SEASON: 1983-84

LOCATION: 4379 de Bullion
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Rina Fraticelli
PRESIDENT: Alun Hibbert
VICE-PRESIDENT: David Rimmer
SECRETARY: Carol Libman
TREASURER: Carol Libman

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Aitken, W.	Sunset Harbour	FF
Bolt, C.	Survival	TW
Burdman, R.	Eye to Eye	TW/OP
Bush, S.	Pedro and the Captain	IH
Dussant, L.	Moman	IH/SR/OP
Freeman, D.	Canadian Comedy	IH
Ghan, L.	Toros Daughter	FF
Gingras, R.	Syncope(Breaks)	IH/SR/OP
Gormley, J.	Latinas	IH
Hibbert, A.	A Majority of Two	IH/TW/OP
Levesque, L.	When I Said That... She Started to Laugh	IH
Libman, C.	A Rare Day in June	IH
Madden, P.	The Day the Fairy Princess Died	FF
Malloy, B.	Potluck	IH
Marchessault, J.	Night Cows	TW
Poteet, S.	Frida Kahlo	IH
Rubess, B. et al.	This is for You, Anna	SR/OP
Seidman, K.J.	Baby Doll	IH/OP
Shapir, D.	Thelon Winter	FF
Vallancourt, L.	Marie Antoine	IH/OP
Walmsley, T.	Nice Guys	IH/OP
Weinzweig, H.	My Mother's Luck	TW

SEASON: 1984-85

LOCATION: 4379 de Bullion
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Rina Fraticelli
PRESIDENT: Alun Hibbert
VICE-PRESIDENT: Susan Poteet
SECRETARY: Neil Kroetsch
TREASURER: Neil Kroetsch

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Aitken, W.	Sunset Harbour	IH/TW
Boyle, J.	Avalon	IH
Curran, C.	Amelia Earhart Was Not a Spy	IH/OP
Fremont-Cote, M.	Le Deprime / Terminal Blues	IH/OP
Ghan, L.	Coldsnap	FF
Kuhns, W.	The Zen of an Intelligent Machine	IH/TW/OP
Marchessault, J.	The Edge of the Earth is Too Near, Violet Leduc	IH/OP
McDougal, P.	Fragments	FF
McLean, A.	A Nun's Diary	IH/OP
Murray, D.	Argentina Welcomes the Homeless	IH
Poteet, S.	I, Rigoberta Menchu	TW
Poteet, S.	Frida Khalo	IH
Rodgers, G.	Barbershop Duet	FF
Shapiro, D.	Thelon Winter	IH/TW
Spenser, E.	Edward	IH
Weinzweig, H.	Joseph and Lily, Lily and Joseph	IH
White/Rubess	The Woman Who Slept With Men	TW/OP

SEASON: 1985-86

LOCATION: 4001 Berri
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Michael Springate
PRESIDENT: Alun Hibbert, Susan Poteet
VICE-PRESIDENT: Susan Poteet, Colleen Curran
SECRETARY: Colleen Curran, Guy Rodgers
TREASURER: Colleen Curran, Guy Rodgers

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Beissel, H.	The Noose	FF
Dubois, R.	Don't Blame the Bedoins	FF/OP
Freeman, D.	Scar	FF
Hibbert, A.	Deadweight (Rough Idle)	FF/OP
Peng, J.	Cremations	FF/OP
Springate, M.	A Common Man (Dog & Crow)	FF/OP
Ward, F.	Somebody Somebody's Returning	IH/OP

SEASON: 1986-87

LOCATION: 4001 Berri
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Michael Springate
PRESIDENT: Susan Poteet
VICE-PRESIDENT: Colleen Curran
SECRETARY: Guy Rodgers
TREASURER: Guy Rodgers

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Bouyoucas, P.	Lionel	FF
Brask/Szanto	Bagman	IH/OP
Curran, C.	Miss Balmoral of the Bayview	FF/OP
Curran, C.	Spooks	IH/OP
Druick, D.	Someone Sleeps Somewhere	FF/OP
Dubois, R.	Don't Blame the Bedouins	TW/OP
Johnston, A.	The Knocks	IH/OP
Majzels, R.	Prodigal Son	IH
Morrison, T.	Succession	FF
Pelletier, M.	Pas de Doux for Obstinate Voices	FF
Ravel, A.	Are You My Mother?	IH
Rodrigues, P.	Lily of the Mohawks	IH/OP
Rubess, B. et al.	The Last Will and Testament of Lolita	TW/OP
Standjofski, H.	No Cycle	TW/OP
Stetson, K.	Warm Wind in China	TW/OP
Ward, F.	P.A.	FF

SEASON: 1987-88

LOCATION: 4001 Berri
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Michael Springate
PRESIDENT: Susan Poteet, Guy Rodgers
VICE-PRESIDENT: Guy Rodgers, Joel Miller
SECRETARY: Joel Miller
TREASURER: Joel Miller

PLAYS DEVELOPED

AUTHOR	TITLE	PROCESS/PROD.*
Ackerman, M.	L'Affaire Tartuffe	FF/OP
Arsenault, L.	Simpy Bivouac	IH/FF/OP
Bacquie, D.	Marvin: Dream of a Lifetime	IH/OP
Bras, A.	The Death of Mayakofsky	FF/OP
Cameron, S.D.	The Prophet at Tantramar	IH/OP
Czernieke, M.A.	Soldat Hans Stumpf	FF
Dorland, K.	The Child	IH/OP
Druick, D.	Where is Kabuki	TW/OP
Egilson, J.	Easy Over	IH/OP
Elliot, G.	Tux	IH
Faigelman, S.	By the Pool	IH
Fennario, D.	Neil Cream	IH/OP
Fine, P.	Age	IH/OP
Gault, C.	Sky	IH/TW/OP
Gelinas, G.	The Passion of Narcisse Mondoux	IH/OP
Highway, T.	Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing	IH/OP
Hollingsworth, M.	The Green Line	IH
Hunter, M.	Beautiful Lake Winnipeg	FF/OP
Majzels, R.	Prodigal Son	TW
McDougal, P.	The Figurehead	IH
Miller, J.	Terrorism	IH
Packer, M.	Piecework	IH
Rodgers, G.	A Killing Frost on St-Zotique	FF
Selody, K.	Effective Dreams	IH
Stetson, K.	Comme un Vent Chaud du Chine	FF/OP

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