Appendix
A Nightwood Chronology

1979

The B.A.A.N.N. Theatre Centre established by Nightwood, Buddies in Bad Times, Necessary Angel, Actors Lab, AKA Performance Interface, and Theatre Autumn Leaf.

6–15 September

*The True Story of Ida Johnson*, at the NDWT Side-Door Theatre and later (18 October–11 November) at the Adelaide Court Theatre. A Nightwood Theatre production adapted from the novel by Sharon Riis. A project of the Explorations Program of the Canada Council, with supplementary funding from the Ontario Arts Council. Kim Renders, Mary Vingoe, and Maureen White in the cast (with Lee Wildgen), directed by Cynthia Grant. Nightwood Theatre Collective and Associate Members: the four founders, plus Marie Black (who did the design with Kim Renders), Kit Goldfarb (production manager), Karen Rodd (masks), Rose Zoltek (publicity), and Christa and Erna Van Daele, who were participants in the first readings.

Mary Vingoe was the only Equity member.

1980

April

*Self-Accusation* by Peter Handke, directed and performed by Cynthia Grant and Richard Shoichet, at the Theatre Centre, co-produced by Nightwood.
May

Buddies in Bad Times and Nightwood Theatre present “Rhubarb! A Festival of New Canadian Plays” (this was Nightwood’s first involvement; “Rhubarb!” was created in 1979, and Maureen White had been a participant in its first year). “Rhubarb! is a workshop production presented to give artists a chance to explore new works. Plays will be presented at various levels of performance from staged reading to fully mounted production.” A Theatre Passe Muraille SEED Show. Nightwood’s contributions: 1. Psycho-Nuclear Breakdown by Cynthia Grant: this “sombre little piece” involved Grant seated in a rocking chair, wearing a bathrobe and performing a monologue she had written as well as reading from Nuclear Madness by Helen Caldicott. Her live reading was juxtaposed with a tape-recorded voice reading from another book, “The Denial of Death” by Ernest Becker, and a videotape, produced by Chris Clifford and Videocab, showing Grant on the verge of a nervous breakdown; 2. Gently Down the Stream by Kim Renders, performed by Renders, Grant, and Maureen White; 3. Soft Boiled by Renders, performed by Renders and White.

19–28 June

Glazed Tempera, inspired by the works of Alex Colville, presented by Nightwood at the Passe Muraille Backspace. The performers are Renders, White, and Peter Van Wart, with a taped reading by Jack Messinger; Grant is the director and the production is said to be “conceived by” the three women. Kim Renders also did the costumes. In the program they “acknowledge the influence of Mabou Mines’ Southern Exposure and the films of Marguerite Duras.” 45 minutes long.

November

Second “Rhubarb!” that year, part of the 1980/81 season at the Theatre Centre. Nightwood’s contributions: 1. The Best of Myles by Flann O’Brien, adapted by Maureen White and Mary Durkan; 2. Soft Boiled #2 by White and Renders as clowns Orangeade and Cellophane; 3. G, adapted from the novel by John Berger, directed by Renders and Grant; 4. Ten Seconds After Closing by Mary Vingoe, directed by Grant; 5. Object/Subject Nausea, a video and live performance piece by Grant.

From the “Rhubarb!” program: “Nightwood Theatre operates as a

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collective to produce original or adapted material in a style which emphasizes the visual, musical and literary elements of the presentation. Their adaptation of *The True Story of Ida Johnson*, and *Glazed Tempera*, inspired by the paintings of Alex Colville, were presented last season as well as Rhubarb (May 1980) and Handke’s *Self Accusation* (April 80).”

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**1981**

28 January–8 February

Theatre Autumn Leaf and Nightwood present in repertory (three shows daily) at the Theatre Centre: *The Audition*, a clown show directed by Dean Gilmour; *Specimens*, directed by Thom Sokoloski; and *For Rachel*, directed by Kim Renders. The latter piece had been workshopped at the Factory Theatre Lab; the performers are Shelley Thompson and Maureen White, with “dramaturgical work by Rina Fraticelli.” In its second week of performance, it is accompanied by *Epilogue*, directed by Grant, performed by Lindsay Holton and Barbara Wright.

May

*Flashbacks of Tomorrow (Memorias del Mañana)*, a collective presentation by Nightwood and Open Experience Hispanic-Canadian Theatre, performed at the Toronto Free Theatre (Berkeley Street) as part of the Toronto Theatre Festival’s Open Stage. Grant is the director and White and Renders are in the cast. Music written and performed by Compañeros. “An original theatre production, presented in a mosaic of dance, ritual, personal experience and music, based on legends, documents and the art of Latin America.”

Summer

Theatre Centre moves to 666 King Street West from its original location above a Greek disco on Danforth.

1–18 October

*The Yellow Wallpaper*, produced by Nightwood at the Theatre Centre, adapted from the story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman and with additional text by Cynthia Grant and Mary Vingoe; performed by Vingoe and
directed by Grant; music by Marsha Coffey; designed by Patsy Lang. Later adapted for radio. Kim Renders is among those thanked in the program, and Maureen White is thanked “for directorial advice.” “Funded in part by the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, and Metro Arts Council.”

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1982

1982 was the year of Nightwood’s Charter.

5–21 March

*Hooligans*, produced by Nightwood Theatre at the Theatre Centre, written by Jan Kudelka and Mary Vingoe, in collaboration with the company, from an idea by Irene Pauzer (who played Isadora), and from the diaries and writings of Isadora Duncan, Edward Gordon Craig, Sergei Esenin, Kathleen Bruce, and Robert Falcon Scott. Directed by Grant and designed by Renders. Cast: Ian A. Black, Jay Bowen, Irene Pauzer, Linda Stephen, Bruce Vavrina. Published in *New Canadian Drama* 6, edited by Rita Much (Ottawa: Borealis Press, 1993).

25–29 August

*Mass/Age*, a collective, multimedia spectacle of life in a nuclear age, performed by Jay Bowen, Kim Renders, Daniel Brooks, Allan Risdill, Gordon Masten, and Maureen White, directed by Grant, presented in a tent at Harbourfront Centre. Live music by Charis Polatos (a member of Compañeros); visual artist John Scott; choreographers Johanna Householder and Allan Risdill.

8 September

Nightwood participates in A Concert for Peace with Compañeros and others.

November

“Rhubarb!” at the Theatre Centre includes *Soft Boiled #3*. Maureen White and Kim Renders return as Cellophane and Orangeade, joined by Cheryl Cashman as Mrs. Fudge. Also, *Notes on a Tumour*, “a comic look
at one man’s attempt at coping with the phobias of our society.” Written and performed by Kim Renders and Christopher Thomas.

“Over the three-week period, 50 or 60 people are involved in short, often multi-media works” (Jon Kaplan, “Actors Make Rhubarb,” NOW, 4 November 1982).

Another notable show is American Demon, “a series of poems exploring images of women in rock music.” This work, part of a new play by Jan Kudelka, was directed by Kate Lushington and featured Nion, Maggie Huculak, Theresa Tova, and Svetlana Zylin.

Cynthia Grant was the master of ceremonies for the second week of “Rhubarb!”

The Saturday, 20 November show was followed by an “open stage” for the audience to perform.

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1983

March

Women’s Cultural Building presents a “Festival of Women Building Culture” at various venues: 8 March, the first “Five Minute Feminist Cabaret” is held at Stagger Lee’s (the Horseshoe Tavern). American Demon is produced 22–25 March, and Pol Pelletier performs Night Cows by Jovette Marchessault and My Mother’s Luck by Helen Weinzweig 21–24 April. Both done as part of Factory Theatre Lab’s “Brave New Works,” produced at Theatre Passe Muraille. On 28–29 April there is a collective performance from The Euguélionne by Louky Bersianak, which had previously had a reading by Cynthia Grant on 21 January.

26–29 May

Women’s Perspectives ’83, a month-long art exhibit sponsored by Partisan Gallery, includes “Caution: Women at Work,” a weekend of performances, all from Nightwood: 1. Four-Part Discord, an expansion of the earlier piece Gently Down the Stream, performed by Mary Durkan, Cynthia Grant, Kim Renders, and Maureen White; 2. Psycho-Nuclear Breakdown by Cynthia Grant; 3. This is For You, Anna/a spectacle of revenge, collectively written and performed by Suzanne Khuri, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Baquta Rubess, Aida Jordão, and Maureen White.
19–26 June

Nightwood presents Antigone by Sophocles, dramaturged by Patricia Keeney-Smith, directed by Cynthia Grant, with a chorus of 40 actors and musicians, at St. Paul’s Square (Avenue Road at Davenport). Cast includes Peggy Sample, Tracy Wright, and Aida Jordão. The Chorus was sung in Ancient Greek. Program note: “This production of Antigone involves a company of young people under the age of twenty-five. The backgrounds of the participants range from young people beginning professional careers in music and theatre to those for whom this has been an entirely new experience.” In the press release, Cynthia Grant is referred to as Nightwood’s artistic director.

18–28 August

Midnight Hags presents Burning Times, at the Theatre Centre, written by Ban Büta Rubess with the cast (Peggy Christopherson, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Mary Marzo, Kim Renders, Maureen White) and the director, Mary Ann Lambooy. Renders and White are identified in the program as members of Nightwood.

30 September–23 October

Nightwood presents Smoke Damage: A story of the witch hunts at St. Paul’s Square, 121 Avenue Road. Written by Ban Büta Rubess with the cast: Peggy Christopherson, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Mary Marzo, Kim Renders, and Maureen White. Rubess and Cynthia Grant were “direction consultants.” The opening night is a benefit performance for the Women’s Bookstore, which had been damaged in a recent arson attempt on the Morgentaler Clinic next door. The play was published by Playwrights Canada in 1985. A note reads: “Smoke Damage develops several themes from the successful workshop of Burning Times, written by Ban Büta Rubess and presented by Midnight Hags at the Theatre Centre, Toronto, in August 1983. Burning Times was initiated and produced by Mary Ann Lambooy. Smoke Damage was developed through a collective process. Although the main writer, Ban Büta Rubess, gave the play its final shape, the five actors contributed largely to its content.”
3–19 November


1983/84


Nightwood also produced a press release–like document with press clippings, statistics from the Fraticelli Report on the Status of Women in Theatre, and the statements: “Nightwood Theatre is the only theatre company in Toronto founded by women, and it continues to be operated by women” and “Since 1978, Nightwood Theatre remains a community-oriented, politically-concerned company, striving to create original Canadian plays.”

In a 1983 Toronto Arts Council grant application, Cynthia Grant is listed as artistic director. Nightwood had previously received $1,700 and was asking for $4,000. In the previous year, it had given 32 performances, with a total audience of 2,900 and an average of 91 per show. Its special audiences are listed as women’s groups, the literary and visual arts community, and the Spanish-speaking community.

1984

As noted above, the 1983/84 season brochure indicated that *The Kingdom of Loudascanbe* by Kim Renders and Maureen White would be performed as a Christmas show; that “Rhubarb!” would be done at the Theatre Centre in January; that *Penelope* would be presented in February; and that an event called “Women Workshop Plays” would happen sometime in 1984. (Subsequent press releases mentioned the long

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delays and postponements for Penelope, but insisted it would be done in the fall.)

January

“Rhubarb!” at the Theatre Centre: White, Vingoe, and Grant appear in Nancy Drew (Goes in Search of Her Missing Mother) by Ann-Marie MacDonald and Beverley Cooper, which became part of a late-night series at Theatre Passe Muraille in 1984, then was given a full production in 1985, with the title Clue in the Fast Lane, directed by Maureen White.

Other “Rhubarb!” participants with Nightwood ties include Mary Durkan, Peggy Sample, and Amanda Hale. Temptonga is performed by Ida Carnevali and directed by Richard Pochinko.

22 March–1 April

Cynthia Grant and Bob Nasmith appear in a production of La Musica by Marguerite Duras, subtitled “an interlude in a divorce.” Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace. No indication this is a Nightwood production.

Also in April, Cynthia Grant directs an anti-nuclear play by Brian Metcalfe called Pink Flies! intended to link Toronto with Volgograd. It runs for two performances at the George Ignatieff Theatre. The cast includes Mary Vingoe; a note in the program reads, “Director Cynthia Grant and actors Mike Hiller, Peggy Sample, Mary Vingoe and Philip Shepherd are members of Nightwood Theatre who have donated their services to the production.”

June

The Theatre Centre moves to the Poor Alex Theatre on Brunswick Street; tenants are Crow’s Theatre, Nightwood, and Theatre Smith-Gilmour.

Spring

The Anna Project (consisting of Suzanne Khuri, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Patricia Nichols, Bañuta Rubess, Tori Smith, Barb Taylor, and Maureen White) tour southern Ontario, funded by Canada Council Explorations, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Floyd S. Chalmers Fund. On the publicity brochure, Maureen White is identified as a founding member.
of Nightwood Theatre. The brochure states, “Together we combine multi-media creative backgrounds and a range of theatrical styles, with years of community organizing and outreach. We share firm roots in the collective creation process and have worked together and with other artists for the past several years to produce and perform original theatre spectacles which are both innovative and socially challenging.”

*This is For You, Anna* is nominated in 1984 for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for artistic excellence and theatrical innovation.

**Summer**

*Love and Work Enough* (“A celebration of Ontario’s pioneer women”), created collectively by its five actors — Kate Lazier, Eva Mackey, Peggy Sample, Heather D. Swain, and Cathy Wendt; directed by Mary Vingoe with Cynthia Grant; musical director Anne Lederman. Shawna Dempsey is the administrator/publicist. Tours for five weeks, then tours again in fall 1984 and into ’85 to 150 schools across Ontario, co-produced by Theatre Direct Canada. Funded by Summer Canada Works, Theatre Ontario’s Youth Theatre Training program (funded by the Ontario Arts Council), and the Department of the Secretary of State to mark the bicentennial of Ontario. Winner of a Dora Mavor Moore Award for best production in the Children’s category.

A videotape was made of one performance. It shows many common techniques of the collective creation method; for example, actors playing animals and objects, inventive staging with songs and dances, and quotations from historical documents.

The central theme was the discrepancy between the delicacy expected of women in the Old World and the resilience they had to show to survive in the New World.

Began research 14–26 May, rehearsed 28 May to 16 June, and toured 18 June to 21 July to: museums, Ontario Place, seniors’ homes, high schools, Harbourfront Centre, Poor Alex Theatre, hospital, Interval House, libraries, Queen Street mental health centre, café.

23 May 1984: Theatre Direct had already proposed a school tour and Nightwood agreed that, if TD commissioned it, “we will consider, even at this stage, building the script as a series of interlocking parts, some of which could be added or deleted depending on our audience.”

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Nightwood contributed $15,000–$20,000 and would receive royalties based on a percentage of earnings. Theatre Direct would pay salaries and production costs and book the tour.

Margaret Laurence gave the show her endorsement: “Love and Work Enough is a marvellous show. It is entertaining, educational and very moving. Historically accurate, it presents the lives of pioneer women in their own words in such a way that audiences of all ages learn a great deal about the stamina, the sufferings, the humour and above all the courage of our foremothers. For young audiences especially, this way of presenting our history is a rich and enjoyable experience. The four young women who act, dance and sing, taking a multitude of parts in the show, are exceptionally talented. To be able to create both laughter and tears—that is a sign of true artistry. I feel privileged to have seen Love and Work Enough. It’s a winner.”

5–23 September

Nightwood presents Pope Joan (“A non-historical comedy”) by Banjuta Rubess, produced and directed by Cynthia Grant at the Theatre Centre at the Poor Alex. Cast: Maureen White (as Joan), Mary Durkan, Mary Vingoe, Dean Gilmour, Andy Jones, and Charles Tomlinson. Nominated for a Chalmers award. “A non-historical investigation into the 9th century legendary Pope.” Coincides with Pope John Paul’s visit to Toronto.

A review by Dr. Linda Beamer, aired on CJRT radio, stated, “This is the kind of theatre we had a lot of in Toronto in the ’70s: imaginative, original, low-budget but high-quality entertainment. I found it fresh—in both senses of the word. It breathes vitality; it is also cheeky.”

Fall

The “Theatre Centre R&D Festival.” Nightwood contributions are: The Woman Who Slept With Men to Take the War Out of Them by Deena Metzger (adapted by Maureen White and Banjuta Rubess, invited to Playwrights Workshop in Montreal to develop further); and The Medical Show by Amanda Hale (actors are Ann-Marie MacDonald, Donna Bothen, and Maureen White, with Grant as director).

The 1984/85 season brochure mentions the success of Love and Work Enough and Pope Joan, and emphasizes that past shows have gone on to
be repeated: *Yellow Wallpaper* on CBC Radio’s Vanishing Point; *Nancy Drew* in a Theatre Passe Muraille run; and the tour of *This is For You, Anna* (referred to as a “Nightwood seed show”) to The Great Canadian Theatre Company in Ottawa. Upcoming Spring productions are: *The Woman Who Slept With Men to Take the War Out of Them, Kollwitz, Penelope,* and *Before and Beyond Testubes.*

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**1985**

**February**

*Re-Production, or Testube Tots in Baby-lon* by Amanda Hale, presented by Nightwood in Ottawa at a conference of the National Association of Women and the Law.

Also in February and March and again in May–June, *Temptonga: The Reddest Woman in the World,* written and performed by Ida Carnevale, is performed in venues around Toronto. Nightwood financially supported the services of Mary Vingoe as director.

Nightwood intended to show three plays in development on 19 May: *Kathe Kollwitz* by Dena Saxer, *Women Organizing,* and *Penelope.* Another proposal was for a play called *Moira* by Mary Vingoe. Nightwood also applied unsuccessfully for funding to do an “Immigrant Women” project and to expand on the *Re-Production* play.

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**April**

Nightwood sponsors a reading of *The Edge of the Earth is Too Near, Violette Leduc* by Jovette Marchessault at Factory Theatre’s “Brave New Works.”

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**May**

Time and Space Limited from New York (8–12 May; writer and director Linda Mussman, actors Deborah Ayer-Brown, Cludia Bruce, Semih Sirinciogly, and Ingrid Reffert) and Ladies Against Women from San Francisco (15–18 May; written by The Group — Jain Angeles, Jeff Thompson, Selma Vincent, and Gail-Anne Williams — and directed by Marcia Kimell) both present evening performances at the Theatre Centre as fundraisers for Nightwood. Time and Space Limited also does a two-week workshop.
May–June

“The Next Stage: Women Transforming the Theatre,” a two-day conference as part of the Theatre Festival of the Americas in Montreal; Grant is a panellist. Other participants include Rina Fraticelli, Kate Lushington, and Pol Pelletier; international participants include Joan Schenkar, Maria Irene Fornes, Judith Malina, and Joanne Akalaitis.

Summer

*Canadian Theatre Review 43:* special issue on women in theatre includes “Notes from the Front Line” with photos and short statements by each of Nightwood’s founding four, as well as a script for, and articles about, This is For You, Anna.

September

In 1985, Christopher Bye was working on a volunteer basis as an administrator for both Nightwood and Buddies, and Louise Kee was doing fundraising. Nightwood restructured and hired a general manager, Linda Brown. Mary Vingoe was appointed the interim artistic coordinator.

Board of directors for 1985/86: Susan G. Cole, Mary Durkan, Maureen FitzGerald, Rina Fraticelli, Rubess, Grant, Renders, and White.

3–6 October

Nightwood presents Penelope, a retelling of Homer’s Ulysses with the poetry of Margaret Atwood, adapted by Cynthia Grant, Peggy Sample, and Susan Seagrove, at the Theatre Centre. Later developed by the Company of Sirens.

October–November

“Transformations,” staged readings at the Theatre Centre: 24–25 October, War Babies by Margaret Hollingsworth, directed by Mary Vingoe; 26–27 October, Portrait of Dom by Hélène Cixous, directed by Banu Rubess; 31 October–1 November, Signs of Life by Joan Schenkar, directed by Svetlana Zylin; 2–3 November, Masterpieces by Sarah Daniels, directed by Mary Durkan.
November–December

This is For You, Anna tours England; at this point, Patricia Nichols is no longer involved. The publicity states the show is produced by The Anna Project and Nightwood Theatre.

Also in 1985:

Cynthia Grant and Aida Jordão began working on The Working People’s Picture Show, a collective creation about labour issues. It was originally produced by Nightwood, then became a production of the Company of Sirens and Ground Zero Productions.

1986

Cynthia Grant left Nightwood in 1986 to co-found the Company of Sirens. Mary Vingoe continued as artistic coordinator and Linda Brown as administrator.

14–16 January

This is For You, Anna returns to Toronto after its English tour for a run at the Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace.

10 March

Fourth annual “Five Minute Feminist Cabaret” at Lee’s Palace, presented by Nightwood and Women’s Cultural Building; Djanet Sears presents the earliest version of Afrika Solo. Attendance is over 300.

13–17 March

First annual “Groundswell Festival.” Nightwood had been seeking funding for a new developmental festival throughout 1985 and had support from the Laidlaw and Jackman Foundations. Thirteen shows presented, including To Humbert Humbert (which later became The Last Will and Testament of Lolita); The Paraskeva Principle by Francine Volker, directed by JoAnn McIntyre, performed by Volker and Annie-Lou Chester, which Nightwood later produced; and A Classical Education, written by Helen Weinzweig (playwright in residence) and directed by Maureen White. Also: A Kissing Way/Quickening, two plays adapted from their radio
versions by Judith Thompson, and Nutshells by Diana Braithwaite, directed by Ahdri Zhina. Jane One Woman is presented by Théâtre Expérimental des Femmes from Montreal.

14 May–1 June

Nightwood presents The Edge of the Earth is Too Near, Violette Leduc by Jovette Marchessault, translated by Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, directed by Cynthia Grant, at the Theatre Centre. Kim Renders stars as Violette, with John Blackwood, Martha Cronyn (as Violette’s lover Hermine), Sky Gilbert (who was nominated for a Dora Award), Joan Heney, Shirley Josephs, and Ian Wallace. Sponsored by the Gay Community Appeal.

June

“duMaurier World Stage Festival” production of This is For You, Anna.

Summer

Programming for “Groundswell” begins through in-house workshops and readings led by Rina Fraticelli and Johanna Householder. Nightwood attempts to establish a library of plays by women.

1986/87

Linda Brown is the general manager (full-time, 8 months per year). In an application to the Ontario Participation Investment in the Arts program, Banuta Rubess is listed as the president, Kim Renders as secretary, and Mary Durkan as treasurer.

Board of directors: Susan Cole, Mary Durkan, Maureen FitzGerald, Rina Fraticelli, Carlyn Moulton, Rubess, Renders, Vingoe, and White. Playwright in residence: Peggy Thompson, through the Ontario Arts Council playwright residency program.

1987

22–30 January

Nightwood presents My Boyfriend’s Back and There’s Gonna Be Laundry: A Lone Woman Show, written and performed by Sandra Shamas, at the Factory Theatre Studio Café.
22 January–1 February
Second annual “Groundswell” held at the Annex Theatre. Week One: St. Frances of Hollywood by Sally Clark, directed by Mary Vingoe; Afrika Solo, a staged reading by Djanet Sears, directed by Annie Szamosi; Swindler’s Rhapsody by Makka Kleist and Monique Mojica; Telewalk Phone Woman Man, written and directed by Jan Kudelka, including Kim Renders in the cast; and Hysterical Women, a feminist comedy improv troupe from Montreal, including Alisa Palmer. Week Two: Artists Angst: A Political Thriller by Beverley Cooper, directed by Maureen White; A Particular Class of Women by Janet Feindel, a workshop directed and dramaturged by Mary Durkan; One Bedroom with Dignity by Lillian Allen, directed by Ahdri Zhina and including Alison Sealy-Smith in the cast; Hersteria, written and performed by Janine Fuller and Shawna Dempsey; and Sex in a Box, written and performed by Kate Lushington, directed by Johanna Householder.

26 February–29 March
Nightwood, in association with Toronto Free Theatre, presents War Babies by Margaret Hollingsworth, directed by Mary Vingoe. The cast: Duncan Fraser, Bridget O’Sullivan, Don Allison, Richard Liptrot, Thomas Hauff, Nicola Lipman, Linda Goranson. Nominated for a Dora Award for Best New Play. Had also been nominated for a Governor General’s Award for Drama in 1985. From the press release: “War Babies centres around a couple in their early forties, she a playwright, he a war correspondent, as they await the birth of their first child. Slowly they are overshadowed by their fictional doubles, characters from a play Esme is writing. As Esme creates her play within a play, the distinctions dissolve between past and present, real and imagined, private and public.”

9 March
At Theatre Passe Muraille, Nightwood, with Women’s Cultural Building, presents the Fifth Annual “Five Minute Feminist Cabaret.” A Fertile Imagination by Susan Cole is first presented as a monologue. Other performers are: Laurie Bell, Susan Belyea, Diana Braithwaite, The Clichettes, Holly Cole, Bev Cooper, Evelynne Datl, Janine Fuller, Louise Garfield, Linda Griffiths, Anne Healy, Hysterical Women, Cathy Jones, Makka

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Kleist, Marla Lukofsry, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Tanya Mars, Monique Mojica, Baŋuta Rubess, and Djanet Sears.

MAY

Nightwood is still at the Poor Alex but is no longer part of the Theatre Centre.

2–21 JUNE

Nightwood and The Humbert Humbert Project (Project), in association with Theatre Passe Muraille, present *The Last Will and Testament of Lolita*. Subtitled “a vile pink comedy,” created and performed by Louise Garfield, Baŋuta Rubess, Peggy Thompson, and Maureen White, with Jim Warren as the Sandman and a film by Peter Mettler featuring Jackie Burroughs. Peggy Thompson is also playwright in residence at this time.

AUGUST

Maureen White begins work as artistic coordinator (she had recently directed *Thin Ice* by Baŋuta Rubess and Bev Cooper, on tour with Theatre Direct, and had acted in *Pope Joan* at Concordia University. Mary Vingoe had also been working as the co-artistic director of The Ship’s Company Theatre in Parrsboro, Nova Scotia). Linda Brown is still the general manager. Nightwood applies for funding to develop *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* with Ann-Marie MacDonald and Baŋuta Rubess (the play at this point is being discussed as a collective), and *The Medea Project* with Sally Clark; also considering Peggy Thompson’s *Jelvis*, Joan Schenkar’s *Fulfilling Koch’s Postulate*, and a collective called *Les Demoiselles de Picasso*. Also applies for funding to hold a workshop by Caryl Churchill.

NOVEMBER

At the Annex Theatre, third annual “Groundswell.” Week One: *Let’s Go to Your Place* by Kate Lushington and The Clichettes, directed by Maureen White; *Venius Pearls* by Colleen Wagner, directed by Mary Durkan; *Idylls*, written and performed by Wanda Buchanan, Susan Coyne, and Paula Wing; *The Eugélienne*, adapted from the novel by Louky Bersianik and performed by Cynthia Grant, Aida Jordão, Peggy Sample, and Alison

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Sealy-Smith; *How I Differ From the Norm*, written and performed by Mary Hawkins and directed by Maggie Huculak; *Ebony Voices*, a collective made up of Jo-Anne Atherley, Margaret Joseph, Alana McKnight, and Carolyn Harris, with Vivine Scarlett. Week Two: *The Paraskeva Principle* by Francine Volker, directed by JoAnn McIntyre; *The Herring Gull’s Egg*, written and directed by Mary Vingoe; *My Boyfriend’s Back and There’s Gonna be Laundry* by Sandra Shamas; *The Kingdom of LoudAsCanBe*, written and directed by Kim Renders; *Settlements* by Beverly Yhap, directed by Kathleen Flaherty.

**18–20 December**

*The Kingdom of LoudAsCanBe*, written and directed by Renders, at the Annex Theatre. Cast: Ida Carnevali, Mary Hawkins, James Kirchner, with live music by Paul Cram, and large puppets. Nightwood and Theatre Direct also take the show on a school tour.

Board of directors for 1987/88: Mary Durkan (president), Renders, White, Vingoe, Rubess, Susan Cole, Maureen FitzGerald, Rina Fraticelli, Carlyn Moulton (and Peggy Thompson listed on some documents).

**1988**

**16–31 January**

Nightwood had been intending to produce Janet Feindel’s *A Particular Class of Women*, but instead produces The Clichettes in *Up Against the Wallpaper*, written by Kate Lushington and The Clichettes (Johanna Householder, Louise Garfield, Janice Hladki), directed by Maureen White. Produced at the Factory Theatre Studio Café. Nominated for Dora Mavor Moore Awards for outstanding costume design.

Special added attraction is *Too Close to Home*, written and performed by Kim Renders. *My Boyfriend’s Back and There’s Gonna Be Laundry* is also done as a late-night show on Fridays and Saturdays.

**January**

*Thin Ice* by Beverley Cooper and Banuta Rubess, directed by Maureen White, wins the Chalmers Canadian Children’s Play Award.
7 March
Sixth Annual “Five Minute Feminist Cabaret” held at Theatre Passe Muraille. “A Laugh a Minute,” by Marusia Bociurkiw, Rites magazine (May 1988).

March
Maureen White is laid off.

31 March–23 April
Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet), “a comical Shakespearean romance” by Ann-Marie MacDonald, commissioned and presented by Nightwood, directed and dramaturged by Banuta Rubess, at the Annex Theatre. Cast includes Derek Boyes, Beverley Cooper, Diana Fajrajsl, Tanja Jacobs, and Martin Julien. Nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award, wins the 1990 Governor General’s Award for Drama, a Chalmers Canadian Play Award, and the Canadian Author’s Association Award. Remounted and toured in 1990.

September
Kate Lushington was hired in July and begins work as artistic director in September. Linda Brown is still the general manager.


1–4 and 8–11 December
Fourth annual “Groundswell” held at the Annex Theatre. Week One: World Class City, written and performed by Jan Kudelka; Copper Tin Can by Monique Giroux, directed by Djanet Sears; Black Friday by Audrey Butler, directed by Karen Woolridge; Dead Honky by Betty Quan, directed by Beverly Yhap; Memoirs of Darkness and Light, performance art written by Mia Blackwell and performed by Blackwell and Kim Renders; Miss McDoon of Doonsville (The Barrel Lady), written and performed by Itah Sadu and directed by Ahdri Zhina Mandiela. Special events include: No More Bimboes for Me (The Invisibility Factor), written by Shirley Barrie and Julie Salverson, developed using Boal’s Forum method and

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performed by Barrie and Salverson, Brenda Bazinet, Richard Campbell, Patricia Idlette, and Susan Seagrove. Also two children’s events: “Kid-splay” writing festival and a video about Native women artists called The Spirit of Turtle Island. Week Two: Godhead, written by Ann Diamond and directed by Mary Durkan; Baby Trials, written and performed by Lisa Karrer and Roberta Levine, directed by Marcia Abujamra; On Earth as it Isn’t Heaven, written and performed by Michele George; Vox Lumina, written by Paula Wing and directed by Micheline Chevrier; Just One Touch by P. Afua Marcus, directed by Ahdri Zhina Mandiela; Out for Blood by The Clichettes, directed by Jennifer Dean.

Selection Committee for “Groundswell”: Janine Fuller, Djanet Sears, Karen Woolridge, Beverly Yhap. “Groundtalk” is a feedback session for participants, including Carol Bolt, Sally Clark, Margaret Hollingsworth, Ann-Marie MacDonald, and Judith Thompson, and hosted by Susan Feldman.

1989

February

Kim Renders leaves the board.

March

Seventh annual “Five Minute Feminist Cabaret” held at Lee’s Palace in association with Women’s Cultural Building. Performers include Meryn Cadell, Sally Clark, Holly Cole, Joan McLeod, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Itah Sadu, Hysterical Women, and Girlfrenzy.

March–April

Nightwood presents The Paraskeva Principle (“A slightly red comedy celebrating the life and art of Paraskeva Clark”), written and performed by Francine Volker, directed by Jo Ann McIntyre, at the Annex Theatre. The program credits the clowning to Richard Pochinko, art to Sally Clark and Eric LaDelpha, and dramaturgy to Margaret Hollingsworth.
**4–28 May**

Nightwood presents *The Herring Gull’s Egg*, written by Mary Vingoe and directed by Maureen White, at the Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace. The cast is Donna Goodhand, David Kinsman, Kate Lynch, Simon Richards, and Alan Williams. At this time, Vingoe is still artistic co-director at The Ship’s Company, and is also teaching at York University, and chair of the Playwrights Union of Canada. *The Herring Gull’s Egg* is about a couple dealing with an unexpected pregnancy, environmental issues, and the divide between urban and rural.

**7 and 8 June**

Nancy Jackman hosts fundraising lunches for Nightwood, assisted by Martha Burns and Diane D’Aquila.

**Fall**

First issue of *Nightwords* newsletter, vol. 1 no. 1. First board retreat held 9 and 10 September.

The period 16 November 1989 to 29 April 1990 is announced as the tenth anniversary season, to include “Groundswell,” the remount of *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*, *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots*, and concluding with “FemCab.”

**16–29 November**

At the Annex Theatre, the fifth annual “Groundswell” includes *A Fertile Imagination* by Susan G. Cole, directed by Kate Lushington; and *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots* by Monique Mojica, directed by Djanet Sears. Also: *Spinster* by Patsy Ludwick, directed by Anne Anglin; *Transmitting an Alarming Message* by Susette Schacherl, directed by Maggie Huculak; *El Hadj Diakouma* by Issa Traore, a presentation by Theatre de l’Harmettan from Montreal; *Ella and Jennifer* by Afua Marcus, directed by Djanet Sears; *Recycling: a Restoration Comedy* by Jean Walker, directed by Pat Idlette; *Closed Visit* by Vivienne Laxdal, directed by Barbara Lysnes, associate artist at the Great Canadian Theatre Company in Ottawa; *The Stayfresh Special* by Alison Kelly and Deborah Williams, from the Rags to Rituals Co-op from Vancouver; *Medusa Rising* by Audrey Butler, directed by Kate Lushington; *Sun and Shadow* by Janis...
Nickleson and Sun Gui Zhen; One Morning I Realized I was Licking the Kitchen Floor by Marilyn Norry and Heather Swain; Flowers by Deborah Porter, directed by Jennie Dean.

Board of directors as of fall 1989: Phyllis Berck, Pat Idlette (replacing Susan Cole), Lesley Currie, Wendy J. Elliot, Astrid Janson, Martha R. Leary, Djanet Sears, Sophia Sperdakos. Staff: Linda Brown, Jennifer Trant, Andrea Williams. The playwright in residence is Sally Clark (her play Life Without Instruction was not produced by Nightwood).

Mission statement from the board retreat: “To provide opportunities for all women to create and explore new visions of the world, stretching the concept of what is theatrical, and to hone their skills as artists, so that more of us may see our reality reflected on this country’s stages, thus offering theatre goers the full diversity of the Canadian experience.”

The board was asked to read: The Fraticelli Report; Kate Lushington’s Fear of Feminism, an article from CanPlay (October 1988) with an update on playwright’s statistics, and “When the Performer is Black” by Rita Shelton Deverell, Canadian Theatre Review no. 47 (Summer 1988).

Fourth annual “Groundswell” is discussed in “The Editor’s Column: Alternative Visions” by Martha J. Bailey, Queen’s Quarterly 96/1 (Spring 1989): 216–219.

1990

January

“Theatrical decade reaffirmed central role of alternatives,” by Jon Kaplan, NOW, 4–10 January 1990. Both Theatre Centre and Nightwood are included in list of top ten “people, companies and events that have had a major impact on Toronto theatre during the past decade.”

Nightwood tours Goodnight Desdemona to the Great Canadian Theatre Company (Ottawa), Vancouver East Cultural Centre, and Northern Light Theatre (Edmonton), then opens at the Canadian Stage Company’s Berkeley Street Theatre on 28 March 1990 (runs 21 March to 15 April). The cast is the same as the 1988 production, except Tanja

Appendix: A Nightwood Chronology

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Jacobs is replaced by Kate Lynch. Budget for the original production was $20,000; budget for the tour is $250,000.

**Winter**

Retitled *Night Talk* newsletter, vol. 1 no. 2., includes a mid-February report from the “Desdemona Tour” by Baquta Rubess, a column by Lushington, and a piece about Muriel Miguel. Also announces that general manager Linda Brown is being replaced by Pegi McGillivray.

**9 February–4 March**

*Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots* by Monique Mojica, a co-production with Nightwood and Passe Muraille, directed by Muriel Miguel, at the Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace. Performed by Mojica and Alejandra Nunez, with music by Nunez. A program note states, “*Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots* highlights a commitment to anti-racism which will be reflected throughout the next decade.” The play had been workshopped in May 1989 as a co-production of Nightwood and Native Earth Performing Arts. It was read in June at the “Weesageechak Festival of New Work by Native Playwrights,” and then a workshop production was seen at “Groundswell” in November 1989, directed by Djanet Sears.

**12 March**


**22 March**

“The Goodnight Gala,” a party to celebrate Nightwood’s anniversary and to raise funds for the “Desdemona Tour.”

**Fall**

*Night Talk* newsletter, vol. 2 no. 1, announces Nightwood has moved to 317 Adelaide Street West as of October 15. Diana Braithwaite is announced as the playwright in residence for 1990/91.

Pegi McGillivray has already moved on and been replaced by business manager Kate Tucker. Other staff are associate artistic director

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Lynda Hill and administrator Jennifer Trant, as well as Victoria Dawe, Elaine Lumley, and Kim Brown.

Board of directors for 1990/91: Kay Armatage, Phyllis Berck, Wendy J. Elliott, Patricia Idlette, Astrid Janson, Marion MacKenzie, Shirley Netten, Judith Ramirez, Djanet Sears, Jo Anne Sommers, Sophia Sper-dakos. Described in the newsletter as “half community members and half artist members.”

15–25 November
“Blood and Power,” the sixth annual “Groundswell,” held at the Annex Theatre, begins with a fundraising event on 11 November called “Write Off,” where playwrights get five hours to create a play. Writers are Banúta Rubess, Don Hannah, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Daniel MacIvor, Sky Gilbert, Audrey Butler, and Diana Braithwaite. Also, for the first time, “Groundswell” is organized around a core troupe of actors.

Week One: Martha and Elvira by Diana Braithwaite, featuring Patricia Idlette and Alison Sealy-Smith; Flowers by Deborah Porter, directed by Lynda Hill (second time at “Groundswell”); Mermaid in Love by Shawna Dempsey; Driving Dad by Jane Wilson, directed by Kathleen Flaherty; A Game of Inches by Linda Griffiths, directed by Sandi Balcovske; Tea Lady by Cecile Belec, directed by Susan Miner; Woman, performed by The Toronto Women’s Auxiliary; a late-night performance called At Odds (Or The Dead Sea Squirrels) by Siobhan McCormick, Iris Turcott, Ellen-Ray Hennessey, Melissa Graham, and Deborah Porter. Week Two: Exhibiting Disgusting Material by The Woomers Group, directed by Sally Han; Chronicle of a Free Fall by Claude Moise and Nothing But the Truth by Jean Morisset, both presented by Theatre de l’Harmattan; Hot and Soft by Muriel Miguel; dark diaspora… in DUB by ahdri zhina mandiela; Premature Mother by Deborah Kimmet, directed by Annie Kidder; Martha and Mary by Vivian Payne; and a late-night performance by Empress Productions (Diane Flacks, Victoria Ward, Wendy White) called Slow Thunder. There are also one-time play readings of: Body Blows by Beverly Yhap, Flight Before Xmas by Victoria Dawe, Eleanor Marx by Robin Beltisky Endres, and An untitled work by Colleen Wagner.

The Play Group is Martha Burns, Jennie Dean, Lynda Hill, Djanet Sears, Pat Idlette, Kate Lushington, and Astrid Janson.
**1991**

**30 JANUARY–24 FEBRUARY**

Nightwood presents *A Fertile Imagination* by Susan G. Cole, directed by Kate Lushington, at the Poor Alex. Cast: Kate Lynch, Robin Craig, Patricia Idlette. Associate artist and dramaturge is Alisa Palmer and the production manager is Leslie Lester. Nominated for two Dora Awards. (Remounted at Theatre Passe Muraille in January–February 1992, directed by Layne Coleman, and with Yanna McIntosh replacing Idlette.)

**11 MARCH**

Ninth annual “Five Minute Feminist Cabaret” at The Great Hall (1087 Queen Street West), hosted by Susan G. Cole and Lorraine Segato. Expected to raise $2,000–$4,000.

**18 APRIL**

Actor Sandra Shamas and storyteller Itah Sadu give a special benefit performance in support of Nightwood and Friends of the Shopping Bag Ladies, a social services agency that helps transient women. Held at Young People’s Theatre; tickets are $65 and $100, including a gala reception. Earns about $7,000 for each organization.

**MAY**

The Second International Women Playwright’s Conference, “Voices of Authority,” is held at Glendon College, York University, in Toronto.

**SUMMER**

*Night Talk*, vol. 2 no. 3 (Summer 1991), includes an article about *dark diaspora... in DUB*. Sister Vision Press will be publishing it “along with *black/stage/women*, an anthology of scripts by Black women playwrights which ahdri zhina is currently producing as a series of workshops and staged readings at Theatre Passe Muraille during the Company of Sirens’ Women and Live Words Festival.” “A Word, or two, from the Artistic Director” describes the great success of *A Fertile Imagination*, the “Nightworks” in-house workshop series on work by Diana Braithwaite,
ahdri zhina mandiela, and Monique Mojica, and the Sister Reach project, with associate artist Pauline Peters and resource and outreach coordinator Annette Clough. “Springwrights” is an ongoing development group for playwrights.

28 JUNE–3 JULY

Nightwood Theatre presents the b current production of dark diaspora... in DUB by ahdri zhina mandiela, a “Fringe Festival” show at the Poor Alex. Co-directed by mandiela and Djanet Sears; the cast is Deborah Castello, Vernita de Lis Leece, Charmaine Headley, mandiela, Junia Mason, Kim Roberts, and Vivine Scarlett. The play was developed at the November 1990 “Groundswell” and at the Company of Sirens’ “Women and Live Words Festival” in May ’91, and by b current. In March of 1992, dark diaspora... in DUB ran at Beaver Hall Studio Gallery, directed by ahdri zhina mandiela and Djanet Sears.

24 OCTOBER–3 NOVEMBER

“Hot Flashes,” the seventh annual “Groundswell,” held at the Tarragon Extra Space. The “Write Off” fundraising event is held again 25 November at Passe Muraille. “Black Women on Site,” a meeting of Black women with an interest in theatre, held 2 November as part of “Groundswell.” Week One: The Particulars of Flora and Rosie by Stiletto Company, performed by Catherine Hayos and Rena Polley; Nancy Chew Enters the Dragon by Betty Quan; Bum Wrap by Toronto Women’s Auxiliary; Sister Sister ME by Lisa Walter; The A-List by Marcy Rogers; Ain’t That a Shame by Vernita Leece; Blatantly Sexual by Bridget McFarthing (had a full production 14–31 October 1993 at Buddies in Bad Times, directed by Alisa Palmer, starring Diane Flacks and Ellen-Ray Hennessy, credited to McFarthing and also Kristyn Dunnion); Mavis Rising by Pauline Peters (whose Dryland was produced by Nightwood in 1993). Week Two: The Sand by Laurie Fyffe, directed by Beverley Cooper; Fear of Lying by Paulette Phillips; Third Floor Women’s Where, written and performed by Heather Lord and Junia Mason, directed by Djanet Sears; What Goes Around by Deborah Castello, directed by ahdri zhina mandiela; Albeit Aboriginal by Marie Annharte Baker; Man on the Moon, Woman on the Pill, written and performed by Christine Taylor, directed by Janice Spence;
Love & Other Strange Things, songs by Lillian Allen performed by Djanet Sears and band.

The “Groundswell” selection committee is Jo Anne Atherley, Carol Bolt, Audrey Butler, Christine Plunkett, and Patricia Idlette.

2 November

The publication of Monique Mojica’s Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots by Women’s Press is launched as part of “Groundswell.”

Fall

Night Talk vol. 3 no. 1 (Fall 1991) announces that four works by playwright in residence Diana Braithwaite will be produced in the new year, in January and February. Also announces that Monique Mojica is the new playwright in residence and that she will be working on A Savage Equilibrium. Lynda Hill announces that she will be leaving her position as associate director as of 13 December. Pauline Peters and Annette Clough’s positions have also ended.

Board of directors: Joanne Dunbar, Astrid Janson, Shirley Netten, Teresa Przybylski, Judith Ramirez, Djanet Sears, Carol Bolt, Sally Han, Clare Barclay, Rita Deverell Staff: Kate Lushington, Kate Tucker, Jennifer Trant.

1992

January/February

At the Poor Alex, Nightwood Theatre presents Diana Braithwaite’s “The Wonder Quartet”: 1. The Wonder of Man: A Black Woman’s Trip Through the Galaxy, 21 January–9 February, written and composed by Braithwaite, directed by Djanet Sears (with assistant Diane Roberts, and Alisa Palmer as movement facilitator), with Melissa Adamson, Lili Francks, Rosemary Galloway, Taborah Johnson, Dawn Roach, Alison Sealy-Smith, and Jean Small. The Wonder of Man evolved from Diana Braithwaite’s 1986 “Groundswell” work, Nutshells, was developed through a 1990/91 playwright’s residency at Nightwood, workshoped in extract as part of “blackstage/women” during the Company of Sirens’ “Women and Live Words Festival” in May 1991, and further developed in workshops.
through a Canada Council Project Grant and donations from Levi-Strauss Canada.

2. Martha and Elvira, 11–16 February, directed by Alison Sealy-Smith with Taborah Johnson and Lili Francks. It grew out of a 1984 script to commemorate two hundred years of Black history in Ontario, toured with Pelican Players, and was then done at “Groundswell.” Won first prize at the “Festival of African Women in the Arts” in Chicago in 1990.

3. Do Not Adjust Your Sets, 11–16 February, directed by ahdri zhina mandiela, with Dawn Roach, Jean Small, Luther Hansraj, and Michael Malcolm. This play came out of the Theatre Centre’s Research & Development series.

4. Time to Forget, directed by Braithwaite, in a late-night reading of a play originated at the “Write Off!” fundraiser, about a family Christmas.

The Wonder of Man, Martha and Elvira, and Do Not Adjust Your Set were held over in repertory for two more weeks, 18 February to 1 March.

A Fertile Imagination by Susan G. Cole, remounted at Theatre Passe Muraille, directed by Layne Coleman, and with Yanna McIntosh replacing Idlette.

9 March
Tenth annual “Five Minute Feminist Cabaret” at the Bathurst Street Theatre: “A Celebration of Women Creating Culture — Five Hundred Years of Resistance.” The artistic selection committee was Lillian Allen, Maxine Bailey, Ruth Dworin, Sally Han, Lee Pui Ming, and Kate Lushington.

October
Night Talk newsletter vol. 4 no. 1 (Fall 1992) introduces Diane Roberts as the new associate artistic director. Nightwood had taken a hiatus from May to September and rented out its office space to Fresh Elements, a summer arts job opportunity program for Black and Native youth designed by Lillian Allen, Itah Sadu, and Marrie Mumford. The general manager is now Heather Young.

Appendix: A Nightwood Chronology
Board of directors: Joanne Abbensatts, Clare Barclay, Carol Bolt, Rita Deverell, Sally Han, Teresa Przybylski, Djanet Sears, Elizabeth Shepherd

**22 October–1 November**

Tarragon Theatre, “Making Waves,” eighth annual “Groundswell.” Artistic director of the festival was Diane Roberts, with committee members Monique Mojica, Alison Sealy-Smith, Susan Hogan, Dawn Obokata, Kate Lushington, and Carol Bolt. Week One: *Supreme Effect* by Kim McNeilly; *Child of the Saver* by Kim Kuhteubl, co-directed by Alison Sealy-Smith and Diane Roberts; *Clean* by Karen Kemlo, directed by Diane Roberts; *A Savage Equilibrium* by Monique Mojica, Fernando Hernandez Perez, and Jani Lauzon, directed by Floyd Favel; *Bantering the Unanswerable* by Kate Barker, directed by Lynda Hill; *Demeter and the Bird’s Song* by Gail Nyoka, directed by Djanet Sears; *Emily Stowe* by Florence Gibson, directed by Elizabeth Shepherd (cast included Joyce Campion). Week Two: *Dryland: In My Village*, written and performed by Pauline Peters, directed by Diane Roberts; *Charming and Rose: True Love* by Kelley Jo Burke, directed by Kate Lushington; *Girls in the 'Hood* by young women from Metro Housing (M.T.H.A.) and Catherine Glen, directed by Diane Roberts; *Coming from the Womb* by The Red Sister/Black Sister Collective, directed by Emerita Emerencia; *Ordinary Desires* by Lisa Porter; *Pen Pals* by Lorre Jensen, directed by Micheline Chevrier. Play readings were done of: *Age of Iron* by Marie Humber (B.C.), *Heartless Disappearance into Labrador Seas* by Lois Brown (Newfoundland), *Looking for Ms. Good Dyke* by Joyce Pate (Baltimore, U.S.A.)

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**1993**

**Winter**

*Night Talk* vol. 4 no. 2 announces that *Dryland*, a story cycle by Pauline Peters that began at “Groundswell” in 1992, will inaugurate the newly renovated Nightwood Studio space. It is described as a “showing”; showings “contain all the elements of a full production: design, lights, music; they are conceived to allow the artists to continue the evolution of their work with the audience as an integral part of the process. They form
the ‘missing link’ between a Groundswell workshop or staged reading, and a show in a larger theatre. Budgets go to artists and materials, not rent and marketing. Risk and experimentation are encouraged; prices are kept low.” Included a “FemCab” ticket order form, announcement of Theatre Resource Centre events (because Dryland co-occurred with the fourth annual Small Theatre Trade Forum, a Small Theatre Party was held after the 13 February preview performance along with the Theatre Resource Centre, also located at 317 Adelaide Street West), and an audience survey.

**February–March**


**15 March**

Young People’s Theatre, eleventh annual “Feminist Cabaret.” Diane Roberts is the artistic director and Alisa Palmer the assistant director of “FemCab.” The selection committee is Maxine Bailey, Ruth Dworin, Gloria May Eshkibok, Nupur Gogia, Sheila James, Lezlie Lee Kam, ah-dri zhina mandiela, Monique Mojica, Dawn Obokata, Diane Roberts, and Elizabeth Shepherd. Hosted by Dawn Roach and Cheryl Francis, with thirty-three acts. Raised $3,500.

**Spring**

*Night Talk* vol. 4 no. 3 announces upcoming *Untitled: A Work in Progress* by Monique Mojica, Kate Lushington, and Djanet Sears, which “investigates the contradictions of race, culture and friendship.... Formerly titled The Colour Collective, the group has since dreamed up many titles: Storm Warning in Effect, Cooking Up a Storm, Seven Onion Soup, Bloodlines and Lifelines, Treacherous Remedies for Amnesia, and This Ain’t the June Callwood Show. Fragments were performed at FemCab, and now the creators are joined by animators Michele George, Diane Roberts and Bağuta Rubess, and designer Teresa Przybylski.
Cheryl Francis is production stage manager.” Also announces *Love and Other Strange Things* by Lillian Allen, a musical revue to be performed by Djanet Sears at Young People’s Theatre 13 and 14 June, and also *Calypso and Coup* by M. NourbeSe Philip, in a co-production with b current at the Nightwood Studio 26 and 27 June (this did not take place, although the play was workshoped and produced in Toronto by Cahoots Theatre in 1996 and 1999).

The newsletter came with a fundraising letter, and announced other fundraising plans for a garage sale, brunch, and bingo. Also called for submissions to “Groundswell.”

**14–16 May**

At the Nightwood Studio, *Untitled: A Work in Progress*, a workshop exploration of issues of race and friendship with Kate Lushington, Djanet Sears, and Monique Mojica. Animators: Michele George, Muriel Miguel, Diane Roberts, and Bahtu Rubess; facilitator: Clarissa Chandler. Set designed by Teresa Przybylski.

**13 and 14 June**

*Love and Other Strange Things* by Lillian Allen, presented as a workshop by Nightwood at Young People’s Theatre. Performed by Taborah Johnson, Djanet Sears, and Nambitha Mpumiwana.

**July**

Press release announces Kate Lushington will leave her position as artistic director as of 1 December. As Heather Young did not renew her contract as general manager, the board would begin a search for a new team to take over as of 1 January 1994. Diane Roberts continues as associate artistic director. Kate Tucker returns as the financial manager and Vanessa Gold Schiff starts as an administrative intern.

The ad specifically says, “Team proposals preferred… Visionary producing team sought… demonstrate artistic vision, producing and general management experience… innovative theatre embraces diverse cultural perspectives.”
**Fall**

*Night Talk* vol. 3 no. 1: “For the first time in eight years Nightwood opens its season with a mainstage production of a finished script, while regular season’s opener the Groundswell Festival of New Works is moved to a new format and new time slot.” Announces *Charming and Rose: True Love* as Lushington’s last show as director, and includes a statement from Kelley Jo Burke. Last full show directed by Lushington had been *A Fertile Imagination* in 1991, and after leaving Nightwood she would direct *A Fertile Imagination* again at the Grand Theatre in London, Ontario.

Also gives information about the search process, and Lushington mentions Nightwood’s intention to find a new home.

**9–30 October**

*Charming and Rose: True Love* by Kelley Jo Burke, directed by Kate Lushington, at the Theatre Centre. The cast is Kristina Nicoll, Rick Roberts, and Djanet Sears. Subtitled “A Comedy with Bite” and also “a wolf morality tale.” Set and costumes by Astrid Janson, with film footage assembled by Jane Thompson. Nominated for a Chalmers Award.

On 22 October, a “Revisionist Fairy Tale Ball” fundraising party is held after the performance.

**November**

Interviews for hiring process take place. Martha R. Leary is chair of the search committee. Applicants are asked to answer the questions, “How would you allocate the resources available in order to realize your vision and that of Nightwood Theatre? What is your artistic vision of Nightwood theatre? How would you define Nightwood Theatre’s community? How would you go about expanding the community?”

**1994**

**March**

The new artistic team is announced: Leslie Lester is producer, and Diane Roberts and Alisa Palmer are co-artistic directors.
29 March–3 April

At the Poor Alex Theatre, ninth annual “Groundswell” — “of works in progress by women.” Nine plays presented: Mango Chutney by Dilara Ally, directed by Diane Roberts; Difference of Latitude by Lisa Walter, directed by Alisa Palmer, featuring Ann-Marie MacDonald and Stephanie Samuels; Curves Off the Gender Track by Steph Kelemen, directed by Alisa Palmer, performed by Caroline Gillis; Cause Unknown by Toni Ellwand, directed by Sarah Stanley; Forgetting to Speak Softly, written and performed by Tanis MacDonald, directed by Marion de Vries; Thru Her Eyes by Anagel Saunders, directed by ahdri zhina mandiela (listed as co-creators); Death and Renovation by Cathy Lenihan, directed by Diane Roberts; Black Curse by Caroline Outten, directed by Fiona Hinds; Mary Medusa, co-created by Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan (written by Millan). Also Growing-Up Days, a storytelling event with Lillian Allen.

New process started with a three-day in-house workshop the previous fall.

The program included an audience feedback sheet.

August

Die in Debt presents, in association with Nightwood Theatre, Oedipus by Ned Dickens, derived from Seneca, directed by Sarah Stanley. Under the Gardiner Expressway between Strachan Avenue and Garrison Road at the entrance to Old Fort York. Sarah Stanley is both the co-artistic director of Die in Debt and a member of Nightwood’s Artistic Advisory.

Fall

Nighttalk newsletter in new, one-page format with an introductory message from Diane Roberts, Alisa Palmer, and Leslie Lester: “We’re enthusiastic to take up the challenge of maintaining Nightwood’s dual role as a leading producer of feminist art and as an important resource for women artists. This year marks Nightwood’s 15th anniversary!” The season is announced as Wearing the Bone (November/December ’94), “Groundswell” (March ’95), and The Coloured Girls Project (May ’95). Also contains a report from Sarah Stanley on Oedipus.

Djanet Sears is playwright in residence for the 1994/95 season. Kate Tucker is still financial manager.
Board of directors: Joanne Abbensetts, Clare Barclay, Florence Gibson, Catherine Glen, Bev John, Ann-Marie MacDonald, ahdri zhina mandiela, Amanda Mills, and Elizabeth Shepherd, with Shara Stone and Linda Brown as advisors. The Artistic Advisory is formed to select “Groundswell” scripts and plan events: Dilara Ally, Sarah Stanley, Dawn Obokata, Jani Lauzon, Nadia Ross, Marium Carvell, and ahdri zhina mandiela. They are not a subcommittee of the board, but assist in the selection of scripts for “Groundswell” as well as community outreach and programming.

October
Listing for Nightwood in NOW (6 October 1994) describes it: “Nightwood Theatre creates alternative visions of the world from diverse cultural perspectives by producing, developing and promoting works by women artists. Over the past 15 years, its projects have included productions, script development, collaborations and the annual Groundswell Festival of new works by women.”

7 November
“Debutant Gala,” a dance fundraiser, at the El Convento Rico Club.

15 November–4 December
The first show of the new season: Wearing the Bone, subtitled “A revolution in paradise,” written and directed by Alisa Palmer, presented by Nightwood at the Theatre Centre West. Cast: Anne Anglin, Susan Coyne, and Sandra Oh, and featuring La Orquestra de la Playa with musical director Allen Cole and vocals by Luis Mario Ochoa. Nominated for Dora Awards for lighting and sound design. “Inspired by the music of renowned Cuban composer, Ernesto Lecuona and the sonnets of celebrated contemporary poet Edna St. Vincent Millay.” Dramaturgy by Diane Roberts, produced by Leslie Lester. Deborah Lambie is the assistant director.

9–11 December
Workshops and in-house readings in preparation for “Groundswell.”

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17 December

Nightwood and Exploded Satellite Productions host “An Evening With JoAnne Akalaitis” in the Nightwood Studio.

1995

January

Fundraising brochure mail-out.

Nighttalk (January 1995) introduces Soraya Peerbaye as the new administrative assistant, and mentions that Diane Roberts has just returned from directing a show at Vancouver’s “Women in View Festival” and that Leslie Lester has also been producing a Factory Theatre/VideoCabaret co-production. Contains a piece by Kim Renders about Nightwood’s origins.

Board of directors: Joanne Abbensetts, Clare Barclay, Florence Gibson, Catherine Glen, Bev John, Ann-Marie MacDonald, adhrí zhina mandiela, Amanda Mills, Elizabeth Shepherd, and addition of Anita Lee. Djanet Sears is the playwright in residence.

13 February

Makin’ Whoopi, an evening of comedy at the Factory Studio Theatre, a fundraising event organized by Marium Carvell.

24 March–2 April

Tenth Annual “Groundswell Festival” held at Theatre Centre West.

Week One: Growing Up Suite by Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan; Dinah Queen of the Blues by Marium Carvell, directed by Diane Roberts, cast is Dwight Bacquie, David Collins, Michelyn Emelle, Richard Greenblatt, Jackie Richardson, and Alison Sealy-Smith; big face by Marion de Vries, directed by Alisa Palmer and performed by Tanja Jacobs; Glass Castles by Lindsay Price, directed by Alisa Palmer; The Yoko Ono Project by Jean Yoon, directed by Sarah Stanley (went on to be workshopped at the Banff Playwrights Colony in 1995; in January ’96 it received a two-week multimedia workshop and one-night “concert reading” at “Under the Umbrella”; it was produced at Theatre Passe Muraille in January 2000, directed by Jean Yoon and Marion de Vries); Rainmaker on a Train

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by Pauline Peters and Taylor Jane Green. Special event: Late Night The Word’s Out, poetry performance hosted by Lillian Allen.

Week Two: Controlling Interest, created and directed by Paulette Phillips (produced at Theatre Passe Muraille in October 1995); The Sea Woman/The Swimmer by Sandra Laronde; The Dissident by Canyon Sam, a performance artist from San Francisco; Green is the Colour of Spring by Jay Pitter, directed by ahdri zhina mandiela and featuring the a capella group The Bush Honeys; Dogs, created and performed by Trisha Lamie and Kim Renders; Mango Chutney by Dilara Ally, directed by Diane Roberts. Special event: Late Night Cunning Linguists, readings by lesbian writers, hosted by Sarah Stanley.

Program contained a warning: “Pieces may contain strong language and be considered offensive by some.”

29 March

Tenth anniversary “Groundswell” panel presentation, hosted by Diane Roberts and Alisa Palmer: discussion on the topic “Art in Your Face: what is women’s theatre development and what should it be?” The moderator is Sally Han and panellists are Diana Leblanc, Sandra Laronde, ahdri zhina mandiela, Banuta Rubess, Judith Thompson, and Jean Yoon; Alison Sealy-Smith and Kim Renders also participate.


2–19 May

Nightwood Studio, The Coloured Girls Project, a workshop referred to as part one of “An Explosion Project,” based on Ntozake Shange’s for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf. Written and directed by Diane Roberts. Participants: Carol Anderson, Michelle Martin, Shakura Saida, Alison Sealy-Smith, and Jane Spidell.

June

Nighttalk newsletter (June 1995) contains a report on The Coloured Girls Project. Catherine Glen is no longer on the board, and Amanda Mills has moved to the position of “advisor.”
Fall

Nighttalk newsletter (Fall 1995) contains announcement that Soraya Peerbaye has been promoted from administrative assistant to associate artist and “Groundswell” coordinator. Playwright in residence is Kim Renders.

Board of directors: Joanne Abbensetts, Clare Barclay, Bev John, Anita Lee, Ann-Marie MacDonald, and Elizabeth Shepherd, with Amanda Mills as advisor. Artistic Advisory: Alex Bulmer, Marium Carvell, Jani Lauzon, ahdri zhina mandiela, Dawn Obokata, Pauline Peters, Sarah Stanley, Jean Yoon.

26 October


29 October

With Volcano, Nightwood hosts “short stuff”: late-night soirees of new readings and music at the Nightwood Studio.

November

First stage of “Groundswell” workshops. In the Fall 1995 Nighttalk, Marium Carvell writes: “We had submissions from every province, as well as from the United States. The name of Nightwood has certainly spread.”

November 1995 to March 1996


A. The Moving Self with Junia Mason and Charmaine Headley, 11 and 12 November 1995
B. Storytelling with Muriel Miguel, 18 and 19 November 1995 (from New York)
C. Jingle-Dress Dancing with Karen Pheasant, 23 November 1995
D. Physicalizing Text with Margo Kane, 25 and 26 November 1995
E. Indian Classical Dance with Menaka Thakkar, 2 and 3 December 1995
F. Physical Voice with Tannis Kowalchuk and Karin Randoja, 14–17 February 1996 (from Primus Theatre in Winnipeg)
G. Corporeal Mime with Denise Boulanger and Francine Alepin, 29–31 March 1996 (from Montreal)

1996
Winter
Nighttalk newsletter (Winter 1996) announces that Jay Pitter will be returning as associate producer. Also, Diane Roberts announces that she is leaving her position as artistic co-director. Over the holidays, Alisa Palmer and Soraya Peerbay are part of a group of Canadians, organized by Judith Rudakoff, who visit Grupo Teatro Escambray in Cuba.

Board of directors: Anita Lee, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Sierra Backle, Dawn Obokata.

29 February–17 March
Wild Pig, in association with Nightwood Theatre, presents big face by Marion de Vries at the Factory Studio Theatre. The play originated when Marion de Vries was a member of SpringWrights, and was workshopped at the 1995 “Groundswell.” DeVries and Alisa Palmer (as dramaturge) went to the Banff Playwrights Colony in June 1995.

8–30 March
24 March
After a two-year hiatus, the fourteenth annual “Five Minute Feminist Cabaret” returns. Brigantine Room at Harbourfront. Produced by Dina Graser, directed by Alisa Palmer, and curated by Graser, Palmer, Leslie Lester, Soraya Peerbay, and Jay Pitter. Hosted by Marium Carvell and Elvira Kurt. Features fifteen performers, all of whom have appeared in previous “FemCabs.”

Spring
Nighttalk newsletter (Spring 1996) contains reports on “FemCab.”

Board of directors: Anita Lee, Sierra Bacquie, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Clare Barclay, Dawn Carter, Joy Lachica, Dawn Obokata.

19–21 April
My Left Breast, written and performed by Susan Miller, presented at Buddies in Bad Times as a benefit fundraiser for The Alliance of Breast Cancer Survivors, in association with Nightwood and Buddies.

8–12 May
Eleventh “Groundswell” at the Factory Studio Café. Fed by Fairies by Sabina Fella, directed by Alisa Palmer; Moist Again/Fragments for a History of..., created and directed by Trisha Lamie; The Gypsy Texts, created and performed by Tannis Kowalchuk, directed by Alisa Palmer; The Madwoman and the Fool: A Harlem Duet, written and directed by Djanet Sears; House of Sacred Cows by Padma Viswanathan (from Edmonton), directed by Soraya Peerbay and Alisa Palmer; Visit, written and directed by Liz Rucker, with Alisa Palmer and Theatre Fugue. Special event: Cunning Linguists, curated by Alisa Palmer and Sarah Stanley.

Other projects that were supported by the first phase of “Groundswell,” but did not receive public performances: Life After Death by Bev Cooper, Angelique by Lorena Gale, Raining Tin by M.J. Kang, Tales of the Blond Assassin by Kate Lynch, Yo Canada! by Alicia Payne, Looking for Boysland by Christina Starr, She Speaks Her Own by the Wimmin of de Poonani Posse.
FALL

Mailing/announcement of 1996/97 season. The first stage of “Ground-swell” is going on. *Harlem Duet: The Madwoman and the Fool* by Djanet Sears will be produced in 1997. Volcano and Nightwood continue to present “short stuff” events on the last Sunday of every month.

Board of directors for 1996/97: Clare Barclay, Shirley Barrie, Sierra Bacquie, Dawn Carter, Ann-Marie MacDonald, and Dawn Obokata, with advisors Amanda Mills and Elizabeth Shepherd. Artistic Advisory: Alex Bulmer, Marium Carvell, Jani Lauzon, ahdri zhina mandiela, Dawn Obokata, Sheysali Saujam, Sarah Stanley. Alisa Palmer is now the sole artistic director. Playwright in residence is Alanis King-Odjig, the former artistic director of Debajehmujig Theatre on Manitoulin Island.

24 October

“Fall Fiesta” fundraiser at El Convento Rico.

26 October—10 November

At the Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace, Sugar ‘n’ Spice, in association with Nightwood, presents *Afrocentric: A Love Story* by David Odhiambo, directed by Maxine Bailey, with Conrad Coates and Sharon Lewis.

29 November—8 December


1997

4—11 March

Creativity Cave, in association with Nightwood, presents *Green is the Colour of Spring* by Jay Pitter.

7 March

“FemCab” held at the Brigantine Room, Harbourfront Centre. Hosts
are Taborah Johnson and Diane Flacks. Sarah Stanley is featured, as she has recently been appointed the new artistic director of Buddies in Bad Times, to start in July. Others appearing include Barbara Hall, the Mayor of Toronto; the opera singer Measha Gosman; Judy Rebick; Djanet Sears; Sandra Shamas; and Deanne Taylor. Sold-out audience of four hundred.

Spring

Nightwood Theatre Newsletter (Spring 1997) makes reference to recent funding cuts and points out that the recent “FemCab” “was directly allied with the International Women’s Day Committee,” and had “a more overtly political line-up than in previous shows.” It also includes “Excerpts from Notes of a Coloured Girl: 32 Short Reasons Why I Write for the Theatre,” by Djanet Sears, the full text of which appeared in the Harlem Duet program. Two honorary board members have been named: Rina Fraticelli and Patricia Rozema.

20 April–18 May

Nightwood presents Harlem Duet, written and directed by Djanet Sears, at the Tarragon Extra Space. Cast: Barbara Barnes-Hopkins, Jeff Jones, Dawn Roach, Alison Sealy-Smith, and Nigel Shawn Williams. There is also a duo providing live musical accompaniment. The assistant director is Maxine Bailey, dramaturgy is by Kate Lushington and Diane Roberts, and ahdri zhina mandiela is listed as a resource artist. Harlem Duet won four Dora Mavor Moore Awards, for best production, outstanding new play, director and female performance for Alison Sealy-Smith, and was remounted at the Canadian Stage Company’s Berkeley Street stage 27 October–29 November 1997. Winner of the Governor General’s Award. It had been workshoped at the “New York Shakespeare Festival,” where it received a public reading at the Joseph Papp Public Theatre.

28 May–1 June

“Groundswell” is held at the Nightwood Studio and includes Songs of Want by Randi Helmers; Hijab by associate artist Soraya Peerbay; Twenty-One by Sandy Senko; Smudge by Alex Bulmer; The Inquisitor’s Daughter

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by Alisa Palmer; Random Acts by Diane Flacks; and In the Midst of the Extraordinary by Jani Lauzon.

FALL

Nightwood Theatre Newsletter (Fall 1997): Alisa Palmer writes, “When I first arrived at Nightwood we were barely able to put up one production in a hundred-seat theatre, with no extra personpower to even consider FemCab. Now, three years later, Nightwood is working in co-production with two of Canada’s most significant theatre companies, representing the largest and most diverse audiences Nightwood has yet to access.”

Soraya Peerbaye announces the plays being worked on for “Groundswell”: Odawa Kwek by Alanis King-Odjig; Dark Room by Beth Herst; a cup of tears by Sheila James; Peter Panic by Ruthe Whiston; Apartheid by Abla Farhoud, translated by Shelly Tepperman; The Aria Project by Sandra Laronde; IKI:Etudes with Dawn Obokata, Joy Kogawa, and Denyse Fujiwara; untitled by Karin Randoja; Fish Eye by Ann Holloway; Fed by Fairies by Sabina Fella, with music by John Millard; Hee Hee by M.J. Kang, with music by Lee Pui Ming; The Skriker by Caryl Churchill, a development project with Clare Coulter.

27 October–29 November

Harlem Duet remounted at The Canadian Stage Company.

27 November–14 December

Random Acts, written and performed by Diane Flacks, presented by Nightwood, Mything Productions, and Buddies in Bad Times, at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. Directed by Alisa Palmer, who is also credited with script collaboration.


APPENDIX: A NIGHTWOOD CHRONOLOGY
1998

6 March

The fourteenth annual “Five Minute Feminist Cabaret,” hosted by Sandra Oh and Sandra Shamas, features Alison Sealy-Smith and Sook-Yin Lee. It is held in the Brigantine Room at Harbourfront.

Spring

Nightwood Theatre Newsletter (Spring 1998) is sent with a fundraising brochure asking for donations. Includes a report on “FemCab” and a call for “Groundswell” submissions by June 30, as well as detailed descriptions of the “Groundswell” shows being presented in May.

25–27 April

“Women in Shorts,” a mini-festival of Canadian women actors. At the Brigatine Room at Harbourfront, as part of the “duMaurier World Stage Festival.” A showcase of excerpts from Jackie Burroughs, Allegra Fulton, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Sheila McCarthy, Karen Robinson, Alison Sealy-Smith, and Pamela Sinha.

2 and 3 May

Public Presentations of The Skriker by Caryl Churchill, a workshop production directed by Alisa Palmer, with Clare Coulter, Jennifer Podemski, and Waneta Storms. At Theatre Passe Muraille as part of the “duMaurier World Stage Festival.”

13–15 May

“Groundswell” 1998 at the Nightwood Studio: The Aria Project by Sandra Laronde, with direction and dramaturgical assistance by Monique Mojica with Susan Hookong; Untitled by Karin Randoja, with direction and creation assistance by Raymond Bobgan; A Cup of Tears by Sheila James, directed and dramaturged by Carol Greyeyes; Hee-Hee: Tales from the White Diamond Mountain by M.J. Kang, directed by Banuta Rubess, with music by Lee Pui-Ming; fish eye, written and performed by Ann Holloway, directed and dramaturged by Moynan King; Peter Panic by Ruthe Whiston; and a reading of Jaded by Rubess.

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December


1998 playwright in residence is Sonja Mills.

1999

March

“FemCab” features Sonja Mills, Alex Bulmer, Sook-Yin Lee, and The Delightful Divas.

Spring

Newly formatted Nightwood Theatre Spring 1999 News + Events includes a report from Diane Flacks. She and Leslie Lester had taken Random Acts on tour to One Yellow Rabbit’s “High Performance Rodeo” in Calgary and to “Jest in Time” in Halifax.

11–21 May

“Groundswell 1999” at the Nightwood Studio in a new, expanded format, with two readings of each play: The Gospel According to Me by Tabby Johnson, directed by Alison Sealy-Smith; Anything That Moves by Ann-Marie MacDonald; Louise and the Red River Flood by Sheila James; The Scrubbing Project by Sandra Laronde, Jani Lauzon, Monique Mojica, and Michelle St. John, facilitated by Djanet Sears; Home by Rena Polley, directed by Trish Vanstone; The Samba Prophet by Padma Viswanathan; The Danish Play by Sonja Mills; The White Dress by Kathleen Oliver; Arias by Lynda Hill; Smudge by Alex Bulmer; Brown Girl in the Ring by Judy McKinley; and an “Excerpt of a New Work” by Djanet Sears.

Fall

Nightwood Theatre Fall 1999 News + Events announces Nightwood is moving to a new location: the sixth Floor of a building at 9 Saint Nicholas

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Street, in the Yonge and Wellesley area. Also includes announcements for upcoming events in 2000: “FemCab,” “Groundswell,” and the premiere of *Anything That Moves*.

**26 November**

Nightwood’s “Taking Up More Space Launch”—a celebration of the move to a new location and the launch of the twentieth anniversary season. Includes “Feminist Schmeminist,” an open-mic cabaret hosted by Sonja Mills.

**13 December**

Annual general meeting


**2000**

Alex Bulmer is serving as apprentice producer. Leslie Lester announces her plans to move to Soulpepper as its producer, and hopes that a new hiring for Nightwood will be in place in the spring.

**5 March**

Nightwood Theatre presents the sixteenth annual “Five Minute Feminist Cabaret” at the Bluma Appel Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre. Hosted by Sandra Shamas and Karen Robinson. Celebrated with a glossy brochure featuring photos of many of the women involved with Nightwood over the years, including Cynthia Grant; a timeline of personnel and events from 1979–2000; and a statement about the history of “FemCab” by Susan G. Cole. Some of the performers include Dionne Brand, Shirley Douglas, Sandra Laronde, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Sonja Mills, Sandra

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Shamas, Swamperella, Shoshana Sperling, Sandra Caldwell, opera singer Siphiwe McKenzie, and Jackie Richardson. Mary Vingoe, Kim Renders, Alisa Palmer, and Leslie Lester blow out the candles on Nightwood’s birthday cake.

25 April—13 May

Anything That Moves: book and lyrics by Ann-Marie MacDonald, directed by Alisa Palmer, music by Allen Cole. The story is also credited to both MacDonald and Palmer. At the Canadian Stage Theatre, Berkeley Street Upstairs, as part of the “duMaurier World Stage Festival.” Designed by Astrid Jansen and Andrea Lundy. Cast: Tamara Bernier, Sandra Caldwell, Dan Chameroy, David Dunbar, Judy Marshak, and Marc Richard. Nominated for Dora Mavor Moore Awards for Outstanding New Musical and Outstanding Performance in a Female Principal Role in a Musical for Judy Marshak. Program note: Anything That Moves began at the 1999 spring “Groundswell” with a three-week workshop.

“A Full Embrace,” by Elisa Kukla, Xtra! 20 April 2000, 3. Cover story claims that Alisa Palmer had asked MacDonald to create something for the twentieth anniversary of Nightwood.

Spring

Nightwood Newsletter Spring 2000 announces that Anything That Moves will be remounted at the Tarragon Theatre in May 2001. Also includes detailed descriptions of the plays in “Groundswell” in June, as well as a call for submissions for August.

June

As it looks for a new location, the Theatre Centre temporarily locates its office and some events at Nightwood’s space.

27–30 June

Seventeenth annual “Groundswell Play Development Series of New Theatre by Women,” at the Nightwood Studio: The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God by Djanet Sears; Girls’ Night by Sharon Lewis, directed by Fleurette Fernando; Smudge by Alex Bulmer, directed by Alisa Palmer as the last stage of preparation before its premiere in the fall;
*The Scrubbing Project* by The Turtle Gals (Sandra Laronde, Jani Lauzon, Monique Mojica, Michelle St. John), directed by Kate Lushington; Write From the Hip—six short works by new, young women writers (Anna Chatterton, Chrysal Donbrath-Zina, Lia Foad, Goldy Notay, Punam Sawhney, Velvet Wadman). Directors: Alison Sealy-Smith, Kelly Thornton, and Fleurette Fernando, Coordinated by Lisa Silverman with Eva-lyn Parry and Soraya Peerbaye.

From *Nightwood Theatre Fall 1999 News + Events*: “For our twentieth anniversary season we are doing something unusual with our developmental programming. This year Groundswell focuses on extended workshops of projects already in development. Many of them you will recognize from previous Groundswells...At the other end of the spectrum, Nightwood offers a new program for first time playwrights...”

**Fall**

*Fall 2000 Newsletter (21st season/21st century).* The season is focused around four playwrights: Alex Bulmer with *Smudge* (2000), Djanet Sears with *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God* (2001), Ann-Marie MacDonald with *Anything That Moves* (remounted in 2001), and Jean Yoon as the playwright in residence.

Also contains a call for submissions from women aged 18 to 29 to Write From the Hip, “a series of weekly workshops and hands-on seminars in writing skills and professional play development.”

**18 November–10 December 2000**

Nightwood Theatre, in association with S.N.I.F.F. inc., presents *Smudge* by Alex Bulmer at the Tarragon Extra Space. Directed by Alisa Palmer. Cast: Diane Flacks, Sherrylee Hunter, Kate Lynch. Nominated for a Chalmers Award and three Doras. Published in *Canadian Theatre Review* 108 (Fall 2001). The program states that the “story [was] developed and edited” with Diane Flacks, Kate Lynch, and Alisa Palmer, and mentions that this play, and *Anything That Moves*, will be the final shows for Palmer and Leslie Lester.

“Smudge has Clarity,” by Jon Kaplan, *NOW*, 30 November–6 December 2000: Flacks plays Freddie and Lynch plays her new lover, Catherine, while Hunter plays multiple characters. The play is an hour long and
appendix: a nightwood chronology

episodic. Sound, set and lighting give the audience a sense of Freddie’s fragmented world, “almost surrealistic setting, characters are indistinct behind a hazy backdrop…”

2001

“Nightwood Theatre forges creative alliances among women of diverse backgrounds in order to develop and produce innovative Canadian Theatre. A visionary producing team is sought to carry Nightwood into its next stage, replacing both the outgoing Artistic Director and the General Manager. Collaborative, innovative proposals are invited from dynamic, experienced teams and/or individuals interested in new play creation and imaginative theatre management structures. The successful candidates will have developed strong survival techniques for making challenging theatre. A progressive world-view tempered by a keen sense of humour is a winning combination for a candidate/team who will be expected to work in a very collaborative feminist context.” The positions were to begin July 1, 2001.

A fundraising brochure announcing The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God and “FemCab” also states, “Last season Nightwood established an Arts Endowment Fund, an initiative of the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Through the success of Nightwood’s fundraising hyperactivity, Nightwood was able to contribute its maximum of $30,000 in one year alone. This year, we venture to add to the nest. Donations will be matched dollar for dollar.”

17 and 18 February


4 March

“Five Minute Feminist Cabaret” at the Bluma Appel Theatre, hosted by Maggie Cassella and Jennifer Podemski. Performers include Sook-Yin

1 May–3 June

Anything That Moves is remounted at the Tarragon Theatre. Wins four Dora Mavor Moore Awards in June 2002: Best Production of a Musical; Outstanding Direction of a Musical (Alisa Palmer); Outstanding Performance by a Female in a Principal Role, Musical (Glynis Ranney); and Outstanding Musical Direction (Allen Cole).

Spring

Nightwood Theatre Spring 2001 Events + News contains notices on “Fem-Cab” and the remount of Anything That Moves. Also announces that Alisa Palmer and Leslie Lester will end their terms as artistic director and artistic producer, to be replaced by Kelly Thornton and Nathalie Bonjour. Includes detailed descriptions of the plays in the upcoming “Groundswell” and a call for the August deadline for submissions to the nineteenth “Groundswell.”

10–16 June

Eighteenth annual “Groundswell” at the Nightwood Studio. On Learning Russian by Ilene Cummings, directed by Sue Miner; Stormbound by Carol Anderson, directed by Alison Sealy-Smith; Supreme Incompetence by Karen Woolridge, directed by Kate Lynch; The Makings of a Man by Robyn-Marie Butt, directed by Jeanette Lambermont; Better Safe Than Sorry by Les Vaches (Erika Hennebury and Ruth Madoc-Jones), directed by Kelly Thornton; Little Mercy’s First Murder by Morwyn Brebner, directed by Eda Holmes (went on to a production at the Tarragon in 2004); Shikas Sit Shiva by Catherine Hayos and Melinda Little, directed by Kelly Thornton; The Guilty Playroom by Shoshana Sperling and Teresa Pavlinek, directed by Alisa Palmer. Also Write From the Hip, five works by young writers in Nightwood’s three-month mentoring program: Dawn Dumont, Rica May Eckersley, Sarah Liss, Shannon Maguire, and Alyssa Pringle.
15 June

September
*Smudge* toured to Halifax.

8 October
*Funny Business: A Tip of the Hat to Lily*, a comedy cabaret tribute to Lily Tomlin, hosted by Diane Flacks as part of the World Leaders: A Festival of Creative Genius at the DuMaurier Theatre at Harbourfront. Performers include Cathy Jones, Luba Goy, Sandra Shamas, and Shoshana Sperling.


2002
The 2001/2002 season brochure lists *Funny Business: A Tip of the Hat to Lily* (October 2001), *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God* (February 2002), International Women’s Day events in March, and *Smudge* on tour in fall 2001 and spring 2002. Also announces “Groundswell” in May, and a brand new Playwrights Unit for the six months leading up to “Groundswell.” Sheila Heti has become the first playwright ever commissioned to write a play for Nightwood, and the Write from the Hip and new Busting Out! programs are advertised.

Spring
Newly formatted newsletter, called *Nightwood: Defining Feminist Theatre*
(Spring 2002), contains an article about *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God*: “With a chorus of 13 and a stellar cast led by Alison Sealy-Smith, this momentous production represents the largest not for profit show produced by any Toronto theatre this season.” Also features interviews with Alison Sealy-Smith and Sheila Heti. More information on Busting Out! a program for girls aged 12 to 15, created by youth coordinator Lisa Silverman, for the summer of 2002.

5–23 February


Spring

*Smudge* tours to Vancouver.

8–10 March

International Women’s Day Events, collectively called “Hourglass.”

8 March

“I’m Not Yer Little Lady” party with performances.

9 March

“The Hourglass Symposium: A Roundtable” at Hart House, with Lynn Fernie, Brigitte Gall, Nalo Hopkinson, Alex Bulmer, and Mirah Soleil-Ross.
10 March

“FemCab: The Five Minute Feminist Cabaret,” hosted by Kate Rigg and Shoshana Sperling, at the Bluma Appel Theatre.

20–26 May

Nineteenth annual “Groundswell” at Tallulah’s Cabaret at Buddies in Bad Times. From 120 submissions from across the country, Kelly Thornton made the selections, and those playwrights became the Playwrights Unit who met from January to May. Ruth Madoc-Jones was the assistant festival director.

The Disappearance of Janey Jones, written and performed by Jennifer Fawcett, directed by Jennifer Capraru; The Trigger written and performed by Carmen Aguirre, from Vancouver, directed by Katrina Dunn; You the Fortress by Robin Sadavoy, directed by Ruth Madoc-Jones; Four Directions by Dawn Dumont (a previous Write From the Hip participant), directed by Marion de Vries; The Butterfly Body by The Butterfly Body Collective (Marjorie Chan, Catherine Bruce, Camille James, Keira Loughran, Shannon Reynolds, Nicole Stamp, and Diana Kolpak); The Bigger World by Lilla Csorgo, directed by Kate Lynch; Tricycle by Claudia Dey, directed by Daryl Cloran; Blood by Jean Yoon, directed by Kelly Thornton.

Also includes Write from the Hip shows by Rachel Bokhout, Melanie Hui, Anne Doelman, and Aimee Haskell, and Cast Iron by Lisa Codrington, directed by ahdri zhina mandiela and featuring Andrea Scott, which went on to the “Fringe” and was fully produced by Nightwood in 2005.

23 and 24 May

As part of “Groundswell,” two “Playwright Slams” were held as fundraisers for Nightwood. The first was hosted by Diane Flacks and Waneta Storms, the second by Yanna McIntosh and Kristen Thomson. Featured playwrights (Carol Anderson, Morwyn Brebner, Diane Flacks, Kate Lynch, Sonja Mills, Mary Francis Moore, Teresa Pavlinek, and Mariko Tamaki) tried to create a five-minute play.

Fall

Newsletter entitled Nightwood Theatre: Excellent Theatre by Women (Fall
Includes an introductory message from the new artistic director, emphasizing the need for an increased, national profile for women's art. The season includes Sonja Mills's *The Danish Play* (November/December 2002); *Finding Regina* by Shoshana Sperling, which would play at the Globe Theatre in Regina 8–13 October 2002, then go to Theatre Passe Muraille in February/March 2003, and to “Groundswell” in May 2003. The newsletter also promotes the www.nightwoodtheatre.net website, and includes an article by board member Maja Ardal, interviews with Sonja Mills and Shoshana Sperling, and updates on various shows and women involved with Nightwood.

A letter sent 20 September 2002 asking for membership renewal also states: “This year the leadership went into a period of Strategic Planning. In these sessions we created a 3 year Business Plan, revitalized the Board of Directors and initiated a Development Plan which strengthens our foundation, corporate and private sector support. We are also pleased to announce that we’ve secured a new home with Art-scape in the arts complex on the heritage site of Gooderham and Worts Distillery; we will move in February.”

19 November–15 December

*The Danish Play* by Sonja Mills, directed by Kelly Thornton, at the Tar-ragon Extra Space.

Cast: Kate Hennig, Christine Brubaker, Dmitry Chepovetsky, Randi Helmers, Erika Hennebury, Eric Goulem, and Bruce Hunter. Special performance and reception for the Ambassador of Denmark to Canada on 28 November. Nominated for two Dora Mavor Moore Awards and invited to tour to Aveny-T Theatre in Copenhagen in May 2004.

2003

Nightwood Theatre: Excellent Theatre by Women (Spring 2003) newsletter. Includes reports on the upcoming production of Finding Regina and on the highly successful run of The Danish Play the previous fall. Also a profile of a new board member, Barb Linds, and the lineups for “Groundswell” and Write From the Hip. There is a note from Keira Loughran, a participant in the Groundswell Playwrights Unit, and information about the upcoming move to the new Distillery location.

Nightwood Theatre’s Mission Statement: “Nightwood Theatre produces excellent theatre by women artists, including original Canadian plays and works from the contemporary international repertoire, for a large broadly-based audience. We are committed to new play creation and to (inter) national creative collaborating.”

Play Development — Nightwood provides opportunities for women playwrights to develop their work to the point where that work is ready to be produced on a stage.

Mentoring — Nightwood Theatre mentors women theatre artists, including actors, designers, directors and writers.

Diversity — Nightwood Theatre reflects the diversity of the women’s artistic community through its Board of Directors, its staff and the artists that it hires.

Outreach — Nightwood Theatre’s programs reach out to the community to cultivate an interest and a passion for the theatre arts in women. Our outreach programs also use theatre as a vehicle to empower women.

18 February–9 March


“Shoshana Sperling: Funny Girl Plays with her Regina,” by Glenn Sumi, NOW, 20–23 February 2003, 58. “In Sperling’s deceptively simple piece, three former high school friends meet up in the local ICU when another friend attempts suicide. They reconnect, throw their weight
around, smoke up, then bemoan their current lives and chip away at the past and each other with emotional ice picks.”

Shoshana Sperling and Lisa Brooke perform character-based comedy as March of Dames, often at venues such as “FemCab” and the cabarets “Strange Sisters” and “Cheap Queers.” Her play began as The Regina Monologues at “Rhubarb!” in spring 2001.

8 March

“FemCab Remix” performed at Theatre Passe Muraille on the Finding Regina stage. Curated by Mariko Tamaki and hosted by Elvira Kurt.

March

Nightwood moves to new location: 55 Mill Street, Suite 301, The Case Goods Building, in Toronto’s new Distillery District. Building run by Artscape and also home to Tapestry New Opera Works and The Tapistry/Nightwood New Work Studio.

12 April

“The Backstage Ball,” a dance-a-thon fundraiser, held at Berkeley Church. Fifty dancers raised over $7,500.

1 June

Strawberry and tea reception in the new location, with a reading from Mercedes by Marion de Vries, which would also be featured at “Groundswell.”

Summer

Nightwood Theatre: Excellent Theatre by Women (Summer 2003) Newsletter. Announcements of “Hysteria” (October–November 2003), China Doll (Feb.-March 2004), “FemCab” (March 2004), The Danish Play on tour in 2004, “Groundswell” in June of 2004. Also reports on previous events (Finding Regina, “FemCab,” and the dance-a-thon) and a profile of assistant producer Janice Rieger. Also details on all the “Groundswell” shows and the new location in the Distillery District.
2–8 JUNE

Twentieth annual “Groundswell Festival” at Nightwood’s new location, the Tapestry/Nightwood New Work Studio. *BeBe* (Brecht’s Women) by Christine Brubaker, Ruth Madoc-Jones, Keira Loughran, Camille Stibel and Erika Hennebury, directed by Jen Capraru; *China Doll* by Marjorie Chan; *Cast Iron* by Lisa Codrington (which was in the Write from the Hip program in 2002); *More* by Kate Hennig; *Privilege* by Corrina Hodgson; *Excellence, Ontario* by Emma Roberts; *Cover Her Face* by Kilby Smith-McGregor; *Mercedes* by Marion de Vries. Final night features young writers from the Write from the Hip program: Marie Breath Badian, Jane Haddad, Claire Horsnell, Katie Kehoe, Melinda Mattos, Sarah Ojamae, and Keren Zaiontz.

**Fall**

*Nightwood Theatre: Excellent Theatre by Women* (Fall 2003) newsletter introduces Lisa Valencia-Svensson as accountant, and Lisa Codrington as the facilitator of Write From the Hip. Write From the Hip runs from March to August, with weekly workshops and events, culminating in “Groundswell.”

23 October–2 November

“Hysteria: A Festival of Women,” co-produced with Buddies in Bad Times, curated by festival directors Kelly Thornton and Moynan King. “The original founders of the Rhubarb Festival team up again to unleash a brand new multi-disciplinary feminist festival, celebrating the voices of hysterical women. Hysteria will showcase a variety of evenings which run the gamut of film, dance, theatre, performance art and music, featuring our most edgy and talented women.” Held at Buddies in Bad Times, featuring a performance of *Cast Iron* by Lisa Codrington, performed by Alison Sealy-Smith, on 28 October; “Mass Hysteria” cabaret evenings, hosted by Shoshana Sperling and Mariko Tamaki; and a panel discussion on 1 November hosted by the Women’s Caucus of the Playwright’s Guild of Canada, entitled “Re-opening the Fraticelli Report.”

Board of directors: Maja Ardal, Susan Baker, Barb Linds, Kelly MacIntosh, Trish McGrath, Sarah Neville, Lascelle Wingate. Artist in
residence: Natasha Mytnowych Commissioned playwrights: Marjorie Chan and Sheila Heti (no Artistic Advisory is listed)

**Also in 2003:**
Kelly Thornton honoured with Pauline McGibbon Award for her work as a director

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**2004**

**25 February**
“Intimate Dinner” fundraising dinner party hosted by Michele Landsberg, Fundraising Committee Chair, along with Barb Linds, and Debbie Gray. Terry Raininger working as director of marketing and development.

**Winter**

*Nightwood Theatre: Excellent Theatre by Women* (Winter 2004) newsletter includes article about the premiere of *China Doll*, and an interview with its set and costume designer, Joanne Dente. Notices about *The Danish Play* going in tour and the upcoming “Groundswell,” and a report about “Hysteria” from fall 2003. Also an announcement that Michele Landsberg has joined the board.

**17 February–14 March**

*China Doll* by Marjorie Chan, directed by Kelly Thornton, at the Tarragon Extra Space. Featuring Marjorie Chan as the lead character Su-Ling, with Jo Chim, Keira Loughran, and John Ng. In addition to its development with Nightwood (since 2002), *China Doll* had originally been commissioned as a CBC radio play and was then commissioned by Nightwood. It had a three-week intensive workshop at the Banff Centre for the Performing Arts in spring 2003. *China Doll* was nominated for three Dora Awards in the General Theatre category, for Outstanding Costume Design (Joanne Dente), Production, and New Play. It was also nominated for the 2005 Governor General’s Literary Award.
8 March

1 May
The “Great May Day Cabaret” includes Las Pasionarias by Aida Jordão, developed with the support of Nightwood.

May
The Danish Play tours to Copenhagen before playing at the Magnetic North Festival in Edmonton in June and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, 26 October to 6 November 2004.

27 June
Anna Chatterton, co-director of youth initiatives, coordinates Busting Out! a new theatre program for eight girls aged twelve to fifteen. Culminates in the performance of a collective creation on 27 June.

June
Nightwood holds three fundraising events: a yard sale at Trinity Bellwoods Park, an online silent auction, and “Strap One On,” a Pride Week event fundraiser organized by Buddies in Bad Times and Nightwood.

5 and 6 July
Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA) mini-conference on dramaturgy, held at Buddies in Bad Times in Toronto. Marjorie Chan spoke about the playwriting process for her play China Doll, and Kelly Thornton and Yvette Nolan (artistic director of Native Earth) addressed “the status of women in Canadian theatre and the dramaturgy of work by women.”

24–29 August
Twenty-first annual “Groundswell Festival” held at the Tapestry/
Nightwood New Work Studio. The “Groundswell” advisory committee was Marjorie Chan, Lisa Codrington, Jordana Commissio, Erica Kopyto (intern company dramaturg), Natasha Mytnowych (the associate festival director), Kilby Smith-McGregor, and Kelly Thornton. The plays were: *Longfellow Falling* by Celia McBride, directed by Kelly Thornton; *Black-piggy Under* by Ann Holloway, directed by Stacey Landers; *Three Fingered Jack and the Legend of Joaquin Murieta* by Marilo Nunez, directed by Natasha Mytnowych; *The Zoe Show* by Lisa Pijuan, directed by Marjorie Chan; *Appleway* by Dian Marie Bridge, directed by ahdri zhina mandiela; and *Emergency Exits* by Jess Dobkin, directed by Erica Kopyto.

The Write from the Hip program, facilitated by Lisa Codrington, had been operating from March to August. The seven members of Write from the Hip were Carly Spencer, Mia Grace Kim, Rosemary Rose, Sarah Fenn, Becky Johnson, Asha Vijayasingham, and Elizabeth Helmers.

4–14 November

Second annual “Hysteria: A Festival of Women.” Festival directors Kelly Thornton and Moynan King; assistant festival directors Erika Hennebury and Natasha Mytnowych. Performances include *organized crime* by d’bi.young, and *Birth Rite*, the Toronto premiere of an autobiographical work by New York playwright/performer Elizabeth Hess. “Saucy: Girls with Smart Mouths,” an afternoon event for girls under twenty-one, includes a performance by the participants in Busting Out! organized by Natasha Mytnowych and *Shameless* magazine, hosted by Sabrina Jalees.

12–14 November

“The Status of Women in Theatre: A Public Debate!” Kelly Thornton and Hope McIntyre, Chair of the Women’s Caucus of the Playwrights Guild of Canada, assemble a national advisory for a three-day conference, taking place as part of “Hysteria.” A public debate is held on 13 November at 2:00 pm, at Tallullah’s Cabaret at Buddies in Bad Times, hosted by Elvira Kurt. “Since last year’s original panel discussion at Hysteria,” similar panels have been held at PACT, Magnetic North, and LMDA. Committee members: Jackie Maxwell, Jan Selman, Louise Forsyth, Yvette Nolan, Naomi Campbell, Nancy Webster, Judith Rudakoff,
Diane Roberts, Jessica Schneider, Cynthia Grant, Kate Weiss, Aida Jordão, Susan Bennett, Denyse Lynde, and Maria Campbell, with core research by Rebecca Burton.

Board of directors, Winter 2004: Maja Ardal, Susan Baker, Kavita Joshi, Michele Landsberg, Kelly MacIntosh, Trish McGrath, Sarah Neville, Lascelle Wingate Commissioned playwrights: Marjorie Chan and Sheila Heti

Board of directors, Summer 2004: Barb Linds, Lesley Ackrill, Susan Baker, Antonella Ceddia, Michele Landsberg, Kelly MacIntosh, Trish McGrath, Sarah Neville, Helen Thundercloud Commissioned playwrights: Lisa Codrington and Sheila Heti Playwright in residence: Ann Holloway

2005
10–15 January
Workshop of All Our Happy Days Are Stupid by Sheila Heti, directed by Bañuta Rubess, held at the Tapestry/Nightwood New Work Studio.

Winter
Nightwood Theatre: Excellent Theatre by Women (Winter 2005) newsletter includes an interview by Erica Kopyto with Lisa Codrington, author of Cast Iron. Also notices of upcoming International Women’s Day event in March and “FemCab” at a new date in May. In “A message from the Artistic Director,” Kelly Thornton writes about “the advocacy work Nightwood is now doing (with the Women’s Caucus of the Playwright’s Guild of Canada and the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres) to address ongoing gender discrimination in Canadian theatre. This new study sees Nightwood sharing the helm of a huge national movement—”Equity in Canadian Theatre: The Women’s Initiative.” It is also announced that Nightwood has made two new commissions: Bev Cooper and Diane Flacks working on The Five Stages of Womanhood and Mariko Tamaki writing Skim; and Ann Holloway is the playwright in residence, working on Mummy. Also an announcement that Marilo Nunez has started as the new administrative assistant.
27 January
Second annual “Intimate Dinner” hosted by Michele Landsberg, Barb Linds, and Debbie Gray. With special guests Diane Flacks and Alison Sealy-Smith.

12 February–13 March
*Cast Iron* by Lisa Codrington at the Tarragon Extra Space, produced in association with Obsidian Theatre. Directed by ahdri zhina mandiela and starring Alison Sealy-Smith. The play began in the Write from the Hip program and was also done at “Groundswell” and at the 2002 Toronto “Fringe,” produced by Back Row Theatre. It was part of the 2004 Banff playRites Colony, and the “CrossCurrents Festival” at the Factory Theatre in 2004. The program includes a “family tree” of the characters and a glossary of terms in the Bajan dialect.

4 March
Kelly Thornton and Nathalie Bonjour are honoured by The Honourable Sarmite D. Bulte, MP, at her International Women’s Day breakfast.

6 March
In recognition of International Women’s Day and in conjunction with *Cast Iron*, Nightwood holds a panel discussion called “Talking Black: Canadian Women Speak Out on the Politics of Language,” hosted by Shannon Lewis. Panellists are Kike Roach, Denise Campbell, Marie Clarke Walker, Akua Benjamin, and d’bi young.

19 March
Mount Saint Vincent University hosts a research collaboration workshop: “Women in Theatre: The Maritime Experience.” Rebecca Burton and Denyse Lynde participated in this conference as representatives of the National Committee on the Status of Women in Canadian Theatre.

2 May
on the University of Toronto campus; performers include Cathy Jones, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Roula Said, Maryem Tollar, and d’bi young.

Summer

Nightwood Theatre (Summer 2005) newsletter. Includes a report on the “FemCab” celebration, which was attended by founders Kim Renders, Cynthia Grant, and Mary Vingoe. Notices of “Groundswell” in August and Bear With Me by Diane Flacks in November/December, and also “FemCab” and Mathilde in 2006. There is a profile of board member Leslie Ackrill, and Frances Shakov is introduced as the director of marketing and development.

Also includes a notice that Nightwood was “accepted to Creative Trust, a unique program that supports and strengthens Toronto’s mid-size music, dance and theatre companies by assisting them in achieving organizational and financial balance, and acquiring and maintaining a fund of Working Capital.” Nightwood “is now in a debt free position.”

An article about the Write From the Hip program mentions that it is now run by Lisa Codrington, who was herself once a member. Two other former members of Write From the Hip are part of the 2005 Groundswell Playwrights Unit: Becky Johnson and Dawn Dumont. Also, a new aspect is the Emerging Actors Program, led by Natasha Mytnowycz. Each of the Write From the Hip plays is matched with a professional director and cast with both professional actors and members of the Emerging Actors Program for its performance at “Groundswell.”

21–27 August

Twenty-second annual “Groundswell Festival” held at Tapestry/Nightwood New Work Studio. Works presented: The Five Stages of Womanhood by Bev Cooper and Diane Flacks, directed by Leah Cherniak, with Cherniak, Cooper, Flacks and Janet Burke; Love Medicine by Dawn Dumont, directed by Marion de Vries; Madre by Beatriz Pizano, directed by Emma Tibaldo; Las Pasionarias by Aida Jordão, directed by the collective, with Paul Babiak, Rebecca Burton, Aida Jordão, and Christina Starr; Anorexican by Becky Johnson, directed by Cathy Gordon, with Johnson; Skim by Mariko Tamaki, directed by Kelly Thornton with Julie Tamiko Manning; Horse Latitudes by Nicola Harwood, directed by Natasha Mytnowycz.
On 27 August, six short works from the Write From the Hip program, by Lena Lee, Kellee Ngan, Saidah Baba Talibah, Sylvia Przedziecki, Karine Silverwomyn, and Kathleen Phillips. The Write From the Hip plays were matched with a professional director and a cast of professional and emerging actors from Nightwood’s Emerging Actors Program, led by Natasha Mytnowych.

2 October
Nightwood presents a panel discussion called “Ms.Conceptions: Queer Mothers and Children Tackle the Politics of Family.” Moderated by Elvira Kurt, to celebrate the premiere of Diane Flacks’s one-woman show Bear With Me. Held at the Tapestry/Nightwood New Work Studio.

October

It is announced that Nathalie Bonjour will be leaving her position as artistic producer of Nightwood as of December, to become the general manager at Queen of Puddings Music Theatre.

23 November–4 December

Board of directors, Winter 2005: Antonella Ceddia, Barb Linds, Lesley Ackrill, Susan Baker, Michele Landsberg, Du-Yi Leu, Kelly McIntosh, Trish McGrath, Sarah Neville, Helen Thundercloud Administrative assistant: Marilo Nunez Commissioned playwrights: Beverley Cooper, Diane Flacks, Sheila Heti, Mariko Tamaki Playwright in residence: Ann Holloway

Board of directors, Summer 2005: Antonella Ceddia and Barb Linds (co-chairs), Lesley Ackrill, Susan Baker, Michele Landsberg, Trish McGrath (treasurer), Sarah Neville (secretary), Helen Thundercloud Administrative assistant: Christine Berg New director of marketing and
development: Frances Shakov Commissioned playwrights: Bev Cooper, Diane Flacks, Mariko Tamaki Playwright in residence: Sonja Mills

**Also in 2005:**
The third annual “Hysteria Festival” was presented 27 October–5 November 2005, curated by festival director Moynan King. After co-producing “Hysteria” for its first two years, Nightwood was not part of this third edition.

**2006**
Nathalie Bonjour is replaced by Monica Esteves as producer and general manager. Nightwood produces a brochure with a timeline of productions and a statement regarding the structure of the season: “Delivering on our mandate.”

**January**
Nightwood receives a bequest of $50,000 from the late Elizabeth Sza-thmary, founding artistic director of Inner Stage Theatre, which was located at 9 Saint Nicholas before Nightwood took over that space.

**26 January**
Nightwood presents a reading of *chronicles in dub* by d’bi young, directed by ahdri zhina mandiela, at the Tapestry/Nightwood New York Studio.

**27 January**
The annual “Intimate Dinner” fundraising event, hosted by Michele Landsberg and Margot Franssen, with special guests Beverley Cooper and Diane Flacks reading from *Five Stages of Womanhood*.

**5 March**
“FemCab”: Nightwood distributes a factsheet of statistics about women’s relative status internationally.
29 April–27 May

Nightwood presents *Mathilde* by Veronique Olmi, translated by Morwyn Brebner and directed by Kelly Thornton with Martha Burns and Tom McCamus, at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts in the Distillery District.

9 May

“Leading Ladies: Business and Culture Sharing Centre Stage”: a gala reception, a performance of *Mathilde*, and post-show festivities hosted by Ann-Marie MacDonald and Phyllis Yaffe (CEO of Alliance Atlantis Communications). “Nightwood turns the spotlight on extraordinary female leaders in business communities across the GTA and southwestern Ontario.”

20–27 August

Twenty-third annual “Groundswell”: *Mom's Birthday* by Tara Beagan; *A Nanking Winter* by Marjorie Chan; *The Darwinist* by Lorena Gale; *Mummy* by Ann Holloway; *Oil Man* by Sonja Mills; and *Essay* by Hannah Moscovitch. Also work from the Write From the Hip participants: Martha Schabas, Paula Schultz, Christine Harris, Ya Ya Yao, Patricia Lee, and Haley McGee; a collective creation from the Busting Out! participants; and *The B-Girl Project*, a hip-hop dance performance by girls aged twelve to sixteen, choreographed by K8 Alsterland.

Board of directors: Susan Baker, Michele Landsberg, Barbara Linds, Trish McGrath, Sarah Neville, Iris Nemani Staff: Kelly Thornton, artistic director; Monica Esteves, producer and general manager; Maggie Kwan, director of development and marketing; Marilo Nunez, administrator; Celia Philips, finance manager; Lisa Codrington and Anna Chatterton, co-directors of youth initiatives; Sonja Mills, playwright in residence.

17–21 October

*Bear With Me* by Diane Flacks toured to The Grand Theatre in London, Ontario.
12 December
“Ga-La-Licious,” a fundraising concert headlined by Sarah Harmer, at the Courthouse Chamber Lounge.

Also in 2006
Equity in Canadian Theatre: The Women’s Initiative was represented by Hope McIntyre at a forum in Calgary as part of the Alberta Theatre Projects Blitz weekend, 5 March. Findings of the National Survey were also presented by main researcher Rebecca Burton at a Playwrights Guild of Canada conference in Toronto on May 26, called “Canadian Women Playmakers: Tributes and Tribulations,” co-sponsored by the Association for Canadian Theatre Research and the Graduate Centre for Study of Drama. Nightwood participants in the conference included Kelly Thornton, Kim Renders, and Diane Roberts.

2007
8 March
At “FemCab,” Maja Ardal took over as interim artistic director as Kelly Thornton went on a one-year maternity leave. “FemCab” was held at the Brigantine Room, Harbourfront Centre, and featured Carol Off (host of CBC’s “As It Happens”) as keynote speaker. Sponsored by Michele Landsberg and Stephen Lewis, hosted by Teresa Pavlinek and Dawn Whitwell.

22 February–17 March
*The Danish Play* is remounted at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts.

2, 9, and 16 March
“Future Femme Fridays,” staged readings of three new plays, held at the Tapestry/Nightwood New Work Studio: *Age of Arousal* by Linda Griffiths; *Oil Man* by Sonja Mills; *The Darwinist* by Lorena Gale.

26 April–19 May
*Crave* by Sarah Kane, directed by Jennifer Tarver, Young Centre for the
Performing Arts. Cast: Carlos Gonzalez-Vio, Michelle Monteith, Hardee Lineham, Maria Ricossa.

“Extreme Women Readings” — after three Thursday night performances of *Crave*, readings of plays by women outside of Canada: 3 May — *Bites* by Kay Adshead (U.K.), directed by Maja Ardal; 10 May — *The Princess Dramas* by Elfriede Jelinek (Austria), directed by Bea Pizano; 17 May — *Behzti (Dishonour)* by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti (U.K.), directed by Maja Ardal.

**9–15 September**

“Groundswell” at the Nightwood Tapestry Studio. *The Unfortunate Misadventures of Masha Galinski* by Erin Shields; *Desert Story* by Dennison Smith; *Light Swooping Through* by Stacey Engels; *a nanking winter* by Marjorie Chan; *Oil Man* by Sonja Mills; *The Corpse Bride* by Niki Landau. Also a collective creation from the Busting Out! participants and short plays from Write from the Hip.

**24 September**

Wine-tasting and play-reading fundraising event, held by donors Margot Franssen and Margaret McCain, raises $30,000.

Board of directors: Iris Nemani (Chair), Trish McGrath, Sarah Neville, Susan Baker, Wanita Lambert, Michele Landsberg, Susan Quinn, Lorraine Rankin, Anne Tomsic Staff: Maja Ardal, interim artistic director; Monica Esteves, producer and general manager; Rebecca Peirson, director of marketing and audience development; Edita Page, director of development; Lisa Codrington, co-director of youth initiatives — Write from the Hip; Anna Chatteron, co-director of youth initiatives — Busting Out!; Beatriz Pizano, associate artistic director; Sonja Mills and Stacey Engels, playwrights in residence

**23 November–16 December**

*Age of Arousal* by Linda Griffiths, directed by Maja Ardal, at the Factory Theatre. Cast: Clare Coulter, Sarah Dodd, Ellen-Ray Hennessy, Maggie Huculak, Gemma James-Smith, and Dylan Smith.
2008

23 February–16 March


4 March


March


20 May

“Ga-la-licious” annual fundraising gala at the Courthouse (57 Adelaide Street East), featuring Mary Walsh and Women Fully Clothed.

May

Extreme Women readings at the Gladstone Hotel: *The Saviour of Potsdam* by Theresia Walser (Austria); *Stoning Mary* by Debbie Tucker Green (England); *In Darfur* by Winter Miller (USA).

May–August

Write from the Hip and Emerging Actors programs

July–August

Busting Out! program

6 October–1 November

*Wild Dogs*, arranged for the stage by Anne Hardcastle from the novel by Helen Humphreys, directed by Kelly Thornton, produced in association with The Canadian Stage Company at the Berkley Street Theatre.
29 October
An excerpt of Wild Dogs performed at the twenty-ninth annual “International Festival of Authors” at Harbourfront Centre; Helen Humphreys is one of the featured authors.

2009
7–24 January
Bear With Me, written and performed by Diane Flacks, at the Berkeley Upstairs Theatre. On 16 January, the show is followed by Plan B: The After Baby Show, featuring female comics Katie Crown, Elvira Kurt, Teresa Pavlinek, Shoshana Sperling, and Kathleen Phillips.

26–31 January
“Groundswell Festival” at the Berkeley Upstairs Theatre: Burning In by Natalie Meisner (Calgary); Stain by Madeleine Blais Dahlem (Saskatoon); Herr Beckmann’s People by Sally Stubbs (Vancouver); Away We Go by Maia Kareda (Toronto); Jane by Lisa Codrington (Toronto); Augury by Florence Gibson (Toronto); La Communion by Beatriz Pizano (Toronto/Columbia).

5 March
“FemCab” at Lulu Lounge, co-hosted by Teresa Pavlinek and Shoshana Sperling. Features Dawn Langstroth and d’bi.young, with Marina Nemat (author of Prisoner of Tehran) as keynote speaker.

30 April
“Ga-la-licious,” featuring Erica Ehm and Janna Polzin; food, “fortune tellers, fire breathers, stilt walkers, magicians…and more!”

24 May
Public reading of Prisoner of Tehran by Marina Nemat, adapted by Maja Ardal and Kelly Thornton, at the Nightwood Studio.

23 August
Write from the Hip

Shelley Scott • Nightwood Theatre
24 August
Busting Out!

October–November
“The 4 x 4 Festival,” on the occasion of Nightwood’s 30th anniversary. Includes a Directors’ Summit running 13–20 November, as well as audience events and four productions:

26 October–21 November
That Face by Polly Stenham (UK), directed by Kelly Thornton at the Berkeley Theatre downstairs.

31 October–14 November
Yellowman by Dael Orlandersmith, directed by Weyni Mengesha; a co-production with Obsidian Theatre, at the Berkeley Theatre upstairs.

11–21 November
No Exit by Jean-Paul Sartre, conceived and directed by Kim Collier (British Columbia). An Electric Company and Virtual Stage production, at Buddies in Bad Times.

20–22 November
Serious Money by Caryl Churchill, directed by Eda Holmes, in partnership with Ryerson University Theatre School, at Theatre Passe Muraille.