



## Selected Press

**WET Productions**

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# Arts & Leisure

THEATER

## From Very Private Schools to Very Public Stages

The founders of Women's Expressive Theater just love to play against type.

Beth Schneckenberger

From left, Danielle Skraastad, Mia Barron and Maggie Lacey, playwrights of "Big Times," now showing in Tribeca. The musical play is a production of Women's Expressive Theater.



Beth Schneckenberger

By ADA CALHOUN

**A**FTER a muggy morning spent in last-minute rehearsal for their new play, "Big Times," a tribute to vaudeville, the play's three actresses fled to the cool, brick-walled dressing room of Walkerspace in Tribeca. They threw off their old-time costumes, shimmed into light summer outfits and pulled sandwiches out of bags. Instantly, the cluttered offstage space assumed the atmosphere of a slumber party.

The three actress-playwrights — Maggie Lacey, Mia Barron and Danielle Skraastad — were soon joined by the show's director, Leigh Silverman, its producers, Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone; and its co-producer, Maria Ratner. The giddiness level climbed.

"The play is about friendship and refusing to suffer," Ms. Barron said, "but it's also a ribald entertainment."

"Did you just say 'rye bread entertainment'?" asked Ms. Silverman.

"Rye bread!" the women began chanting. "Big Times," which opened on Saturday, is the latest production from the on-the-rise company Women's Expressive Theater (primarily known as WET). Founded in 1999 by Ms. Eden, 31, and Ms. Pettibone, 30, WET is known in the low-budget theater world for its unusual combination of glamorous fund-raising parties and old-school feminist politics. WET's mission statement is teeming with words like "empower," "sisterhood" and "women-centric," but WET's parties hardly feel like political action meetings; the drinks are strong and the guest lists elite, with attendees like Billy Crudup, Amy Sedaris, Paul Rudd and Ally Sheedy.

"We're putting the sparkle back in feminism," Ms. Eden said.

Ms. Eden and Ms. Pettibone, Upper East Side natives, met at an interschool singing group. (Ms. Pettibone attended Brearley, and Ms. Eden attended Chapin.) They became friends and began meeting once a week before school for iced coffee.

"Even then we were having power breakfasts," Ms. Eden said.

Ms. Pettibone added, "Except back then, our meeting agenda was boys and skin." The women lost touch but reunited after college; Ms. Pettibone was Anna Deavere Smith's assistant, and Ms. Eden was the office manager of Bernard

Telsey Casting, which was casting Ms. Smith's "House Arrest."

Though successful, Ms. Eden and Ms. Pettibone discovered a mutual frustration with the way women (themselves included) were treated in the acting world.

"I'm the brunette and I look ethnic, so I'm not going to be the ingénue," Ms. Eden said. "One of my best friends is a beautiful blonde, and she never gets to play anyone intelligent. We were following our dreams and making things happen, but something didn't feel right."

Sexism, she said, "has just been swept under the carpet." She cited a New York State Council on the Arts report that only 17 percent of the plays produced in the 2001-2 season were written by women. "We decided we should just produce the kind of work we're not seeing out there," Ms. Pettibone said. "It's not about teaching the world a lesson. It's about producing media that we love."

WET's first show was "I Stand Before You Naked" by Joyce Carol Oates, which appeared at the 1999 New York International Fringe Festival. Ms. Oates saw the show and wrote additional material for WET that became "I Stand Before You Naked II." In 2002, the company staged Sheila Callaghan's "Scab," about two female roommates sharing a boyfriend. And in 2003, WET's production of Julia Jordan's "St. Scarlet" — the first and arguably the best of four plays by Ms. Jordan that were produced in New York that season — became a must-see for followers of Off Off Broadway. "Big Times" WET's new offering, is a play with live music that follows an orphan who models herself after Jimmy Duran: a ukulele-toting burlesque performer, and an unemployable wait with a dove impression. Ultimately, the three stage hopefuls discover that their solo acts are going nowhere but that, as a vaudeville producer tells them, "individually you're awful; together you're awful good."

Ms. Silverman recalled the plays that she and WET considered collaborating on before they chose "Big Times": "Plays about rape! Big-ory! Murder! Transgender issues! And then I invited Sasha and Victoria to the workshop of this play."

Ms. Eden said: "We saw this show, and it was a big yes. The women in the play are desperately trying to get in a door. It's a true representation of life as an artist."



# QUEST

THE QUEST

# 400

Philanthropy:  
The Next  
Generation

## THE NEXT GENERATION OF GIVING

BY ZIBBY RIGHT

Two other native New Yorkers, Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone, started WET (Women's Expressive Theatre, [wetweb.org](http://wetweb.org)), a non-profit addressing another social challenge: the stereotypical depiction of women in the media and the dearth of projects written, directed, and produced by women. They resolved to produce plays and projects that challenged the status quo. They teach teenage girls how to look at the media with a critical eye and to take smart risks. Eden, a Chapin graduate, and Pettibone, a Brearley alum, credit their all-girls education with "inspiring us to find what we wanted to do and how to drill down how to do it," Pettibone says. Both their parents taught them: "If you don't like something the way it is, go out and make it happen," says Eden. "It's your responsibility to make a change in the world."

The biggest challenge for Eden and Pettibone is having patience and not letting the apathy of others get them down. "Change can be slow and when you're in it, it's hard to see it happening," says Pettibone. "We're so passionate and committed to making things happen, but the rewards aren't always tangible or measurable," Eden echoes. "This is not about instant gratification. You have to stay committed to really making an impact in your community and know that big ideas are great, but you have to boil them down to a step-by-step program to implement change."

Eden and Pettibone are surprised by how often their peers thank them after seeing one of their productions for just getting them out of the house. Eden says, "People in our

generation don't want to buy tickets to plays. They think the theater is too expensive or high-brow, so we have to work hard to get rid of every excuse for them not to come. By just buying one ticket to one play, they're effecting more social change than they probably ever imagined."

Finally, Eden adds, "Don't be afraid to fail. The surest way to fail is to worry about it. Just do one small thing. It's our job as a universe to put the penny in the pail. If it's that simple, why aren't we all doing it?" ♦



Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone started WET (Women's Expressive Theatre) to challenge the status quo of cultural depictions of women. Above: The cast of their production of 'Contest of Wits'. Below: Eden and Pettibone.

MIN  
LAU  
AMA





# REAL SIMPLE

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## Empower Play

With the launch of their Women's Expressive Theater (WET), Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone hoped to challenge gender inequality and create more opportunities for women in the arts. But as their successful non-profit organization began to outgrow its makeshift workspace in the bedrooms of their small New York City apartments, it became clear that they were depriving themselves—and WET—of the opportunities needed to thrive.

When a longtime inspiration and advisor, producer Daryl Roth, asked why the women didn't have an office, she not only validated their need for physical space, she also empowered them to have a new level of respect for the work they were doing.

**Sasha Eden:** "When you're running a non-profit, the whole concept is taking care of a 'bigger picture.' Sometimes you forget that, if you don't take care of the core company *and* yourselves in the process, you cannot support that larger picture."

**Daryl Roth:** "It's like being a mother and putting your child first. The last thing to get satisfied is yourself. So a physical office didn't feel as important as raising money for the other things WET really needed."

Daryl encouraged Sasha and Victoria to work an office space into their budget, to raise money, and to make it happen. "You deserve an office," she said. "It's time."

**Daryl Roth:** "My motivation was to help them feel that what they were doing was valuable and honorable. Having an office means hanging up your shingle and putting yourself in business officially. Once you get set up, you can be more powerful—and feel stronger—going forward. The hard part is making that first step and deciding that 'okay, we need this, too.'"

**Victoria Pettibone:** "What made the difference to us was that the advice came from Daryl, an extraordinary businesswoman who knows the delicacy of our industry. There was a validation that made it feel possible, and a trust that it was good. Once we were given her respect, the next step was manifesting it in an office space—and giving WET a true home."

Savvy bartering skills and the generosity of supporters helped move WET out of Sasha and Victoria's bedrooms and into an incredible professional space. Everyone agrees that the results have been unbelievable for the growing non-profit.



From left to right: Sasha Eden, Daryl Roth, and Victoria Pettibone. Inset: scene from WET's production of "BFF" by Anna Ziegler.



**Sasha Eden:** "The work tripled in the first month. Our focus—the way we handle our day-to-day, our ability to build a strong support system—is now much more developed so we can better fulfill our goals."

**Daryl Roth:** "It's been a natural progression; Sasha and Victoria have grown the seeds that they had sowed initially. It feels to me that, everything they were really good at in the beginning, they're even better at now."

WET's world premiere of "Perfect Couple," a play written by Brooke Berman and directed by Maria Mileaf, is running in June and July 2008 at the DR2, Daryl Roth's theater in New York City. For tickets and information, visit [www.wetweb.org](http://www.wetweb.org).

To read more Pivotal Conversations, visit [www.pivotalconversations.com/RealSimple](http://www.pivotalconversations.com/RealSimple).

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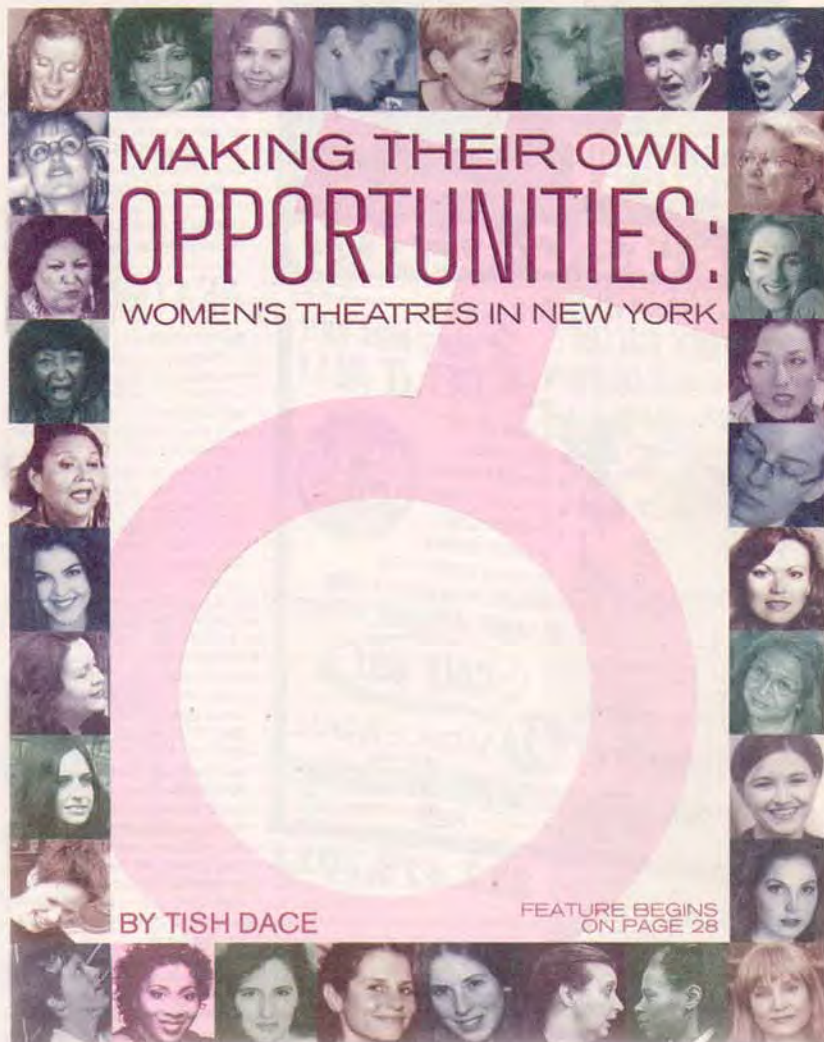
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## MAKING THEIR OWN OPPORTUNITIES:

WOMEN'S THEATRES IN NEW YORK

BY TISH DACE

FEATURE BEGINS ON PAGE 28

Thirty years ago, New York boasted only a handful of women's theatres. Over the following decade, companies came and went, but the numbers remained the same. Recently, however, the Big Apple's women's theatres have proliferated so much that including them all in one article is no longer possible. Here, Back Stage correspondent Tish Dace—in her ninth annual International Women's Day/Women's History Month feature on women in theatre—samples 20 of the city's current roster.

### BY TISH DACE

Women started creating their own theatres in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The *New Feminist Repertory* gave weekly performances in 1969, and the *Westbeth Playwrights Feminist Collective* began producing in 1971. Other early women's companies included *It's All Right to Be Woman* and *Womanrite*. These theatres strove to raise women's consciousness and change the way the world worked.



Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone of Women's Expressive Theater (WET).

Many women's theatres have defined their missions more loosely. Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone began *Women's Expressive Theatre* (cheekily dubbed "WET") "to promote sisterhood and empower," in Eden's words, and in Pettibone's, "to respect diversity among all women." They aim to give women free expression and avoid stereotypes by celebrating women's intelligence and power and sexiness. "People smile at the name WET," Eden reports. A youthful, hip company inspired by Eve Ensler, Daryl Roth, and Anna Devere Smith, they also have fulfilled Pettibone's desire to produce and Eden's yen for better roles. She says, "Doing an episode on 'Dawson's Creek' didn't make me feel I was helping womankind. Here, I can combine my passions for women's rights and theatre." Pettibone explains, "We put women in a prominent place, but we hire men too." Optimistic about the market for women's plays, they cite the successful "Vagina Monologues." Optimism seems their watchword; says Pettibone, "Young women feel we can do whatever we want to do."



# WET Credits

**WET Productions is a 501(c)3 organization that produces media which challenges female stereotypes and advocates for equality.**

## **SELECTED CREDITS:**

**Theatrical Productions:** The world premiere of *A Perfect Couple* by Brooke Berman, directed by Maria Mileaf; The world premiere of *BFF* by Anna Ziegler, directed by Josh Hecht (published by The Dramatists Play Service, and in the Smith and Kraus anthology, *The Best American Playwrights of 2007*); The world premiere of *Big Times*, by Mia Barron, Maggie Lacey, Danielle Skraastad, directed by Leigh Silverman; The world premiere of *St. Scarlet*, written by Julia Jordan, directed by Chris Messina (published by Dramatists Play Service); The world premiere of *Scab*, written by Sheila Callaghan, directed by Hayley Finn; The New York premiere of *Bold Girls* written by Rona Munro, directed by Hayley Finn; *I Stand Before You Naked* written by Joyce Carol Oates, directed by Heather Scarlet Arnet at the NY Int'l Fringe Festival and The Harold Clurman Theatre (with original material written by Ms. Oates, exclusively for WET's production).

**Events:** *Letters to A Young Artist*, a performance of the book written by Anna Deavere Smith, Hosted by Daryl Roth, read by Ms. Smith, Olympia Dukakis, Eve Ensler, Bill T. Jones, Josh Hamilton, Eugene Jarecki, Lisa Kron, and James C. Nicola; *Waitress*, a reading of the then un-produced, original screenplay, written and directed by Adrienne Shelly, starring Paul Rudd, Gretchen Mol, Amy Sedaris and Michael Cerveris; *The New York Film Premiere of Friends With Money*, presented in association with Sony Pictures Classics, followed by a talk-back with writer/director Nicole Holofcener and actor Catherine Keener. *Bottom Of The World*, a new play commissioned by WET, written by Lucy Thurber at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, The Tribeca Theater Festival and The Public Theater; *The Morgan Stories*, written and directed by Adrienne Shelly, starring Billy Crudup, Ally Sheedy, Jessica Hecht and Paul Rudd; *The Modern Woman Unbound I and II* with New York Times Best Selling authors, including Nicola Kraus and Emma McLaughlin ("The Nanny Diaries"), Amy Sohn ("Run Catch Kiss" and "Kiss and Tell"), Beth Harpaz ("Girls in the Van") and Lorene Cary ("Pride", "Black Ice"); *LOVE*, a one-night only event featuring short plays on the subject of love by some of the hottest female playwright read by celebrated actors. *LOVE 2009* featuring performances by Debra Messing, Blythe Danner, Perrey Reeves, Emmanuelle Chriqui, Maulik Pancholy, David Alan Basche, John Lloyd Young, Tracie Thoms, Andre Royo, Alysia Reiner, JD Williams, Alex Frost, Sabine Singh, with plays by Jenny Lyn Bader, Annie Baker, Lucy Boyle, Laura Eason, Ann Marie Healy, Ellen Melaver, Susan Miller, Anna Ziegler. *LOVE 2008* featuring performances by Lauren Ambrose, Martha Plimpton, Jane Alexander, Ricki Lake, Neil Patrick Harris, Gretchen Mol, Peter Hermann, Laila Robins, Michael Cerveris, Josh Hamilton and Sabine Singh, with plays by Jenny Lyn Bader, Lucy Boyle, Brooke Berman, Julia Cho, Julia Jordan, Liz Tucillo and Francine Volpe. *LOVE 2006*, hosted by Diane von Furstenberg at the DVF studios featuring performances by Emmanuelle Chriqui, Ally Sheedy, Mark Feuerstein, Cady Huffman, Jessica Hecht and Jackie Hoffman; *Laugh 'til You WET Your Pants parts I and II*, stand up comedy nights of all star female talent held at Gotham Comedy Club and Gramercy Comedy Club featuring Judy Gold, Corey Kahaney, Vanessa Hollingshead and other notable female stand up comics.

**Script Development:** *The INKubator: The Ray and Kit Sawyer Development Series* develops work written by selected women writers throughout the year, providing dramaturgical, promotional and creative support for new material. Playwrights in the INKubator have included Brooke Berman, Francine Volpe, Sarah Schulman and Julia Jordan, Cusi Cram, Neena Beber. As a part of the INKubator, WET has partnered with The Williamstown Theater Festival, Naked Angels, The National Theater Institute at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. *The 2009 INKubator Summer Series* presented work from *The INKubator* to the public and featured *Current Nobody* written by Melissa James Gibson, *Dusty and the Big Bad World* written by Cusi Cram and *Swimming in March* written by Kate Robin and musical improv superstars, Glennis McMurray and Eliza Skinner of *I Eat Pandas*.

**Educational Outreach Program:** In 2004 WET launched educational the educational wing of the company with *WET's Risk Takers Film Series*. *Risk Takers* is a free, city-wide media literacy & leadership program for adolescent girls, that accepts over 100+ girls annually, from over 40 participating NYC schools. The program features leading female role models in the media, as master teachers, addressing issues girls are facing daily, such as peer pressure, drug and alcohol use, body image, teen pregnancy, sexuality, safe sex, discrimination, sexual assault and rape, education, class, race, friendship, and family dynamics. Special guests have included: Frances McDormand, Olympia Dukakis, Mary-Louise Parker, Kerry Washington, Ally Sheedy, Kelly McGillis, Alison Lohman, Michelle Monaghan, Nicole Holofcener, Jessica Sharzer, Kirsten Smith, Keri Russell, Kate Lanier, Gina Prince-Bythewood, Maria Magentti, Nicole Ari Parker and Lili Taylor and more. [www.risktakers.us](http://www.risktakers.us)  
[www.wetweb.org](http://www.wetweb.org)



# **WET Theater**

**Selected Press**



WET presents

# a Perfect Couple

written by Brooke Berman

directed by Maria Mileaf



produced by Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone

## Press

**The New York Times**

"An enjoyable comedy-drama...Ms. Berman has a breezy, accessible voice and a vigorous interest in turning over the rocks in contemporary relationships to find out what is growing underneath."

**Charles Isherwood, The New York Times**

**VOICE**

"Berman's charming, taffeta-light plays give voice to the delights and disappointments of contemporary young womanhood." **The Village Voice**

**NEW YORK POST**

"In her last play, "Hunting and Gathering," Brooke Berman explored the romantic confusion of a group of 20-somethings. With "A Perfect Couple," she's moved on and up - proving, just as entertainingly, that 30-somethings aren't any better at love. The playwright displays a gift for incisive characterizations and dialogue that's both amusing and poignant..... Well directed by Maria Mileaf and beautifully acted by the ensemble" **The New York Post**

**Time Out New York**

"Brainy-yet-heartfelt... Berman raises several rich themes -- loneliness, sexless infidelity, Gen Xers versus Gen Yers, gender roles and the awful mutability of love" **Time Out New York, Critics' Pick**

**The NEW YORK Sun**

"Ms. Berman, who has a keen ear and a sharp eye, is as unflinching as a crash-scene photographer in documenting her characters' alienation from their chronic ambivalence..." **The Sun**

**THEATERMANIA**

"Charmingly bittersweet. Not only is there comedy and drama to be had in the interpersonal relationships between these three characters, but there's also a fascinating reflection on what it means to investigate and relive one's past." **Theatermania**

**VARIETY**

"A sleek production from WET." **Variety**

**NEW YORK**

**New York Magazine Critics' Pick**

**Bloomberg**

"In a mere 75 minutes, A Perfect Couple turns into a bracingly chortle-rich life lesson." **John Simon, Bloomberg News**

## A Perfect Couple

Written by **Brooke Berman** Directed by **Maria Mileaf**

Produced by **Sasha Eden** and **Victoria Pettibone**

Associate Producers **Ami Ankin** and **Azizah Rowen**





WET presents the World Premiere of...

# BFF

Written by Anna Ziegler

Directed by Josh Hecht



Featuring

**Sasha Eden**

**Laura Heisler**

**Jeremy Webb**

The DR\*2 Theatre - Where WET is a Theater in Residence

**Limited engagement begins February 17th, 2007**

**Monday-Saturday, 8pm**

**Tickets: \$25 - \$35**

Reservations through Telecharge at 212-239-6200 or online at [www.wetweb.org](http://www.wetweb.org)  
or [www.telecharge.com](http://www.telecharge.com)

Set Design **Robin Vest**

Lighting Design **Clifton Taylor** Costume Design **Sara Jean Tosetti**

Original Music & Sound Design **David Stephen Baker** Projection Design **Kevin R. Frech**

Production Stage Manager **Ashley B. Delegal** Production Manager **David Nelson**

**Produced by Victoria Pettibone and Sasha Eden**

For more information about the play or to tell us your BFF stories go to  
[Wetweb.org](http://Wetweb.org) or [myspace.com/bffwet](http://myspace.com/bffwet)

WET's 2006-2007 Season Sponsor

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## Selected Press for *BFF*

“Anna Ziegler’s tenderly chiaroscuro play about adolescence is an unmitigated pleasure. Playing best friends – Eliza and Lauren – Laura Heisler and Sasha Eden are radiantly real, capturing the easy affection and hurt of teen-age friendship. Sex and cruelty intrude on their idyll, and Lauren’s eager experiments with boys drive Eliza deeper into her own shell. Structurally, the play swims back and forth through time, bridging past and present. In the latter sequences, the adult Lauren meets Seth (Jeremy Webb), a sensitive young banker, but she finds herself unable to open her heart – filled as it is with mourning for the girl she couldn’t save. Ziegler’s writing is rueful, frank and fresh; her insights into young womanhood feel earned and authentic.” - **The New Yorker**

“The actors turn in fine performances...Heisler, ever a brave performer, gives a wrenching turn...Ziegler shows talent for creating character and dialogue.” - **The Village Voice**

“It’s successes are achievements in subtlety...Masterful...Both thespians capture the internal fight between desperately wanting to cling to something and knowing it must change. ..both acting and writing are raw, without any showiness to cheapen the harsh, true pain created by people unaware of the damage they’re doing.” - **Variety**

“The enterprising Women’s Expressive Theater – WET for short- has again introduced us to a female playwright of surprising professional polish... Under Josh Hecht’s detailed and sensitive direction, the three performers shine. Eden’s troubled Lauren is the play’s centerpiece, convincing both as adolescent and questing young woman. Heisler, too, is a most believable teenager, and when allowed to briefly present a lively fourth character, demonstrates a vibrant versatility. Webb easily defines that most difficult of the male species, a good guy; his interpretation glows with integrity.” – **Backstage**

“The playwright has a gift for incisive characterizations and realistic dialogue, while the actors, under the sensitive direction of Josh Hecht, deliver highly appealing performances. ” - **The New York Post**

“The plot...hangs on a compelling psychological mystery that deepens as the play progresses, and ends with a genuinely gasp-inducing moment that raises the stakes of everything that came before.” - **The New York Sun**

“Three gifted young actors star in *BFF*, an off-Broadway play by Women’s Expressive Theater. The story, which is broadly about adolescent friendship, grief and adult romance, emerges from a series of vignettes that take place alternately in the early 1990s and the present day. Lauren (Sasha Eden) and Eliza (Laura Heisler) are “best friends forever”, until their relationship experiences the inevitable trials of young-adulthood. But this isn’t the stuff of chick lit: despite the frequency of sharp one-liners, a feeling of foreboding pervades the story and casts a noirish pall.

Anna Ziegler’s script is punchy and streamlined. And the modest, off-Broadway set is furnished with impressive economy. Ms Heisler is endearingly sardonic and acts with keen comic timing, but the show is Ms Eden’s, whose permutations of costume and character are startling.” – **Economist.com**



## Selected Press for *BFF* Cont...

“Ziegler’s swing-set story structure and Josh Hecht’s astute direction keep things moving along nicely, but it’s the strength of the roles — respectively nailed by Sasha Eden and Laura Heisler — that forms *BFF*’s strongest bonds.” – **Flavorpill.com**

“Playing Lauren and Eliza, respectively, Sasha Eden and Laura Heisler capture the essence of the girls’ pubescent immaturity beautifully. In addition, Heisler manages to make some of Eliza’s most darkly brooding, and often non-sequitur-esque, observations, pungently funny. ..When Lauren is with Seth, theatergoers are equally charmed, particularly given Jeremy Webb’s endearing performance as this young banker...” - **American Theater Web**

“A perky presence with a dark lining, [Eden] convinces as both an impetuous teenager and a hollowed-out adult more careful than she should be with her heart... The play resonates with honesty and insight” - **Talkin’ Broadway**

“Sasha Eden and Laura Heisler are enormously engaging as the best friends forever, as is Jeremy Webb as the kind of sensitive, charming boyfriend who should happen to every single girl in New York practicing her Yoga at a self-actualization training center... Laura Heisler’s performance falls into that something special and truly unforgettable category.” - **CurtainUp**

“The playwright’s skill in evoking this adolescent friendship is matched by the enormous strengths of the actors Sasha Eden and Laura Heisler, who portray the young girls with a remarkable level of emotional honesty and verisimilitude...It shimmers with lyricism, gentle wit, and a good deal of wisdom...when it comes to the playwright’s ability to evoke adolescence, that twilight zone of our lives when everything that we feel is felt so deeply and unwaveringly. Anna Ziegler has few peers in writing about that time and those feelings.”  
- **NYTheatre.com**



World Premiere of "Big Times" June 11<sup>th</sup>-July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005

wet  
presents **BIG TIMES**

with LIVE music by The Moonlighters

written by  
and starring



Mia Barron



Maggie Lacey



Danielle Skraastad

directed by Leigh Silverman

produced by Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone

★ A COMEDIC EXTRAVAGANZA ★

Admish: \$19

Tuesdays thru Saturdays, June 11th thru July 9th at 8pm, 46 Walker Street at Walkerspace.

Tickets to Big Times are now available at [www.smartix.com](http://www.smartix.com) or by calling 212.868.4444.

For more information: [www.wetweb.org](http://www.wetweb.org)



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## *Selected Big Times Press*

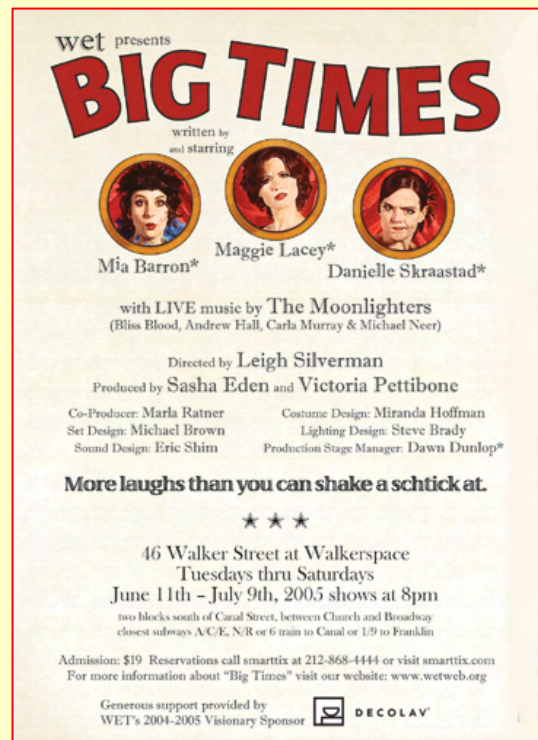
“The latest production from the on-the-rise company Women’s Expressive Theater (WET)” – **THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTS & LEISURE**

“Big Times is the kind of play that can actually get a laugh out of Why did the chicken cross the road...with slapstick, rapid fire dialogue and quick costume changes as each actress plays a host of roles...you can bring your eight year old to this one and you both will probably enjoy it....Women’s Expressive Theater has turned Walkerspace into a tiny Vaudeville stage, complete with Red Velvet curtains, little round tables, and popcorn at the door. Providing original and adapted music, are The Moonlighters, a great ukulele-steel-guitar close harmony band...it would take a true curmudgeon to withstand its charms. **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

“The fun of this irrepressible pastiche begins in the lobby of Walkerspace, where a concession girl hands out free bags of popcorn and drinks (from egg creams to cocktails). Zippily directed by Leigh Silverman, with help from an enchantingly notstalgic score by The Moonlighters, it steadily gains momentum. The talented writer-performers play their multiple roles with zest. As Barron, Lacey and Skraastad race through their routines, one feels the infectious enthusiasm of three gutsy dames putting on a show” **TIME OUT NEW YORK**

Clichés have rarely felt so fresh and fun as in Big Times, a blithe, sassy vaudeville homage presented by WET, the city's pioneer company for women in theatre. Traditional burlesque meets sexy, contemporary panache, resulting in a hybrid play, both comical and lovely, performed by longtime friends Mia Barron, Maggie Lacey, and Danielle Skraastad. The plot is a simple yet clever excuse to explore and exploit one show biz stereotype after another, made all the more delightful by the Prohibition-era nostalgia of the Moonlighters, a ukulele and steel guitar band. **FLAVORPILL**

“These young women pull up gold with their performance” **BROADWAY.COM**



The World Premiere of  
**St. Scarlet**

WRITTEN BY JULIA JORDAN



A **WET** PRODUCTION  
PRODUCED BY  
**SASHA EDEN & VICTORIA PETTIBONE**  
DIRECTED BY **CHRIS MESSINA**

At the Ontological Theater, St. Mark's Church 131 East 10th Street, East Village NYC  
June 17th - July 17th 2003

Cast: Michael Chernus, Katie Dietz, Rosemarie Dewitt, Gabe Fazio, Ivan Martin,  
Susan O'Connor, and Joan Jaffry Poust



## Selected Press From *St. Scarlet*

“Despairing about the future of the theater? Find the business of the stage too cynical, merely a capillary of the vast, widget-making entertainment complex? It might do you good to pop in on *St. Scarlet*...independent, enterprising young people doing polished, professional work, the kind that bespeaks attention to detail, respect for craft. *St. Scarlet* enhanced by a production - directed by Chris Messina . . .The set is spot on...the costumes are equally good...the acting is thoughtful throughout. The night I saw *St. Scarlet* the small theater was full, the audience mostly young and salted with actors I recognized from other downtown shows. They contributed to the feeling in the house that the enterprise of putting on a play is a worthy one, both joyful and serious. The energy and sincerity of aspiring artists filled the room, and it was infectious.”

- **The New York Times**

“Julia Jordan is the playwright of the moment, with four plays scheduled for New York City productions this season. And if her first outing, *St. Scarlet* is typical of her work, this will be a red-letter year for audiences...Jordan crafts an often hilarious and, more surprisingly, moving meditation on the ties that bind both lovers and families, no matter how hard people try to break free. Chris Messina does a fine job of directing, keeping the proceedings believable even at their most extreme, and never letting the pacing flag. O’Connor is truly spectacular at bringing warmth and sympathy to the potentially annoying Ruby, while Dewitt, Martin and Michael Chernus are all very good.”

- **The New York Post**

“There is a generous heart at the center of this drama...you will root for these characters. This season could still turn out to be the year of Jordan.”

- **Time Out New York**

“A sure-fire hit ...Expect lovable characters, digestible themes, and a happy ending. *St. Scarlet* is full of intelligence and wit; even its title is a smart play on the concept of fractured identity.”

- **Theatermania.com**

“Three snowbound siblings have to cope simultaneously with their mother’s death and a confrontational intruder in this play by a much touted newcomer, Julia Jordan. Her producers are WET– that is, they’re Women’s Expressive Theater – but they’re probably not all wet, since they’ve had the sense to hire one of New York’s more adventurous young actors, Chris Messina, to direct Jordan’s opus.”

- **The Village Voice**

World Premiere. Produced at the Greenwich Street Theater, 547 Greenwich St.,  
February 23rd - March 16th,  
with Shannon Burkett, Anne Carney, Flora Diaz, Sasha Eden, David Wheir,



written by **Sheila Callaghan** directed by **Hayley Finn**  
produced by Women's Expressive Theater Inc.



## Selected Press from Scab

“...a textbook example of promising work, written with a yen for interesting language and liberally salted with well-observed details of the lives of newly minted adults...The three principals are all attractive and all quite good; each manages to be both idiosyncratic and representative, which is one reason the play should be especially appealing to people in their 20's who will undoubtedly see their striving and hopeful, striving and despairing selves on the stage...Ms. Eden is sweetly persuasive as a girl-next-door type with a fervent intellectual sincerity and a nascent non prudish streak. (Christa is clearly an emblematic role for Ms. Eden who, with Victoria Pettibone, is a co-artistic director of WET, a company whose name, according to its mission statement, “is a representation of our fundamental belief that women can be powerful, intelligent, creative and sexual.”)...Mr. Wheir is very appealing as the older man, a kind of academic hanger-on whose combination of seriousness, pretension and boyish charm is easy to imagine as attractive to both the sincerely ambitious Christa and Anima, the self-anointed martyr.”

- **New York Times**

“Director Hayley Finn mounts a stylish production with snappy pacing, clever musical accents and design.”

- **Village Voice**

“Despite the heavy subject matter, the play is very funny. The humor comes out naturally. Shannon Burkett is excellent as the over-dramatic, tortured and drunken theater student; she is the ultimate cynic. Sasha Eden shines, displaying a great sense of comic timing as the enthusiastic ingénue who grows into her own. Hayley Finn's direction keeps the cast on the same rhythm throughout and makes a sometimes wacky play very engaging.”

- **Backstage.com**

"Scab, a hyper articulate odd-couple comedy, may close this weekend, but it deserves a second life. Sheila Callaghan crafts sparkling dialogue....the romantic entanglements are handled with wit and sensitivity.”

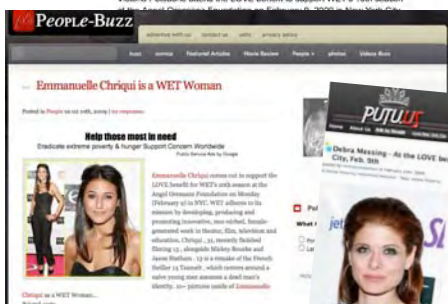
- **Time Out NY**

# **WET's Events**

**Selected Press**







## Online:

**Celebs-Fashion.net** (February 10, 2009)  
**Hip Celebrity.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Hot Celebs Home** (February 10, 2009)  
**People Buzz.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Zimbo.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Suprior Topics.Com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Nowatermark.net** (February 10, 2009)  
**Wordpress.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Jollypeople.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Fafarazzi.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Zimbo.com** (February 7, 2009)  
**Putu.us Blog** (February 7, 2009)  
**vpqv.net** (February 7, 2009)  
**rantstoughtsmerde.blogspot.com** (February 7, 2009)  
**X17.COM** (February 7, 2009)  
**Exposay.com** (February 7, 2009)  
**debra-m.com** (February 7, 2009)  
**Womanaroundtown.com** (February 8, 2009)  
**Times Square Gossip.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Insider Management Group** (February 10, 2009)  
**StarMAXinc.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Exposay.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Nachophoto.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**Celebutopia** (February 10, 2009)  
**widgetbox.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**celebritieswonder.com** (February 10, 2009)  
**famegame.com** (February 11, 2009)  
**www.putu.us** (February 11, 2009)  
**Yahoo Buzz** (February 14, 2009)  
**Smallworld.com**

## Broadcast:

**Kjoy 98.3 WLBG 96.1** (February 6, 2009)  
**Kjoy 98.3 WLBG 96.1** (February 13, 2009)  
**NBC MOBILE** (March 2, 2009)-Feature



# SundayStyles

The New York Times

10 ST

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2009



Feb. 9: Women's Expressive Theater gave a benefit that included short plays and an after-party at the Angel Orensanz Foundation for the Arts, built in 1849 as a synagogue and now a party and production space, in the East Village. The theater advances women, particularly playwrights, in the theater.

1. LUCY BOYLE, left, and TRACIE THOMS.

2. EMMANUELLE CHRIQUI, left, and BLYTHE DANNER.

3. The interior.

4. ELLEN MELAVER, left, and PERREY REEVES.

5. From left, VICTORIA PETTIBONE, a founder; Alysia Reiner; DAVID ALAN BASCHE; DEBRA MESSING; and SASHA EDEN, also a founder.



Feb. 6: The 54th Viennese Opera Ball, at the Waldorf, took place in the midst of a mini opera, with the host, "Prince Orlofsky" from Strauss's "Fledermaus," arriving in the ballroom in a coach. After that, the 700 guests began waltzing.



## EVENING HOURS

Bill Cunningham

## Waltzing Away



Feb. 10: The annual awards dinner of the International Women's Health Coalition took place at Cipriani 42nd Street. The event was attended by

more than 400 guests.

15. From left, EDIE LEDERER, TIMOTHY WIRTH, DIANA L. TAYLOR and ADRIENNE GERMAIN, the coalition's president.

16. ROBIN CHANDLER DUKE, 17. MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG and Ms. Taylor.

18. VIVIAN DONNELLEY, left, and VIRGINIA JOFFE.

19. From left, RUTH MESSINGER, DEBORAH TOLMAN and GALE BREWER.



"LOVE," A PERFORMANCE OF SHORT PLAYS TO BENEFIT WET PRODUCTION'S TENTH SEASON ANGEL ORENSANZ FOUNDATION. FEBRUARY 9.

**A study says college-age men orgasm twice as often as their female hookup partners. Any advice for women who can't get off?**

*"You go and see a movie and it's so perfect and beautiful and no one's making funny faces. It's not realistic. So basically, don't watch movies. Ever."*

—Perrey Reeves



INTERVIEW MAGAZINE CELEBRATES TWENTY YEARS WITH PATRICK MCMULLAN ELAINE'S. FEBRUARY 10.

**Is there anything about you on the Internet that you'd like to disappear?**

*"I am just happy that in my heyday—when I was in my twenties, and I was drunk and stupid—there was no TMZ. Thank God."* —Iman

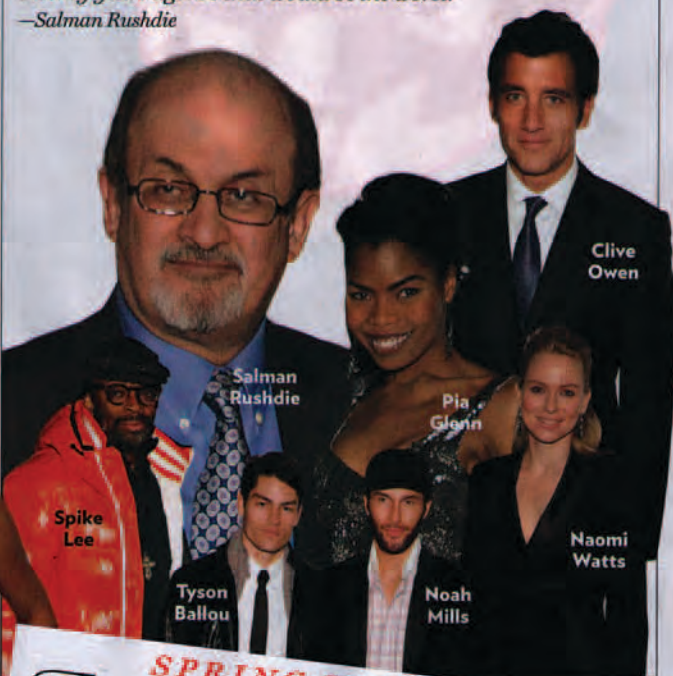


THE CINEMA SOCIETY AND ANGEL BY THIERRY MUGLER HOST THE PREMIERE OF *THE INTERNATIONAL* AMC LINCOLN SQUARE AND GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM. FEBRUARY 9.

**What was your worst Valentine's Day?**

*"The Khomeini fatwa was pronounced on Valentine's Day. Twenty years ago. So that would be the worst."*

—Salman Rushdie





## WET women fight for meatier roles in entertainment

Read More: 30 Rock, Alysia Reiner, Andre Royo, Anne Hathaway, Blythe Danner, David Alan Basche, Debra Messing, Emmanuelle Chriqui, Entourage, George Lucas, J.D. Williams, January Jones, Mad Men, Marisa Tomei, Maulik Pancholy, Perry Reeves, Sabine Singh, Steven Spielberg, The Wire, Tina Fey, Entertainment News

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Try this short exercise. Off the top of your head, name 10 female directors. Now name 10 lead roles on television for women who don't play the wife or the girlfriend. How about 10 female rolls on TV for women who are "average size"? How'd you do?

There's no doubt it's been an amazing year for female roles in entertainment. Tina Fey's Liz Lemon still harps on having a baby, whether there's a man in the picture or not. January Jones surprised us all on *Mad Men*, when her perfect Betty housewife kicked Don Draper out of

their perfect suburban house for cheating. And as far as Oscar nominations, whether it's the self-absorbed rehabber Anne Hathaway in *Rachel Getting Married*, or the single mom stripper, Marisa Tomei in *The Wrestler*, these are not your typical heroines.

But while there are some incredible meaty roles for actresses out there, they're certainly not the majority. Enter WET, or Women's Expressive Theater, a not-for-profit production company that aims to break down the stereotypes of women in entertainment. Founded by Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone in 1999, WET develops and produces female-generated content in film, theater, television and education.

Regarding the name WET, "It may seem ironic. It's meant to be," said Eden on the stage Monday night at their annual Love benefit at the Angel Orensanz Foundation. An amazing array of actors including Debra Messing, Blythe Danner, J.D. Williams, Andre Royo, Maulik Pancholy, Alysia Reiner, David Alan Basche, Sabine Singh, Perry Reeves and Emmanuelle Chriqui presented eight short plays all about love. The content of the plays covered a married couple's complications at a sperm bank, one woman's obsession over an Obama campaign volunteer, and a love story between a person, a dog, and a plant.

J.D. Williams, who came out to play the said plant, is no stranger to nontraditional roles, having played the young drug-dealer Bodie on *The Wire*, a type of role never before seen on TV. "The biggest challenge for women is really exposure," he says. "What I'm talking about is for there to be a female Steven Spielberg. Or you know, a female George Lucas. They are out there, but they don't get the recognition."

Another former *Wire* actor, Andre Royo, who brought the role of Bubbles to life on the show, tells us, "A friend of mine was writing a movie, and asking me if I knew any female directors to refer him to. And it took me an hour to think of two. I think that's very sad." With only 15% of women holding powerful behind-the-scenes roles like producer, writer or director in the U.S. industry, it's no surprise that Royo couldn't think of more. A 2007 San Diego Stage study found that female directors accounted for 6% of the industry, down from 11% in 2000. Royo says his daughter wants to be an actress, and it pains him that he holds reservations about encouraging her to enter the profession.

It's no secret that there's a long road for any woman to reach success in showbiz. On what she's most peeved about, Entourage's Emmanuelle Chriqui tells us, "I think we're just sexualized more often than not. Actresses want to act. We don't just want to just be pretty. And it's tough. It always seems like the more you love a project, the tougher it is." Her co-star Perry Reeves says she had the most trouble when she was breaking in to the industry: "I remember when I first started acting, people were like, 'oh you know, they're not going to like you. You're kinda a little eggy. You're kinda, maybe a little smart.'" Reeves is more than thrilled now to transform the traditional wife role as Mrs. Ari Gold.

There is hope when it comes to building female representation in the industry, and that hope begins with organizations like WET. Perhaps to see how far we have to go, we have to look to how far we've come. "I think it's evolved so well since the 60s, when I began," says Blythe Danner. "I see more roles for powerful women and for minority women, in general."

30 Rock's, Maulik Pancholy, believes the solution is representing more real women in entertainment. "It's exciting, because it is happening," he says. "And there are especially great parts for women, and I'm lucky that I get to work with two of the strongest women on television. So I do think it can change."



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# Selected Press from WET's 2008 LOVE Benefit

## TELEVISION:

**New York 1** (January 26th, 2008) - "Tends Expert" segment promotes LOVE benefit and products from Korbel Champagne and Philosophy, two of the sponsors of LOVE.

## PRINT:

**New York Daily News** (February 8, 2008) – Rush and Molloy column item mentioning LOVE Benefit.

**New York Magazine** (February 25, 2008) – Intelligencer section inclusion with picture of Ricki Lake; Party Lines page of photos of performers and a quote from Michael Cerveris.

**OK! Magazine** (March 3, 2008) – Ricki Lake at LOVE featured in Hot Buzz.

**Soaps In Depth** - Photos of Sabine Singh at LOVE

## RADIO:

**"The Movie Show and MORE"** – Host, Stacy Horton, mentioned the LOVE Benefit twice on her radio show which airs on Lifestyle Talk Radio Network.

## ONLINE:

**New York Social Diary** (January 28, 2008) – Listing benefit on social calendar.

**Playbill** (January 30, 2008) – Ran a story to promote ticket sales.

**Gothamist** (February 11, 2008) – Ran a story to promote ticket sales.

**New York Magazine** (February 12, 2008) – Two articles written about the event: "The Martha Plimpton and Josh Hamilton Comedy Team on 'Top Girls,' Dildos, and Jury Duty" and "Michael Cerveris Will Be Spending Valentine's Day With Vampires, His Dog."

**WireImage** (February 12, 2008) – Posted paparazzi photos.

**Patrick McMullan** (February 12, 2008) – Posted paparazzi photos.

**Retna** (February 12, 2008) – Posted paparazzi photos.

**TheaterMania** (February 12, 2008) – Posted paparazzi photos.

**Broadway World** (February 12, 2008) – Article about the event with photos.

**We Love Soaps** (February 12, 2008) – Photo of Sabine Singh, Jane Alexander and Laila Robins from their performances.

**Jezebel** (February 12, 2008) – Posted link to Michael Cerveris New York Magazine article.

**Broadway.com** (February 20, 2008) – Posted photos from LOVE Benefit.

**Forbes.com** – Interviewed Sasha Eden and Ricki Lake.





# EVERETT YORK

FEBRUARY 25, 2008



## Party Lines

"LOVE." THE SECOND ANNUAL WOMEN'S EXPRESSIVE THEATER BENEFIT THE ANGEL ORENSANZ FOUNDATION, FEBRUARY 11.

### Ever make a grand romantic gesture?

*"My whole life I've been making them. I've gotten on planes with no notice and flown across oceans. They meet with intermittent success, but often abject failure. In the long term, I'm still going home to my dog."*

—Michael Cerveris



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# TRAVEL + LEISURE

MAY 2008

## SPECIAL ISSUE



Ricki Lake, actress, producer, author, and activist; Sasha Eden, Executive Producer/Creative Director of WET and actress; Victoria Pettibone, Executive Producer/Director of Operations of WET; Abby Epstein, director, producer, and author. Photo credit: Maggie Soladay

### WET LOVE BENEFIT

On February 11, 2008, the non-profit production company **WET**, produced its annual LOVE benefit, at the Angel Orensanz Foundation in NYC, directed by Abby Epstein and designed by event designer guru, Bryant Keller. This benefit mixed today's most exciting writers and performers with a little Valentine's Day romance, a dose of creativity, and a whole lot of social consciousness. LOVE featured performances by Jane Alexander, Lauren Ambrose, Michael Cerveris, Rosemarie DeWitt, Josh Hamilton, Neil Patrick Harris, Peter Hermann, Ricki Lake, Gretchen Mol, Martha Plimpton, Laila Robins, Sabine Singh, and Danielle Skraastad, followed by a chic and sexy after party. WET's 2008 LOVE benefit was sponsored by Travel + Leisure, **A.Link**, and **Korbel Champagne**, and co-sponsored by **JetBlue Airways**, and restaurants **Pala Pizza Romana** and **RICE**. All proceeds from WET's LOVE benefit support WET's 2008 season. Founded in 1999 by Executive Producers Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone, WET is a 501c3 not for profit production company that produces media which challenges female stereotypes and advocates for equality.

For more information and photos from the event, visit [WETWEB.ORG](http://WETWEB.ORG).

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# NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 25, 2008

## Intelligencer

### Ricki's Babies Destined For Fame!

*But she isn't pushing them.*

**Ricki Lake** knows her kids will be stars. "My older son"—that's **Milo**, age 10—"is going to be a musician," she said at the Women's Expressive Theater benefit on February 11. "They call him mini-Jimi, because he's like a little Jimi Hendrix. And my younger one"—**Owen**, 6—"is a little comedian." Lake says she's not a stage mom. "Part of me wants to shove him out there," she said of Milo, "but I battle that and want him to have a normal childhood." The former talk-show host knows the perils of fame. "I don't want him to be famous," she said. "But he's that good that he could be."

—Tim Murphy



# DAILY CANDY


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October 5, 2004

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## Today's Special

If starving actors and actresses wait tables between gigs, wouldn't it follow that playing a waitress onstage would be a no-brainer of a role? Director and screenwriter Adrienne Shelley may or may not have drawn on life experience when writing her latest play, *Waitress*. She did, however, call on her real contacts when she asked WET, the not-for-profit theater production company that supports women in the arts, to help stage the show.



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Celebrate the launch of the IN.NYC<sup>SM</sup> Card at a free, interactive art exhibition open to the public from Oct. 8-11. Inside a large-scale pavilion created by internationally acclaimed artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, visitors can explore distinctive expressions of NYC life. Presented by American Express and organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Learn more at [www.innyc.com](http://www.innyc.com).

 **Today in Everywhere:** Is your shoulder lonely? A new [handbag](#) is sure to make it feel better.

That was last week. Fast-forward to tonight (and tonight only): There will be a reading of Shelley's script at the East 13th Street Theater. The plot: a quirky, romantic story of a waitress who can dish it out everywhere. Except, that is, at home. The conflict: She hates her husband and she wants out, but she just found out she's pregnant. The supporting players: pie-serving sidekicks and a nebbishy gynecologist.

*Waitress* stars Paul Rudd, Gretchen Mol, and possibly a certain commedienne whose name we've been asked not to reveal (but whose initials are A.S.). There's going to be an after-party, so be sure to tip your caterwaiters nicely.

Hoping for seconds? You'll have to talk to the chefs.

*Reading of Adrienne Shelley's Waitress, 6 p.m., at East 13th Street Theater, 136 East 13th Street, between Third and Fourth Avenues (212-396-4280). Tickets are free, but the theater is small. Accommodations are first come, first served, and priority is given to those who sign up. For more information and to put yourself on the guest list, go to [wetweb.org](http://wetweb.org).*





# **WET's Educational Program**

## **Selected Press**

# Finding their voices

By ABBY LUBY

Sunday, February 18th, 2007

Two years ago, a very shy 14-year-old New Yorker named Alexandra Campos tried to open up to girls she'd never met. She was encouraged by what she called a "safe haven" - a place where you could express yourself without the fear of rejection.

The safe haven is actually a self-esteem program for teen girls started by the Women's Expressive Theater, Inc. (WET), a non-profit group that aims to dispel female stereotypes. Known as the "Risk Takers Film Series," the program screens films that the girls can relate to and talk about.

"It's the best thing I could've ever done," said Campos, now 16 and a theater student at Beacon High School in Manhattan. She was back at Risk Takers last month for the program's kickoff session.

Risk Takers, now in its third year, is the brainchild of WET executive producers Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone, professionals in Off-Broadway theater production.

"We were frustrated by how women were seen in the media," said Pettibone. "We wanted to teach girls how to look at 'airbrushed' women with a critical eye and know they don't have to be all the images they see."

An active force of volunteers in more than 50 city high schools recruits girls ages 12-17 for the free series.

"We visit all high schools - public, magnet, private schools," said Eden. "The girls fill out a simple application and all they have to do is show up."

For one Saturday a month, girls come to the Calhoun School on West End Ave., watch a film chosen specifically for the program, then talk about it in small groups. After a free lunch, the teens meet the woman who wrote or directed that film.

One of the program's goals is to explore racial issues among teenage girls, but finding films about women of color can be a challenge, said Eden. "There are not a lot of movies appropriate for teen girls directed or produced by women of color."

On a Saturday in late January, a racially mixed group of about 80 girls watched "Lovely & Amazing," a film written and directed by Nicole Holofcener. Holofcener has directed episodes of "Sex and the City" and is known for her earlier film "Walking and Talking," starring Anne Heche and Catherine Keener.

"Lovely & Amazing" explores the relationship between a mother (Brenda Blethyn) and her two adult daughters (Emily Mortimer and Catherine Keener) who are obsessed with how they look, and a third, adopted daughter who is 8 years old and African-American (Raven Goodwin).

After a Q&A with the filmmakers, volunteer mentors with backgrounds in psychology lead discussion groups.

"The mentors try to draw the girls out," said Lisa Borneman, a clinical social worker and a psychotherapist who oversees the 30 mentors in the program. "We start with how the movie relates to the girls' own lives.

The idea is to talk about body image and self-esteem and get them to access their feelings."

For 15-year-old Mischka Bedasee, speaking in the Risk Takers discussion group was a real challenge.

"You try to feel comfortable about what you think," said Bedasee, a student at the High School of Fashion Industries. "It gives females a chance to open up and to express themselves. It gives us a voice."

Bedasee said girls talk a lot about appearance. "We want to look better to other girls - it's how we compete for guys."

When the entire group met with Holofcener, she was joined by Oscar-winning actress Frances McDormand, a strong supporter of WET and Risk Takers. The women spoke frankly and joked with the crowd during the Q&A.

"Self-respect was the key when I was a teen," said Holofcener. "I remember it was so difficult to pick new friends. I chose friends who were bad - they were cool and sexy - the girls who teased somebody and stole things. My friends didn't get me. But I had a strong moral sense."

Meeting these professional women was inspiring for 17-year-old Holland Hamilton, a student at the Professional Performing Arts School

"There is the fame factor," said Hamilton, who has been participating in the Risk Takers series for all three years. "I get to talk to these famous people and see that they are just like me."

Another perk of the program is accessing a list of internships provided by WET. Interning with a stage manager gave Hamilton a different focus on her future. "I had an amazing experience and it helped me decide that I was going to college," she said. "I'm going to Oberlin."

Campos said that the risks she took in the program were hard but satisfying.

"In the beginning, everyone has that wall up that says, 'I don't know you and I don't know what I should say.' But as time goes on, that wall starts breaking down and it's very rewarding." u

The next Risk Takers session is on Feb. 24 at the Calhoun School. To apply or learn more, call (212) 682-0265 or visit [www.wetweb.org](http://www.wetweb.org).



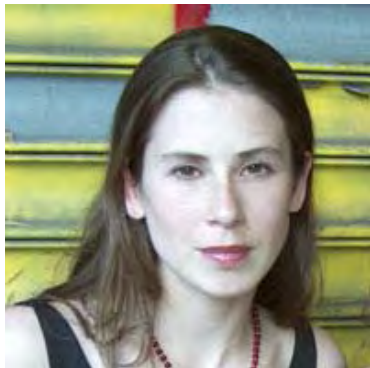
Rosier NEWS

**Frances McDormand and WET co-founder Sasha Eden during a Q&A session with director Nicole Holofcener.**



Rosier NEWS





## Why We Admire Her

On a Saturday morning, 100 teenage girls watch *The Breakfast Club* in a New York City high school. After the film, Ally Sheedy herself will drop by to discuss teen stereotypes, peer pressure, and whether her artsy character should have succumbed to a makeover from Molly Ringwald's snotty one. This event is part of WET's Risk Takers Film Series, started in 2004 by Pettibone, a Manhattan casting director, and her friend Sasha Eden, an actress. It's only one step they're taking toward a bigger mission: to squash female stereotypes in the media.

## How She Got Started

Eight years ago, after having helped cast a few Broadway productions — the hit *Rent* among them — Pettibone got frustrated that most female roles were dumb babes, not-so-hot best friends, or dutiful wives and moms. So she and Eden got together to produce plays about women who aren't so one-dimensional. "We weren't looking for a story about 'promoting equality' but rather scripts with complex, central female characters," Pettibone says. They named the venture Women's Expressive Theater (WET). Using their showbiz connections, the duo hosted readings and high-profile fundraisers with celebs like Paul Rudd to finance WET's first show, *I Stand Before You Naked* by Joyce Carol Oates at the New York International Fringe Festival in August 1999. The play was a hit, but Pettibone realized that to make a bigger difference, she needed to reach a younger audience. That's when she and Eden created WET's Risk Takers Film Series. They announced the program in person at local high schools, touting celebrity guests like Frances McDormand (*North Country*) to get girls excited. "Guest actors can show the girls they're human and inspire them to work hard, take risks, and have courage," Pettibone says.



## What She's Accomplished

WET has produced seven sold-out shows — all written by women. And in less than 3 years, WET's Risk Takers Film Series has enrolled more than 300 students from 50 high schools. "I learned from this program that I can and should take positive risks in my life — it doesn't matter how big or small," says Sara Lyons, a Risk Takers student who directed a play last year as a senior in high school.

## Her Latest Production

*BFF*, a dark comedy about two girlfriends written by playwright Anna Ziegler and directed by Josh Hecht, opened in New York this February.

For more on WET and the film series, visit [Women's Expressive Theater](#).