

Laurents's ability to direct is more often lauded than his writing. He regularly unites all elements of the production—music, voice, setting, movement, and picturization—to create vibrant dramatic moments. The understanding of structure and character honed in his writing assists in drawing out fully human characterizations. His ability to find new or underutilized talent—Jane Fonda in *Invitation to a March*, Lansbury in *Anyone Can Whistle*, George Hearn in *La Cage aux Folles*—signifies an astute eye and ensures his lasting influence.

A very sexual man—his first gay experience was at thirteen and he was more interested in quantity of partners than quality for many years—Laurents struggled with his homosexuality in psychotherapy, keeping it out of his play *Heartsong* (1946) and claiming that he would have excluded it as a subtext from *Home of the Brave* (Laurents, 65, 53). At the same time, he accepted his homosexuality and is proud of how “truthfully” it was treated in his first movie, *Rope* (1931). There are biographical aspects of his work to explore (particularly in *The Enclave*), as well as thematic obsessions, such as the figure of the complicated, boyish blond (i.e., the major in *Home of the Brave*, the disillusioned artist in *Time of the Cuckoo*, the characters played by Hatcher, and Robert Redford's Hubbell in *The Way We Were*). Laurents has identified his own recurrent themes as discovery, acceptance, prejudice, and betrayal (4)—themes with which any homosexual can empathize. Although he struggled with it, he has never denied his homosexuality. He wrote that, even while carrying on physical relationships with women, “I didn't believe the ability to have sex with a woman made me heterosexual” (55). Homosexuality's impact on his life—his relationship with Hatcher and his friendships—and his working relationships with gay men is clear. However, it is also clear that the media ignored this man's personal life until 1995, denying many a role model whose mainstream career unashamedly included gay material.

See L. Kramer, “His Brilliant Career,” *The Advocate* 681 (May 16, 1995): 49–56; A. Laurents, *Original Story By: A Memoir of Broadway and Hollywood*, New York, 2000; “Laurents, Arthur,” in *Current Biography Yearbook, 1984*, edited by C. Moritz, New York, 1984, 220–23; G. Loney, “Arthur Laurents Is High on Comedy,” *After Dark* 6 (November 1973): 34–36; G. Raymond, “Arthur Laurents: Back to the Future,” *Theatre Week*, June 26, 1995; V. Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies*, rev. ed., New York, 1987; and D. Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock*, Boston, 1983.

Jeffrey Smart

**Le GALLIENNE, Eva** (1899–1991), actress, director, producer, author, and translator, was born in London. Her parents traveled in the popular artis-

tic circles of the day, and Eva quickly developed a taste for literature and the arts. Her father was an intimate of Oscar Wilde. As the marriage of her parents disintegrated, she moved with her mother to Paris, where they lived alongside free-spirited expatriate women such as Edith Wharton, Isadora Duncan, and Gertrude Stein in the area that was later labeled “the left Bank of Lesbos.” Inspired by the performances of Sarah Bernhardt, she studied acting at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and made her acting debut in London in 1914.

The next year she sailed for New York. In 1918, while performing in a company with Ethel Barrymore, she formed her first important lesbian relationship with the notorious actress **Alla Nazimova** and moved into an apartment at the famous Algonquin Hotel. From 1920 to 1925, her name was in lights, and there were larger than life photos of her on billboards as she toured the country in *Not So Long Ago*, *Liliom*, and *The Swan*. She was the darling of the media, providing interviews about her beauty secrets, advertising products, and modeling the latest fashions.

While she was projecting heterosexuality in the media, she was engaged in a five-year relationship with **Mercedes de Acosta**. She starred in two of de Acosta’s plays—*Sandro Botticelli* in New York and *Jebanne d’Arc* in Paris. Neither was successful. Le Gallienne’s reviews began to describe her acting as “cold and intellectual,” code words from disapproving male critics over her masculine behavior onstage at a time when frilly femininity was still the expected mode.

Rejected by the Actors’ Theatre when she asked it to produce Ibsen’s *The Master Builder* with herself in the role of Hilda Wangel, she struck out on her own and mounted a production with lesbian Gladys Calthrop as designer. Reviewers were dazzled by her ultramasculine performance as she toured the country with the play.

Heady with success, at the age of twenty-seven and at the height of her fame, this daunting and determined maverick turned her back on stardom and dared to challenge the male-dominated Broadway system of long runs, high prices, and typecasting. Supported by wealthy patrons such as Otto H. Kahn and the reclusive lesbian Alice De Lamar, she established America’s first classical repertory theater, the Civic Repertory Theatre (1926–35). Associated with her theater was a school for apprentices, whose students included Robert Lewis, Burgess Meredith, Arnold Moss, Howard da Silva, John Garfield, May Sarton, and J. Edward Bromberg.

Her Civic Repertory Theatre enjoyed tributes from leading critics of the day. Robert Benchley insisted that “one ought to go there about once a month just to recapture the feeling of theatregoing” (36). At the end of

the first season, she had filled her theater to an average 78 percent capacity and had produced six out of eight critical successes. She won a listing for two years on *Nation* magazine's Roll of Honor and a cover photograph on *Time* (November 25, 1929). By her third season, she was playing to 91 percent capacity. During the company's ten years, she staged thirty-seven plays in New York and toured the most successful ones during the summer. The most popular offerings included *Hedda Gabler*, *Peter Pan*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Camille*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *The Cradle Song*. Her production of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* was New York's English-language premiere.

Her popularity took a turn in the 1930s. With her focus on the classics, especially on the plays of Ibsen, she limited her following. She had been honored from coast to coast for her commitment to noncommercial drama, but by 1935 Americans, caught in the Great Depression, were more interested in contemporary social commentary.

Theatergoers had also become more aware of her lesbianism. She had begun a relationship with Civic actress **Josephine Hutchinson** in the late 1920s. When newspapers across the country got wind of "Josie's" divorce from her estranged husband, they reported that he had named Le Gallienne as correspondent. Although it was not true, the damage was done. Influential and homophobic critic George Jean Nathan dubbed the Civic Repertory Theatre "the Le Gallienne sorority" (122) while countless cruel jokes and rumors began to circulate about activities at the theater.

In 1937, **Margaret Webster** moved into Le Gallienne's professional and private life. Along with **Cheryl Crawford**, the troika of lesbians founded the American Repertory Theatre in 1946. Le Gallienne starred in *Henry VIII*, *What Every Woman Knows*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, and *Alice in Wonderland*, directing the latter two shows as well. Although it received considerable financial support and strong testimonials from Broadway luminaries, the company could not withstand union demands, the high cost of producing plays in repertory, and the many complaints over its play selection. The accusations of communism leveled at both Webster and Crawford hurt ticket sales.

Le Gallienne's life and career went steadily downhill. In 1951, her relationship with Margaret Webster ended, and, except for sporadic successes, her theater career was over. When not acting or directing, she turned her energies to translating the plays of Ibsen and the tales of Hans Christian Andersen, as well as writing a biography of Eleonora Duse and her own autobiography. In the summers, she often taught acting at Lucille Lortel's White Barn Theatre in Connecticut. One of her young students was Peter Falk. During long stretches of inactivity, she turned to alcohol for escape.

In 1957, Le Gallienne appeared as Queen Elizabeth in Tyrone Guthrie's production of *Mary Stuart*, which was a stunning success. The attention brought her television roles and a five-year affiliation with the National Repertory Theatre (1961–66), where she either acted in or directed the great plays of Shakespeare, Ibsen, Chekhov, Sheridan, Molière, Schiller, and Euripides. Instead of performing in New York, the company toured the country, performing at colleges and universities and in civic auditoriums. In 1968, she joined the APA-Phoenix Theatre for one season, performing in *Exit the King* and directing *The Cherry Orchard*. Between 1957 and 1975, the once prominent actress appeared in only 117 Broadway performances.

Le Gallienne returned to Broadway in 1975 with Ellis Rabb's revival of *The Royal Family*. Although it was intended for only a two-week engagement at Washington's Kennedy Center, the successful production went on to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Broadway, a twenty-three-week national tour, and finally a television special.

Her range of acting was remarkable. She went from the classic *Trojan Women* to the contemporary *Exit the King*, from the sentimental *Liliom* to the psychological complexity of *Ghosts*, from the romanticism of *Camille* to the realism of *Hedda Gabler*, and from the fantasy of *Peter Pan* to the operatic bravado of *Mary Stuart*. She was selected by nationally known director Lee Strasberg as a "vivid example of what American actors are capable of" (qtd. in Wasserman, 6).

Intent on making her characterizations appear realistic, she carefully plotted their logical development in the play. Constant attention was given to maintaining her technical skills of vocal control and bodily movement. But when rehearsing and performing her acting was dependent on her concentration. She tried to think and listen as the character, often including pauses to draw the audience into her thought process.

When she directed, she always read the play to the company at the first rehearsal, making no attempt to act it out but rather to set the tone. This was followed by several full-company readings, until the meanings were understood and the actors had clear ideas about their characterizations. Only then did they begin to explore on the stage. Her most vital function as a director was building an ensemble, one in which each actor was important and in which all worked as a harmonious unit. Rather than direct as a dictator imposing her ideas, she looked on rehearsals as a collaborative effort. She had clear concepts not only of the characters but of all technical elements, from the lighting to the smallest prop.

Behind her public role as a famous actress, director, and producer, Eva Le Gallienne led a private life troubled by her personal struggle with lesbianism. For more than fifty years, she lived in shadows. Like many les-

bians of her generation, she viewed herself as a man trapped in a female body. Because she was unwilling to hide behind a convenient marriage or to camouflage her relationships in order to boost her career, her sexuality became a nemesis that created her great need for privacy.

Acting was a way of publicly expressing her personal feelings. She could reveal her soul when she performed. Some have said that her struggle with her sexuality drained her creative energy; others have said it was the very source of it. Regardless, it profoundly influenced her art, coloring her selection of scripts, casting choices, management decisions, style of acting, and ultimately her critical reception.

Burgess Meredith has remarked that in the 1920s Le Gallienne was regarded as a “Young Goddess, an inspiration.” The high royalty of the American theater consisted of five people—**Katharine Cornell**, **Helen Hayes**, **Alfred Lunt**, **Lynn Fontanne**, and **Eva Le Gallienne**. “To have a role in one of their plays was more than a privilege,” he stressed. “It was a kind of knighthood” (*New York Times*, June 16, 1974).

During her long career, she earned a Tony Award for lifetime achievement (1964), an Emmy for her role in a television broadcast of *The Royal Family* (1977), the American National Theatre and Academy’s (ANTA) National Artist Award (1977), and an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actress in the film *Resurrection* (1980). At the age of eighty-two, she received another Tony nomination for her performance in *To Grandmother’s House We Go* (1981). She did not win, but the *New York Times* paid tribute: “She has no equal on Broadway. It is easy to fall in love all over again with Eva Le Gallienne, her face, her voice, her poise, and her beauty” (*New York Times*, January 16, 1981). In 1986, President Ronald Reagan awarded her the National Medal of the Arts. When *American Theatre* magazine celebrated the silver anniversary of the nonprofit theater movement in America, they featured Le Gallienne and proclaimed that her efforts in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s “presaged a changing role for the theatre a generation in advance.” Along with Tyrone Guthrie, John Houseman, and Zelda Fichandler, she was credited with being one of the theater artists who “played a part in shaping America’s nonprofit theatre” (Zeisler, 5).

See R. Benchley, “Early Christmas Flopping,” *New Yorker* 6 (December 15, 1930), p. 36; Billy Rose Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library; Civic Repertory Theatre Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University; E. Le Gallienne, *At* 33, New York, 1934; E. Le Gallienne, *With a Quiet Heart*, New York, 1953; G.J. Nathan, “The Theatre,” *American Mercury* 14 (May 1928), p. 122; R.A. Schanke, *Eva Le Gallienne: A Bio-Bibliography*, Westport, CT, 1989; R.A. Schanke, *Shattered Applause: The Lives of Eva Le Gallienne*, Carbondale, IL, 1992; R. A. Schanke, “*That Furious Lesbian*”: *The Story of Mercedes de Acosta*, Carbondale, 2003; R.A. Schanke, “Images of Eva Le Gallienne: Reflections of

Androgyny," *Theatre Survey* 34 (November 1993), 43–53; H. Sheehy, *Eva Le Gallienne: A Biography*, New York, 1998; D. Wasserman, "Developing an American Acting Style," *New York Theatre Review*, II (February 1978), p. 6; P. Zeisler, "Toward Brave New Worlds," *American Theatre* 3 (November 1986), p. 5; *New York Times* (June 16, 1974) and (January 16, 1981). Many letters written over a five-year period by Le Gallienne to Mercedes de Acosta are located in the de Acosta Collection, Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia, PA.

Robert A. Schanke

Ludlam

257

**LUDLAM, Charles** (1943–1987), playwright, actor, director, and designer, was a multidimensional, prolific artist responsible for founding and growing one of the nation's most unique theater enterprises, The Ridiculous Theatrical Company. He was born on April 12, 1943, in Floral Park, New York. Social, cultural, and familial conditions all conspired to shape the artist at the earliest age: his mother lost him at the Mineola Fair, where he aimlessly wandered into a Punch and Judy show, followed by a freak show, "where he saw armless black dwarves painting pictures with their toes" (Samuels, *Complete Plays*, x); the Catholic Church, with its high religious ritual and pageantry, was a prominent force in the Ludlam family; and a movie theater sat directly across the street from his family's home. Ludlam was encouraged to explore his vivid imagination as a child, producing backyard and basement plays and vignettes with other neighborhood children.

Known as a rebel and outcast throughout high school, Ludlam's first real exposure to theater came in the form of an apprenticeship at a summer stock company, the Red Barn Theater, in 1958. There he was exposed to the often frantic, haphazard, and chaotic experience theater can be. He pursued his newfound interest in the theater by traveling to New York and seeing a variety of theatrical entertainments, from the commercial to the avant-garde to the experimental. One such company of the latter type, The Living Theatre, proved to be such a significant influence and motivator for Ludlam that at the age of seventeen he founded his own avant-garde company, the Student's Repertory Theater in Northport, New York.

Ludlam enrolled at Hofstra University (1961–65), where as an acting major he met great resistance from the faculty. He was simply too outrageous and informed, and "his acting was excessive" (Samuels, *Complete Plays*, xi). Two significant milestones in his career grew out of this experience: first, as a result of being an unwanted actor, he turned to writing and directing and wrote his first full-length play, *Edna Brown*; and, second, he explored his sexual identity as a homosexual man. Shortly after