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How to No Shame: A Self-Starting Manual for Creating and Maintaining a No Shame Theatre

Todd Ristau

Hollins University, tristau@hollins.edu

Jeff Goode

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How To No Shame
A self-starting manual for creating and maintaining a No Shame Theatre

By Todd Wm. Ristau and Jeff Goode

The first performance of No Shame Theatre was given on October 3, 1986 from the back of this truck.

Featuring:
- Structure and format for No Shames both on- and off-campus
- No Shame administration and publicity models
  - The history of No Shame
- Resources
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The sale and distribution of this text in no way implies consent or authorization to use the name No Shame Theatre. Such permission will likely be enthusiastically granted if the following conditions are met:

1) Contact Todd Ristau, Jeff Goode, and Stan Ruth (creators of the original No Shame Theatre) about wanting to start a No Shame franchise sufficiently before your first performance so that all parties have a complete understanding of what is being undertaken.
2) Conform to the guidelines and procedures outlined in this manual.
3) Credit the creators of the original No Shame Theatre as such in all materials generated by your franchise.
4) Arrange to have a web page for your No Shame linked off the No Shame hub site at www.noshame.org, and submit all archive materials (orders, photos, press, posters, etc.) in a timely fashion.

All inquiries regarding starting and maintaining a No Shame franchise should be addressed to the original creators at:

Todd Ristau, Program Director
Playwright's Lab at Hollins University
Box 9602
Roanoke, VA 24020

tristau@hollins.edu
or
NoShTh@aol.com
How To No Shame

by

Todd Wm. Ristau

and

Jeff Goode
HEY, YOU. YEAH, YOU.

WANT TO START A THEATRE?

Maybe you purchased this booklet. Perhaps you found it on your table when you returned from the rest room. Possibly it was slipped to you clandestinely by a shadowy figure in the lobby of a commercial theatre who whispered as she passed, “There’s more to theatre than the Samuel French Catalogue.”

Why you? Why did this book find its way into your hands?

Because you’re a risk taker. You’ve got ideas. You’re not satisfied with what’s out there. You crave the new, the different, and you aren’t going to just sit around waiting for it to come looking for you. You are the kind of unreasonable person who actually makes things happen.

You think theatre is the most exciting art form in the world because it’s alive, happening in front of you, aware of its audience, collaborative, combining all other art forms...and yet you feel bored and confused by most of the plays being done in conventional theatres.

You believe the most common mistake emerging artists make is placing too much importance on being accepted by those same “established” theatres. You’re pretty sure that acceptance by “those” theatres is something which comes at the end of your career, not the beginning.

You think people learn more by doing than by watching, but you also know that opportunities to get experience can be few and far between.

You don’t think that finding a way to promote other people’s work has to leave you broke, bitter and alone. You dream of starting a theatre where people don’t have to kiss a chain of ass to get their work done—or sell their house to pay for it when someone says yes to their project proposal. You’ve read how Mamet and Malkovich started out performing plays in church basements, refilled your coffee, and thought to yourself, “Where can I find a church basement?”

You, my friend, are perfect No Shame material, and we’d like to give your truck a jump start. Here you will find most of the information you’ll need to establish a No Shame. If it turns out we don’t answer all your questions, we have contact information for people who can.

“Risk breeds creativity, and I hope I never hear Bob Barker say, ‘Have your risk spayed or neutered!’”

—Jeff Lenhart, Cedar Falls No Shame
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It’s a place where you can take risks. Where you can dare to fail. Not because failure is your goal, but because you learn the most by attempting greatness, even if you don’t quite achieve it. No Shame is a place where fear of failure will not keep you from trying to succeed.

It’s a place where the new becomes the now. Where something fresh out of your mind can be shared with an audience without a selection committee, advisory board, or literary manager in between.

It’s a theatre in a truck—or at least that’s how it started. A low budget, low tech environment that’s had performances under street lights, in courtyards, lobbies, parks, classrooms, bars, churches, and even on real theatre stages. Wherever there is light enough for a script to be read and room for people to watch, No Shame can happen.

It’s a convoy of trucks that has driven around the world, parking in places like Iowa, New York, Florida, Illinois, Texas, North Carolina, Alaska, Ohio, Virginia, California, even England! Each No Shame is individual, and made up of more individuals, but all are communities where absolute beginners work side by side with grizzled veterans of the theatre, and where you can get hands-on experience in every aspect of production—writing, acting, directing, design, even arts administration.

At No Shame anything can happen and usually does. The full range of performance is open to you. On any given night you might see a poem, a dance piece, a puppet show, a monologue, a mime routine, stand-up comedy, a song, improvisation, jugglers, and a magic act—all followed by a delightful ditty on a hand saw. A kind of “open mic” for the theatre with only three basic rules—that the work be original, less than 5 minutes long, and not break any laws. It’s so simple a child could do it...and has.

No Shame’s audience, performers, and writers are constantly changing roles in a single evening, fostering a spirit of cooperation—not competition. No Shame is different from other theatres because anyone can walk in the door the first night and participate in any way they choose. No Shame isn’t something you join; it’s something that by just being there you are already helping to lead.

“No Shame: It's your theatre, make it what you want it to be.”
The University of Iowa is home to the Iowa Playwright’s Workshop, where writers come from all over the world to develop their individual voices, directors come to work with new writers, and actors come to work with new directors. It’s not surprising that a writer-centered venue like No Shame would spring from a writer-centered program like the one at Iowa. What is surprising is that at No Shame the mantle of writer is available to anyone and everyone regardless of experience or skill. Whereas the Workshop is very difficult to get into, No Shame is very easy to get into, and no outside party decides if you are fit to participate.

No Shame started at Iowa not as an outgrowth of the playwriting program, but rather more like a revolutionary reaction against it. To understand the origins of No Shame, you need to look at the conditions which sparked the “revolution.”

In the beginning there was Madness.

The playwrights of the Workshop at Iowa had long had a performance lab called Midnight Madness where each week they were assigned a topic or theme around which to create short scripted pieces. Workshop members had these assignments produced at midnight on Friday in an abandoned math classroom which had been converted to a stage.

Writers got production experience without mounting a full production, and actors got stage experience without the agony of an audition. It had a lot going for it, but there were also limitations. Madness reinforced a power structure that put playwrights at the top and actors at the bottom, because only Workshop playwrights wrote for it. Writers were primary, performers secondary, and audience hardly considered at all. Because Madness was more class project than theatre venue, it was probably inevitable that either the writers would lose interest or another project would eventually replace it. When Madness was cancelled, the undergraduate actors were angry over losing performance opportunities.

They wanted Madness back, but that just wasn’t going to happen.
One night Todd Ristau and Stan Ruth, both in an undergraduate playwriting class, were drinking adult beverages while discussing the complaints of the undergrad actors. The slightly drunken duo decided that the actors should become empowered by writing for themselves. As to the loss of the Madness stage, they proclaimed (loudly) that there was no need to be chained to a particular space, you could (and should) do theatre anywhere. Todd suggested his big green pickup truck.

Stan said, “Yeah!”

Todd said they shouldn’t be ashamed of not being members of some elite writers club or embarrassed by not having a bunch of fancy lights. What was needed was a theatre without shame.

Stan said, “NO SHAME!” and thus the concept, philosophy, and name of No Shame Theatre were born.

Todd had been invited by special permission to become a member of the graduate Playwright’s Workshop while still an undergrad. This made him the best candidate to ask Bob Hedley, chair of both the department and Workshop, if it would be OK to park a truck in the theatre lot on Friday nights and perform Madness-style pieces from the back of it. Bob said, “Hey, that’s a great idea, so long as the Department doesn’t have anything to do with it.”

The time was changed to 11:00 to distinguish No Shame from Midnight
Madness and also to get to the bar an hour earlier for post-performance discussion. There was originally a submission process for No Shame, but pretty quickly Stan and Todd decided they didn’t have time to read the scripts and rejected the idea of saying no to anyone. Another core tenet of No Shame was established.

Jeff Goode, another undergraduate actor/writer, joined the team to help wrangle writers and performers and to get the word out about the first night. Originally the trio went by the name Archie Levine to keep the focus on the participants rather than the organizers, as well as to add a “touch of mystery.”

At the first performance, Todd parked his truck behind the theatre. Brad Schnurr sat on Kris Farrar’s motorcycle and aimed its headlamp to provide light for the performers standing in the truck bed. He revved its engine between pieces to recharge the battery for the next piece. The truck stereo was the sound board. Shamelessly low tech and glorious.

When it was over, Stan Ruth shouted to the crowd from the back of the truck, “Come back next week for Hard Liquor and Hand Gun Night at No Shame Theatre!” The audience roared its support and came back Friday after Friday regardless of the weather, just to see what was going to happen next. They have kept coming back for nearly two decades. No Shame was successful partly because it was weird and new, but also because these upstarts, with their hastily rehearsed pieces, had thrown down the established notion that only members of the Playwright’s Workshop could write something worth performing. They created a venue where risk taking wasn’t lethal and community was more important than competition. It worked in large part because they had no idea what the heck they were doing.

Detail of the first No Shame sign up sheet, posted on the call board of the UI Theatre Department in 1986.

It’s interesting to note the original time limit for pieces was 3-4 minutes, rather than a cap at 5 as it is today. Also note that from the beginning the creators were making the point that No Shame didn’t mean No Pride by asking writers to do things they were proud enough to perform.

Lastly, note that the original poster called for submissions to be left in a cardboard box. One person was rejected for the first No Shame...no one was ever rejected again, because the submission policy was done away with forever after that.
**How Do You Do It?**

The basic structure of No Shame is simple and, ultimately, flexible.

There are only three rules which have never changed over the years:

1) Pieces must be **original**.
2) Pieces should be **no more than five minutes in length**.
3) You can’t break anything—not yourself, not the audience, not the theatre—and **you can’t break any laws**.

**Originality**

Pieces need to be original for a couple of reasons. Original pieces mean you don’t have to spend any time or energy getting permissions or dealing with the consequences of violating someone else’s copyright. Along the same lines, nobody has to worry about paying a royalty, which allows you to keep your ticket prices at the lowest possible rate. No Shame needs a low ticket price to keep audience expectation at the appropriate level.

Stipulating people bring only new original scripts keeps the focus on experimentation, immediacy, and peer evaluation. There may be an audience for three back to back interpretations of Hamlet’s soliloquy, but it ain’t gonna be at No Shame.

**Five minute time limit**

The idea behind the time limit is to have a rapid fire evening where writers and performers are forced to learn an economy of language and staging. Everything needs to be tight, each word necessary. The shorter the pieces, the more pieces you can get in without an intermission. Did we mention No Shame shouldn’t have an intermission?

**Don’t break stuff**

The logic behind not breaking anything, especially laws, should be obvious. If you damage the audience or the space, you’re likely to lose them. Speaking from experience, you’ll also enjoy doing shows in a parking lot more than in the jail house gym.

Each No Shame will create a unique venue which serves its own needs, but there is a basic structure which is consistent throughout the various franchises. We’ll come back later with some more detailed suggestions on format and structure that we think are pretty good ideas, and might work well for you at your No Shame.

Right now, though, here’s a quick run down on what an evening at No Shame usually looks like:
Show up on Friday (or whatever night you do it)
No Shame doesn’t have to be every Friday night. In fact, it doesn’t even have to be on Friday night at all. Orlando No Shame started out on Wednesdays, on-campus No Shames tend to only perform when school is in session, and several No Shames perform only once or twice a month.

Decide what is right for you, based on your community, host theatre, and their needs.

Take the first 15 pieces that show up at the door
That sounds pretty simple, but who’s going to take them? What do they do with them? You’re going to need someone to come at least a half an hour before the show starts, have a clip board with paper and a pen, and take the names of the authors as they show up.

Read the order
Usually the order is read giving only the author’s names, but some No Shames also include the titles of the pieces. You probably don’t want to give much more info than that, because the sooner you get on with the show, the happier the audience will be about being there.

Do the pieces
The usual format for performance is that each piece will follow the next without individual introduction. This was established at the first No Shame and has carried on in most of the offshoots. It helps to keep the performers focused and the energy high, while not disrupting the flow of the evening with constant announcements from the emcee.

Clean up afterwards
You can do this however you want, but it’s really important. That’s usually going to be the only part of the show that the people who run your host theatre are going to see—and it will have a real impact on how long you keep the space if you don’t get it cleaned up and back to the same condition as when you walked in.

**Go home**
Ok, this isn’t really part of the structure, but it’s still important. Remember the host theatre is taking a risk every single week by having a large number of non-traditional theatre goers in their audience and on their stage. When the show is over, get them out, get the place cleaned up, and go join them at the bar to talk about art and how the evening went. You don't have to go home, but you can't stay at the theatre!

"The thing about No Shame that's so inspiring is that there can be a night when 98 percent of what you see on stage is drék, but that two percent that's good is like a kernel of gold and that's the future of art and theater right there. I credit No Shame as being one of my greatest teachers in playwriting ever."

—Megan Gogerty

Jeri Lynn Schulke and Libby Simeon perform outside in Iowa City. Photo © Michael Williams, 1989.
WHO DO I GET TO DO IT?

Start with the writers

All the No Shames that have struggled have been those with a shortage of writers, not performers. When Adam Burton talks about the hard times at Iowa City No Shame in '96, he mentions that no one was writing, not that no one was willing to act.

Let’s be very clear on this. At least in the beginning, writers are more important than actors. You must have people willing to generate theatre, not just people willing to participate in theatre. If you have a room full of actors and no scripts, you don't have a show. If you have a room full of actors and only one script, you've got a 3-minute show. If you have 10 scripts and 1 actor, you've got a 1-hour tour de force with one performer acting his or her ass off and loving every minute of it. And frankly, most people would pay to see that.
True, the original motivation at Iowa was actors wanting to perform, but Iowa’s program is built around playwriting. Because the actors had been working with writers directly for a long time, they could easily recast themselves in that role. This may not be the case at a theatre department built around directing or acting. It will be even harder in a non-profit theatre with no new works program.

So, if you want to start a No Shame, write for it yourself. Don’t expect people to do what you’re not willing to do. Lead by example. Get a body of work ready to go, with at least a dozen 3 to 5 minute pieces you want to do at No Shame.

The next step will be gathering a core group, also ready to create pieces. Whether by accident or design, all of the successful No Shames have somehow had this writing core.

One of the reasons No Shame Iowa City was able to establish itself early on was that between Todd Ristau, Stan Ruth, Jeff Goode, and Tony Trout, we had a minimum of 4-6 pieces per week in that truck. Even if it rained. Which it usually did.

Knowing there would be at least a half hour show every week made it easier for people like Fred Norberg (who wrote every other week) or Gina Kaufmann (who wrote once a year) to drop by whenever they had something. So, as it was, the entire first year we never had fewer than 10 pieces—except for the first night.

No Shame Cedar Falls (with its smaller theatre department) would seem ripe for a tougher start, but they've been doing surprisingly well. In part because from day one they've had Pingel, Van Gorder, Wozniak, and Zimmerle providing pieces every week.

This doesn't mean that you should have an in-group of writers who control No Shame and who make the non-core people feel excluded. We’re simply talking about a quantity of ultra-reliable fodder-providers upon which your No Shame can build.

These core writers (as well as regular performers) are what gives No
Shame its distinctive personality, though. If someone asks you whether you'd like go to Open Mic A or Open Mic B, you have no basis for choosing between them because they're both "anything can happen." No Shame is also "anything can happen," yet the regular writers and performers provide a familiarity.

The audience sort of knows what they're getting, even though they don't know exactly what to expect. In 1986, there would be a handful of pieces from new people, but you were certain you were going to see Todd do something disturbing and dark, Stan shout non-sequiturs about art, Tony do something cool with a lot of props, and it would all end with Jeff doing Doctor Yahtzee. In 2001, you'd have 10 pieces of who knows what—but you’d be certain to see Al Angel do something about poop, Brad Harris juggle things, Aprille Clarke do something edgily funny, and it would all end with a Chris Stangl monologue. Now, would you rather go to Open Mic A, B, or No Shame? No Shame, of course!

The No Shame core group gives the overall venue continuity in both a practical and an emotional sense. The magical thing about No Shame is that the forum has figured out a way to establish a reliable continuity without any actual rules or rigidity.

The core group will also be the folks most interested in the survival of your venue, the ones most likely to take on the responsibilities and various jobs necessary to keep it going....your staff.

Once you understand that the key to successfully launching a No Shame is figuring out how to establish a core group, it becomes very clear why some No Shames falter while others succeed.

**Finding your core group of writers...**

Start by looking in the obvious places. Scan the papers for anywhere people create new work: song writing classes, newly established theatre groups, improv companies, fiction workshops, poetry slams, and possibly even a playwriting class if there is such an animal in your neighborhood.

Use the No Shame network. The venue has been around for nearly twenty years. At a conservative estimate that’s around 7650 new pieces written and performed in Iowa City alone! With that many people moving through, there’s a good chance someone in your area has performed at or been to see a No Shame somewhere and will know what you are talking about.

Go to the No Shame website at [www.noshame.org](http://www.noshame.org). There you’ll find an interactive message board where you can let the whole No Shame network know about your plan to start a branch in your area. Ask if they
know anyone who’d like to get involved, and they will direct veteran No Shamers in your area to you.

Try checking out something called the RAT Conference, which is a loosely organized collection of small theatres started by Erik Ehn. Go to their website, join their list, and ask for help finding some writers and performers in your area.

http://rat-list@ratconference.com/

After you’ve made the rounds, get better acquainted with the people you’ve made a “connection” with. Talk and argue about what you want to see on the stage and why you’re frustrated that no one is doing it. Convince them the kind of theatre they want to see won’t happen unless they make it happen themselves. Keep this up until you’ve found five or six writer/performers as excited as you are by the idea of No Shame.

They will become your core group of writers. Meet frequently to talk about theatre, go to plays, and get to know each other well enough that you can give feedback honestly without fear the group will fall apart.

Write together. You’re going to be in a much better position if everyone involved is already writing than if they wait to write their first pieces on the night of the first show. If your group is unfamiliar with No Shame, show them sample scripts from the script libraries at the website, and maybe even take a field trip to one of the existing franchises. Remember to stress that No Shame isn’t a single voice or style; instead, it is about helping people find and develop their own voice and style.

Inspiration good. Copying bad.

If each member of your core group cooks up a dozen pieces, when you approach the director of a possible host theatre and plop five dozen scripts in their lap, you’ll be letting them know that you’re serious. You’ll also be giving them a better idea of what you plan to do in their space.

You’re not asking for anyone to approve these texts, you’re merely showing them that there is a need for a venue of this kind in your area.
community. When you claim that you can help them provide a way to showcase up to 15 original acts of theatre every week, 780 per year, you can back it up. What other theatre in your town is that ambitious? Probably none. No Shame is important, and you can prove it, if they’ll give you the chance.

Don’t think too narrowly about theatrical performance either. No Shame isn’t just “the monologue hut” or showcase for traditional scenes with two people sitting at a table. It can be that, but it can also be musicians doing new songs, magicians, drag queens, mimes, dancers, performance artists, mind readers, hypnotists, poets, comedians, and damn near anything else. We’ve even had someone come out and do air brush body painting live on stage.

When you see a street performer, play, concert, recital, or poetry slam, consider if any of those acts would be a good addition to a No Shame lineup. Go up to people you like and tell them about No Shame. Don’t be embarrassed to seem like someone recruiting for a cult. Embrace that. It’s exactly what you are doing. Theatre should be your religion, and No Shame should be your church. You gotta get some more true believers in there for Friday night service.

You’re going to need performers too…

Writers at No Shame are also often performers, but don’t forget people who see themselves primarily as performers. They may start writing themselves, or they may not, but you don’t want to make people feel like they are excluded if they don’t write pieces. Also, it can really help the variety of an evening if the audience sees a lot of different people on the stage even if most of the pieces are by the same handful of writers.

Send your writers out like advance scouts to ask everyone they meet, “Where are the venues for new work?” If the people they ask don’t know any places where new work is done, you’ve just alerted people to a need in their community and can tell them about No Shame. If they do know where new work is done, get the name of the theatre, and check it out. Make contact with the person there who can put you in touch with more writers.
and performers, and keep growing your list. Use this list to create your database for later mailings. Divide your database into categories: writers, performers, and audience.

Oh, yeah, you’re also going to need an audience....

Because theatre is live, the audience is as much a part of the collaboration as the performers on the stage or the writers biting their pencils. It’s even more true at No Shame, because our audience is encouraged to also write and perform if they wish.

For this reason you shouldn’t have a traditional publicity model in mind when you approach audience development. Your venue isn’t traditional, what you’re offering isn’t traditional, so why think your audience is going to be? As much as anything else, audience development should be an expression of your philosophy, not just a way to getbutts on seats.

One asset you have going for you is that a line up of 10 pieces with an average of two performers each, gives you 30 writers and performers. If they all have one friend they’d like to have come see the show, that’s 60 people right there. Make sure that everyone involved in the show is also thinking about getting people there to watch.

Your core groups will have an ebb and flow, so don’t stress if people come and go. Getting started is an important stage and shouldn’t be rushed. When you’ve got a cohesive group of committed people in your writing group with a decent pile of pieces, a group of performers ready to do them, and enough word of mouth that you are confident there will be an audience of curious onlookers at your first No Shame performance, you can start thinking about the next step:

Getting a theatre.

“Being at No Shame is kind of like watching an armored car and a truck full of lollipops crash into each other. You’re horrified, but you’re also hopeful that something wonderful is going to drop into your lap.”

—Kris Millering

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WHERE DO YOU DO IT?

We’ve said that anywhere there is light enough for a script to be read and room enough for an audience to gather, No Shame can happen. You could do it in a parking lot, courtyard, lobby, house, bar, café, church basement—anywhere. No Shame can even be done in an actual theatre space. The important thing is that whatever space you use suits your needs, and that you have permission to use it on a regular basis.

No Shame is a parasite. We mean this in the best possible way, of course, but No Shame simply can’t exist as a stand-alone entity. The purpose is being a platform for original live performances, not keeping the doors of a building open. The host provides the stage, lights, electricity, heat, air conditioning, plumbing, parking, insurance, permits, and the bank accounts—in short, everything but the performances and audiences. That’s your job.

For this reason, choosing an appropriate host is crucial.

Any potential host will have some kind of stage, but which stands the best chance of creating a symbiotic relationship with your No Shame? Getting kicked out by a host or leaving them for another space will confuse your audience, and you don’t want people thinking more about your relationship to the space than the work being done in it. Better to avoid these problems by thinking things through before you ask to take up residence.

The imposing buildings of theater in higher education, homes to the two Iowa No Shames. On the left is the E.C. Mabie Theatre of Iowa City's University Theatres, and on the right is the Communication Arts Center (CAC) at the University of Northern Iowa, where the Cedar Falls chapter of No Shame Theatre resides. Photos © UofI, 2000 and UNI, 1996, respectively.

The most basic decision is whether to pursue a venue on-campus or off.

Starting an on-campus No Shame

A university has lots of resources, and any college town will have a vast audience desperate to find new reasons to socialize and fun ways to avoid studying. Participants in on-campus No Shames are likely be around for two to three years at a stretch, which can help establish a dedicated following. In a college theatre program, you’re likely to have a large number of people eager to experiment with the medium they are studying and already possessing some training and stage experience. Students active at No Shame will get much more cooperation from their school if the venue is on campus rather than off, because it will be easier to see student involvement as a complement to, rather than a distraction from, their degree program.

All strong arguments for on-campus if your core group are theatre students. There are some other things to think about, though. Not every theatre department is going to welcome the idea of No Shame. For example, a program devoted solely to classic method training won’t be sympathetic to a venue they feel is promoting “irresponsible” approaches to performance. Script-in-hand readings of unrehearsed pieces by untested performers without benefit of a director may not be exactly how some departments want to be represented. They may also worry that the unpredictable nature of No Shame is too big a risk to their public profile.

You may also discover there is a great deal of tension between “townies” and students. No Shame can become a battlefield in this tug of war, since the venue is open to all. If the students gain the upper hand, you risk losing non-student audience. If the townies become the dominant presence, you may lose student involvement. Losing students will make the University question why they are hosting No Shame, and they may decide to stop doing so. Do your best to maintain balance in this regard.

Since campus No Shames are usually started by students, the average age
of participants tends to be well under thirty. The young generation has something to say but might not have the life experience to consistently present a dynamic range of pieces. Audience members from the general community may stay away from things they think are “student only,” with no relevance to them. This could lead to a venue with a pretty rigid age stratification. The perception that No Shame is something you “grow out of” or “isn’t serious” could arise. It ain’t so and should be avoided.

In spite of the difficulties, No Shames on campuses like Iowa City and Cedar Falls are clearly good homes with strong followings. If you decide the benefits outweigh the negatives, then ask for permission.

**Convincing them to host your No Shame on-campus**

If you’re currently a student in a university or college theatre program, you may already have a great deal of access to an on-campus venue. You probably know personally everyone to approach for permission to use it. If not, then get to know them. Take a class from them and do well in it. Impress them with your responsibility and passion for theatre. It can’t hurt, right? The bottom line is, they aren’t going to hand the keys to someone they don’t know. If you can’t be the person with the truck, you’ve got to find someone who can be.

Sometimes it’s good to go straight to the top, but before you go to the Department Chair, talk to some faculty members. Tell them about how great it would be if there were a place where people could experiment with live performance and get stage experience which did not directly impact their grade point average. If done as part of a regular class, an unsuccessful experiment might get them a lower grade, and fear of that...
repercussion might keep people from trying anything new. At No Shame, a failed piece will have no academic repercussions, so even the experience of failing becomes a positive. Such a lab will help foster the kind of risk taking which strengthens the student, the department, and theatre as a whole. If the faculty get excited about this, and there isn’t any reason why they shouldn’t, they can help you pitch it to the chair of the department. In a school with a playwriting component, the person teaching those classes will be the best place to start. You’ll want some faculty support, and the ones who can encourage their writing students to participate is going to be a good friend to have.

We should be clear, though, that while you want faculty approval, an important element of the No Shame experience is being a bit subversive and operating on the fringe of official support. In fact, one of the things that actually helped No Shame in Iowa City were periodic rumors that the faculty wanted to shut it down. Such rumors often resulted in a higher quality of writing when people thought their venue might be taken away because they weren’t doing their best work anymore.

If you’re not in a theatre department yourself and don’t know anyone who is, it’s a bit trickier (but not impossible) to set up an on-campus venue.

At UNI in Cedar Falls, Neil Van Gorder wasn’t a theatre student, he was in the Art Department. The Art Department; however, happened to have a performance space. Neil explained the No Shame concept to one of his
professors, who gave them the keys to use the stage. That’s how Neil became their “person with the truck and the connections.”

Whether it’s the Theatre Department, the Art Department, or the Student Union, it’s probably a good idea to pitch No Shame as a temporary experiment at first, rather than something that will run forever. You can hope it will, but at this point it doesn’t pay to expect it. What you need to focus on is your first show, not your tenth anniversary extravaganza.

Your host will likely be more friendly to the idea of letting you try No Shame if there is no long-term commitment, so don’t ask for one up front. Once you’re in the door, you’ll be hard to get rid of, so long as the pieces keep getting written, the audiences keep coming, and you don’t break any rules.

Colleges have lots of rules. You may need official approval before putting up posters around campus. Find out if you can smoke on stage before somebody does it, since most universities are now smoke-free zones. Don’t even think about drinking real booze on a college stage; that’s just asking to lose your space. Sometimes colleges have curfews. You may need to arrange for campus security to be present for public events. Finding out ahead of time can prevent some real headaches later on.

Is there No Shame after graduation?
A fairly common scenario is that No Shame performers will cut their teeth in a university setting and after graduation try to recreate the No Shame environment in another city. In this case they’re no longer going
to have a direct connection to a college or university unless they happen to be teaching there.

Todd McNerny is an example of this. After graduating from Iowa, he got a teaching position at the College of Charleston. As a Faculty Advisor, he helped a new No Shame get started. It wasn’t quite the same as being “the person with the truck” though, because he was offering a truck, not getting ready to drive it himself. No Shame Charleston went dormant for a few years—but the truck was still there, waiting for someone who desperately wanted to get behind the wheel. Along came Rob Murdoch, who borrowed the keys and got the truck started again in 2003.

Starting a off-campus No Shame
The biggest mistake you can make in starting a No Shame somewhere else is assuming it will function on the same model as the one you just left. If that was a college, then there are going to be some important differences off campus, and you need to consider them in advance.

First, a college theatre is sort of like a state-supported enterprise. While butts on seats are important, a bad season of ticket sales isn’t likely to close it down for good. The opposite is true “in the real world.” Out there, for the first time, you are likely to have all sorts of worries. You’ll be worried about things like advertising, audience development, legal matters, charging larger sums of money, and, with a bit of luck, handling larger sums of money.
**Choosing a off-campus host for No Shame**

Picking a “real world” host requires research. As a late night venue, public safety is going to be a concern. After all, your audience will be leaving at one in the morning, not ten in the evening. Look into public transportation, street lights, proximity and closing times of restaurants or bars, and anything else which might make an audience think twice about coming out for your show. Make sure the facilities are adequate to your needs—size, appearance, potential for multi-purpose usage, restrooms, ventilation, comfort of seats, backstage area, sight lines, acoustics, etc.

It’s always better to start off in a small theatre space rather than a large one, because 20 people in a 75-seat studio looks a lot better than 20 people in a 500-seat auditorium. Always better to be forced to move to a larger space due to expanding audiences than the other way around.

On the artistic side, read mission statements and see plays at theatres you are interested in building a relationship with. A theatre dedicated to adaptations of the classics or to hosting Broadway tours is not likely to be where anyone looks to find interesting new work or experimental performance pieces. If your audience won’t think to look for No Shame there, why should you? Find a theatre in the community that is going to be sympathetic to the need to establish a venue for new work, but unable to staff something like that themselves...then the only trick is convincing them to let you staff it for them.

And that’s the next step—getting them to host your No Shame.

**Convincing them to host your off-campus No Shame**

There are essentially two ways to go here: either becoming an in-house production or renting the space from them as an outside producing organization. Each has benefits and drawbacks.

**In-house production**

If you are an in-house production, the host will likely provide the space and all the equipment with the expectation of keeping the entire gate and all concession sales. This keeps your No Shame staff from having to worry about making rent or maintaining its own bank account and budget. An arrangement like this allows you to simply bill approved expenses to the host theatre. You’re also likely to have some perks like being given a listing on their website and monthly newsletter.

This can be a really great situation because of the amount of support you will be getting from your host. The downside is that you will lose some direct control over the venue and have to check more frequently with the host to see if what you are doing remains in sync with the host’s interests. This is particularly true of advertising, so you’ll want to be on friendly
terms with the Publicity Director of your host theatre in this situation.

**Renting**

Renting from a host will give you more control but doesn’t free you from all the downsides of being an in-house production. In fact, many of them are going to be the same. Most theatres have strict rules about how renters advertise. Some insist you use their logo; some insist you don’t. Some include you in their own publicity; some adamantly won’t give you a presence on their website or their promotional materials. Some people in your host theatre may resent outside renters who take up rehearsal space and cause programming headaches on their production schedule.

When renting, you have to make rent—that’s obvious. Who pays the balance if you don’t have enough ticket sales to do it? You get to keep all proceeds above the cost of rent, but that presents another can of worms. What do you do with that money? Put it in a slush fund? Use it for publicity? Pay writers? Throw a party? Put it in your own pocket? Sooner or later someone will ask about it and may not like your answer.

As a renter you may also have expenses you never considered before, like a deposit on the space or charges for any damage done to it. You may be asked to provide your own insurance if the rental agreement does not specifically extend coverage to you and your audience. There may be permits required by the city in which you set up shop. You may even have an extra charge for equipment rental if your agreement only covers use of the space, not lights and other tech items needed to run the show.

Some theatres require you to rent on a performance-by-performance basis, which could leave you out in the cold if they unexpectedly decide to put something else in your slot. Others may require you to commit to an extended period of time. This gives you more certainty the venue will be there for you but also leaves you legally liable for payment of rent, even if your No Shame goes belly up after a few shows.

We don’t want rentals to sound terrifying. In fact, the lion’s share of No Shame franchises do rent from their host theatres. All we’re saying is
that while this option does bring you more control, that control also means more responsibility and headaches.

You may find, as these headaches compound, that you need a lawyer and accountant. Even setting up a bank account for the tens of dollars you stand to make is going to force the question of using a personal account or a business account. You might have to report ticket proceeds on your taxes if you deposit them in your own account, but setting up a business account might require actually incorporating as a business. Incorporating means deciding to be a for-profit or not-for-profit organization. Either option requires a lot of official paperwork, forms, fees, taxes, etc.

If you do end up incorporating, remember that “No Shame” is a name shared by a lot of franchises. Don’t try to register as No Shame Theatre, Inc. Set up a parent corporation, such as GNAP! in Austin or Moveable Feast in Chicago. This will be your producing organization. The host rents to them, and then they present No Shame.

Focusing on this legal stuff now is going to drive you nuts, because you’ll be doing that instead of putting on a show. For now, like we’ve said before, keep it simple. Focus on the performance. We just want to give you a heads up on all this so you can impress the people you’d like to host you by having thought about some of these things in advance. We want you to be able to ask good questions and give good answers when you’re pitching No Shame, so you and your prospective host can work out the best possible relationship from the beginning!

Remember that for your “real world” host, the success of their theatre is their livelihood. Every single thing that goes on in their building has a direct impact on them.

Showing that you understand their concerns and respect their positions will help them see you as a partner rather than as just a troublesome tenant.

Let’s take a look at two successful non-campus No Shames: Live Arts in Charlottesville and the one at P.S. 122 in New York.
In addition to the main stage, Live Arts has a studio space with 75 seats, called the Lab. It’d been under used because the paid staff were focused on providing support for the regular season and educational programs. They didn’t have time to also do programming for a second stage.

They asked a committee of volunteers to take over the administration of the Lab. What they were looking for was a way to fill the smaller theatre regularly with exciting performances in a low-to-no cost way. Whatever went in there also had to be a reflection of the mission of the theatre. It would have to provide meaningful production experience and help foster the growth of the local artistic community.

Jessica McCoy, an Iowa alum who had relocated in Charlottesville, was on that committee. She wasn’t a theatre major, but had been an avid audience member of No Shame in Iowa City. Jessica had never performed or written for it, but she knew that No Shame seemed to be exactly what the committee was looking for. She pitched the idea, and it was accepted. Here is where things could have gone horribly wrong.

Several upstart No Shames have floundered early on because it was assumed that simply announcing No Shame was coming would produce a ready-made audience of 144 who would show up on opening night, scripts and dollars in hand, and continue to come every week thereafter.

This is not the case.

Jessica remembered large houses, no overhead, and performers who sprang from the audience. It seemed to require no effort or cost on the part of the host theatre. The theory was sound, but in a town where no one had ever heard of No Shame, it probably wasn’t realistic to expect that anything like No Shame was going to happen just by putting it on the production calendar.

As it turns out, Todd Ristau was also living in Charlottesville, and had been in some Live Arts productions. When the committee found out one of the original No Shame founders was available, he was brought in as an advisor. Because Todd already had a large body of work of his own, he could show the committee sample scripts and describe how the venue
could be administrated, advertised, and developed. He was also teaching a playwriting class at Mary Baldwin College. He could (and did) require his students to write for the newly-started No Shame, so for at least a semester he was able to guarantee a minimum of 6 pieces a week—even if that meant driving a bus load of students across a mountain and back every Friday night.

The first year was very difficult, but No Shame alone brought in $8,888 in ticket sales and concessions—a substantial part of an extremely successful season of Lab productions. Live Arts has created the official position of No Shame Producer, paying a small stipend for seeing that the show happens every week and that everything gets done that needs to get done. As a permanent in-house production, No Shame is an important part of their overall programming, and Live Arts describes No Shame in their newsletter as “the most surprising and dynamic theatre in town.”

P.S. 122 (www.ps122.org)
At Performance Space 122 in Manhattan, we have another example of a successful non-campus No Shame. This time No Shame rents from its host. P.S. 122, one of the best known experimentalist theatres in the world, is an important venue for new dance and performance art. You’d be hard pressed to find a host theatre in New York with a mission statement more perfectly geared toward what No Shame is all about.

Dan P. Brooks was a student at the University of Iowa, where he had been an active No Shame writer, performer, and Board Member. After graduation he landed a job as Administrative Assistant at P.S. 122, where
he pitched the idea of hosting No Shame to Mark Russell, the Artistic Director.

Mark had been to Iowa as a Playwright’s Festival guest and had seen how successful it was in developing new work. He was interested in hosting a No Shame, but it took many months of Dan’s persistent advocacy before that became a reality.

Dan needed to show there would be enough interest among New York writers and performers in doing No Shame even in a city that already had a wide array of performance opportunities available. He hustled, and got a core group of writers and performers who would commit to help get the ball rolling. Fortunately, this included a fair number of former Iowa No Shamers who’d relocated to New York. Their enthusiasm helped him to keep pushing the idea to Mark.

Because he’d proven himself as a staff member at P.S. 122, and because he had a core group of writers and performers in place, the project was finally given a green light.

No Shame rents from P.S. 122, but because Dan is a staff member at both the host theatre and at No Shame, most of the renter pitfalls are easily being avoided. The new venue is rapidly gaining a following which is likely to carry it well into the future.

Both the Live Arts and P.S. 122 No Shames followed the same basic model but in very different situations.

First, there was the identification of a need: a venue for new work. Next a theatre which had identified the same need was found. The pitch was made by someone “on the inside” who could be “the person with the truck”, someone who was trusted by the host theatre to take on the project, and who could bring together a core group of writers and performers to make it happen.
Who can I turn to for help?
As a person considering a No Shame start up, you now have a lot of available resources that simply weren’t there for the early franchises.

First of all, you’re not alone. Thanks to Jeff Goode, the No Shame network is linked through a central hub website to which you can turn for support. (What’s that url again? www.noshame.org) There you will find links to each official No Shame. Each franchise site maintains an archive of publicity, venue models, photos, press coverage, and even sample scripts. Jeff has catalogued and made available on-line literally thousands of No Shame scripts dating all the way back to 1986.

You can use these scripts to show people some of things that can be done at a No Shame. There is even a new program called the First Aid Kit which allows No Shames to use donated scripts to fill in when they have a night with a small line up. This can be very useful when you’re a new branch just getting started and allows you to lead by example even if you haven’t got a suitcase full of scripts of your own. We can deliver a truckload right to your printer.

There are interactive message boards where writers, performers, and audience members discuss the pieces they’ve seen. You can post to these boards and get back a wealth of suggestions and assistance from No Shamers everywhere. There are also email addresses for current and past participants to whom you can write directly for advice and support if you’re shy about having the discussion out in the public eye.

With so many active No Shames, you’ve got plenty of Artistic Directors who are more than willing to describe the financial and artistic benefits No Shame has provided them. They can talk with you, or you can have them talk to the people who run the theatre you’d like to host you. They’re happy to be a reference.

And you have this book, complete with two authors who are also willing to give you a hand. We want to help you get your truck started.
I’VE GOT WRITERS, PERFORMERS, PEOPLE WHO WANT TO WATCH, AND A THEATRE… WHAT ELSE DO I NEED?

You’re going to need a staff.

The staff structure is a necessary evil. You need at least a three-person staff, which we call the “Holy Trinity.”

The person with the truck and connections
This doesn’t have to be someone with a real truck, but it does have to be someone with enough connections to some kind of theatre that the people it belongs to will let No Shame use it. This is the person who can deliver a theatre space on a regular basis and run interference between the theatre you get and the staff you have: something like a producer, who makes sure whatever needs to get done is done on time.

The person who pokes a finger in your chest when you do something that isn’t part of the mission

In a “real world” theatre, the person safeguarding the mission statement is the Artistic Director. They should be really passionate about the idea of No Shame and use that passion to keep the staff and core group motivated. They help keep No Shame No Shame by reminding everyone what the mission of No Shame is….providing emerging writers and performers with a low-risk opportunity to learn by doing. It may not be the best idea to have this person be the one talking to the host theatre staff. The same passion that holds a No Shame together could be very scary to the people who actually run the theatre you are performing in. You want someone who can “light a fire” but not be suspected of arson.

Left: Heather Lam, Tabitha Lee, and Matt Baetz (not pictured) make up the “Holy Trinity” in Orlando. Heather was the “person with the truck” because she provided No Shame with its first home at the Mood Swing Café. In addition to having connections to the venue, Heather was able to attract a circle of writers and performers because she was known in the local theatre scene.

One of the first to sign on was Tabitha Lee, who later got a job at Cherry Street Theatre. When this happened, Tabitha took the keys to the truck from Heather, who began to function solely as No Shame Orlando’s Artistic Director.

Matt provides the needed third leg of the triad, and it seems to be working just fine.
The person who takes the order and runs the performance

Because the line up of writers and performers changes every week, it’s a good idea for the Stage Manager to be a constant at the venue. By being recognized as the face of No Shame, they’re the person everyone will come to first with problems or suggestions. If you have a different emcee every week; it’ll be much harder for people to see it as the same venue each time. Also, the person about to pee on the stage will be more likely to listen to a familiar face when told, “You can’t do that in here.”

Other Jobs:

When No Shame was in the truck, this three-person staff was all we needed. When we moved indoors, the staff structure had to evolve, and something like titles began to emerge. When setting up your staff, try not to impose more structure than you need, so your venue and the group running it have room to evolve.

Avoid titles that upset the host theatre or confuse the public. “Artistic Director” works fine at a college, but don’t expect a theatre that already has an Artistic Director to let you use the same title for your staff top dog. Better to go with something like “Producer” or “Grand Poobah” than to ruffle feathers over a title. We suggest beginning with non-titles based on what you’re actually doing. Something like, “I’m the person who (fill in the blank).” That way, when a more formal title is bestowed, it will reflect what you have done rather than the expectations people have for a title chosen before you’ve done anything.
Here are some examples of jobs which might pop up as you go along.

**The person who twiddles the knobs**
The first thing we needed after moving inside was a Light Board Operator (LBO), to whom we gave the glorified title Technical Director (TD). If you’re using a space with lights in it, chances are good that your LBO will have to be someone approved by your host theatre to use the equipment available to you. This is important because lighting equipment is expensive. When you have no idea who will be performing or what they will be doing in your space each week, the host needs to be confident the person behind the knobs knows what the knobs do and can be trusted to twiddle them. Many theatres have SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for the various technical positions needed to mount a production. Ask to see them, and be sure that the whole staff is familiar with them.

**The person who twiddles the other knobs**
Depending upon your space, it may be necessary to have a separate person to run a sound board. Just like with the LBO, it’s important to make sure that anyone who uses the sound equipment be properly trained in how to do so. The host theatre staff should also know exactly who they are, and approve them. It’s a good idea to have backups for every position, because no matter how dedicated your staff, there are going to be times when they just can’t be there and someone will have to do their job. In the case of technical positions like knob twiddlers, the backups also need to be properly trained and checked out on the equipment ahead of time.

**Production Assistants**
These folks are 1/3 usher, 1/3 bouncer, and 1/3 running crew. They get the audience through the door in an orderly fashion, wrangle performers, direct writers to the SM to get in the line up, assist in getting pieces on and off stage in a hurry, help with the clean up after the show, and protect the theatre from rule breakers.

It’s a dirty job, but several somebodies have to do it.

Usually people who volunteer to be PAs have an interest in taking on more responsibility and apprentice to the SM, LBO, or other members of staff. PAs will be likely candidates to stand in for regular staff members when a substitute is needed, or to fill a vacancy when one opens up on staff. This creates a sustainability for the venue and ensures that the ever-changing audience has a fairly constant and familiar staff even through
transitions. They are also a good pool to draw from when you discover any new jobs that have to be done.

**The person who takes the money**

Nobody says you have to take money from your audience. When No Shame started in the truck, it was totally free. For quite a while when we moved inside it remained free. Some, like Cedar Falls and LA are still free.

You may find, however, the theatre hosting you will start asking for a weekly rent in order to offset the costs of the use of the space or even as a way to limit the number of people trying to crowd into a small theatre with limited seating.

It’s safe to say that if you charge for seats, you need someone to take the money and make sure that everyone pays the requisite admission. We usually call this person the House Manager. It’s a very important job and covers more territory than you may think. House Managers are responsible for all front of house things, like meeting and greeting the audience, making sure the audience is happy and ready for what it’s going to get, that aisles are clear, and that exits aren’t blocked. Their primary responsibility, though, is anything that has to do with money.

This person should be trustworthy enough to be reasonably certain they will collect, count, and deposit the door proceeds in full. They’re also in charge of any money from other sources, like concessions. In some host situations, it’s a matter of law that an accurate tally of audience be kept, the proceeds counted, and that you have ticket stubs to match your tally. In a set up like this, you’re going to want a House Manager who is also known and trusted by the host theatre, especially if concessions will include alcohol sales.

These are the most common jobs on the list of Core Staff, but it is possible that someday you’ll need a group of people beyond the staff. Other jobs may arise, but these may not necessarily be jobs that need doing on the night of the show.

Proceed with caution to the job descriptions on the next page.
The No Shame Board

Not every No Shame is ever going to evolve to the point where a level of administration beyond the staff is needed. When you’re getting started, all you need is the Holy Trinity. Necessity may add others, like knob twiddlers and ticket takers, but a Board is less like staff and more like a Board of Trustees. If you do incorporate, you will legally have to have such a board. The staff run the theatre, the board oversees the staff.

In a not-for-profit theatre, the Board of Trustees usually work without pay out of devotion to the mission of the theatre and are held financially liable if the theatre goes under or has bad debt. Each board member will have an office, with a job description laid out in a constitution and by-laws. No Shame isn’t going to require the level of oversight your host theatre does, but some jobs may eventually need doing that are more suited to something like a Board than to the staff.

For example, you need a House Manager on staff to collect the ticket money, but the Treasurer maintains the bank account, prepares tax statements, and cuts the checks. You need a Stage Manager to collect scripts and read the order at the show, but you don’t need a Secretary there to take attendance, record the minutes, or report on old and new business.

We hope this gives you an idea of the difference between a Board and your Core Staff, because that’s all we’re going to say about it for now.

Except for this:

If you don’t need a Board, don’t form one.
GOOD TO GO?
NOT QUITE—YOU’RE NOT DRESSED!

The metaphor may seem silly, but things like publicity and the minute details of how you present yourselves as a theatre are like the clothes you put on to go out and face the world.

Publicity is a thankless job, but somebody better do it…
Even if you don’t have a designated Publicist, someone needs to wear the hat. The thing about doing publicity, though, is it requires the sort of things most of us in the theatre are terrible at. Mainly, things that have to do with being organized. You have to keep accurate press lists with the names and addresses of every reviewer and ad director at every media outlet within driving distance of your show. Get to know them personally. Knowing the ad director’s name shows you care about them, so they might just be tempted to care a little bit more about you and your project. Being on friendly terms can also get you lower rates and better ad placement on the page. Worth the extra effort, don’t you think?

You won’t know how important this is until you find a misprint in the paper and don’t know who to contact to have it corrected. You can’t avoid all mistakes, but you can keep them to a minimum by including the following things in your press releases:

a) **What:** Name of the event and a short description.
b) **Where:** Name and address of the host theatre.
c) **When:** Date of the show, time of curtain, when tickets go on sale.
d) **Who:** The contact person, with phone number, email, and website.

Write the same info on the back of any photos you submit, along with a
In addition to paid advertising and preview articles, don’t neglect free events listings. These are often the first place people look when deciding what to do on Friday night. You’re probably also eligible for Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on your local radio and public access TV stations and maybe even the local news. The more people see your name, the more confident they’ll feel about coming to your show.

The Publicist also handles direct mailings. That means keeping more lists, producing the cards, and getting them mailed. If you’re a No Shame that happens only once or twice a month you may have to invest in things like mailers to let people know when to come see the show.

Advertising and mailings have deadlines, of course, but you’ll need to keep a big calendar of all relevant deadlines. Set up a timeline for taking pictures, writing copy, getting artwork done, putting it together, getting it approved, getting it printed, and getting it posted.

You can get a lot of publicity for free, but most costs actual money, which takes budgeting and math. Being a publicist requires tact, concise language, a keen eye for clean images, and attention to detail. You must balance the need to attract attention against antagonizing the community. Publicity must entice but not over promise, because an audience that gets less than advertised won’t trust you the next time around.

You’ll find it very useful if you keep copies of all publicity generated, the press releases you write, any press coverage you get, and photos of your No Shame in an archive. Try to get that material to the Big Archive at the website, because it is a powerful publicity tool. If people are curious about No Shame but too timid to venture out in person, the first place they look to see what the fuss is about is online. It may not seem fair, but if your web page isn’t interesting they may not think your No Shame is going to be interesting either. Regularly updating your site will pay big dividends in the end. Honest.

“No Shame is industrial-strength, thoroughly theatrified, performative chicanery.”

—The Austin Chronicle
So far we’ve given you a pretty rapid fire overview of the basics. Before we close, it might be worthwhile to review a little, and offer suggestions based on our experience setting up other No Shames in the past.

*Every house will have its rules...*

Each No Shame will have the same basic staff structure, format, and core rules. That being said, each No Shame will also develop its own way of doing things and house rules which give it a unique flavor. These house rules are going to depend on a lot of factors, including the demands of the host theatre, the community standards where you live, and the laws of the area in which you are located.

When we were in the truck, people in the audience could eat, drink, and smoke during the show. When we moved inside, we had to establish a no eating, drinking, or smoking rule in order to be allowed to use the space. In Theatre B there have been lots of naked people because college theatre tends to be OK with exposed human anatomy. In Chicago there was a no-nudity rule because the bar hosting No Shame could lose its liquor license over things like wantonly waving willies or brazenly braless boobies. For some reason, Charlottesville has a no open flame rule. You never know what people will care about...unless you ask.

Sometimes a No Shame has to impose so many rules due to the restrictions of its host theatre that they don’t even feel comfortable calling it No Shame. The first instance of this is “Yes, Shame!”

Yes, Shame! was started by two Iowa City high school students, Emily Yoshida and Anne Sullivan. They were active at No Shame, but thought that it could be cool to try bringing the No Shame experience to kids who couldn’t stay out as late on Fridays or who had problems with some of the “adult content” of a regular No Shame performance.

They knew there were also students at their school who were intimidated by the established Iowa City No Shame regulars and audience. They needed a place with a slightly lower risk threshold and a few more rules...
regarding language and behavior. When Anne got the position of Drama Club President, she used her new power to become the “person with the truck” and helped Emily put together a mini-version of No Shame in the Little Theatre Space of City High. They had a Faculty Sponsor, Drama Director Doug Lestina, to assist them in getting approval for the project. Approval was granted, but with a catch—using the building and being officially sponsored by the school mean limiting material to what is considered "school appropriate." No one approves the scripts ahead of time, but it is clearly understood that if you can’t do it at school, then you can’t do it at Yes, Shame! Either. No one wants to lose the venue, so they comply with the rules, and are self-policing.

**Starting time...**

Most No Shames are late-night venues, taking the order at 10:30 and beginning the show at 11:00, but some start earlier—much earlier. The important thing is to be consistent—meaning a regular performance schedule with a regular start time.

Late night is also good for experimental works. An 8:00 crowd expects a more polished performance because that’s what they usually get. A late-night venue will also weed out children and prudes who might take offense at pieces with sexual content and adult language. Knowing this, writers will impose less self censorship and employ a freer creative hand.

Just as importantly, late nights won’t conflict with regular performances or rehearsals in your host venue—this means the theatre not only doesn’t lose money by hosting you, but they also make money when they would normally be dark. You’re also going to have fewer conflicts with writers and performers who are doing other things earlier in the evening, like other shows they might be cast in or real life jobs.

**Friday or not Friday, that is the question...**

No Shame can be done on any night, but Friday is a good choice for a late night venue. People tend to be rowdier and more apt to break loose on a Friday night than on a weeknight or Saturday.

**Never cancel a show...**

Without continuity you can’t hope to create a cult following. The fact that No Shame performs in the same place at the same time is important even to the people who don’t come because it means that if you find
yourself in Iowa City on a Friday night, even if you haven’t been there in five years, you know that No Shame will be happening and where to find it. You don’t have to check a calendar or make any calls. It’s a given. But conversely, it only takes one cancellation to create doubt in your audience’s mind, and the cult following will evaporate.

**Greet the audience…**

Encourage your core staff to recognize the people who come back from week to week. Get to know the regular audience members. People are a lot more likely to keep coming back week after week if they think that being there is important. One way to demonstrate that importance is to greet them by their name, ask them how they are, and tell them you’re glad they came back. Then after the show, ask them what they thought. Actually listening to them is going to make them realize that there is something different about this No Shame thing.

You’re not snowballing them; you’re demonstrating something that is true. The audience participates just by being there. Show them they matter to you a lot more than just a pocket to pick, and you’re going to have a convert who will help you to convert others.

**Charging admission…**

We strongly recommend that you don’t charge any admission until you have to. If you are an in-house production, you may have your ticket prices set for you by the policies of the host theatre; if you are a renting No Shame like at P.S. 122, you may have the freedom to set your own admission prices. No Shame Los Angeles plays for tips, leaving a tip jar for people to pay what they think it’s worth and are committed to not
charging admission until the contributions are not covering most of the rent. Good thing too, since it costs $5 just to park near the theatre.

How you do it is up to you, but find what works and stick to it. It won’t get you far to charge $5 one week, $1 the next, nothing the third, and $7 the fourth. Audiences like to be surprised by the performance, not by the box office.

Who has to buy a ticket...

If you charge admission, we’d like to recommend that everyone who takes up a seat pay for the privilege.

This might seem like a bad idea at first, because people might accuse you of making them “pay to play,” but participants should try not to think of admission as paying to do their own 5 minute piece, but as paying to watch 14 other people do their 5 minute pieces. If they think of it that way, they are building community, if they think of it the other way, they’re excluding themselves from the community before they have a chance to be part of it. You can probably provide some kind of green room for those who want to do their piece but have no desire to pay to see anyone else do theirs.

By making everyone who takes up a seat pay (except staff), you establish a baseline of equality for everyone: audience, writer, and performer alike. When audience members are sitting next to a performer and know the performer didn’t pay, it sets the groundwork for charges of elitism, a clique or in-crowd, and a false standard for judging the quality of the pieces. You don’t want someone intentionally doing a real piece of crap just so they don’t have to pay to get in—or worse, have someone make that accusation of someone who was really trying but didn’t manage a very successful piece.

If the show is ready to start and there are still empty seats, by all means, offer them to the writers and performers. You don’t want a show with empty seats if you can help it, but at the same time, you don’t want to turn away 25 people who want to pay for a ticket but can’t because you have 25 performers who didn’t pay taking up seats. This is going to be extra true if you happen to be in a small space with very limited seating.
We recommend you stay free as long as you can, but we really suggest this policy be employed as soon as you start charging for tickets, because it will be much harder to impose later on if it’s not there from the beginning.

Taking the order…
When collecting the scripts, it doesn’t hurt to ask everybody the following questions:

a) Is this an original piece?
b) Is it 3-5 minutes?
c) Does it break any laws?
d) What kind of piece is it—monologue, funny, sad, etc.?

Asking these questions not only reinforces the three basic rules but also serves another purpose. If too many pieces of the same type or tone come in at the same time, you have the freedom to swap things around a little to keep the performance from bogging down in the middle. When taking the order, the SM can consider special requests for placement, but shouldn’t be bound to comply with them. The reason for the request should be made clear—for example, “I need to go last so that when the two dozen eggs hit me nobody has to follow me.”

At this point, the stage manager would probably tell them they can’t do the egg piece because it would damage the space, but you get the idea. More likely the request will be to go first so that an elaborate set or hidden prop can be placed before the audience sees it, and a request like that should probably be honored if possible.

Number of pieces by a single author…
In Iowa City they currently have the happy problem currently of having so many people turning up with scripts that they have imposed a rule which says you can’t do more than one piece per author per night. This is to provide maximum opportunity for everyone and gives the greatest variety for the audience. Some leniency in this rule might be granted on nights with very few pieces in the line up, but by and large it’s better to have a shorter evening and tell someone to bring their other pieces back next week than to have a long night loaded down with a lot of scripts from a handful of authors.

When you do let someone have more than one piece, it’s also a good idea not to let them do the pieces back to back in the order. If you do, people might use this to get around the 5 minute rule. For example, “Long
Boring Piece Part I" followed by Parts II through VI is really a 30 minute short play, not a series of No Shame pieces. This is also true of a poet bringing "3 short poems." It’s a much more pleasant experience for the audience if you don’t let several poems by the same poet go back to back, even if together they are still under 5 minutes. Each poem or song was written as a separate piece and should probably be performed that way.

**Collecting and keeping the scripts...**

We’ve mentioned that when people sign up they need to turn in a script. We first started doing this as a measure of quality control. Back in the days of actual typewriters, if you had to sit down and bang it out manually, chances were good that you were turning in a second draft.

We also found that having a copy of the script was the only way for a Board Op to have a prayer of getting cues right. Eventually it occurred to us that keeping these scripts in an archive was also a really good idea.

No Shames periodically do a Best Of No Shame show composed of pieces that have had the strongest audience response. These shows are done at an earlier time slot, like 8:00, and serve as a kind of sampler plate for people who haven’t made it out to a regular No Shame. The only way to select those pieces is to have them to look at. For this reason most No Shames ask that contact information be included on the scripts, so people can be notified if they are selected for a BONS. It’s also a good idea if the cast of the piece can be indicated on the script for the same reason. Often the LBO will make these notations.
Some writers are touchy about leaving a script, so explain that scripts are kept for archival purposes only, that the author retains all copyright, and that the piece won’t be performed again without the author’s consent.

Who keeps the archives is up to you. We suggest a file box with a folder for each night of performances, all organized by date.

**Reading the order...**

At a lot of No Shames, the same person who took the order reads it at the top of the show. There’s no rule about this, and it might be better if you divide the labor up a bit. Perhaps have one person taking the order while another actually does the stage managing, like telling people they can’t drop two dozen eggs from the light grid or where they should store props.

At any rate, you’ll probably find it less confusing for everyone if you have the person or persons doing these two jobs be the same from week to week. That way writers will be looking for a face instead of a clipboard to give their scripts to, and having the same emcee from week to week gives No Shame audiences a familiar personality to help anchor them amid the chaos of all that surging and seething creativity.

**Doing the pieces...**

As we’ve said, it’s best to do the pieces without individual announcement before each piece. When you have 15 different pieces, some by the same author, it can get confusing, though. If a piece is late in getting on stage, the SM may bellow out the name of the writer who is next in the order: something like:

“**Smick! Smick is next!**”

The audience might snicker, but it’s all in good fun, and the show will get moving again without any real interruption to the flow. Besides, it’s a tricky way to get the writers to pay attention to other people’s pieces and learn other writer’s names.

As you move from one piece to the next during the show, performers and writers should also be responsible for clearing the stage, so the piece that follows them can get set up quickly. This will probably be done in low light, so people should be careful. Some No Shames have production assistants who sit down front and help with this. If you have the staff available, they can really make things run more smoothly.

**Cleaning up...**

With an average of 3 actors times 15 pieces plus a handful of writers who didn’t act, a stage manager, and 2 or 3 production assistants, you might think clean up will be a breeze. You’d be amazed how too many helpers
can make things go slower rather than faster. A lot of No Shames have the writers clean up after the show and send everyone else home. Why pick on the writers? Because there has to be at least one writer for every piece, and if a piece is messy, the writer probably wrote it that way. If writers stay to help, you’re guaranteed a proportionate work force.

Talking about it afterwards…
No Shame is primarily a way for emerging artists to gain experience in a low risk environment, so one of the things you’re going to need to do as the person or persons running No Shame is make sure that positive and constructive feedback is provided in an appropriate way.

It’s true that No Shame audiences aren’t always polite and tend to respond in more “honest” ways than traditional audiences. We get that. We’d like to point out, however, that being honest doesn’t have to mean being cruel. If someone sucks and you give them a very hard time about it, they may give up writing forever. Who knows what we lose if we drive someone out of the theatre because what they did on this one night wasn’t what we’d like them to have done? We’re not saying you should mollycoddle lousy writers or performers, but unless your underlying philosophy is one of encouragement what you are doing might not actually be No Shame.

We’ve heard the “shape up or ship out” argument, and we reject it. No Shame isn’t about creating writers and performers who are impervious to criticism because they had to be that thick skinned to survive on our stage. That’s what the “real world” does. What we try to do is build a community of writers, performers, and audience members who are mutually supportive—even when honestly telling someone their piece sucked.

Telling someone they sucked without tactfully explaining why they sucked only makes one person feel superior at the expense of another.

Worse, it can foster the motivation to work only to be redeemed in the eyes of the person who told them they sucked, instead of working to find and develop their own voice.
Again, that’s how the “real world” does it. We are **not** the real world. We’re inclusive, not exclusive. A first-time performer is more likely to come back and try again if someone he or she recognizes (and perhaps even respects) as a No Shame regular says something positive to them about the piece they did.

Even if it was a pretty painful 5 minutes for you, it’s your responsibility as a No Shame regular to encourage the No Shame newbie. The whole point of daring to fail is to learn by doing. Be careful that new people don’t learn not to try again because failing at No Shame is worse than failing in a traditional theatre setting. That’s **us** failing, not the less-than-good pieces we happen to be criticizing.

If what you or anyone else is seeing on stage at No Shame sucks, then isn’t writing and performing something better a more productive way to improve the offerings? You’ll get more satisfactory results leading by example than by proving how skillful and deadly a critic you can be.

What are some of the various expressions of the No Shame credo?

**“Dare to fail.”**

—the original No Shame motto from 1986

"No Shame Theatre is a no-budget, low-tech weekly forum showcasing original short work. It's a place for writers/performers to experiment and try new things in a virtually risk-free environment, and to receive instant audience feedback; there are no guarantees, no censors, no discrimination, No Shame. Cheap, raw, unpredictable theatre."

—*current Iowa City description*

“Prepare an original piece of 5 minutes or less and bring a script containing general lighting cues (if necessary). No other restrictions apply! Anything goes! Experimentation and shameless behavior is encouraged! ”

—*Austin description*

“No Shame is intended to be a low risk performance environment where writers and performers can explore any aspect of the theatre they choose and not have fear of failure be the first obstacle they face in attempting success. It’s short and it’s fast, so if your piece doesn’t exactly fly, no one will be pointing at the wreckage long."

—*Charlottesville description*
“The focus of No Shame is on experimentation, low production values, and creative expression in a low risk, non-judgmental environment. It is open to all, and all are encouraged to participate.”

—New York description (HOME)

“No Shame Theater is an open performance forum for theatre, music, dance, sketch comedy, performance art, and virtually anything else you can do on a stage. All pieces must be original, under five minutes in length, and cannot damage the space or its occupants in any way. Other than that, everything goes.”

—New York description (PS 122)

“No Shame Theatre is a forum for theatrical experimentation featuring short, original theatreworks, fresh out of the oven. It is high-risk, low-budget, no-censorship theatre which you can shut up and eat or you're going straight to your room.”

—Los Angeles description

What’s the common thread here?

Sometimes they say No Shame is high-risk, sometimes low-risk, but it’s still all about taking risks.

No Shame is where risks can happen, where you can take an enormous personal risk of trying something new without taking any professional risks.

And brings us full circle.

You’re attracted to No Shame because you’re a risk taker and because you want to provide a place where others can feel comfortable learning to be risk takers, too. Please, let us know if there is anything we can do to help you in that really important work.

“No Shame is the most real kind of theatre, because it’s immediate, it’s now. You have this idea and you can share it right away. No Shame is the best thing ever. When you’re trying to create great works of art that are going to be classics and for the ages, it gets dull real fast. Whatever else you say about it, No Shame ain’t dull. Well, sometimes it’s boring, but it ain’t dull.”

—Scott Smith

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In discussing ways to cultivate new No Shames, several remarks keep surfacing—the audience "owning" the show and a venue that is "self-regulating."

This brings to mind the notion of "emergence." Emergence involves systems in which a lower order of participants in the system operate by simple rules and function together in a bottom-up way to create a coherent functioning of the higher order group which is more complex and adaptive than the lower order participants. (*Higher* and *lower* are of course with reference to differing scales, not value judgments.)

The signal example is an anthill. Contrary to popular belief, the Queen doesn't command an anthill. No one commands anyone in the anthill. Each ant automatically follows a very rudimentary set of rules about what to do when faced with a specific set of stimuli, each one thinking not about the overall organization of the anthill but only about the micro-motives of her own responses to these stimuli in her own very immediate surroundings, and the result is an anthill that distributes tasks and resources, builds a nest, procures food, and manages procreation all with an amazing elegance. The anthill is in a very real way a functioning organism of its own, made up of ants but really existing on an order of scale removed from the individual ants.

Put another way, the Iowa City No Shame displays many of the structural principles of an emergent system, which perhaps has allowed it to function like a self-regulating organism. It might be helpful for new organizers to consider those structural principles as they try to incubate its spores in a different climate. As articulated by writer Steven Johnson, those principles are:

1. More is Different.

The nature of an emergent system requires a critical mass of participants for the group to generate any kind of cohesive statistical variation. (Five tosses of a coin are utterly random, with results too wildly variable for any systematic process. Five million tosses follow laws of statistical distribution so well that casinos can on that scale predict with razor sharp accuracy the win-loss ratio of a game of chance.) We don't know how many No Shame participants are necessary for global behavior to develop, but clearly this is critical in a way that goes beyond the old "bums in seats" imperative. Also, this can be promoted by blurring or
eliminating the distinction between the “performer” ants and the “audience” ants, making all members of the community available in both roles. This is additionally an important reason why No Shame should be weekly, even at the cost of "watering down" the event. An emergent No Shame requires not only a sufficient number of participants but a sufficient number of participatory acts.

2. Ignorance is Useful
Emergence requires that none of the ants starts trying to run the anthill. Focus on facilitating the micro-motives of the individual participants -- “I want to get laughs, I want to get laid, I want to express myself, I want to alleviate my boredom” -- not on imposing structure from above. Yes, you need to make sure the three basic rules are well known (pieces must be 3-5 minutes, must be original, and can’t break any laws), but beyond that there is no reason to go into legalistic detail —which is why most No Shames start off with a variation of:

“Welcome to No Shame Theatre, where anything can happen and usually does. Don’t break yourselves, don’t break the audience, and don’t break the theatre. The order for tonight is....”

More information than that puts emphasis on the venue rather than on the work being done there, and that is not what you want.

3. Encourage Random Encounters
A degree of random input permits the system to encounter something new and unexpected and also ties into the statistical processes described above. This is why it's critical to encourage newbies. It's also why the
selection criterion needs to be content and author neutral—like "first 15 submitted."

In Charlottesville, they give away a weird prop each week as a door prize. The winner gets to keep it if they come back soon after with a piece which incorporates it. This not only functions as a “randomizer” but also helps reaffirm the idea that not only can anyone write for No Shame, they really do want everyone to write for No Shame.

It’s been successful there in part because it helps teach the No Shame "expectation level." The audience knows that the person doing a door prize piece is doing the piece to be part of the community, not necessarily because they want to prove something artistically. The “I have to; I won the door prize” aspect gets people to take a chance they might not normally, and the audience is supportive because they know it could just as easily have been them. Sometimes door prize pieces are bad, but sometimes they are fantastic. The same is true for all No Shame pieces, but the door prize helps the audience get that message in a fast, sneaky way.

The last two of these rules relate to establishing a feedback loop among the participants. A self-regulating organism can’t self-regulate without information and responsiveness to that information. In a normal top-down theatre environment, company management tells performers and writers whether their work is good and selects the pieces and performers that will be presented to the audience in upcoming shows. For a No Shame to succeed, the audience and the participants will have to perform this process of selection and growth spontaneously.

4. Look for Patterns in Signs
This is one half of the feedback loop: the feedback. Performers and writers must be given information that reflects how they did. Given the nature of performance (applause vs. dying), this is not a design feature you need to worry about too much.

5. Pay Attention to Your Neighbors
This is the other half of the feedback loop: the loop. Writers and performers have to receive the information about how they did and learn from it -- by improving, by finding a new hobby, or by laboriously converting the audience to their unique and challenging artistic vision. You can’t really build this into your No Shame, but it already comes built into most performers and writers.

However, applause isn’t the only way to establish the audience-performer feedback loop. No Shame has an extra-theatrical community, in the form of its website. Each franchise has its own interactive message board,
greatly enhancing the volume and specificity of the feedback loop. A segment of the community besides the writers and performers have a voice in the proceedings more precise than the blunt message of applause. An emergent system needs a critical mass of participants to generate the necessary statistical events and also needs the nodes to be linked in sufficient ways to permit complex/chaotic reactions to develop in its information flow. This information needs to come from peers in the system, not a central authority.

These conversations aren’t limited to your individual No Shame, either. All are encouraged to participate in discussion threads on any of the No Shame boards of the various cities in which No Shame exists—thereby fostering a truly interactive and growing network of No Shames.

Or, in the language of Emergence Theory, helping to create a much bigger ant hill.

"No Shame—theatre of the people, by the people, for the people!"

—unnamed participant
APPENDIX B: Photo Album

Below: Jen Shepard, James Thorn, and Margie Dube in “Bad Day at the Beach”, Iowa City (1990), for IPTV.

Below: Greg Jackson and Jewels Peter (1990), for IPTV.


T-Bone and Jackson Galaxy, Iowa City, 1990.

Left: Cheryl Graef and Megan Gogerty performing “Julie” as part of the BOBONS show in 1996.
Right: Ashley Runneh and Cheryl Snodgrass announcing the order in Iowa. Photo © Michael Williams, 1989.
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Above: Brett Webster and the cereal box from “A Giant Box of Corn Flakes Sings the Blues.” Photo by Brian Rochlin © 2002.

Left: Al Hoover, Chris Carter, and Alice Reed performing in the Live Arts Lab Space, 2003.

Below: From the UI Spectator, Kyle Lange and Mary Fons in “Super Human Sorority Girl Saves Iowa City” (1999).


Clockwise from left: Poster for a Duck’s Breath Mystery Theatre event at Iowa, for which No Shame opened; logo for No Shame at Mill Mountain Theatre; Best of No Shame poster for Charlottesville, with Jane Jones breathing fire (photos by Annaliese Moyer, design by Lee Moyer); cover of the Spring 1990 edition of The Drama Review, featuring an article on No Shame: the cover photo is of Bob Cappel performing at No Shame in 1989.
Left: A No Shame Season Pass, granting a year of No Shame for one low price. Concept and badge design by Lee Moyer.
Right: Jessica McCoy, Chair of the Live Arts Lab Committee, who first got No Shame approved in Charlottesville.

Above, L to R: Sean Nitchmann’s “Angry Suburban Poet” and Celena Church and Iaoco Medes performing their original song “Stereotype Allegory” in the Lab Space at Live Arts, Charlottesville.
Below, left to right: Erin Fleck performing “Caffeine,” Lee Moyer and Greg Hays in “Bluebird” (Photo © Annaliese Moyer, 2002), Jane Jones and Alex Davis in “Physical Theatre.” (Photo © Michelle May, 2002)


Right: Logo for No Shame LA.
Below: Artwork for the opening of No Shame Roanoke.

Above: Poster for the Portland production of No Shame Goes To War, a themed collection of No Shame pieces dealing with the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and collected from No Shames around the country. Other productions were mounted in Los Angeles, Iowa City, and Charlottesville.

Emily Yoshida and Yes! Shame audience gathering at City High School, Iowa City.

Oval Theatre, host of No Shame in Orlando.
Above, clockwise from left: Jeff Goode reading the order for the 17th anniversary reunion show in the parking lot where it all started; Todd Ristau; Howard Zimmerle and Jesse Wozniak; Carolyn Jacobson, Fred Norberg, Adam Burton and John Smick; Dan P. Brooks; and finally, James Horak, Tony Trout, with Luke Pingel. The performance was in the back of Guy Snodgrass' pickup truck in Iowa City on October 3, 2003. 25 pieces were performed by No Shame alums returning from across the US and even Canada to an audience of around 100 onlookers (some shown right). Photos © John Smick, 2003.

Clockwise from Left: The grand opening of Roanoke No Shame on October 17th, 2003. The Star City Wildcats were the house band; a marionette from Brandon Davis’ “Dance of the Leprechaun King,” with original music on bagpipes; Connie Sellers on guitar; The Yancey Family Players in a piece by Dwayne Yancey; Delores Curry playing an original composition for the hammer dulcimer; and John Shirley in rooster costume for his “Worn Out Chicken Blues.” Photos © Jennifer Fowler, 2003.
APPENDIX C: No Shame Who’s Who

Some of our performers and writers who’ve gained recognition in the “real world.”

ALCOTT, TODD  New York (HOME), 1989-90
Todd was one of the original core members of the first New York No Shame and a big part of its early success. He is recognized as a successful actor in TV and film, as well as a well respected writer for the stage and screen.
(http://us.imdb.com/Name?Alcott,+Todd)

BENDER, JOAN  Iowa City, late 80’s
Joan first sang publicly on the No Shame stage in Iowa, and has since pursued a career as a professional blues singer, releasing her own CD of original tunes and blues standards. Joan lives and works in New York. Some of the venues where she’s performed include: Blue Note, Sweet Basil’s, Café Carlyle, the Cutting Room, Rue B, The Bitter End, Irving Plaza, the New Age Cabaret, The Rainbow Room, C-Note, Lickety Split in Harlem, Cleopatra’s Needle, and Small’s.
(www.joanbender.com/)

BITTERMAN, SHEM  New York, 1990
Shem Bitterman is a graduate of the Iowa Playwright's Workshop and alumnus of The Juilliard School where he studied acting. His play The Job, won the 1997 Stanley Award and the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Ted Schmidt Award for “World Premiere of Outstanding New Play.” Other produced plays include; Ten Below (The W.P.A. Theatre with Kevin Conway and Anthony Edwards), Survivors (Mark Taper Forum), Buffalo Hunters (Mark Taper Forum), Peephole (Geva), Justice (Padua Hills Playwright's Festival), Night-side (Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Humana Festival), The Ramp (South Coast Rep and Temple University), Self Storage (co-authored with Tony Spiridakis—Mark Taper Forum and The Odyssey), Beiging Legends (Mark Taper Forum and Pacific Jewish Theatre), and Iowa Boys (The Actor's Studio). Children's plays include: Gallivier's Travels and Robinson and Crusoe (ITP). Radio plays include; Timon of Athens (NPR). Shem has developed films Punch Productions, Warner Brothers and Disney. His produced films include Halloween 5, Out Of The Rain, and Peephole, which he directed. He co-wrote with Tony Spiridakis the film Tinsletown. He has taught theatre arts, screenwriting, and playwriting in various universities and venues, including Lancaster State Prison, The People's Theatre in Beijing, Canton University, and the University of Iowa. He is a member of Equity, S.A.G., the W.G.A. and the Writer's Group at the Mark Taper Forum.

BOGARDUS, JANET  New York, 1990
Janet’s off-Broadway credits include First Lady Suite at The Public Theatre; Where’s Mamie?, by Michael John LaChuisa at Ensemble Studio Theatre; The Eclipse by Joyce Carole Oates at EST; and a workshop production of Children of Eden by Stephen Schwartz, produced by Playwrights Horizon. Janet most recently directed Daddy Kathryn by James McGuire at HERE in NYC and has directed/choreographed many shows for Theatreworks/USA. A founding member of Instant Girl, Janet has performed on MTV, “The Jon Stewart Show,” Citiarts, and in venues including SERIOUS FUN! at Lincoln Center, NAKED ANGELS, DTW, The Groundlings, and P.S. 122.

CAISLEY, ROBERT  Roanoke, 2004
Robert is a playwright whose work includes The Lake; Kite's Book: Tales of an 18th Century Hitman; Letters to an Alien; Bad Manners; Three Women Embracing and several successful adaptations of classic authors. He is currently the Artistic Director of the Idaho Repertory Theatre and Founding Producer of the DNA Annual Festival of Very, Very, Very Short Plays. He was a founding member of Chicago’s Breadline Theatre Group and was recently selected the Fourth Freedom Forum Peace Play Award. He first attended No Shame in Roanoke while he was a visiting artist for Mill Mountain Theatre’s Norfolk Southern New Play Festival which featured his play 22-Day Adagio.
CLARK, SEAN  Iowa City, 1987-88
Sean earned his MFA in playwriting at the University of Iowa in 1988, winning several prizes while doing so. He has since been associated with some of the most popular and critically acclaimed television programs of the past decade, writing for Northern Exposure and The Commish, story-editing for Coach and Evening Shade, and acting as a consulting producer on Sirens and Sliders and a supervising producer on Early Edition. He currently directs the Graduate Screenwriting Program at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

COFFEY, DAN  Iowa City, 1989
Dan Coffey (MFA, The University of Iowa Playwrights Workshop) is a founder of the Duck’s Breath Mystery Theater, perhaps best known to NPR listeners as “Dr. Science.” In addition to his radio appearances, Dr. Science has been featured on a television special, Dr. Science’s National Science Test, PBS 1985, and a children’s show, Dr. Science, which ran on Fox TV in 1987. Coffey is co-author of two books, Dr. Science's Big Book of Science, Simplified (Contemporary, 1985) and Dr. Science’s Book of Shocking Domestic Revelations (William Morrow, 1993). He has taught radio and television writing as well as performance in The University of Iowa’s Department of Communication Studies. For three years, he directed the Iowa Radio Project, a radio theater series distributed on public radio. Most recently, he was the original host of the NPR quiz show Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me!

DANNENFELSER, DAVID  New York (HOME) 1990
David Dannenfelser is artistic director of Icarus Theatre Ensemble, which is presenting the first annual Ilium Theatre Festival. David is also a playwright whose play, When Words Fail..., is published in Plays and Playwrights for the New Millennium.

DE LA PUENTE, NOEMI  Iowa City, 1997
Noemi is a member of SAG and AFTRA and an AEA Eligible Performer who has appeared on stage and television in numerous roles since she graduated from Iowa with her MFA in acting. She has performed in the National Theater of the Performing Arts, Delaware Theatre Company, and Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire. She was also a long time member of the improv comedy troop Loos Scrooz. As a playwright, her work has been performed in New York, where she is a member of the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre’s Writers Group. In 2001 she became the Associate Artistic Director of the Carolinian Shakespeare Festival.

ENSENBERGER, FRANK  Iowa City, 1986-89
A graduate of the University of Iowa, Frank is a member of the Adobe Theatre Company in Manhattan, and has appeared in 5 shows: Duet! A Romantic Fable (Lud, Stump, Office Boy, Cop), Fish Story (Klaus Klaude), Poona the Fuckdog (Rabbit), The Eight: Reindeer Monologues (Cupid), and Tracker (Wineglass).

F-S, KATIE  Cedar Falls, 2001-02
A “traveling performance poet” who's shouted to audiences across the Midwest, Katie is most recently working on her second chapbook, initiating a youth poetry league in the Cedar Falls and Waterloo high schools, and casting her original one-act poetic explosion IN:VERSE, which will open at UNI in November.

FAL DU TO , MATTHEW  Iowa City, 1993-95
After graduating from the University of Iowa with a degree in English, Matthew decided to fulfill his dream of starting a theatre company. The company he founded, Dreamwell Theatre, continues to thrive. His acting credits include "Paul" in Barefoot in the Park, "George" in Of Mice and Men, "Edward" in Someone Who’ll Watch Over Me, "King Philip" in The Lion in Winter, "Andrew" in Love Letters, and "Philip" in Corpus Christi. Directing credits include The Hobbit, Wait Until Dark, How To Sell a Chair, Intellectual Orgasms, and Law Number One; both of which he also wrote.

(www.dreamwell.com/)
FEFFER, STEVE  Iowa City, 1987
Steve earned his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin in August 2003, specializing in Theatre and Drama, with a dissertation entitled “Rhythm Trade-offs,” which considers the use of rock, pop, and hip-hop music in contemporary theatre and drama. He also holds an M.F.A. in Playwriting from the University of Iowa and a B.F.A. in Dramatic Writing from New York University (Tisch). He has taught theatre courses including Playwriting at Wisconsin, County College of Morris (1996-98), Rutgers University (1996), New York University (1994), Iona College (1993-96), Triton College (1991-92), and elsewhere. Steve’s one-act plays and monologues have been published in a number of anthologies, including Plays From the Ensemble Studio Theatre Marathon 2000 (Faber and Faber, 2001) and Best American Short Plays 1997-1998 (Applause Books, 2000), and his full-length play The Wizards of Quiz was published by Dramatists Play Service (1994). His plays have been produced by theatre companies around the country, including Stages Repertory Theatre (TX), University Theatres Mainstage (WI), Ensemble Studio Theatre (NYC), Chatham Playhouse (NJ), National Jewish Theatre (IL), the O’Neill Theatre Center’s National Playwrights Conference (CT), and many others. He has directed or served as dramaturge for over a dozen stage productions, and his academic honors include a Vilas Travel Fellowship (2002) and the Ross T. Quint Scholarship for Academic and Artistic Excellence (1999-2001). His playwriting awards include the National Children’s Playwriting Award (Houston, TX, 2000), the Jamie Hammerstein Playwriting Award (Ensemble Studio Theatre, NYC, 2000), the Dorothy Silver National Playwriting Award for a New Jewish Play (1997), and the Marc A. Klein National Playwriting Award (Case Western Reserve University, 1990). He currently teaches at Western Michigan University.

FERRONE, ROD  New York (HOME), 1989-90
Rod Ferrone is an actor/dancer/singer/hat trickster/choreographer who has danced for the stage, film, and television and has performed with some of the legends of the entertainment world including Jimmy Slyde, Gregory Hines, and Henny Youngman, among others. He was one-half of the comedy duo Hot Foot, whose critically acclaimed show Scorch Marks on the Floor was seen the world over. He has most recently performed on Broadway in the groundbreaking smash hit Urban Tap. He has toured extensively with Cool Heat Urban Beat, a fusion of tap and hip hop, which was critically acclaimed in Scotland, London, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii. Rod contributed some of the choreography to the show. He is also co-star of Feet 2 The Beat, which he founded in 1996. Other tap credits include Dance Umbrella's Jazz Tap Hip Hop, the JVC and Panasonic jazz festivals in NYC, the Colorado Dance Festival, a guest appearance at National Tap Dance Day at Lincoln Center (’96) and at Town Hall (’99), and a guest appearance with the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra in Morton Gould’s Tap Dance Concerto. He has also been involved in the “Meet the Artist” program at Lincoln Center, giving lecture-demonstrations to grade school and high school students. He has taught master classes and workshops extensively throughout the world, teaching jazz, Latin, eccentric, and funk-hip hop. Acting credits include Scrooge in the role of the Narrator at the Lamb's Theater in NYC. Rod is an accomplished guitarist as well.

GARB, MICHELLE  Iowa City, 1988-90; Los Angeles, 2002-present
One of the hottest comics and most respected lecturers, Michelle Garb created Fat Brain/Skinny Body, a lecture on eating disorder awareness and positive body self-image, as a result of her own 15-year battle with anorexia. Michelle has first-hand experience with the personal losses that stem from an eating disorder. She is still active in her recovery and in addition to speaking on the subject; she is in the process of forming Edith Eats, a non-profit eating disorder organization which recently gained support and funding through the NCAA. As a comedian, she works all the major clubs in New York City and Los Angeles and has appeared on the Chris Rock Show. (www.michellegarb.com/)

GILMAN, REBECCA  Iowa City, 1991-92
Rebecca’s table top theatre pieces such as Mrs. Sock Monkey Doll were No Shame favorites, and since her graduation from Iowa, she has been recognized as one of the most important new American writers. Her plays, such as Spinning Into Butter, are produced
internationally and have received some of theatre's most prestigious awards, including the Goodman Theatre's Scott McPherson Award, the American Theatre Critics Association's 1998 Osborn Award, a 1997 Joseph Jefferson Citation, and an After Dark Award for New Work for the Chicago 1996-97 season.

GOERTHY, MEGAN Iowa City, 1993-97
While at Iowa, Megan had an undergraduate emphasis on playwriting, and was active in No Shame, serving as Artistic Director. After graduation she was selected for a prestigious Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (ATAS) 2003 Internship in the category of television development. She was one of 35 interns selected from a nationwide pool of 900 applicants. Also, her play Rumple Schmumple was a winner in an ACTF Festival 10-minute play competition, and was performed at the Kennedy Center in April, 2003. She is currently pursuing her MFA at the University of Texas, Austin.

GOODE, JEFF Iowa City, 1986-89; Chicago, 1993-96; Los Angeles, 2002-present
Jeff Goode is an actor, director, and author of over 50 plays, musicals, and children's shows, including The Eight: Reindeer Monologues [developed at No Shame], the cult serial Larry and the Werewolf, and the shock-comedy Pooma the Fuckdog and Other Plays for Children. His published scripts include The Eight (now available in Dutch!), The UBU Plays (Jarry for kids!), and The Messy Adventures of Dick Piston, Hotel Detective. Currently working in television, Jeff has written pilots for Fox, Disney, UPN, USA Networks, Canal Plus, and two for MTV, including the pilot for Undressed. His most recent project is American Dragon for Disney Studios. Jeff is an original co-founder of No Shame Theatre, and later established No Shame Los Angeles. He is a founding company member of The Unusual Cabaret [Bar Harbor, Maine] as well as Pantechnicon Artworks [Chicago].
(www.jeffgoode.com)

HATLEN, INGER Iowa City, 1993-1997
Inger is currently working with Pig Iron Theatre Company in Philadelphia as the production manager.

HUSS, TOBY Iowa City; 1986-87: New York, 1989; Los Angeles, 2002-present
Toby created a long series of pieces for No Shame at Iowa named for the title character, “Artie, Strongest Man in the World,” which he also performed at the first New York No Shame. The character was picked up by Nickelodeon for their show The Adventures of Pete and Pete. Toby was hired to write for the show and to play the character, which led to work on MTV, and feature films like Vegas Vacation and Down Periscope. He has also done voice-over work for several recurring supporting characters on King of the Hill, guest spots on shows like Seinfeld, News Radio, and The Martin Short Show. Most recently, he has been contracted for a major role in the HBO series Carnivale.
(www.hbo.com/carnivale/cast/actor/toby_huss.shtml)

INDUSTRIAL TEPEE New York, 1990
Industrial Tepee was the brain child of NYC singer-songwriter / guitarist Tom Shaner who’d been playing solo in the subways and small East Village clubs while reluctantly attending NYU. While trying out new songs at small dives such as the Chameleon Club, he shared the bill with other artists like Beck, King Missile, and Lach. They were soon asked to make an album with PNYM Records, released to rave reviews and college radio play. The band used the No Shame at HOME to help promote their music to a wider audience. Industrial Tepee's third release, What Divine Engine came out in October '98. Tepee toured the east coast through the spring of '99 and is currently in the studio working on a new full-length album and playing selected dates around the NYC area.
(www.motherwest.com/tepee/)

JAMES, JOSHUA Iowa City 1989-90; New York 2002-present
Joshua James is a New York-based playwright whose plays include The Men's Room,
Running In Place, Old Dog, Tallboy Walkin’, Thicker Than Water, The Penis Papers, SPOOG – The Sex & Love Monologues, 2 Very Dangerous People Sharing 1 Small Space Together, The Hot Naked Truth, The Beautiful One, Something Situation, and The Elf: The Bunny & The Big Xmas Blow-up, along with many others. He also authored the original screenplays for The Jones Party, PuppyDog Tales, Spinners, and A Natural High. His plays have been produced in cities across the United States, including Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. In the spring of 2002, Joshua made his London debut when his play The Men’s Room premiered at the Croydon Warehouse Theatre in the U.K. Additionally, Joshua is the co-founder (with Ato Essandoh) of the writing/performance group The Defiant Ones and co-author of the plays Close Encounters, Eat My Shorts and Defiant Ones: Revolution. Joshua is a product of the University of Iowa MFA Acting program. In addition to writing, Joshua directs and consults throughout New York City.

KAUFMANN, GINA  Iowa City, 1987-89
Gina has an impressive collection of professional credits as a director, including starting the Unusual Cabaret in Bar Harbor, which employed a large number of No Shame alums in its shows. She is currently directing Temptation, by Vaclav Havel, for Capital University in Sacramento.

LEGUIZAMO, JOHN  New York (HOME), Early 90’s
John is a Colombian-born actor and comedian known as much for his raunchy comic performances as his serious dramatic acting roles. In 1991 he won over audiences and critics alike with his off-Broadway one-man show, Mambo Mouth (developed partly at No Shame). Ever since he has been working steadily in film, television, and theatre. (www.imdb.com/name/nm0000491/)

LOHMAN, MARK  Iowa City, 1986-88
Mark is Production Manager and Resident Designer for the University of Chicago Theatre. He was there at the very first No Shame performance and has gone on to garner critical acclaim for designs at theatres ranging from Steppenwolf to Lifeline.

MANHEIM, CAMRYN  New York (HOME), Early 90’s
Camryn Manheim played defense attorney Ellenor Frutt on ABC's Emmy Award winning drama The Practice. In 1998 she won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series, and in 1999 she won a Golden Globe Award for her work in the same role. In addition she was named one of the "Most Intriguing People of the Year" by People Magazine, one of the "Most Fascinating Women of the Year" by Ladies Home Journal, and one of Glamour magazine's "Women of the Year." (www.CamrynManheim.com)

MARGGRAFF, RUTH  Iowa City 1988-89; New York (HOME), 1989-90
Ruth was a member of the Iowa Playwright’s Workshop and a regular No Shame participant. She continued writing and performing at No Shame even after she moved to New York City, where she helped to establish the venue at the HOME for Contemporary Theatre and Art. She has since gone on to become an assistant professor of playwriting at the University of Texas, with a growing collection of professional theatre credits for her plays. (www.utexas.edu/academic/mcw/news01margraff.html)

MCNERNEY, TODD  Iowa City, 1988-90
Todd holds a BA in Theatre from St. John's University [MN] and an MFA in Acting from the University of Iowa. At Iowa he was active with No Shame, finding innovative ways to promote and extend the performer beyond the traditional notions of acting. Todd is currently teaching in the performance track at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. He is a co-founder of The Shakespeare Project, which produces two productions of Shakespeare's work each year. He also spent three years touring with Mummenschanz, the internationally known Swiss mime troupe. He currently serves as Coordinator for the Piccolo Spoleto Theatre Series.

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METZGAR, BONNIE  Iowa City, 1988-89; New York (HOME), 1989-90
Bonnie has had an extraordinary career as a writer, director, and arts administrator. After leaving Iowa she worked closely with Susan Lori Parks as well as many of the best known playwrights living and working in New York City. She was the Artistic Director of BACA Downtown, NYSF Production Manager, and directed shows at the Joseph Papp Public Theater, Henson International Festival of Puppet Theatre, and Clubbed Thumb, to name just a few.

MITLER, MATT  New York (HOME) 1990
Matt currently is the Company Director of Dzieci Theatre but was initially trained in Humanistic and Existential Psychology and Group Process before discovering the healing potential of theatre. His study and training ranges from therapeutic study with such notables as R.D. Laing and Dr. Carl Rogers to theatrical study with Jerzy Grotowski and The Polish Theatre Laboratory. Combining these two pursuits, he has led workshops in a variety of settings including Hutchings Psychiatric Center (NY), The National Theatre School of Sweden, and the graduate school of The University of Psychology of Warsaw. In 1980, his essay "Art and Therapy" was published in New Directions in Psychotherapy. He is also profiled in Working on the Inside: The Spiritual Life Through the Eyes of Actors by Retta Blaney. In Europe from 1977 to 1981, Matt performed, directed, taught, and formed the international theatre collective The Tribe, which presented interactive works at a variety of institutions and was featured at Le Festival Mondial du Theatre in Nancy, France. Other festivals which presented Mr. Mitler's work include The Köln Festival, Vienna Festwochen, The International Festival of Fools, The Gaukler Festival of Mime, The International Festival of Mimes and Pantomimes (Poland), The World Theatre Festival (Denver), and The Theatre of Nations. Matt has designed and directed better than fifty theatrical productions, including his own adaptation of Nathaniel West's Miss Lonely Hearts for the 29th Street Repertory Theatre; the critically acclaimed musical Sofrito, featuring The Latin Legends All Stars, for The New Victory Theater; and the apocalyptic epic Dirty Money (which he also co-wrote) for Teatr Am Turm in Frankfurt, Germany. He has staged the works of dozens of solo performers and comedy troupes at a variety of NYC venues including The Samuel Beckett Theatre, LaMama ETC, and The Joseph Papp Public Theatre. As a "New York Actor," he appeared on numerous television programs and starred in over a dozen independent motion pictures before creating his own film projects. Matt acted, directed, and edited on half a dozen cult videos, including the award winning Shakespearean parody, MacBeth, King of Scotland. His first film feature, Cracking Up, which he produced, directed, wrote, edited, and starred in, enjoyed a limited theatrical run in 1998. A festival hit, the film garnered many awards including, Best Film at the Venice International Film Festival Critic's Week and the People's Choice award at the New York Underground Film Festival. Participating in the festival circuit took Matt back to Europe for the first time in ten years. While there, he had the good fortune to be sponsored by The Children's Cancer Fund of Sweden to train an ensemble of actors in clowning and therapeutic technique and to lead seminars in creativity and healing at the Umea School of Medicine.
(http://dziecitheatre.org/)

NEVEU, BRETT  Iowa City 1989-90; Chicago 1991-95
In addition to his online comic strip Stoopid Pigeon (stoopidpigeon.com), Brett has had numerous productions in Chicago theatres. He received nice reviews for the Chicago Dramatists production of his play Drawing War from the Chicago Tribune in 2000. His most recent play, The Last Barbecue, was produced at the 29th Street Rep in New York to good reviews in Backstage magazine.
(www.theatermania.com/ny/shows/lastbarbecue/)

ORRACH, JOE  New York (HOME), 1989-90
Joe was one-half of the comedy duo Hot Foot, whose critically acclaimed show Scorch Marks on the Floor was seen the world over. Joe has danced in film (Everyone Says I Love You) and on Broadway. He recently helped to choreograph the dancing at the Elan
Awards 2003 presentation, which honored choreographer Graciela Daniele.

AMY LYNN PIGOTT  Iowa City 1988-91; Los Angeles 2002-present
Amy has worked in all aspects of the theatre with directing, acting, and technical credits from theatres as diverse as Bailiwick Repertory, The Unusual Cabaret in Bar Harbor, Maine, and Café Theatre Upstairs in London. She is the founder of the Chicago-based theatre and film company Pantechnicon Artworks, through which she produced and directed the epic multi-media piece *Oedipus Goes to Hollywood* and the live serial *Larry and the Werewolf*. Other directing credits include *Arthur 33* at the Circle Rep. Lab in New York, *Smiley* at Cleveland Public Theatre, and *Mystery at Midnight* at Stage Two Theatre in Chicago. Amy has worked as the Associate Producer for Heartland Films, through which she produced such industrial wonders as *True Grit* or Butler Cleans Up and Supra Man, a multi-media dental products sales meeting piece. She also has worked on industrials for Coca-Cola, The Farm Bureau, Reynolds Aluminum, and Motorola and served as the script supervisor for the independent feature *Anticipation*. Amy is the Co-Founder of the Albany Park Theater Project, which brings together teens from Chicago’s Albany Park neighborhood to create and perform theatre that comes out of their personal experiences, their neighborhood, and their diverse native cultures. Prior to that, she spent time directing, program designing, and teaching for SOUL: Stories of Urban Life, a community-based oral history performance project in Chicago’s Uptown/Edgewater neighborhood, and for After School Action Programs’ Girl University, a program for young female residents of a HUD building in Uptown. Amy is the former Vice President of the Women’s Theatre Alliance, a service organization dedicated to promoting women’s leadership in the theatre arts. Amy is currently the Director of No Shame - Los Angeles. She also spends a lot of time with her three most impressive productions: Liam, Rileigh, and Madailin.

ERIC A. POT  Iowa City 1988-91; Los Angeles 2002-present
Eric is a graduate of the University of Iowa, where he earned degrees in both Theatre and Film. As an actor, Eric has played everything from Romeo to Yossele in the U.S. premiere of Lillian Atlan’s *Mister Fugue* and was an Irene Ryan Semi-Finalist for his performance as Danceney in *Les Liaisons Dangereuse*. He is certified with recommendation by the Society of American Fight Directors and has directed fights for dozens of shows. You can see him on screen in such films as *Michael* and *My Best Friend's Wedding*. As a filmmaker, Eric has scripted and directed several shorts as well as producing the independent features *Anticipation* and *Merlot*. Eric is a Feature Film Assistant Director and a member of the Directors Guild of America. His films include *Freaky Friday*, *Freddy vs. Jason*, *On The Line*, *Dragonfly*, *Just Visiting*, *Return to Me*, *Hardball*, *Home Alone 3*, *My Best Friend’s Wedding*, *Chain Reaction*, *To Sir with Love 2*, *Normal Life*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, and *The Fugitive*. Eric just finished the New Line picture *Cellular*, featuring Kim Basinger and William H. Macy.

PRICE, JONATHON  Iowa City 1988-90; Los Angeles 2002-present
Jonathon is a professional composer/musician specializing in original scores for film and television. He was recently featured in *Film Score Monthly* (Vol 4 #6) as a result of his success in this field. He has composed the music for the features *Rustin* (Meat Loaf, Zachary Ty Bryan, Ashley Johnson), *Sammyville* (Chase Masterson), *Dog Story* (Adam Golomb, and composed the music for TLC’s *The Ultimate 10…,..., the Discovery Channel’s Movie Magic*, and CN’s *Fast Food Films*. (http://members.aol.com/JPrice5000/)

RISTAU, TODD  Iowa City, 1986-90; New York, 1990; Chicago 1994; Charlottesville, 2001-2003; Verona, 2002; Roanoke 2003-present
Todd is an actor, director and graduate of the Iowa Playwrights Workshop. His work has been produced internationally in theatres ranging from 30 chairs in an Iowa City church basement to the 1800 seat Birmingham Hippodrome in England. His play *Great Balls of Fire, the Jerry Lee Lewis Story* made him the first Iowa writer since Tennessee Williams to be produced on London’s West End. He is currently Assistant Professor of Theatre at Mary
Baldwin College, where he teaches writing, acting, directing, and dramatic literature. Todd has acted in over 200 roles for stage and film, including a tour with Geese Theatre, a Grotowski based improvisational mask work company performing exclusively in prisons. Something of the “Johnny Appleseed of No Shame,” he has recreated the venue in New York City, for HOME for Contemporary Theatre and Art, as well as in Virginia for Live Arts of Charlottesville, ShenanArts of Verona, and most recently at Mill Mountain Theatre of Roanoke. More locations around the country are currently being discussed. (www.ristenltd.com/professional/vita.html)

ROSS, SHERWOOD  Charlottesville, 2002 to present
Sherwood Ross, a professional journalist for 40 years, was an activist during the Civil Rights movement in the deep south. He became a playwright through his involvement in No Shame, and recently had his first play selected for production by the Barksdale Theatre of Richmond Virginia as part of its main stage season.

SHEEHAN, JULIE  New York (HOME), 1990
Julie Sheehan is a poet whose work has appeared in Ploughshares, Paris Review, Southwest Review, Texas Review and Western Humanities Review. Her first book of poems, Thaw, won the Poets Out Loud Prize and was published by Fordham University Press. Julie was born in a small town in Iowa but now holds degrees from both Yale and Columbia. (www.fordham.edu/general/Undergraduate/Julie_Sheehan11856.html)

SHEPARD, JENNIFER, Iowa City 1990-94
Jennifer feels that her early experiences writing for No Shame helped prepare her to write sketch comedy. From 1991 to 93 she served as a member of the No Shame Board at Iowa. Now she is an actress working professionally in Chicago, Jennifer specializing in sketch and long form improvisation. She has written for and appeared with several critically acclaimed Chicago sketch ensembles, including Gay Co, The Galileo Players and Brick. In 2004, Jennifer and her husband, Larrance Fingerhut, will open a theater featuring improv in Bar Harbor, ME.

New York based performance artist Stuart Sherman was famous for creating short, anecdotal performance pieces which included film, sound, and live action to illustrate his deadpan conceptual wit with an economy of means. Since the late 1960's, Stuart produced many amazing experimental theater works, often including substantial film and video elements, as well as wonderful solo performances with nothing more than a few small props arranged on a television tray. He died of AIDS in September, 2001, at the age of 55. His nomadic / spiritual life, his economy of means, and his love of play will be remembered by those he touched, especially those lucky enough to work with him on the No Shame stage. (http://jclarkmedia.com/gaybooks/sherman.html)

STAR CITY WILDCATS  Roanoke, 2003
The Wildcats are a high-energy rockabilly trio inspired by the sights and sounds of the 1950's. Their songs range from rockin' originals to covers of Bill Haley and The Comets, Johnny Cash, and early Elvis. Former members of The Blue Ticks, along with a former member of Rocket 350, they are B.B. Rieserson (vocals and guitar), Brandon Davis (stand-up bass), and Andre Burroughs (drums). Favorites of the local scene in Roanoke, they played the pre-show set for the Rooneoke No Shame inaugural performance, and continue to play for the venue whenever their tour schedule allows. Brandon, a marionette maker, has written puppet plays and tested many scenes at No Shame stage, where he also performs original compositions for the bagpipes. (www.starcitywildcats.com)

ULLIAN, PETER  Iowa City, 1990-91
Peter was the recipient of a Gilman & Gonzalez-Falla Musical Theater Foundation Commendation Award for his work in the American Musical Theatre, the first librettist to
receive this award. He also received a Roger L. Stevens Award from the Kennedy Center/Fund for New American Plays for his drama *In the Shadow of the Terminal Tower.*

**WARD, PENNY** New York (HOME), 1990

Penny is a former dancer who currently works as a videographer and archivist, including work for the New York Public Library Dance Collection. She does video production and editing for demo tapes and grant applications as well as collaborations with choreographers to incorporate video into live performance. Ward received a 1989 NYFA Fellowship, and her work has been seen on television in New York, Los Angeles, and Korea.

**WOODSIDE, DAVID (DB)** Iowa City, 1989-90

While at the University of Iowa, David performed regularly with Joshua James at No Shame in a series of pieces entitled *White Boy, Black Boy Theatre.* After leaving Iowa, he went on to play a very large number of strong supporting roles on screen and television; including recurring characters on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer, The Division, Once and Again,* and *24.* David recently garnered great attention with his performance in the mini-series *The Temptations.* He has appeared in the independent features *More Dogs Than Bones* and *Scarred City.*

**DWAYNE YANCEY** Roanoke, 2003-present

By profession, Yancey is a newspaper journalist. He has more than 20 years experience in journalism and has written a book on Virginia politics, if that counts for anything. Dwayne once interviewed playwright Edward Albee for his college newspaper, focusing on why Albee waited until after age 30 to start writing plays. At the time Yancey considered this quite an oddity. Ironically, Yancey himself wouldn't start seriously writing plays until he was well into his 40s. Since then, he's written more than 30 scripts. His pieces continue to be produced by theatres and schools around the country, and winning him recognition at playwriting contests in Virginia, West Virginia and North Carolina. Recent highlights include *Lucy* (First Place in the 18th Annual Henrico Theatre Company Playwriting Contest); *Night Cops* at James Madison University; *The Last Man on the Moon Blues* (Acme Theatre New Works Winter Festival); *Hamlet on Spring Break* (Virginia Theatre Association conference, 2002); *Plantagenet v. Shakespeare;* and *The Sirens Sing the Blues and Other Old Favorites.*
APPENDIX D: Open Letters of Support for No Shame

These individuals, including Artistic Directors, Departmental Chairs, supportive faculty and working theatre professionals have consented to being listed as a ready list of references you may contact and discuss the pros and cons of setting up a No Shame.

The University of Iowa

“No Shame Theatre is not a part of the theatre arts department, but has always had the department's enthusiastic support. It provides a unique opportunity for performance and audience participation that could never survive in a formal structure. The people who have made No Shame such a success have provided us with evenings of fun, provocative ideas and not a few groans. But they have always provided a solid reason to come to the theater at 11 o'clock at night.”

David Thayer, Acting Chair
Theatre Department
University of Iowa
October, 1997

January 14, 2004

An Open Letter to Possible No Shame Leaders,

We at the University of Iowa have had the pleasure of hosting No Shame Theatre since it was born here in the back of a pick up truck. For almost two decades undergraduates, graduate students, and people from town have had the opportunity to write, perform, experiment, get instant feedback and create a community that borders on both brilliance and foolery. Its presence in our theatre – long ago we brought it in from the cold – is one of our department’s greatest strengths.

No Shame brings people to the theatre who have never even thought about attending a play. They line up every Friday night and fill our lobby with energy and high expectations. Some of them just watch, but a lot of them surprise themselves and end up performing. What theatre department could ask for more? In fact we get more – some of these audience members discover they like live performance and return to see the plays we produce and take our classes.

No Shame Theatre gives everyone an equal chance to succeed or fail on
his or her respective face. It doesn’t matter whether you’ve studied drama, know how to act, have written novels or never put pen to paper. You too can be a star (or a fool) for five minutes. Sometimes the most experienced people discover they have a lot to learn, and novices come away feeling like stars. No Shame tells the truth every time.

No Shame charges audience members $1.00 apiece. We charge No Shame $100 a week. Everyone comes out ahead. We ask nothing of No Shame except that they respect they theatre and leave it in as good condition as they found it. We put no limits on what they can present, but ask that they post a sign at the door saying material could be offensive to certain people. Other than that they are on their own.

We enjoy the vitality, creativity and spirit of No Shame Theatre. I recommend it to any institution looking to attract a new crowd and discover unexpected talent.

Alan MacVey, Chair
Department of Theatre Arts
Univeristy of Iowa
Phone: (319) 353-2430
Email: alan-macvey@uiowa.edu

January 19, 2004

Saying yes to Todd Ristau and opening a No Shame franchise at our theater was one of the best things I have done as an Artistic Director.

Some of my favorite moments and people of the last three years have come as a direct result, and with very little risk Live Arts has grown in directions that truly matter.

We have a great new conduit for new writers and performers, who can be part of our theater with any degree of submersion—from dipping a toe to plunging in head first. We have new audiences, who learn from the first moments theatrical values (economy, imagination, topicality, among
many others) that truly matter. We gained an income stream, that though modest, is very reliable and welcome.

But, most of all, we became part of a community that is centered right here but stretches from coast to coast. This community supports all that we do in ways large and small, and has fed directly into all our other work; education, production, development, outreach and new works have all seen vital new energy as a direct result of No Shame.

Our Friday late night slot was a wasteland, but now I can not imagine our theater without No Shame filling it 52 weeks a year. It is theater that always surprises, that touches something deep and meaningful in audiences, performers, and writers, and that makes a lasting impression.

Brevity is the soul of wit, and of No Shame. These short performances make an outsized impression on all who encounter them. My only question for any theater without No Shame is “What are you waiting for?” Don’t let the revolution start without you.

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**John Gibson**
artistic director, live arts
jgibson@livearts.org

**PO BOX 1231** (mail)
123 East Water Street (shipping)
Charlottesville VA, 22902
(p) 434.977.4177 x 104
(f) 434.977.3318

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January 20th, 2004

No Shame and Mill Mountain are a perfect match. The success we have experienced in reaching new audiences is really remarkable. No Shame serves as means to attract and tap into a broader group of creative artists than traditional theatre does. Our experience is that often traditional theatres either a bit daunting to those not in the profession or limiting to some within it who want to try new models. But those feeling outside are
individuals with ideas that need to be heard. Bringing No Shame to our theatre has enhanced the ways we can achieve our mission which is to provide our entire region with theatrical and artistic outlets and experiences.

No Shame has been particularly useful in our intern program. These developing performers are at a critical point in their careers. They need as many and as frequent performance opportunities as possible. They need an environment in which there is a freedom to experiment and grow with few risks. No Shame has given them a chance to gain those valuable outlets.

Jere Lee Hodgin
Producing Artistic Director
Mill Mountain Theatre
One Market Square SE
Roanoke, VA 24011
Phone: (540) 342-5732
Email: jhodgin@millmountain.org

January, 2004

This venue came to JMU in the fall of 2003 when a student in my Intro to Theatre class, Trent Westbrook, approached me with an idea for his semester project. He proposed starting something I had never heard of before called No Shame Theatre. I have to admit I was skeptical about the whole thing, but Trent gave me a detailed description of the concept along with a copy of the How To No Shame book and the URL for the national website. He was so passionate in his determination to get this thing off the ground at JMU that even though it sounded like a heartbreaker of an idea, I gave him the go ahead.

Trent talked two other students in the class into joining forces with him, designed a funny and provocative ad campaign, found a performance site, then shocked and delighted me by making this wonderfully weird, touching approach to theatre actually work.
I am very pleased at the success of No Shame on our campus, and understand two previously non-theatre student participants have signed up for one of my theatre classes! They intend to keep No Shame going at JMU and I am thrilled to make No Shame participation a semester project option.

Cathy Brookshire  
Theatre Department Faculty  
James Madison University  
800 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22807  
Email: brooksca@jmu.edu

Also available to contact as references to discuss No Shame Theatre

Todd McNerney  
Assistant Professor of Performance and Voice  
Department of Theatre  
College of Charleston  
Phone: (843) 953-7735  
Email: mcnerneyt@cofc.edu

Todd was instrumental in setting up the No Shame branch at the College of Charleston, for bio information see Appendix C.

David Gothard  
Producing Artistic Director  
78 Chesil Court, Chelsea Manor St.  
London SW3 5OS  
Email: davidgothard@hotmail.com

David Gothard is a former Artistic Director of Riverside Studios, London, and was Artistic Director at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre in England from 1987 to 1990. American writers premiered during that time include David Hwang, Jean Claude van Itallie, Emily Mann, Sam Shepard and Todd Ristau.

David has been a supporter of No Shame Theatre since he first encountered it as a guest of the Iowa Playwright’s Festival in the early 1990’s. Since that time he has supported and assisted in the development of many of the new writers he was made aware of through this venue, helping to launch many to significant international recognition.

He has created writing workshops in Derry, Northern Ireland and has repeatedly been invited to adjudicate and teach at the Iowa Playwright’s Workshop, where he began his pioneer work with Naomi Wallace, W. David Hancock, and other important new writers. He continues to support No shame as part of his dedication to new works and emerging artists.
APPENDIX E: REFERENCES, CREDITS, AND THANKS

Bibliography:
No Shame Theatre <http://www.noshame.org>

(More) Suggested Reading:
Brook, Peter. The Empty Space. Atheneum, 1981.
Web Resources:
The WWW Virtual Library: Theatre and Drama. <http://vl-theatre.com>

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LIKE Hollins Playwright’s Lab on Facebook to keep up to date on all our upcoming events, local productions, and to follow the rapidly growing success of all our M.F.A.
Todd Ristau is an actor, director, and a graduate of the Iowa Playwright’s Workshop. His plays have been produced internationally in theatres ranging from 30 chairs in an Iowa City church basement to the 1800-seat Birmingham Hippodrome in England. His play *Great Balls of Fire, the Jerry Lee Lewis Story* made him the first Iowa writer since Tennessee Williams to be produced on London’s West End.

Todd is currently an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Mary Baldwin College, where he teaches writing, acting, directing, and dramatic literature.

He has acted in over 200 roles for stage and film, including a tour with Geese Theatre, a Grotowski-based improvisational mask-work company performing exclusively in prisons.

He co-founded No Shame Theatre, set up the structure that would allow it to continue after his graduation, and established the first No Shame franchise in New York City. He also started the Virginia No Shames for Live Arts of Charlottesville, ShenanArts of Verona, and Mill Mountain Theatre of Roanoke.

Jeff Goode is an actor, director, and author of over 50 plays, musicals and children's shows, including *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues* [developed at No Shame], the cult serial *Larry and the Werewolf*, and the shock-comedy *Poona the Fuckdog and other plays for children*.

His published scripts include *The Eight* (now available in Dutch!), *The UBU Plays (Jarry for kids!)*, and *The Messy Adventures of Dick Piston, Hotel Detective*.

Currently working in television, Jeff has written pilots for Fox, Disney, UPN, USA Networks, Canal Plus, and two for MTV, including the pilot for *Undressed*, now in its sixth season.

Jeff is a co-founder of No Shame Theatre and a founding company member of The Unusual Cabaret (Bar Harbor, Maine) as well as Pantechnicon Artworks (Chicago).

You can find him on the internet at: www.jeffgoode.com
Anywhere there is light enough to read a script and space enough for an audience to gather No Shame can happen. The first No Shame was done from the back of a pick up truck in a parking lot because no “real” theatre would have us.

After weeks of performing in the rain and snow, the University of Iowa theatre department decided not to let us die of exposure and invited us inside, where we’ve been a forum for new work for almost twenty years.

No Shame can happen anywhere, but this book is geared toward helping you set up an indoor No Shame, either on campus or in a non-campus “real world” theatre space.

There are benefits and problems unique to each, and since we’ve done both, we figured it was about time to give you the benefit of our experience in setting up and maintaining a No Shame theatre franchise.

The rest is up to you. If you don’t do it, who the heck will?

“No Shame is what theatre is all about. There is more dangerous fizzling and grotesquely crackling creative energy on display at a good No Shame than in a whole season of [traditional main stage] productions. The failures, the horrors, coupled with the experience of something new and wonderful. The ancient audiences had no idea what they were going to see, but today only No Shame can claim that kind of ambushing surprise. But it is no Open Mic Night. It has a host, and a personality of its own. Flawed, variously lit, and often incoherent, it is nothing less than lovable. Most communities are filled with characters, and No Shame gives them a weekly chance to come out from under the disguises they wear around ‘in real life’ so as not to be slain.”

—Lee Moyer, Designer and Illustrator (www.leemoyer.com)