

Sheila Callaghan

playwright • screenwriter

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To Whom It May Concern:

I've personally been involved with Clubbed Thumb for over seven years. In 2003 I workshopped my play CRUMBLE (Lay Me Down, Justin Timberlake) in Clubbed Thumb's Boot Camp development series. The play went on to receive a production in the Summerworks series, and afterwards found itself in Clubbed Thumb's published anthology of plays entitled FUNNY, STRANGE, PROVOCATIVE. In 2008 we were awarded a commission grant from NYSCA for my play ROADKILL CONFIDENTIAL, as well as an LMCC space grant to further develop it. We then fine-tuned the play at the Playwrights Center in Minneapolis, followed by a design workshop in Brooklyn. ROADKILL CONFIDENTIAL was ultimately produced by Clubbed Thumb last fall at 3LD downtown.

Not only did Clubbed Thumb provide a safe space within which I could explore my work, but it also identified like-minded collaborators with whom I could develop long-standing relationships. In addition to formally funded developmental opportunities, Maria provided informal readings of my play in her living room, armed with homemade soup or cookies or whiskey or whatever the mood required. Through these readings I not only learned about my play in a stress-free environment, but was able to collaborate with a bevy of actors I'd long admired but with whom had not had the opportunity to work. Building and fostering a strong community is essential to any artist who seeks to embrace and be embraced by her field, and Clubbed Thumb more than provided this support for me.

As evidenced above, Maria Striar has shown special interest in providing my projects with the particular amenities needed both for the arc of my own development as an artist and for the honing of my work itself. It's all too rare for a playwright to have a play commissioned, developed, and produced by one theatrical entity. Clubbed Thumb is deeply committed to its artists in this way, from creating enduring relationships to supporting play development to seeing the playwrights' vision through to eventual production. This is its great, unique strength.

Clubbed Thumb supports quirky, challenging, engaging, theatrical work which doesn't necessarily fit not any mainstream mold. It's very rare to walk out of a Clubbed Thumb show and not feel exhilarated or moved by something—a beautifully lyrical turn of phrase, a thrilling theatrical moment, a surprising way of arriving at truth... And it's no coincidence that a good deal of mid-career playwrights who have been lauded for their adventurousness, creativity, and intelligence have passed through Clubbed Thumb: Anne Washburn, Lisa D'Amour, Sarah Ruhl, Anne Marie Healy, Rinne Groff, Jordan Harrison, Jason Grote, and Erin Courtney, to name a few. These are some of my favorite writers, and if it weren't for Clubbed Thumb it's difficult to imagine how these playwrights might have navigated their way to the positions they now hold in the theatrical landscape. It is a vital, essential organization, and should be supported in any and every way possible.

Regards,



Sheila Callaghan