



# new musicals inc.

## **An Introduction to New Musicals Inc. and the Academy for New Musical Theatre**

NMI produces, develops and studies new musicals. It has two branches: an academic one, and a development/production one.

**NMI.** *New Musicals Inc.* is the name under which we produce and develop musicals. NMI develops musicals for producers and writers all around the country, through workshops, dramaturgy, table readings, concerts, productions.

**ANMT.** The academic branch is called the *Academy for New Musical Theatre*. ANMT offers classes and curriculum, both live in Los Angeles and through a series of online courses for bookwriters, lyricists and composers.

We've been in existence for over 40 years, originally as the West Coast branch of the Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop. We've developed hundreds of musicals.

We've worked with such producers as The Colony Theatre, Broadway Rose Theatre, Copake Theatre, Celebration Theatre, Deaf West Theatre, Red Mountain Theatre, American Folklore Theatre/Northern Sky Theatre, Civic Light Opera South Bay Cities, McCoy Rigby Entertainment, East West Players, Carousel Theatre, the Lyric Theatre, Latino Theatre Company, the Victory Theatre, University of California Irvine's prestigious Department of Drama, and we're members of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, a national network of musical theatre producers and theatre companies.

We've worked with such writers as: Jeff Marx (*Avenue Q*), Mark Hollmann (*Urinetown*), Hunter Foster (*Bonnie and Clyde*), Georgia Stitt (*The Water*), Fat Mike (*NOFX*), Clay Zambo (*Greenbrier Ghost*), Randy Rogel (*The Gypsy King*), Paul Graham Brown (*Fairystories*), Placido Domingo, Jr (*Vlad*), Kellen Blair (*Murder for Two*) and hundreds more.

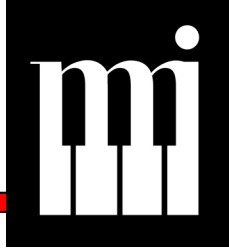
Our academy offers one of only three professional programs in the U.S. for writers and composers in musical theatre.

In this introduction, you will find a brief history, descriptions of our process for developing musicals, and some options for you to get involved as a producer, writer, Board member, or musical theatre fan.



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## 1. Here's What We Do

*For producers*, we offer a complete process for developing a musical, whether it's already begun, or it's still only an idea. Depending on what your musical needs, we can nurture it with actors, directors, music directors, dramaturgs, rehearsal rooms, and concert readings.

*For writers*, we offer two distinctly different kinds of involvement. We create many opportunities for writers to create new musicals in partnership with producers, often from scratch. The other opportunity we offer is academic: ranging from a core curriculum to a year-long writers' workshop in which writers can create their own full-length shows, as well as a full range of courses offered online for bookwriters, lyricists and composers.

*For actors*, we offer a full range of experiences, from a professional repertory ensemble which meets weekly to workshop new works for producers, to courses, seminars, formal and informal readings, and performers' workshops for teens and professionals.

*For audience members*, we offer concert readings, festivals, conferences, salons with musical theatre luminaries, an annual 15-minute musical celebration, and a brave new world of online musicals written directly for the internet.

We've hosted Salons with: Stephen Sondheim, Richard Sherman, Jeff Marx, Winnie Holzman, Jason Robert Brown, Marty Panzer, Stiles and Drew, Charles Strouse, and Arthur Kopit.



## 2. A Brief History

New Musicals Inc.'s roots go back 40 years to the original musical theatre workshops of Lehman Engel, the preeminent Broadway musical director. After Mr. Engel, John Sparks, Lenning Davis, and Marty Hansen lead the workshop for many years until John Sparks assumed sole Artistic Directorship of the workshop for the past three decades. In 2002, Executive Director Scott Guy expanded NMI's historic writers' workshop to include an actors' repertory company and a professional wing to develop musicals directly for producers and theatres. In 2003, NMI hired Elise Dewsberry as resident dramaturge; she was appointed Artistic Director in 2010.

NMI moved to its own home in July 2005, and offers rehearsal rooms and a large workshop space to writers, actors, and theatre artists. It is currently exploring options for a larger facility which can support productions, as well as a number of co-production ventures.

NMI operated as the Academy for New Musical Theatre from 2002-2014, and in 2014 changed its legal name to New Musicals Inc. NMI continues to operate its academic branch under the name of the Academy for New Musical Theatre.

NMI produces and hosts a major regional biennial conference on the "Business of the Musical Theatre BIZ" with participating producers, writers, entertainment attorneys from dozens of musical theatre producing organizations, ranging from Equity Waiver houses to mid-size theatres to Broadway producers. We produced our seventh conference in 2022.

NMI has two full-time staff members: Scott Guy, Executive Director, and Elise Dewsberry, Artistic Director; and four part-time monthly contractors.

**Physical Facilities.** NMI leases 2200 square feet at 5628 Vineland in North Hollywood, California. Space includes two rehearsal rooms, a large workshop space, two bathrooms, a kitchen area, upper-floor storage, and four workstations for staff. NMI has the capability of digitally recording and streamcasting its workshops via its large-capacity website: [www.nmi.org](http://www.nmi.org).



### 3. Programs and Activities

New Musicals Inc. has many diverse activities, and it is difficult to summarize them, but they all relate to the creation of new musical theatre.

***New Musicals Inc.'s Creative Services.*** Creation and development of new musicals, generally with or for producers. Support includes: 1) formal dramaturgy/feedback, generally from Artistic Director Elise Dewsberry; 2) table readings with three NMI staff members, with detailed analysis of music, book and lyrics; 3) workshops and readings with actors, usually in “concert style” at music stands, without blocking, lights, costumes or sets; and then 4) informal colleague-to-colleague recommendations to producers and theatres interested in new musicals, nationwide.

***The Writers' Workshop.*** The venerable writers' workshop has assisting writers for four decades. In recent years, it has expanded to include several different levels. 1) The Core Curriculum resembles the BMI/Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop in New York in that it involves writers in the creation of ballads, charm songs, comedy songs and musical scenes, but NMI's writers' workshop includes intensives (“labs”) focused on music or bookwriting or lyrics. Its source-material texts were updated to include present-day Pulitzer Prize and Obie-winning plays, and to address the “contemporary musical” and how it resembles and differs from the classic American musical. 2) A second-level of the curriculum focuses on the creation of a first-draft of a musical. 3) An advanced level of curriculum is the monthly “General Workshop” in which invited writers present selections from musicals in progress. 4) Seasoned Academy writers are often invited to create shows for producers as part of the Staff Workshop, but this is not a guarantee of membership in the Academy.

***Production.*** New Musicals Inc. has ambitions expand its national presence as a producing entity. To that end, it has produced many world premiere musicals: *40 is the New 15*; *A Ring in Brooklyn*; and *The Max Factor Factor*, *The Bully Problem*, *Gideon and the Blundersnorp*, *Manson's Girls*, *The Benefit of Hindsight*, and dozens of 15-minute musicals. Five years in a row from 2017-2022, we have won the "The Pick of the Fringe" award at the Hollywood Fringe Festival.



## 4. Behind the Scenes

In this section, we discuss some of the business and organizational aspects of New Musicals Inc.: marketing, operating budgets, the Board of Directors, and the staff.

### Marketing

NMI has participated in workshops sponsored by the National Arts Marketing Project, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, and the Center for NonProfit Management, hiring a series of consultants, contractors, interns and SEO firms to create a series of national viral marketing campaigns. Current outreach includes a press list of approximately 200 print/online newspapers, magazines, blogs, websites, radio stations, TV stations and PSA outlets.

NMI's quarterly e-newsletter is disseminated to approximately 10,000 recipients.

NMI Facebook outreach is approximately 2,300; Twitter is a similar number. Googling for "new musical theatre" or "new musicals" consistently returns both NMI and ANMT on the first screen/top ten results. In contrast, NMI has minor, inconsistent presence at Yelp, Pinterest and Instagram.

In spite of our decades of researching and experimenting, we have not yet found a single, consistently reliable way to market to potential new members. A majority of writers who contact us for the first time say they found us "on the internet" and the rest are scattered throughout our entire spectrum of outreach: our postcards, our public presentations, referrals, word of mouth, an author's biography in a program, etc.

### Annual Operating Budget Summary

Operating income and expenses increased an average of 28% every year from 2002 through 2008, and have plateaued just shy of \$250,000 ever since. Traditionally, the Executive Director budgets a conservative zero-deficit balance, spending surplus revenue if and only if it is collected.

In Fiscal Year 2006-07, NMI established an Endowment Fund with a twofold purpose: to supplement staff salaries, and eventually to accomplish the purchase of a building. The fund remains in place, with its initial few thousand dollars untouched.



## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has had a sturdy core of members since its incorporation in 2002: Michael Blaha and John Sparks have served uninterrupted terms on the Board since 2002. The Board's size has fluctuated throughout the years, but current numbers seven.

Current Board members are:

John Mitchell, President/Secretary  
Tina Johnson-Marcel, Vice President  
Paula Brand, Treasurer  
Michael Blaha  
Michael Gordon Shapiro, Member Representative  
John Sparks  
Elise Dewsberry

**Staff.** The NMI staff currently consists of two full-time staff (Scott Guy and Elise Dewsberry), with four part-time staff members hired on a project-by-project basis: Ron Barnett, Music Director; Catie O'Donnell, Staff Producer, Phillip Seward, Composers' Lab (online); Larry Todd Johnson, Lyric Lab (online); and temporary intern Erik Vargas.



## 5. Developing a Musical: a Description of Our Process

There's no single way to develop a musical, so what follows here is a broad-strokes kind of generalization for two different scenarios: developing a musical from scratch, followed by a generalization of how we approach a musical which is already in progress.

### *Developing a Musical from Scratch*

#### *1. IDEA*

The producer generates or approves an idea

NMI assembles a creative team to create a paragraph-sized version, or perhaps several different approaches

Producer approves the approach

Creative team develops a 4-6 page outline of the storyline

Creative team writes a 15-minute first cut (generally a scene and two songs).

The Academy presents that 15-minute cut for the producer.

At this point, the producer either shuts down the project, or greenlights the writing of a full first draft and agrees to produce a public reading of that draft.

#### *2. DRAFT*

For those works which receive a greenlight from the producer for first draft:

NMI supports table readings and workshops of the work, nurturing it through first draft.

#### *3. FEEDBACK*

At every step along the way, NMI staff offers feedback and suggestions, with the producer as involved as he or she wants to be

#### *4. PRESENTATION*

The producer presents a public reading of the first draft of the work at his expense.

After the producer has fulfilled his obligation by presenting the reading, he is under no obligation for a production of the musical; but if he does produce the musical, NMI expects he will do so under terms approved by the Dramatists Guild.





## ***Developing an Already-Existing Musical***

### *Phase 1 - Staff Evaluation and Preparation of New Rough Draft*

The staff at New Musicals Inc. reads and sings the work in-house, and provides the authors with detailed feedback and suggestions for future direction. Usually, NMI suggests that the authors prepare a new outline. On occasion, in consultation with the authors, an NMI staff writer will prepare an outline. Authors then create a new draft of the script.

### *Phase 2 - Private Reading*

Authors revise the work, and upon submission of a new draft, NMI prepares a reading of the work, often utilizing members of the Academy Repertory Company. This reading would not be open to the public; but would be followed by additional dramaturgical feedback from NMI. Sometimes an additional producing theatre becomes involved at this phase.

### *Phase 3 - Public Reading*

Authors revise the work, and producing theatre prepares a public semi-staged reading of the work. Sometimes this public reading is modest, along the lines of a concert. Other times, if the work warrants, casting directors, directors, arrangers and orchestrators may become involved, and the public reading might include a live orchestra/band.

At the end of the process, the writers own their work, and producers are free to negotiate production contracts directly with the writers, with NMI encouragement for terms approved by the Dramatists Guild.



*New Musicals developed from scratch*

2004-2022 seasons

*Aging Out* - UC/Irvine  
*Black & White Christmas* – UC/Irvine  
*Candida* - The Lyric Theatre  
*Come Rain or Shine* - Civic Light Opera South Bay Cities  
*Cotton Club* - Civic Light Opera South Bay Cities  
*Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun Queen* - McCoy Rigby Entertainment  
*Duplexity* - Celebration Theatre  
*E-Scape: a cyberspace musical* - UC/Irvine  
*Enchanted* - East West Players  
*Gams, Guys & Guns* - Civic Light Opera South Bay Cities  
*Ghost(s)* - The Lyric Theatre  
*Gideon and the Blundersnorp* - Mad Bard Productions, Hollywood Fringe Festival  
*Got Milk?* - Northern Sky Theatre  
*Houdini* - Northern Sky Theatre  
*Imelda* - East West Players  
*Irreconcilable Differences* - Deaf West Theatre  
*Kings of Swing* – UC/Irvine  
*Los Quatros Pedros* - Civic Light Opera South Bay Cities  
*Manson's Girls* - Hollywood Fringe Festival  
*Miss Vulcan 1939* - Red Mountain Theatre  
*Mistletoe, Mistletoe* – UC/Irvine  
*Now and Then a Hero* - Colony Theatre  
*Oklahoma in Wisconsin* - Northern Sky Theatre  
*Orange County Big Ol' Beauty Pageant* - UC/Irvine  
*Powder Puff Pilots* - UC/Irvine  
*Small Town Kennedys* - Civic Light Opera South Bay Cities  
*So Proudly We Hailed* - Hollywood Fringe Festival  
*Sour Grapes; or the Ladies of the Hood River Horticultural Society and the Flower that Nearly Destroyed Them* - Broadway Rose Theatre  
*The Benefit of Hindsight* - Hollywood Fringe Festival  
*The Bully Problem* - Mad Bard Productions, Hollywood Fringe Festival  
*The Fish Whisperer* - Northern Sky Theatre  
*The Max Factor Factor* - Celebration Theatre  
*The Plot to Kill Charlie Chaplin* - Northern Sky Theatre  
*The Ring* – Victory Theatre Center  
*Valentino* - Civic Light Opera South Bay Cities  
*Who Killed the Tupperware Lady?* - Civic Light Opera South Bay Cities  
*Windjammers* - Northern Sky Theatre



### ***Development of pre-existing musicals***

*13 Alabama Ghosts and Jeffrey* - dramaturgy  
*Adam & Eve Story* - dramaturgy  
*Alley Dog* - dramaturgy  
*Back to the Dream* - dramaturgy  
*Better than Sinatra* - table reading - dramaturgy  
*Bonnie and Clyde* - workshop, concert reading  
*Bowery Lights* - dramaturgy  
*Butch Cassidy: A Musical Adventure* - dramaturgy  
*Butterfly* – dramaturgy  
*Chapter Eleven* – dramaturgy  
*Cinderella* - workshop, concert reading  
*Confetti* - dramaturgy  
*Count Dracula, P. of D.* - dramaturgy  
*Crowley (The Vehement Appetite of the Beast)* - dramaturgy  
*Daughter of Beijing* - concert reading - dramaturgy  
*Day of Wrath* - dramaturgy  
*Dr. Doolittle* - dramaturgy  
*eleven* - dramaturgy  
*Emerald* - dramaturgy  
*Enter Love* - dramaturgy  
*Evernight: The Musical* - dramaturgy  
*Eye of the Storm* - dramaturgy  
*Fairystories* - workshop, concert reading - dramaturgy  
*Friday at Five* - dramaturgy  
*Gilbert & Sullivan on Wall Street* – workshop, dramaturgy  
*Greenbriar Ghost* - concert reading, workshop, dramaturgy  
*Haight* - dramaturgy  
*Happily Never After* - workshop, concert reading  
*Hard Hats* - dramaturgy  
*Honestly Abe*, table reading - dramaturgy  
*I Believe in Miracles* - dramaturgy  
*I Know I Came in Here for Something* - workshop - dramaturgy  
*Juice* - dramaturgy  
*Karma (The Musical)* - dramaturgy  
*Killer in Drag* - dramaturgy  
*King of the Road: The Roger Miller Story* - concert reading  
*L.A., I Love You!* - dramaturgy  
*Life After Life* - dramaturgy  
*Looking For Tarzan* - dramaturgy  
*Losing It* - dramaturgy  
*Love Bytes* – workshop, dramaturgy  
*Marilyn* - dramaturgy  
*Marina* - dramaturgy  
*Moses and Pharoah* - dramaturgy  
*Mr. Genius* - dramaturgy  
*Naked in America* - workshop, concert reading



*New York Tendaberry* - dramaturgy  
*Oh, Hell!* - dramaturgy  
*Old People* - dramaturgy  
*One Voice* - dramaturgy  
*Paradise Elvis Style* - dramaturgy  
*Perverts for Christ* - dramaturgy  
*Placebo* - dramaturgy  
*Princess Diana the Musical* - dramaturgy  
*Probe* - dramaturgy  
*Pursuit of Happiness* - table reading - dramaturgy  
*Radical Love: the rock opera* - table reading - dramaturgy  
*Real Women Have Curves* - dramaturgy  
*Road to Ruin* - workshop, concert reading  
*Rocket Boys*, table reading - dramaturgy  
*Romancing the Throne* - workshop, concert reading  
*Samson & Delilah* - dramaturgy  
*Samson and Delilah* - dramaturgy  
*Scream* - workshop, concert reading - dramaturgy  
*Shifting Gears* - dramaturgy  
*Silas Marner* - dramaturgy  
*Sophia* - dramaturgy  
*Stig Edgren Project* - dramaturgy  
*STILTZ the Musical* - dramaturgy  
*Surprise! The Musical* - dramaturgy  
*Sweet Caroline: The Musical* - dramaturgy  
*Taste Budz* - workshop, concert reading  
*The Cask of Amantillado* - dramaturgy  
*The Greatest Gift* - dramaturgy  
*The Holy Cows of Credence, South Dakota* - dramaturgy  
*The Hourglass Cafe* - dramaturgy  
*The Iron Chink*, table reading - dramaturgy  
*The Souls of the Sea* - dramaturgy  
*The Spirit of River City* - dramaturgy  
*The Upside-Down Town* - dramaturgy  
*The Water* - workshop, concert reading - dramaturgy  
*The Watersong* - dramaturgy  
*Tsarina the Musical* - dramaturgy  
*Twelve Pound Look* - dramaturgy  
*Unwritten Rules* - dramaturgy  
*Vasari!* - dramaturgy  
*Where Fortunes Lie* - dramaturgy  
*Women Must Work* - dramaturgy  
*Woodie* - dramaturgy  
*work! Work! WORK!* - dramaturgy



## 6. Testimonials

Our goal is to help the authors achieve *their* goals. We're not trying to get writers to create the show we *wish* they would write. We're trying to help the show become the best it can be, whether it's serious or comic, experimental or traditional, adult or juvenile, big or small, etc.

Many writers and producers with whom we have worked have been extremely pleased with us. At the risk of not sounding humble, we'd like to share some of their praise with you.

'I recently had the pleasure of working with The Academy for New Musical Theatre on a reading of *The Grouch's Daughter*, my new musical co-written with Jack Helbig. NMI staff member Elise Dewsberry served as both dramaturg and director, and in our years of working on this show, no one person has been as helpful to us as she was. NMI's suggestions led to a rewrite that greatly helped me shape the show and refine its style. I'm deeply impressed with the care and intelligence of their creative input, and would not hesitate to work with NMI again.'

*Mark Hollmann*  
*Tony Award-winning composer, Urinetown*

'I couldn't be more impressed with the folks at NMI. They are dramaturgs, coaches, and teachers of the greatest, highest caliber. The feedback they'll offer you on your work is astonishingly insightful and detailed. I was amazed to find this level of professionalism and intelligence about musical theater outside of NYC. You can take or leave, of course, anything they say, but when they critiqued a project I wrote there, I found 90% of their feedback right on the money and incredibly helpful, and the project I was working on there grew by leaps and bounds because of their input. I highly, highly recommend getting their input on your new musical projects. Their teeth are sharp as sharks', but they don't bite.'

*Jeff Marx, Tony award-winning co-creator of Avenue Q*

'The Academy for New Musical Theatre is a wonderful place to learn new skills, make friends, see your work come to life and grow as a person. As a recent Core Curriculum grad, I can't say enough about the patience, skill and support one receives during the sometimes scary process of writing a musical that will actually be produced on a stage in L.A. The work they are doing at NMI will serve American Musical Theatre very well in the coming decades, helping it to stay alive and prosper. Bravo to NMI!'

*Joanna Perry-Folino*



'Mercury Musical Developments has used NMI's excellent writer training as a model and inspiration for many years. NMI is ensuring, vitally, that new talent is nurtured, focused and honed. The organisation deserves huge plaudits for its commitment and service to new musical writing.'

*Georgina Bexon*

'Creating a musical in a vacuum is easy, it's only when you learn the art of collaboration that you realize what you've been missing and what your strengths and weaknesses are. The Academy for New Musical Theatre is on time, on target and long over due. If you're a serious writer, lyricist or composer and love musicals, stop playing around. Get to the Academy and get it done.'

*James Goins  
Composer*

'NMI has found a way to combine both the educational component – How To Write A Musical – with the practical application – access to people and organizations looking for new musicals. In that, they are unique and proven. NMI was responsible for bringing the three of us together – composer, lyricist and librettist – and introducing us to Civic Light Opera South Bay Cities. Without NMI, *The Cotton Club* would never have happened for the three of us in the way it did.'

*Arnold Margolin, Jason Kuller, Weslie Brown  
The Cotton Club*

'There is nothing greater than the power of the right idea. We are blessed to have a visionary staff who are determined to nudge us out of inertia, down the bumpy road to musical theater success. We are also very fortunate to have the support of our performer members, who continue to prove themselves indispensable to the process.'

*J.L. Segal*

'NMI stands for excellence, in songwriting and in scriptwriting. In this musically challenged time we live in, they are one of the few organizations, whose goal is to maintain the high standards, we have always expected of the theatre. I could not be more enthusiastic about the Academy For New Musical Theatre. Had I been involved with such a group, earlier in my career, I might have written a Broadway musical myself.'

I hope everyone who treasures the great works of the past, and believes in their responsibility to the future, will continue to support the efforts of this wonderful organization.

*Marty Panzer  
Grammy-Award-winning lyricist*

'If you are serious about creating for the musical theatre, the program at NMI is nonpareil. Experienced, professional, talented, and enthusiastic teachers guide a hard-working student body. This is the real deal, a bargain, great fun, and where careers are born.'

*Neville Johnson*



'I always thought I had it in me to write for musical theatre, but it took NMI to lead me through the steps to learn the craft, develop the skills, and ultimately find my own voice as a writer.'

*Robin Share*

'NMI is a group of very talented writers and actors who are keeping the art of musical theater alive and well through collaborations and commissions from theaters, producers and directors. Since joining the workshop, my knowledge and skills have grown immensely through the support and guidance of the fabulous staff, which includes the best dramaturges anywhere!'

*Bonnie Janofsky*

'NMI has taught me everything I know about composing for musical theatre. I am very grateful to the organization for inspiring me, equipping me, and broadening my opportunities.'

*Sandy Shanin, composer*

'NMI is a welcome oasis for musical theatre devotees in the Los Angeles area. Its highly qualified staff knows the art inside-out, and in a stunningly comprehensive first year instilled in me the necessary tools to write professional level musical theatre. Their connections with the local and national musical theatre community provided me the dream chance of a lifetime: to write an original musical with a nationally recognized theater. I am grateful to NMI for strengthening and deepening my already fervent passion for musical theatre.'

*Aaron Coleman  
Lyricist, Imelda*

'For the person interested in musical theatre, there are few places greater at bringing together support, critique, and artistic collaboration than The Academy of New Musical Theatre.'

*Sachi Oyama, Librettist  
Imelda*

'In a world of diminishing standards, it's inspirational to be part of a group constantly striving to raise the bar.'

*Jeffery Lyle Segal*

'EWP had an opportunity to create an original musical from idea-to-production. We would never have attempted it on our own, but NMI's incredible creativity, energy and artistic quality of musical development drove us all the way to production. The process is astonishing. We can't imagine how we would produce an original musical again without NMI.'

*Tim Dang  
East West Players*



'EWP's mission to support underrepresented voices in the Asian Pacific community wanted to create an original musical in a very short span of time. Our collaboration with NMI's incredible creativity, energy and artistic quality of musical development took us from an idea all the way to production. We now have a unique new work to expand the canon of American musicals. We can't imagine the number of works we can add to the American musical theater under the guidance of NMI.'

*Tim Dang  
East West Players*

“John Sparks and his fabulous team were the best thing that could have happened to *Fairystories*. Scott Guy and Elise Dewsberry’s careful and insightful feedback provided me with expert and informed opinions and still allowed my show to change and grow in the way I wanted it to. They applied their knowledge to both the general and the specific and did so with unfailing generosity of spirit. I can’t believe we did all this by email and video feedback and we’re still speaking to each other!

Not only were they careful and caring with the content of the *Fairystories*, they also magnificently guided an (at times) overwhelmed author/composer through the various stages of the process. They don’t just know what makes a good musical, they know that it takes experimentation, U-turns and false starts to get a show to a stronger place.

The subsequent workshops at Theatre Building Chicago and the beautiful development production at Village Theatre, Issaquah were really able to blossom as a direct result of the time that *Fairystories* had spent with Elise, Scott and John.

I would recommend this programme to any writer, composer or producer with a new musical... or a not so new one that isn’t working...or a show that IS working but could work better. You could not wish to be in safer hands!’

*Paul Graham Brown  
Writer/Composer FAIRYSTORIES  
Berlin, January 2007.*

'I absolutely want to put in my thanks for the reading you conducted on Monday, and for your comments about the work. It's going to help us greatly on our next leg of the process. Conversations are already heating up about how to further shape the material. I'm sure that our show will be much better for the process

*Kirby Shaw  
Romancing the Throne*





'Scott & Elise, I want to thank you both again for the tremendous help you've given us with *Romancing the Throne*. Please convey our thanks to the cast as well for all their hard in putting up the reading. I know I speak for Kirby as well in thanking you especially for the in-depth analysis and critique you provided. We've already begun discussing your comments and we're pumped up to start rewrites. We also plan to take you up on your offer to run our new outline by you. Again, much appreciated for all your help in this.'

*Randy Rogel*  
*Romancing the Throne*

'I really want to thank you for taking the time to go through the script with such thoroughness, understanding and care. It's quite exceptional attention that we're getting from you, and we are SO grateful. I agree with virtually everything you've said (and I've whacked myself on the head with a baseball bat quite a few times for not seeing what *now* seems blindingly obvious). But I'm only seeing the light because you illuminate things so clearly. I'm going to go for another draft and see if I can attain the clarity and dramatic momentum that I'm aiming for. I'll also take your note about showing rather than telling to heart. That is such an acute point. We both think you're rather a genius as a dramaturg. And not only are your insights invaluable - you are also so unstintingly generous about giving them.'

*Chris Burgess*  
*London*

'Once again, thank you for the feedback! I actually love the way you set challenges and aren't fooled by partial solutions. '

*Stephen Telfer*

You've answered so many nagging questions and doubts for us with this, our difficult third pass draft. Your eye for detail is superb, and the more brutal you are with us, the more Chris and I love it! At this point in the show's development, I sometimes can't see the wood for the trees, and you've allowed us both to take a step back from the story and look again with a fresh perspective.

*Denise Wright*

'Wow!! Thank you so very much. I love all your ideas. It's as though you were reading our minds -- Roger and I tossed some of those questions around as well -- then YOU magically solve our problems with the answers!! What's particularly brilliant is that you are having us work through the process in manageable stages. What a gift you have, that you can lead us so that we need to climb out of only puddles of quicksand of our own making, rather than oceans of it! Your very grateful students...''

*Roger Love and Ann McNamee*



'Thank you mucho for your evaluation. I will cherish it like a prospector finding gold for the first time, fascinated by the possibilities... '

*Ramon Parra*

'Elise Dewsberry's rare gift for analyzing plot and character is enormously helpful to writers. Her story sense is phenomenal. [You have such a great story sense and always zero in most helpfully on where something should be clearer or more consistent.]'

*Stephen Oles*

'All the comments were extremely interesting, most were very useful and getting feedback on the 3rd quarter, while we're still working on the finale, was enormously beneficial. We're unused to this method - usually never dreaming of letting people see stuff when it's in this embryonic state - but it's a really enjoyable way of working and we're very pleased with the results we're seeing and hearing. A huge thank you to all involved.'

*Peter Shrubshall & Richard Free  
London*

'I can't tell you how useful your feedback is. We have NOTHING like this in England. No system at all for informed investigation of a musical. It's so rewarding to see a group of professionals-in-the-know examining your work and not letting you get away with anything. It's all too easy to kid yourself.'

*Chris Burgess  
Mercury Musical Developments  
London*

'This sort of feedback is priceless. I love your frankness and honesty and willingness to disagree with each other. We have nothing like this in the UK, and it's easy to feel you're writing in a vacuum over here. For a self-trained musician like me, who lacks the all-round knowledge a formal grounding gives you, your comments are so valuable and appreciated as I strive to lift my game to your standards.'

*Denise Wright  
London*

'We have found everything that you have sent our way extremely illuminating and constructive. It has been fascinating to watch it evolve and I hope the performers have enjoyed playing it as much as we have enjoyed watching them.'

*Alexander Bermange  
Michael Gyngell  
London*



"We are so grateful for your thoroughness and the insight of your comments. Your report has given us a fresh approach to the project."

"I've never received a more cogent and useable evaluation before. I'm very comfortable with the critique process but I have never finished reading a critique/evaluation with as much desire and energy to go to work on and polish a piece."

"Thanks for the fantastic feedback that you provided on the evaluation. It sounds like you really understood my vision for the show more than many of the people I've shown it to."

"The critique was spot on. I would say that the work that you are doing is the most helpful I have ever received from any arts organization. I only wish that more organizations were able to do as much for the field of musical theater. I think that your entire approach is great, serving a wide number of artists at many different levels in their careers. An incredible process really."

"I thought the critique was very thorough, thoughtful, and encouraging, and it inspired many new ways of thinking about my project."

"I found the feedback extremely helpful. It was thoughtful, thorough and very supportive. This is the first time I have attempted to write the music, lyrics and book and your comments have re-energized me and I am currently hard at work on a second draft of my piece. Thank you so much!"

*2008 Search Writers*