

BIOGRAPHY: FRANK GAGLIANO,



Playwright/Educator

Frank Gagliano was part of the 1960's group of Off-Broadway playwrights that revitalized American Drama.

Gagliano's Off-Broadway plays include: *Conerico Was Here To Stay* (at NY's Cherry Lane Theatre, Melvin Bernhardt, director — Barr/Wilder/Albee, producers; *Night Of The Dunce*, produced in New York at The Cherry Lane Theatre, Joseph Hardy, director — Barr/Wilder/Albee, producers (first produced as *The Library Raid*, at Houston's Alley Theatre, directed by Nina Vance); *Father Uxbridge Wants To Marry* (first developed at the O'Neill Theatre Center, directed by Melvin Bernhardt), produced at New York's American Place Theatre (Melvin Bernhardt, director), starring Olympia Dukakis, and later televised on New York's WNET-TV, starring Roy Scheider; *The City Scene* (*Conerico Was Here To Stay* and *Paradise Gardens East*), first developed at the Barr/Edward Albee/Wilder Workshop, — the double bill was later produced Off-Broadway at The Fortune Theatre (Neil Israel, director; Simon Saltzman, producer).

***In The Voodoo Parlour Of Marie Laveau* was first developed at The O'Neill Theatre Center**, showcased in New York's Phoenix Theatre Sideshow Series (directed by Michael Montel) and at The Neighborhood Group Theatre (also in New York), directed by Frank Gagliano. *In The Voodoo Parlour of Marie Laveau* had its West Coast premiere at L.A.'s Ensemble Studio Theatre on 11 June 1986, produced by Christine Beato and Brent Hedgecock, in association with Videosyncracy and directed by Larry Peters.

Other plays have been produced in Regional Theaters and Universities throughout the country — including: *The Hide-And-Seek-Odyssey Of Madeleine Gimple* (a children's play, first commissioned by The Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center and which

starred Raul Julia, directed by Lloyd Richards); *The Prince of Peasantmania*, first developed at The O'Neill Theatre Center, Michael Schultz, director (World Premiere, The Milwaukee Repertory Theater, starring John Glover, directed by Eugene Lesser); *Congo Square* (a musical, with Broadway composer Claibe Richardson, first produced at the University of Rhode Island's Professional Season of Plays, directed by J Ranelli); *The Resurrection of Jackie Cramer*, a Rock Opera with composer Raymond Benson (first incarnation in the E.P. Conkle Workshop, University of Texas, J Ranelli, director — then further development at The New Dramatists, J Ranelli, director — then a full production at The New Dramatists (J Ranelli directing again) — then a full NY Off-Broadway showcase production at the American Theatre of Actors, Raymond Benson directing (and at the piano).

***Big Sur* (first produced as an original television play on the NBC network, starring Billy Dee Williams and the late James Coco (1968); *San Ysidro*, a cantata with composer James Reichert (written in memory of those who were massacred at a MacDonald's restaurant in San Ysidro, California, on July 8, 1984) — and *The Total Immersion of Madeleine Favorini*, produced at The University of Las Vegas, Frank Gagliano directing.**

Gagliano's musical theatre piece (original book and lyrics), *From The Bodoni County Songbook Anthology*, with a score by the late Claibe Richardson, was developed at the 1989 O'Neill Theatre Center Musical Theatre Conference, and inaugurated the new Musical Lab productions at New York's Vineyard Theatre in the Spring of 1991 (Andre Ernotte, director) and, in its revised text, was showcased by Pittsburgh's Pyramid Productions, August 1995, directed by Ted Hoover.

His two theater pieces, *Hanna* and his monologue play for male performer *My Chekhov Light*, were performed at The

Birmingham Lofts, Pittsburgh(1991); The New Dramatists, NYC (1992); A Contemporary American Theatre Festival, Shepherdstown, WV (1992); Primary Stages in New York City (May, 1993). At the above-listed venues, Gagliano gave the reading/performances of *My Chekhov Light*.

Gagliano also has given reading-performances of *My Chekhov Light* in other venues here and abroad –at: The Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center (2004); New York’s Cherry Lane Theatre (2004); Kirovograd, Ukraine (2005); Dancer Stage of Amsterdam (2005), and at The E.T.A. Hoffman Theatre in Bamberg, Germany. This was followed by the world premiere production of *My Chekhov Light* (German translation by the late Jurgen Schlunk), on 28 November 1998, at the E.T.A.Hoffmann’s Studio Theatre, starring Ernst Hofstetter, directed by Georg Immelmann (1998). Gagliano also gave a reading/performance of *My Chekhov Light* at *The Beijing Institute of World Theatre and Film* (2007).

Applause Books selected a section of Gagliano’s *My Chekhov Light* for its 2008 edition of *One on One: The Best Men’s Monologues for the Twenty-First Century* .

Gagliano's theatre piece, *Eulogy*, was included in The New York Primary Stages’ Legacy Project (Oct.,1994). Gagliano’s latest play in the Bodoni Cycle, *The Farewell Concert of Irene and Vernon Palazzo*, was workshopped in the 1995 Carnegie Mellon Showcase of New Plays, directed by Michael Montel, featuring Rita Gardner (the original “girl” in *The Fantasticks*) and Bill Young, of the NY cabaret group, Shake, Wilder & Young, with original music by Mr. Young), followed by a New Dramatists’ reading with the same cast, that same year.

Gagliano conceptualized (along with director Robert Brewer and choreographer Rick Pessagno) *And The Angels Sing*:

The Songs of Johnny Mercer, which premiered at UNLV in Las Vegas (Jan, 1996), and, soon after, at the Odyssey Theatre in Los Angeles (Feb, 1996). He wrote the book for a new musical, *Piano Bar (At The Chateau De La Mer)*, with composer/lyricist Gene Nordan, which had its world premiere at the Vivian Davis Theatre in Morgantown, WV (1998), directed by Michael Montel.

[Gagliano wrote Broadway-bound musical books that never made it to Broadway: “Quasimodo.” Music and lyrics by Lionel Bart. Lorin Price, Producer (1972). “Anyway The Wind Blows,” Cyma Rubin, Producer (1976)]

Gagliano is a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP); The New Dramatists (alumnus); The Dramatists Guild; The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center (founding playwright). He has served on the Board of Directors of The Theatre Association of Pennsylvania (TAP); and was a panelist on the PEW Trust's Philadelphia Theatre Initiative.

Gagliano has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship in playwriting, two Rockefeller Foundation playwriting grants, an O'Neill Theatre Center/Wesleyan University grant, a 1989 Pennsylvania Arts Council Playwrights Fellowship—and was awarded the grand prize in the 1999 International Ernest Hemingway Playwriting competition for his play, *The Total Immersion of Madeleine Favorini*.

Gagliano helped found Carnegie Mellon Drama's Showcase of New Plays (1986), and was the Showcase's Artistic Director from 1986 to 1998. He was also Artistic Director of the University of Michigan's Festival of New Works (A professional developmental showcase for New Dramatic Writing; plays, screenplays, musicals). His first Festival season was in the Spring of 1999, in Ann Arbor, Michigan—where he established the Arthur

Miller Award For Dramatic Writing, with Mr. Miller attending. In both the Showcase of New Plays and The Festival of New Works, playwrights Douglas Wright, Nilo Cruz, Willy Holtzman, Lisa Loomer, Victor Bumbalo, Jack Gilhooley, David Grimm, Julie Jensen, Dave Carley and 75 others, had new plays developed.

Gagliano's *The Commedia World Of Lafcadio B* (inspired by a play of Luigi Pirandello), was presented in the Play Labs of the 2005 Last Frontier Theatre Conference, Valdez, Alaska. There, Gagliano also gave a tribute to Arthur Miller (*Why I Broke Down When Arthur Miller Died*), a tribute he again gave on 4 August 2005 in Beijing, China, at the Beijing Institute Of World Theatre and Film, and at Open Stage Theatre in Pittsburgh (2006), on the first Anniversary of Arthur Miller's death — and which he posts yearly from his Facebook page to his over 600 friends (the tribute can be accessed on <http://www.gaglianoriff.com/page/articles>

Gagliano's stage version of *BIG SUR* was performed at the Beijing Institute of World Theatre and Film at Peking University in May, 2007 (directed by, and starring, Joseph Graves). At PKU, Gagliano also taught a playwriting class to Chinese English major students — a first in China. Gagliano's seven-part journal, covering the event, is posted on <http://www.gaglianoriff.com/page/beijing>.

Gagliano's novel, *ANTON'S LEAP*, was published in 2008 (and is available on Amazon and Kindle. Excerpts are posted on <http://www.gaglianoriff.com/page/books>. For Amazon/Kindle books: <http://www.amazon.com/Antons-Leap-Frank-Gagliano/dp/1419692003>.

In its 2011 season, the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company presented the *entire* VOODOO TRILOGY (musical *Congo Square* (directed by Marci Woodruff), *In The Voodoo*

Parlour Of Marie Laveau (directed by Kim El) and *The Commedia World Of Lafcadio Beau* (directed by Frank Gagliano) — with all three Voodoo pieces being performed in one marathon evening on Fat Tuesday of that year.

In April, 2012, Gagliano delivered the keynote speech at the annual Anton Chekhov Conference in Yalta, Ukraine, where he also gave a reading/performance of his play, *My Chekhov Light*. His essay, *My Five Days With Chekhov*, covering this event — plus the texts of the keynote speech and *My Chekhov Light* — are posted on [http:// www.gaglianoriff.com/page/ SearchingForChekhov](http://www.gaglianoriff.com/page/SearchingForChekhov).

Gagliano, deepening his interest and passion for The Great American Songbook and the American genius songwriter Johnny Mercer, in particular, taught two in-depth courses on the subjects at Carnegie Mellon's Osher Institute in 2010 and 2012. The fruits of his courses can be found on the newly created link, [http://www.gaglianoriff.com/page/ johnny_mercer_and_the_american_songbook](http://www.gaglianoriff.com/page/johnny_mercer_and_the_american_songbook)

Gagliano and composer James Rushin are currently collaborating on a new original musical, “THE MAGICAL MOSCOW McDONALD’S MIRACLE OF LOVE.” The current version was given a concert reading at Pittsburgh’s Steel City Improv on 21 June 2013 (directed by Melissa Martin and with James Rushin at the piano) — along with excerpts from *The Resurrection Of Jackie Cramer* and *From The Bodoni County Songbook Anthology*.

In the Fall of 2014, Gagliano’s newly surfaced (never produced) television play, *The Private Eye Of Hiram Bodoni*, will be given it’s first reading at New York’s HB Studio..

All of Gagliano's plays (most of them revised) can be found on his Web site <http://www.gaglianoriff.com/page/plays>,

Mp3's of his theatre musicals are posted on <http://www.gaglianoriff.com/page/musicals>.

Also posted on <http://www.gaglianoriff.com>: *Articles and Essays, Monologues and Scenes from his plays, Guest Artists, Bits And Pieces*, and his notes on a new Text Analysis book "**Holographing The PlayText**" — aimed at all theatre practitioners who have to "put the text out there"

In May 2013, Gagliano was nominated to be inducted as a Fellow in the *College Of Fellows of the American Theatre*. The induction ceremonies took place at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C., Sunday, 20 April 2014.



The Kennedy induction ceremony and photos can be found on the home page of <http://www.gaglianoriff.com>, and the citation can be found on <http://www.gaglianoriff.com/download/FellowsCitation.pdf> .

* * * * *

DEGREES
University of Iowa, BA
Columbia University, MFA.

Gagliano's Educational Institutions/Residencies

Hunter College Adult Ed, Dramatic Lit (substituting for John Lahr, at John Lahr's request); Royal Shakespeare Co., London, England, Playwright-In-Residence, The Royal Shakespeare Company, 1967 (observing Peter Brook directing the controversial "US"); Florida State University, Tallahassee, Assistant Professor of Drama, Playwright-In-Residence, and Director of Contemporary Playwright's Center, 1969-73; University of Texas at Austin, Lecturer In Playwriting and Director, E.P. Conkle Workshop for Playwrights, 1973-75; Distinguished Visiting Alumni Professor, University of Rhode Island, 1975. UNLV residency while in production for The Total Immersion Of Madeleine Favorini.

[Benedum Professor of Playwriting, West Virginia University, 1976-2010]

* * * * *

PROJECTS AT VARIOUS STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

“The Painted Lady On Gene Kelly Street”, A Play

“Humongus Toe Rides Again,” A Play

“The Private Eye Of Hiram Bodoni,” Television Play

“Journeying Past Susannah,” A Musical

“The Magical Moscow/McDonald’s Miracle Of Love,” A Musical Theatre Piece (Spanning The Old Cold War With The New Cold War)

“The Endgame Procession” A Theatre Piece

“Tales Of Theloneus Bascomb,” Story In Rhyme

* * * * *

*** Frank Gagliano was born in Brooklyn, NY. He is married to former Opera singer Sandra Gagliano. His son Rico is the co-creator, co-producer, co-anchor of American Public Media’s “DINNER PARTY DOWNLOAD,” airing on many NPR stations throughout the country (Including WESA-FM in Pittsburgh), and can also be heard on line, at www.dinnerpartydownload.org Gagliano and Sandra live now in Pittsburgh, PA.**

[Gagliano retired as WVU Benedum Professor of Playwriting in The Division Of Theatre And Dance on May 15, 2010]

Contact

sandrico@aol.com

[Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn]