

New year resolutions?

So we're officially out of recession and it's already the start of February. Where did that go!?

I tend not to make New year resolutions, so I don't get disappointed when they don't turn out. However, I've got a big one this year which I do intend to stick to - to see 17percent begin to make an impact.

This is happening already, so many of you have emailed me and said this is exactly what we need. Subscriptions to the newsletter, Facebook group and Twitter fans are increasing every day. Lucie Roberts, a top designer who also works in a very male oriented profession, is designing a new logo to be launched at the launch events in London. I have met with and received offers of help from a number of very inspirational and dedicated women (and a number of men, who have also offered advice and support.) I am waiting with crossed

fingers to hear about a funding application to redevelop the website and look into starting to run some courses and networking events, as well as planning the launch events in the week of International Women's Day (8-12 March 2010, see back page for details).

Another thing I need to do is heed Shelley Silas' advice, (see the Inspirations section on the website), to 'keep writing, keep doing what you're doing', as I have to confess the plays have been pushed to the side for a little while. It's all too easy to do, what with all the little distractions: Christmas, the New Year, the snow, the job, etc, etc. However - to borrow the boxing metaphor from our latest Inspiration Bryony Lavery - this year I am resolved to bat the distractions in the face whenever necessary! <SH, Feb 2010>



Latest on the website:

Bryony Lavery boxes clever!

"The two things that always make me write are 1. Artistic fun and 2. A real deadline. So, trying to set myself a sort of chess-like writing challenge, plus someone breathing down my neck usually works for me. Basically... Enjoy and have someone pay you to make something, then one's puritan work ethic and sense of fairness gets you to finish something."

Bryony has written numerous original plays and adapted literary classics for radio and stage. One of her most recent works, *The Snow Queen*, was seen in December 2009 at Chichester Festival Theatre.

Plays include *Frozen*, *Last Easter*, *A Wedding Story*, *More Light*. She also adapts classic and modern novels for theatre and radio, including *Wuthering Heights*, *Precious Bane*, *Behind The Scenes at The Museum* and *The Magic Toyshop*. Current work – Stockholm [Wolff-Whiting award 2008] for *Frantic Assembly*, *Kursk* for *Sound and Fury*, *The Wicked Lady* for *New Vic Theatre Stoke on Trent*.

Future work includes *Dirt* for *Manhattan Theatre Club*, and *A Christmas Carol* at *Birmingham Rep*. She is making a piece about boxing with *Frantic Assembly* and *The National Theatre of Scotland*.

Read the full Q+A on the website - <http://17percent.co.uk/inspirations.php>
If you have a story to share - get in touch.



Devoted and disgruntled

Sam went to her first Devoted and Disgruntled event on 30/31 January, where she met some really interesting people. She convened a session to discuss why only 17% of UK performed plays are written by women and had a good discussion. Her only bugbear was that no men came to the session. Although 17percent exists to promote and support female writers (as they are under-represented on British stages, and there are no other UK organisations specifically doing this,) the organisation is not against male writers or men.

It is vital that men are involved in the quest for gender equality in the arts – from a purely practical point of view, many men are the ones in the top positions who we should be working with – not working against. 17percent was set up to make a change, but change won't happen on its own; women and men need to help and support each other. So please, as a playwright said to me at the event 'let's start thinking of it as a conversation, not a competition'.

Medway group

The pilot Medway group continue to meet at the Deaf Cat Cafe in Rochester.

So far we have discussed a range of topics, including why we think that male characters are easier to write! Our theories range from 'What you see is what you get with a man', to the fact that as so much drama is written by and about men, we are just more tuned in to write that kind of character. (If you disagree please email us...) As an exercise (just for fun!) we are taking a male character from a play and turning them into a female character - to see how easy or hard this is.

We will be drawing up a list of top plays by women we think that everyone should read, and these will be posted on the blog shortly.

The group meets at the Deaf Cat Cafe in Rochester on a monthly basis, if you are a Kent-based female playwright and would like to join, please email 17percentcampaign@gmail.com

Next meeting: TBC February 2010.

Top ten women's plays of the decade

The Sunday Times ran an article on the top theatre of the decade and only 2 plays were written by women. They were: That Face by Polly Stenham, Royal Court 2007 and God of carnage by Yasmina Reza, Gielgud 2008

But do you know better? What plays from the last decade would you nominate? Email us your suggestions.

17%

If you wish to unsubscribe, please email 17percentcampaign@gmail.com with the word 'Unsubscribe' in the header.

Launch news

Submissions to launch showcase

Our call for 10-minute plays for the launch showcase events had a really good response (44 plays) and we will shortlist during the week of 8 February - so if you've submitted something, thanks, and you will know if you've been successful by the end of that week.

Once the scripts have been chosen by the editorial board we will hold a networking and discussion event, so that the writers can have the opportunity to meet with other writers and discuss their work.

Venue confirmed

The venue and format for the launch event has also been confirmed. The format will be two panel discussions followed by a showcase of 5 or 6 short plays over two days on 11 and 12 March. The venue is The Red Hedgehog in Highgate, a really lovely space in a vibrant, arty location, just across the road from Highgate tube. Places are free, but please email to reserve your place.

We hope to repeat the format at regional venues later in the year.

Only **17%** of UK plays are written by women...*

Why? 11 March 2010

&

What next? 12 March 2010

Two discussions followed by a showcase of the best new women's writing you've never heard of... until now.

11&12 March 2010
6.30pm
The Red Hedgehog
255-257 Archway Road
Highgate
N6 5BS

17percent aims to redress the current gender imbalance in plays being produced in the UK, by providing women with opportunities to develop as writers, through peer-to-peer networking and educational opportunities, championing women's achievements in the theatre, promoting female writers and providing positive female role models and inspirations.

17percent website: <http://17percent.co.uk/index.php>
Our blog: <http://17percent.wordpress.com>
Email: 17percentcampaign@gmail.com
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