

THEATRE ASYLUM PRESENTS

FORNES X 2

A DOUBLE BILL LINKING
"THE SUCCESSFUL LIFE OF 3" AND "MUD"
1 STORY, 2 PLAYS, 3 ACTORS

MAY 30-JUNE 14

(PREVIEWS MAY 28/29)

213 AUGUSTA AVENUE, 8 PM

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PROGRAM

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Premiere May 30th 2015 at 213 Augusta Avenue, Kensington Market, Toronto.
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Theatre Asylum presents
FORNÉS x 2
a double bill comprising
The Successful Life of 3 and *Mud*
by Maria Irene Fornés

Cast:

3/Henry	Hardee T. Lineham
She/Mae	Michelle Latimer
He/Lloyd	Jamie Robinson
Bodyguard 1/Policeman	Chad Dembski
Bodyguards	Molly McGregor
	Cole Vincent

Director/Producer	Jennifer H. Capraru
Scenographer/Projection Designer	Troy Hourie
Associate Producer/PSM	Chad Dembski
Lighting Designer	Sandra Marcroft
Costume Designer	Snezana Pesic
Music/Sound Designer	Cathy Nosaty
Stage Managers	Maria Colasante
	Cole Vincent
Assistant Director	Molly McGregor
Dramaturg	Judith Rudakoff
Associate Dramaturg	Lucy Powis
Publicist	Dianne Weinrib
Costume Assistant	Sandra Mandic
Production Assistant	Elizabeth Elliot
Graphic Designer	Magda Rubenfeld Koralewska

The Successful Life of 3 is dedicated to Susan Sontag.
Fornés specifies that at particular moments in the play, SHE thinks with a stupid expression, HE looks disdainful, 3 stares with intense curiosity.

Theatre Asylum is a federally registered charity, a member of TAPA and engages artists under CAEA and ADC agreements. Board of Directors: Karen Bell, Pnina Zilberman, Cheryl Landy, Otilie Mason, Jen Capraru.

The performance runs 90 minutes, with one intermission.

A NOTE ON THE COMPANY

From the abattoirs of Victorian England (*The Gut Girls* 1995) to a classroom in Leningrad (*Dear Elena* 1996) to the Holocaust (*The Trials* 2004, *My Mother's Courage* 1998) to England's Romantic poets (*Blood and Ice* 1994) to Brecht's bed (*BéBé* 2005) Theatre Asylum creates thought provoking contemporary theatre by and about women and human rights issues from the inter/national repertoire. Most recently, the Cuban première of *Les Belles Soeurs* at Teatro el Sótano with the Ministry of Culture, Canadian Embassy and La Francophonie, Havana 2015.

The name was chosen for its dual meaning - asylum as a place of madness, danger and the unexpected, while also one of refuge, trust and process. Isôko Theatre Rwanda, Asylum's sister company, has mounted the African premières of *The Monument* in Kinyarwanda, 2008 (World Stage, Dialog Festival Poland, MAI Montreal, Arts Azimut, Rwanda tour) and *Littoral* in French, 2010 (Rwanda tour). The company's approach emphasizes dramaturgy and an image-driven, highly physical staging style grounded in metaphor. For years it was the sole company in Canada dedicated to premièring international women's drama, later branching out into developing new Canadian work. Equal representation for women is practiced, and program booklets published to raise awareness about each playwright. The company has been nominated for the international awards the Freedom to Create Prize (*The Monument*) and Best Direction at Les Grands Prix d'Afrique Francophone (*Littoral*), and 8 Dora awards, winning 1. In development is a site-specific staging in Kensington Market of Sean Dixon's novel *The Many Revenges of Kip Flynn*, and further touring.

www.theatreasylum.com

SUMMARY OF THE PLAYS

The Successful Life of 3, one of Fornés earliest plays, is subtitled "A Skit for Vaudeville," and the influence of that style is evident. The piece, presented in a series of disconnected sketches, follows the love triangle of He, She and 3 from their first lustful meeting in a doctor's office through several break ups and make ups.

Though *Mud* was written almost twenty years after *The Successful Life of 3*, it once again presents a female-centric love triangle, and the themes of masculine rivalry, sex, and power that come with it. This time, the setting shifts to a house where the impoverished Lloyd, Mae and Henry find themselves in conflict with each other and the world they are trapped by.

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

“Every time I listen to Fornés, or read or see one of her plays, I feel this; she breathes, has always breathed, a finer, purer, sharper air.”

-- Tony Kushner

Cuban-American playwright Maria Irene Fornés writes with great truth from a woman's point of view. The women and men whose points of view she compassionately expresses live at the margins of society. Yet each is searching to express some kind of virtue in the world. Fornés gives them a voice, but filters it through the lens of her own idiosyncratic understanding of language, a revolutionary language which is deceptively naïve yet flagrantly theatrical. It is capable of expressing nuances of emotion and depths of irony. It lives in the liminal space between text and subtext, between what characters say and what they feel. It traps them in moments of dishonesty by placing them directly at the point where language and truth intersect. There is no room to hide behind the stark simplicity of the words Fornés uses to build her complex works.

A leading figure of the Off-Off-Broadway movement, Fornés' plays are raw, alive and examine the human condition. *The Successful Life of 3 and Mud*, written almost 20 years apart, once linked via 1 story, 2 plays, 3 actors, reveal a cycle of consumerism and poverty which relates to the changing face of Kensington Market, the last of the neighbourhoods in Toronto's downtown core to attempt to resist total gentrification. I have lived here for over 20 years in the same apartment, and am an activist with Friends of Kensington Market, who recently fought off a Walmart. The soul of Kensington pays tribute to the style of the Off-Off-Broadway movement, with visceral, avant-garde theatre happening in found spaces. But as corporations maneuver in, they force out small family merchants, low income renters, newcomers, students and artists. Kensington is a microcosm, but the threat of monoculture affects healthy civic ecologies in all of Canada.

Heartfelt thanks to this extraordinary cast of grace and grit, to my collaborateur Troy and to our brilliant team for this journey. Thank you all for your talent, hard work, generosity of spirit, trust - for your hearts of light.

I fell in love with Fornés many years ago when I directed a reading linking the two plays. But I fired up this project in 2013, immediately upon learning that Fornés was gravely ill. As I write, at 85, the brilliant and eternal Maria Irene Fornés is in the late stages of Alzheimer's disease in New York. Yet Fornés' unique work continues to inspire, even as a playwright as central to the theatre as she approaches silence.



MARIA IRENE FORNES 1965

MARIA IRENE FORNÉS

Maria Irene Fornés is one of the most important and enduring, yet simultaneously under-acknowledged theatre practitioners to come from Off-Off-Broadway in New York City. Perhaps the most influential American female dramatist of the twentieth century, Fornés was also prolific and gifted as a director, teacher and even a designer. Her work spanned many decades, from the 1960s, certainly until 1999, when the Signature Theatre devoted a season to the production of her work. As a playwright, director and teacher she created a unique body of work known for its lyricism, its rigorous and crystalline composition, and its passionate examination of the human spirit. As director of the INTAR Hispanic-American Playwrights Lab in the 1980s, she nurtured a generation of Latino/a playwrights, including Cherrie Moraga, Migdalia Cruz, Nilo Cruz, Caridad Svich, Eduardo Machado and others. The author of over forty plays, Fornes has won nine OBIE awards, including one for Sustained Achievement in theatre in 1982.

First produced, directed and designed in 1965 at the Firehouse Theatre Minneapolis, *The Successful Life of 3* is Fornés' third play and one of her most comically absurd. The ten scene, vaudeville-spirited farce follows the bizarre love triangle of the anonymously named He, She, and 3 from meeting, to break-up, to reunion and even to chaos.

Fornes won her first Obie in 1965 for Playwriting for her two plays *The Successful Life of 3* and *Promenade*. In addition to its first production in Minneapolis, 3 was also presented under the direction of Joseph Chaikin and Richard Gilman by the Open Theatre at the Sheridan Square Playhouse in New York in March of 1965.

Mud (1983) is one of Fornés' most important plays from her middle period. It is, most succinctly, a play about three people whose individual desires brutishly conflict, both with each other and the world that envelops them. Indeed a theme of Fornés's middle work is this notion of entrapment that emerges both within the personal relationships as well as through the characters' relationship to an insidious environment that is both unseen and omnipresent.

Mud was first developed as a workshop in 1983 at Padua Hills, California, where Fornés noted that the red mud of the California hillside became an important set piece in her design. The play was further developed and moved to New York City, where it debuted later that year at Theatre for a New City, and helped earn Fornés another Obie for writing and directing.

Looking at the twenty year gap between *The Successful Life of 3* and *Mud*, both plays that emerges from a love triangle with a woman at the centre, the contrast between her early work's playful cheekiness and her later work's emotionally charged gravity is evident. As in many of her plays, 3 establishes a world onstage that rejects the existence of a world offstage. When 3 and She exit in the initial waiting room scene, their imme-

diate return implies not only their speedy conjugal tryst, but also suggests that there is in fact no Doctor's office that is hidden from the view of the audience. What the audience sees is the world of 3, He, and She, a world that creates its own rules as it progresses. Fornes does not condescend to this world, but instead takes great care in emphasizing its reality for the characters, and hopefully for the audience.

– Gwendolyn Alker, Jonathan Marsh, and Harrison M. Beck

Gwendolyn Alker is a full time faculty member in the Department of Drama at New York University. She is incoming editor of *Theatre Topics*, and has published on Maria Irene Fornés in *Topics* and elsewhere. She also curated the 2010 Fornés Festival in New York City. Marsh and Beck were students in her seminar on Fornés held at New York University in 2010.



Fornés (left) and her sister Margarita (Fornés: "The Rest I Make Up" documentary by Michelle Memran. Facebook. 14 May 2015.)

FORNÉS ON ART

To say that a work of art is meaningful is to imply that the work is endowed with intelligence. That it is illuminating. But if we must inquire what the meaning of a work of art is, it becomes evident that the work has failed us; that we have not been inspired by it; that the work has not succeeded in breathing its life for us.

To approach a work of art with the wish to decipher its symbolism, and to extract the author's intentions from it, is to imply that the work can be something other than what it demonstrates, that the work can be treated as a code system which, when deciphered, reveals the true content of the work. A work of art should not be other than what it demonstrates. It should not be an intellectual puzzle, or at least not primarily. A true work of art is a magical thing. To comprehend magic we must be in a state of innocence, of credulity. If there is wisdom in the work it will come to us. But if we go after it, we become wary, watchful. We lose our ability to taste.

A work of art must have its function, like a car, a window, or a bridge. We all know how a car, or a window, or a bridge must function. We know whether the designer or engineer has succeeded. However, we are not too sure how art must function. Art must inspire us. That is its function.

If art is to inspire us, we must not be too eager to understand. If we understand too readily, our understanding will, most likely, be meaningless. It will have no consequences. We must be patient with ourselves.

We have learned to think of inspiration as the property of artists. It is not. Inspiration belongs to all of us. What the artist does with his inspiration is quite clear. He creates his work of art. The product of his inspiration becomes public. The inspiration of the layman generates itself in his personal life. It enriches it, and ennobles it. Inspiration is a precious gift which we have relinquished without any struggle. We do not believe that it belongs to us.

Art is created by the artist for the layman. The layman must take possession of it. He must be familiar with it. He must make himself worthy of being its judge. He must love it.

– Maria Irene Fornés

New York City, July 1965

(Originally published as a preface to *The Successful Life of 3 in Playwrights for Tomorrow: A Collection of Plays, Volume 2* (Arthur H. Ballet, University of Minnesota Press, 1966))

“During a workshop at Yale... Fornes led us through an exercise using her signature visualization methods. She commanded, “Close your eyes. Picture a wall. What is the wall made of? Picture yourself walking through the wall. What is on the other side? Picture this. Open your eyes and draw a picture of the wall and what was on the other side. Write the following down in the corner of your paper: What shall I do with my things? I’m going to dance until I drop. Piece of bread. Looking at someone’s teeth. Now write a scene between two characters in this location on the other side of the wall. Use either the line of dialogue, the object, or the action in your scene only if it helps you.””

-- Anne García-Romero, “Notes from California State University at Northridge, 1989 and more”
 (Caridad Svich, “The Legacy of Maria Irene Fornes: A Collection of Impressions and Exercises.”
PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art 31.3 (2009).)



Fornés (back row, centre) with students at the University of Toronto in 2003 (Fornés: “The Rest I Make Up” documentary by Michelle Memran. Facebook. 8 August 2013.)



Maria Irene Fornés (Personal Facebook. 6 April 2008)

“The people in *Mud* are real,” [Fornés] insists, not pared down at all. Characters in *The Successful Life of 3*, on the other hand, are cartoons, not intended to be realistic... She knows they are real, she explains, thanks to a House Manager who approached her after a performance of *Mud* and told her he recognized them because he came from that world.”

-- Sally Porterfield, “Black Cats and Green Trees: The Art of Maria Irene Fornés” (*Modern Drama* 43.2 (Summer 2000), University of Toronto Press)

FORNÉS' POSSIBILITY

I met Irene Fornés in 1988 when I was accepted to be part of the nationally-competitive INTAR Hispanic Playwrights in Residence Laboratory in New York City. The journey of working with Irene ended up being one that lasted four years. Then a few years afterwards, in 1995, she directed my play *Any Place But Here* at Theater for the New City, also in New York City. In the year 2000, when she was honored with a season of her work at Signature Theater, I co-edited the volume *Conducting a Life: Reflections on the Theatre of Maria Irene Fornés* for Smith & Kraus Publishers. The volume spans forty years of her career and is comprised of a collage of personal essays and reflections, academic papers, poems (including one by the eminent Caryl Churchill) and an interview with Fornés herself.

But, of course, a journey with an artist is not limited to historical time. I first encountered Fornés' work on the page, in a collection published by PAJ. The volume contained the play *Mud* – which you will see tonight – and other of her major mid-career works. *Mud* is, perhaps, along with *Fefu and Her Friends*, her most produced play. A three-hander, it is a play that originally began its life at the Padua Hills Playwrights Conference in California, where Irene taught workshops and wrote the first drafts of many of her mid-career plays. At Padua, Irene often staged (she also directed her own work, and in that sense, was very much an auteur) her plays outdoors. *Mud* was no exception. The character of Mae was first seen standing in a field, framed by the Padua County hills. A creature of the earth, she began with her feet firmly planted, barefoot, on the ground.

The trajectory of *Mud* and of its earth-bound characters is a tragic one. The characters are caught in a strange, social-realist grip of ingrained patriarchal patterns of behavior, but also in a toxic (ultimately) web of their own irrational desires. Mae, the heroine of the play, is also the altar upon which the play's sacrifice rests. What price is paid by women when they are trapped in and by systems that forbid them their own aspirations, and their ability to transcend societal limitations? In *Mud*, the price is high and a sobering reminder that although *Mud* is what Irene in private conversation always called a "hopeful" play – because Mae's struggle is honored and placed front and centre- it is still a play that is rooted in the seemingly endless and often violent fight for justice women face every day in countries around the world.

Mud is one of Fornés' signature plays. It is a reference point, as it were, when speaking of Fornés' body of work. Its elegance and dark humor and blazingly clear insight is a model of what much of the strongest work in her career would possess. In *Mud*, you see the seeds of the web of desire charted in *Abingdon Square*, and even those that populate the epic play *What of the Night?* (the only play of hers that was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for Drama). *The Successful Life* of 3 stems from earlier in her

career. First produced in 1966, this romantic spoof received her first of seven career OBIE Awards. The un-named characters involved in an erotic triangle in the play are figures dancing, as it were, around the many points of desire that tangles and untangle their lives. The play displays Fornés' wit and her own willingness to play with theatrical form – something that distinguishes her entire body of work.

You may come to Fornés' work with no prior knowledge of its existence. You may come to it as an avid reader and fan. You may simply have wandered in and found yourself here for these two plays this evening. As a teacher, Fornés always spoke about the theatre as a salon – a place to be with friends and enjoy their company – a parlor evening where on this night some plays would be performed but tomorrow could be a song or a dance or a string quartet performing a work. For Fornés, the space of play, however tragic or comic, contains possibilities. Great artists teach you this. I am ever grateful for the lesson.

– Caridad Svich

Caridad Svich received the 2012 OBIE for Lifetime Achievement. She is a playwright, translator, educator, essayist, lyricist and editor. Seven of her plays are collected in *Instructions for Breathing and Other Plays* published by Seagull Books (2014).



Fornés with one of her OBIE Awards (Fornés: "The Rest I Make Up" documentary by Michelle Memran. Facebook. 23 December 2012)

OFF-OFF-BROADWAY

In the 1950s, the domination of the commercial Broadway theater was challenged by a new movement known as Off-Broadway—small professional theatres in New York City, like Circle In the Square and the Living Theatre, revived American classics like O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* and Tennessee William's *Summer and Smoke* and introduced new European drama.

However, even off-Broadway succumbed to the commercial pressures and eventually lost some of its adventurousness. Off-Off-Broadway was the non-commercial theatre in New York City's Greenwich Village and Lower East Side where spirit for new theatre took roost in the 1960s and it challenged Broadway and even Off-Broadway's own brand of moribund commercialism. It was an underground theatre movement that existed on the fringe of the New York theatre, because in Greenwich Village at that time, performance in anything but a legitimate theatre was prohibited. Off-Off-Broadway producers like Ellen Stewart and Joe Cino fought a constant battle to ward off building inspectors, police, theatrical unions, and politicians who wanted to close them down. Between 1958 and 1968, in the Off-Off-Broadway theatre scene, there was an explosion of new work there that transformed the theatre across America. It was a place where a generation of young theatre artists wrote bold new plays, explored new ways of staging, discovered new styles of acting, and created entirely new forms of theatre.

...

Why should 1960s' Off-Off-Broadway theatre matter to contemporary playwrights, directors, actors, designers, technicians, or other theater artists at the beginning of a new Millennium? Are the experiments, the exuberance, and fervor of the '60s too removed from the harsh commercial realities of blockbuster films, computerized special effects, the Internet, and MTV? What mysteries can be revealed within the eight-foot-by-eight-foot stage of the Caffe Cino? What does the tireless, quixotic, globetrotting, radical, 40-year-old theater quest of Ellen Stewart and her La Mama Experimental Theatre Club have to offer to today's young theatre artists? Is there anything to be learned from the wild, wooly, and perhaps deranged musicals of Al Carmines and his Judson Poets' Theatre or the visceral, gut-wrenching drama of hardcore drugs and street culture of Theater Genesis?

The answer, at places like La Mama Experimental Theatre Club, The Living Theatre, Theatre For The New City (still run by original OOB-er, Crystal Field), the National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Playwrights Horizons, Edward Albee's Last Frontier Theatre Conference, the RAT (Regional Alternative Theater) Conference, Actors Theater of Louisville, South Coast Repertory, New Dramatists, Chicago Dra-

matists, EnsembleStudio Theater, A.S.K. Theater Projects in Los Angeles, the WaterFront Ensemble of New Jersey, the Playwrights Center of Minneapolis, Frontera-Hyde Park Theater in Austin, TX, the Fringe Theater Festivals of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, is a resounding no. That's because none of these theaters or theatre organizations would have come into existence and continued into the present without influence and model of the Off-Off-Broadway theater of the 1960s.

The energy and enthusiasm for the arts during the sixties, which was fueled by enormous initial support through the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and many others, has continued despite years of cut-backs and unrelenting attacks from conservatives. In fact, the 1960s Off-Off-Broadway theaters were brought into being without any funding. These theaters were funded by the desperate desire of their artists to create art at any cost to themselves—financial, emotional, or physical. Ellen Stewart funded Café La Mama with her job as a fashion designer, Joe Cino worked as a typist at a steam pressing firm to pay for his café, and St. Mark's Church in the Bowerie [more commonly known as the Bowery] and the Judson Memorial Church provided (and continue to provide) free space for their theaters. It is in this spirit of theatrical adventure, experimentation, and enthusiasm that have continued in the new play development organizations of the American theater, the Off-Off-Broadways of the new century.

– Excerpted and used by permission of the author from *The Off-Off-Broadway Explosion: The American Playwrights' Journey in the 1960s* (Back Stage Books, New York, 2003) by David A. Crespy



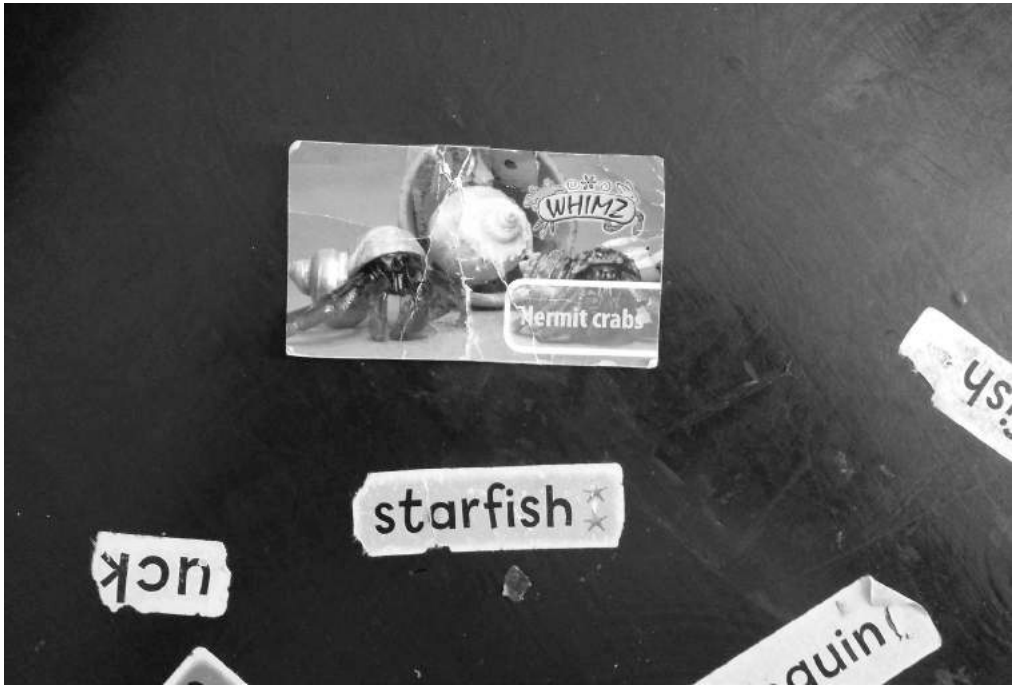
Fornés with Susan Sontag, to whom *The Successful Life of 3* was dedicated

“I don’t know how we get to Paula Vogel or 13P or the ethos or aesthetics of off-Broadway today without Fornés. Why she is lesser known than playwrights that she is just as important as is an interesting phenomenon and seems connected to gender and ethnic bias to be sure, but this phenomenon is also compounded by what an iconoclast she was. How difficult it is categorize her ... She is the ultimate playwright’s playwright.”

-- Achy Obejas
("Maria Irene Fornés returns to NYC but custody struggle continues,"
WBEZ91.5, 19 February 2013)



Fornés (9) and other leading figures of the Off-Off-Broadway movement (Photo Credit: Dan McCoy)



Collage (Credit: Dorian Hakim Robinson, age 3 1/2, son of actor Jamie Robinson)

“MAE: The starfish is an animal, not a fish. He is called a fish because he lives in the water. The starfish cannot live out of the water. If he is moist and in the shade he may be able to live out of the water for a day. Starfish eat old and dead sea animals. They keep the water clean. A starfish has five arms like a star. That is why it is called a starfish. Each of the arms of the starfish has an eye in the end. Those eyes do not look like our eyes. A starfish’s eye cannot see. But they can tell if it is night or day. If a starfish loses an arm he can grow a new one. This takes about a year. A starfish can live five or ten years or perhaps more, no one really knows.”

-Maria Irene Fornés, *Mud*

A NOTE FROM THE SCENOGRAPHER

The scenographic space that has been developed for *Fornés x 2* is the culmination of a two year exploration of the texts by installation artist/performance designer, Troy Hourie, in collaboration with director/producer, Jennifer H. Capraru. Rather than presenting a traditional theatrical set design, the goal was to build a mediated, immersive, performative installation in a site-specific space.

As we began to explore the plays, we decided to locate our production in a found space in Toronto's Kensington Market. In researching the history of the market, which was a part of the area known as The Ward, we discovered a similar working class struggle to the one that existed in rural Alabama where *Mud* takes place. Photographs of Kensington Market in the 1930s revealed a similar desperation to that found in the images shot by artist Walker Evans of Alabama. The Kensington Market of today is a rich environment in which to locate *The Successful Life of 3*. It is home to an active community fighting to maintain its roots against large commercial entities trying to modernize the neighborhood with big box stores and chain restaurants.

As we began to search for a space, we were optimally looking for a home or a shop/warehouse space that was dilapidated, and that evoked the weathered, poverty-stricken, barren landscape of Fornés' *Mud*. This would allow us to then juxtapose the flamboyant, capitalistic qualities of *The Successful Life of 3*.

We looked at all sorts of spaces in The Market: the basements of stores, an empty medical office, a laundromat, and several storefront properties. All offered many possibilities, but, in the end, we acquired the basement space at 213 Augusta Avenue. Though narrow and small, we were thrilled that this location provided two vividly different rooms in which to present the pair of plays. Both rooms offered intimacy and immersiveness that would heighten the audience experience. It was then my job to embrace each space, and draw on their inherent qualities to build a scenographic environment.

For *Mud*, I also travelled to rural Alabama in late February to document the landscape with photographs and video. This journey allowed me to build a richer, visually layered space where characters and audience members could share a liminal space. I did this by collaging images of historic Kensington Market with those I photographed in Alabama. The scenography became an art installation, merging the existing basement room clad in plywood, with clotheslines of laundered shirts, blankets, and lace. The constructed space we built was informed by the captured images of the red clay mud, Spanish moss blowing in the wind, weathered and dilapidated wood and brick textures, and even a white sharecropper's house that Mae, Lloyd and Henry could have lived in.

Every surface of the second room of 213 Augusta was covered in reflective Mylar which was conducive to creating a heightened theatrical space where *The Successful Life of 3* would directly confront the issues of prosperity, attainment, and commercialism. We enhanced this space by building a light installation in an attempt to evoke game show settings like "The Dating Game" or "Let's Make a Deal". The space is superficial, confrontational, and jarring, to accentuate the absurd nature of the play.

We hope that in locating Fornés' plays in Kensington Market, the audience will be given the opportunity to find new resonances in these delightful and experimental plays.

-- Troy Hourie



Set collage for *The Successful Life of 3* (Credit: Troy Hourie)



Set collage for *Mud* (Credit: Troy Hourie)

“I think these three [characters in *Mud*] are wonderful. I think if you’re going to call the men pigs then call them all pigs because they’re all quite brutal in some way and quite tender in another sense. But the men are not anymore piggish than she is. They have a bigger heart than she has. She’s more self-centered, more ambitious, in a way harder than they are. The three of them are trying to survive as best they can. And they’re not bad people.”

-- Maria Irene Fornés (Allen Frame, *BOMB -- Artists in Conversation*, Fall 1984)



Sharecroppers house in rural Alabama (Photo Credit: Troy Hourie)

She - costume changes



15mily/
ball



10 years later
10mily
print 7. sheet
& ball
on top of original
costume

+ 3 years later
19mily
sleep
savage
+ 6mily 7mily
1mily getting
into
slippers
in scene 9.

6/10 out slippers

Costume sketches for She in *The Successful Life of 3* (Credit: Snezana Pesic)

SHE: I went from here

HE: To where?

SHE: I don't know where.

I called a parasol an umbrella.

Yes, an umbrella.

Oh, let me be wrong.

I don't care.

ALL: Let me be wrong

But also not know it.

Be wrong,

Be wrong,

And, oh, not to know it.

Oh! Let me be wrong.

- Maria Irene Fornés, *The Successful Life of 3*



Costume sketches for 3 in *The Successful Life of 3* (Credit: Snezana Pesic)

“We are one with the rest of humanity and that is not a choice. It is what we are. We are one with the kind ones and the beautiful ones and the talented ones, but we are also one with the victims of crimes and with the murderers.

Compassion is of course a result of identification, and so is hatred. My intention is not necessarily to promote kindness to the opposite sex but something ultimately more interesting, which is that any human being is a member of our species and if we do not allow our imagination to receive the experiences of others because they are of a different gender, we will shrivel and decay, and our spirit will become a dry prune and we will become ill and die and we will not go to heaven because in heaven they do not allow dry prunes.”

-- Maria Irene Fornés

(“The ‘Woman’ Playwright Issue, *PAJ: Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 7 No. 3 (1983))



Costume sketches for Lloyd in *Mud* (Credit: Snezana Pesic)

“I think [*Mud*] is a feminist play because the central character is a woman, and the theme is one that writers usually deal with through a male character. The subject matter is—a person who has a mind, a little mind, she’s not a brilliant person, but the mind is opening, and she begins to feel obsessed with it, and she would do anything in the world to find the light. And some people can understand that as a subject matter only if it were a male character wanting to find that. It has nothing to do with men and women. It has to do with poverty and isolation and a mind. This mind is in the body of a female.”

-- Maria Irene Fornés
(Allen Frame, *BOMB-- Artists in Conversation*, Fall 1984)

FROM THE DRAMATURG'S NOTEBOOK: SIMILARITIES, ECHOES, REVERBERATIONS

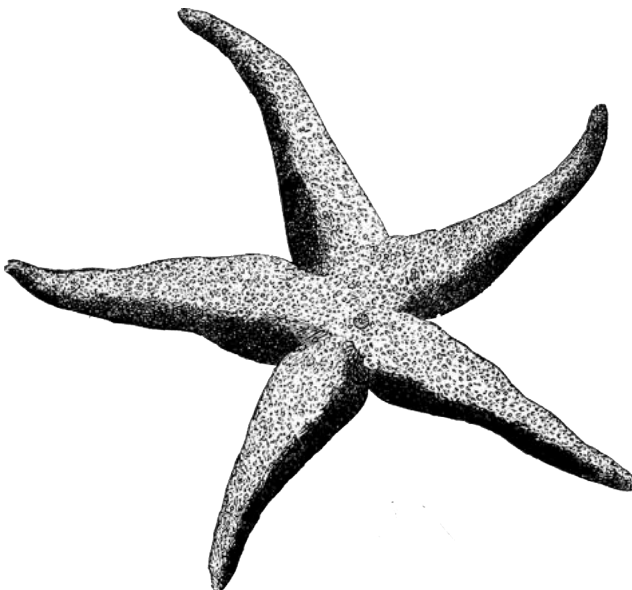
The Successful Life of 3 and *Mud* were written almost twenty years apart, the former in 1965 and the latter in 1983. Even so, similar and sometimes identical themes, action, situations, context, and characterization are found in both.

Here are some examples:

- Things are not what or as they appear to be
- Sexual interaction is rooted in a power struggle for domination
- Sex is used as a weapon
- Stasis is disturbed by the addition of a third person: a male usurper
- No one gets what they want
- Gender roles reflect heterosexist examples of early and mid-20th century norms: women are responsible for household chores, men undertake physical labour or tasks requiring intellect and education
- Rivalry abounds: the men compete with each other, and the affection or attention of the shared women are often the focus of the competition
- The men present two types of conventional maleness: He and Lloyd are physically powerful, while 3 and Henry are relatively intelligent
- Initially, one man in each play is stronger than the other. Ultimately, the weaker man is shown to have the power of endurance versus either the power of passion or intelligence, so he prevails
- Characters seem to closely observe each other, yet barely perceive or acknowledge anything meaningful about each other
- Characters do not want to be self-aware, as they wouldn't know how to deal with that knowledge
- Characters are waiting for an external force to change their circumstances. They rarely, if ever, initiate change on their own. Change occurs because destiny (or an unidentified force) intervenes and either adds or subtracts a variable
- The women know that they are being dominated. They long for a chance to become independent or free. When they attempt to do so, they fail
- The women threaten to leave
- The women crave a decent life
- The women play games, exploring aspects of their power, and exercising it over the two men
- Characters undermine each other to feel powerful, rather than drawing on their own strengths
- 3 and Henry want to instruct She and Mae

- The women have an unrealistic fantasy of life beyond their immediate, isolated experiences
- Stealing occurs in both plays
- The women try to mold the newly arrived man into a more suitable mate and partner than the one they already have
- The women try to improve their lives through an affiliation with a new man who they think is smarter, more educated, and therefore better than their previous partner
- The women attempt to impress, attract, woo, and seduce the new men
- The male interlopers must seduce the women to threaten, and then transform of the status quo
- The men cannot relate to the women without conquering, possessing, and controlling them
- The women believe what 3 and Henry tell them, but are suspicious of what He and Lloyd say
- The women feel unfulfilled and empty
- The women possess untapped potential, while the men have already achieved all they can, and are past their prime
- The men use the women as intermediaries in the communication among the three of them
- The men may possess different qualities or abilities, but they serve the same purpose in the women's lives and represent the same force
- The women like the difference between the two men
- 3 and Henry are more worldly than He and Lloyd
- The women have unrealistic aspirations and goals

– Judith Rudakoff



BIOGRAPHIES

JENNIFER H. CAPRARU (Director/Producer)

Most recently, *Les Belle Soeurs* (Cuban premiere) and *Napoleon of the Nile* by George Seremba (Brown University USA). Credits include *Littoral* (nominated for best direction Prix Théâtre Africain), *The Monument* (Rwanda, World Stage, Poland, nominated for Freedom To Create Prize), staged workshop *Incendies* (Festival Francophone Havana). She is Artistic Director of Isôko Rwanda and Theatre Asylum, where her productions such as *BéBé*, *The Trials* (2 Dora nominations), and *My Mother's Courage* (3 Dora nominations), have been developed and toured Canada with The Theatre Centre, NAC, Intrepid Theatre, Segal Centre, Harbourfront and Banff Centre . Other directing includes *The Gut Girls* (Theatre Centre 3 Dora nominations, 1 award), *The Seventh Seal* (Concordia), *24 Exposures* (Canadian Stage Festival,) *Lullaby* (Dark Horse, Dora nomination Outstanding Production), *Metamorphoses* (Phoenix Theatre, Victoria Critics Best Production award, nomination Director), She trained as a director in Germany and holds an MA from York University., and her publications have appeared in Palgrave Macmillan and Methuen. Jen was Associate Dramaturg at Factory Theatre for three years, and has been nominated for the Hirsch and McGibbon awards. Upcoming, *Mandelstam* for the Fringe at the Minsk synagogue.

MARIA COLASANTE (Stage Manager)

Maria is a recent graduate of Ryerson Theatre School, having earned her BFA in Performance Production. Maria recently completed a co-op with the stage management department of *The Sound of Music* at the Stratford Festival Theatre (2015). Past stage management credits include: *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, Lower Ossington Theatre (2014); *Hair*, Lower Ossington Theatre (2014); *Just Is*, New Voices Festival (2014). Maria has learned a great deal stage managing a double bill for the first time. She would like to thank Jen and Chad for being incredible mentors during this process.

CHAD DEMBSKI (Production Stage Manager/Associate Producer)

Now based in Toronto after 5 years in Montreal, Chad has worked across Canada, in the U.S. and in Europe. Artistic Director of surprise performance; which presented *Hamletown* at HATCH (Harbourfront Centre) and *ok/ok/ok* (Hub 14). He co-created and performed in *FAREWELL* with Dustin Harvey, this site and city specific show was created in Halifax and has toured to Denmark, Ireland, Wales, Vancouver, Montreal, and Victoria. Has previously created new work with Public Recordings (*Manual for Incidence*, */Dance/Songs/, relay*) and Small Wooden Shoe (*Dedicated to the Revolutions* and *Perhaps in a Hundred Years*) and Bluemouth Inc. (something about a River; Dora nomination, best male performance, winner best production).

TROY HOURIE (Scenographer/Video Designer)

Troy is a Canadian scenographer and installation artist. He has designed over 300 productions for various off-Broadway, regional and opera companies across the USA, Canada and internationally; including Glimmerglass Festival, The New Victory, New York Theatre Workshop, Cherry Lane Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Classical Theatre of Harlem, Epic Theatre Ensemble, Juilliard, The Guthrie, Bay Street Theatre, New York Stage and Film, Williamstown, Huntington Theatre, Court Theatre, Studio Theatre, DC., Syracuse Stage, Sarasota Opera, Nashville Opera and Virginia Opera. Awards: AUDELCO Award and nominations for Helen Hayes Award, Joseph Jefferson Award, Henry Hewes Award, Drama Desk Award, International Opera Award, six AUDELCO nominations and Ford Foundation Artist Grant. His work was exhibited in the 1998, 2011 and 2015 Prague Quadrennials. Installations: *Apparitions*, Artscape Gibraltar, *Escape to Beira*, ARTErra Portugal and *Apparitions Attic*, Arteles Finland. Upcoming: *The Magic Flute* at Glimmerglass Festival 2015. *Enchanted Spaces: The Wisdom Tree*, an art installation was commissioned by Glimmerglass and will also be exhibited summer 2015.

MICHELLE LATIMER (She/Mae)

Selected Theatre: *THE MILL Pt. 2, 3 & 4*, *Director's Cut*, *Unidentified Human Remains* (Crow's Theatre), *Aurash*, *Interrogation* (Modern Times), *Mary's Wedding* (Grand Theatre), *Unnatural and Accidental Women* (Native Earth/Buddies In Badtimes), *Chekhov's Longs...In the Ravine* (Smith-Gilmour/Factory/NAC), *Idiot* (Summerworks), *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout* (WTC). Selected Film and TV: *Blackstone* (APTN), *Paradise Falls*, *Moose TV*, *Naked Josh*, *Crash and Burn* (Showcase), *Pavane* (Bravo), *This is Wonderland* (CBC), *Puppets Who Kill* (Comedy Network), *Train 48* (Global), *Resident Evil 2* (Alliance Atlantis). Michelle also works as filmmaker. Her short film *The Underground* recently premiered at Tiff 2014 and was screened at Cannes Film Festival as part of Telefilm Canada's Not Short on Talent spotlight. Her feature documentary *Alias* premiered at Hot Docs and was nominated for a 2015 Canadian Screen Award, and her animated short *Choke* premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, receiving the Special Jury Honorable Mention in International Short Filmmaking. She is currently developing a feature film with Sienna Films and the National Film Board of Canada, as well as creating a dramatic series in development with Back Alley Films and Muse Entertainment. Awards include: Golden Sheaf Award (Outstanding Emerging Filmmaker), Playback Magazine's Ten to Watch, Reelworld Trailblazer Award.

HARDEE T. LINEHAM (3/Henry)

Most recently *Creditors* (Coalmine); *Richard III* (Dora Winner) *Harper Regan*, *Henry IV*, *Edward VI*, *The Tempest*, *Spring Awakening*, *Summerfolk*, *Proof*, *Macbeth*, *Plenty*. (Canadian Stage) Selected credits include: *The Ugly*

One (Theatre Smash/Tarragon); *Lenin's Embalmers* (Independent); *The Overwhelming*, *Stuff Happens*, *Black Bird* (Studio 180); *Dying To Be Sick* (Pleiades); *Crave* (Nightwood); *Streetcar Named Desire*, *Macbeth*, *School for Wives* (Playhouse); *Scary Stories*, *Mad Boy Chronicles*, *Six Degrees* (A.T.P.); *White Biting Dog*, *The Unseen Hand*, *Love and Anger*, *Dads in Bondage*. Dora Nominations: *Crackwalker*, *Lie of the Mind*, *True West*, *Science Fiction*. Training: National Theatre School. Film/TV credits include: *The Jane Show*, *Santa Baby*, *Shoemaker* (Genie Nomination); *Top of the Food Chain*, *The Big Hit*, *The Italian Machine*, *Puppets Who Kill*, *Traders*, *Little Mosque*, *Murdoch*, *Warehouse 13*, *The Ron James Show*, *Gay Basher*.

SANDRA MARCROFT (Lighting Designer)

Sandra Marcroft happily returns to Theatre Asylum to light another exciting production, after having lit *Walking to Russia* and *The Trials of John Demjanjuk*. Over the past two decades, Sandra Marcroft has designed the lighting for over a hundred Theatre and Dance productions. Her designs have been nominated three times for Dora Mavor Moore awards and she has twice received a Dora for Outstanding Lighting Design. Her work has been seen across Canada and Europe. Sandra is a member of The Associated Designers of Canada.

MOLLY MCGREGOR (Assistant Director)

Molly McGregor has just finished her first year Concordia University studying Theatre for Development. She has worked with Jumblies Theatre and The Whalebone Collective on large and small community-engaged art projects. Her interest in socially engaged theatre has cemented through working with Fornes' writing. Molly is extremely excited to be assistant directing with Theatre Asylum.

CATHY NOSATY (Music/Sound Designer)

Cathy Nosaty enjoys a diverse career as a musician, composer, sound designer, musical director and artist educator. Over the past thirty years she has created scores for over ninety productions for regional and independent theatre companies across Canada including five productions for Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes and *Bébé* directed by Jennifer Herszman-Capraru. Cathy was Assistant Conductor/Keyboardist for the Toronto company of *Jersey Boys*. Recent projects include The Intergenerational iPad Vocal Group, the score for the documentary film *The Motherload* for CBC's Doc Zone, original music for *Valley Song* for Gateway Theatre and composition and co-musical direction for *Train Payanam* for Community Arts Guild.

SNEZANA PESIC (Costume Designer)

Based in Toronto, Snezana works across Canada as a set, costume

and lighting designer. Selected theatre credits include: *Clever Little Lies* (Manitoba Theatre Centre, Winnipeg); *Arms and the Man*, *The Game of Love and Chance*, *Fan* (Odyssey Theatre, Ottawa); *Spring Awakening* (George Brown Theatre School, Toronto); *Nightmare Dream* (IFT Theatre/Obsidian Theatre, Toronto); *One* (Ghost River Theatre, Calgary); *The Cherry Orchard*, *Roberto Zucco*, *Antigone*, *After the Fall*, *One Flea Spare* (Studio Theatre, U of A, Edmonton); *Three Little Birds*, *Mighty Carlins* (Workshop West Theatre, Edmonton); *Seussical* (Keyano Theatre, Fort McMurray). Snezana is recipient of Betty Mitchell Award (Calgary) for outstanding lighting design, Rideau Prix Award (Ottawa) nominee for outstanding set and costume design and Pauline McGibbon Award nominee for Ontario's emerging theatre artist. With her work, she participated in numerous international exhibitions, including Prague Quadrennial 2007 and 2011, and World Stage Design in 2009 and 2013.

LUCY POWIS (Associate Dramaturg/Program Layout Editor)

Lucy is a recent graduate of York University's theatre program, having specialized in devised theatre and new play dramaturgy, and is starting her MFA in Dramaturgy at Columbia University this September. She is a student member of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas. Previous credits include: assistant dramaturg, *Queer Bathroom Stories* (Libido Productions/Buddies in Bad Times); dramaturg, *Here* (Theatre Aquarius TA2 Series); co-writer/performer, *A Little Too Close To Home* (Little Black Afro; winner: Best of Venue at the 2013 Hamilton Fringe Festival). Upcoming: dramaturg, *strangeness and breath* (Little Black Afro/videofag); producer/dramaturg, *The 10/10/10 Project* (Toronto and Hamilton Fringe Festivals); dramaturg, *Rowing* (Hamilton Fringe Festival).

JAMIE ROBINSON (He/Lloyd)

Jamie is co-founder of the Grey-Bruce Arts Collective and of Montreal's Metachroma Theatre. Selected Theatre acting credits include: Four seasons with the Stratford Festival of Canada including major roles in *Edward II* (Gaveston), *Troilus & Cressida* (Achilles), and *Merchant of Venice* (Prince of Morocco); Three seasons with Blyth Festival; the title role in *Richard III* (Metachroma Theatre. META Award Nomination, Best Actor); *Gas Girls* (New Harlem Productions. Dora Award Nomination, Best Actor); *Romeo & Juliet* (Canadian Stage); *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Birdland Theatre); *Medea* (Mirvish/MTC); and *Escape From Happiness* (Factory Theatre). Select Film/TV acting credits include: *Murdoch Mysteries* (Shaftesbury); *The Rick Mercer Report* (CBC); *Celeste in the City* (ABC); *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* (Disney); and *The Fraternity* (Universal Studios). Jamie holds an MFA from York University in Theatre Directing and Teaching, is a graduate of the Stratford Birmingham Conservatory and the recipient of two Stratford Festival Guthrie Awards.

JUDITH RUDAKOFF (Dramaturg/Program Content Editor)

Dramaturg Judith Rudakoff has worked with emerging and established artists throughout Canada and in Cuba, Denmark, South Africa, England and USA. She is a past winner of the Elliott Hayes Award for Achievement in Dramaturgy award for her work on Lata Pada's *Revealed by Fire*. Recent dramaturgy includes Nina Arsenault's *The Silicone Diaries* and *I Was Barbie* (Buddies in Bad Times), and *40 Days and 40 Nights* (Summer-Works Festival). Books include *TRANS(per)FORMING Nina Arsenault: An Unreasonable Body of Work* (2012) and *Between the Lines: The Process of Dramaturgy* (with Lynn M. Thomson, 2002). Her articles on theatre and performance have appeared in *The Drama Review*, *TheatreForum*, and *Canadian Theatre Review*. Her most recent book is *Dramaturging Personal Narratives: Who am I and Where is Here?* (2015). Rudakoff is a member of Playwrights Guild of Canada, and Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas. She is a Professor of Theatre at York University where she teaches playwriting, dramaturgy, and contemporary Canadian theatre.

COLE VINCENT (Stage Manager)

Cole Vincent is a fourth year Theatre Production BFA at York University. His main interests lie in stage management, production management, lighting design and developmental dramaturgy. Recent experiences include: Assistant Lighting Designer: *The Days of Wine and Roses* (Renascent/Hart House Theatre), Lighting Designer: *Clipped* and *The Final Solution* (Paprika Festival 2015), Production Manager: *I Was Once on Fire* (Little Black Afro/Storefront Theatre), Production Manager/Lighting Designer: *The Redux Project*, Producer/Dramaturg: *Telling Tales Out of School* (Theatre@York). Upcoming: Production Manager: *strangeness and breath* (Little Black Afro/video/fag), Assistant Lighting Designer: *Shakespeare in High Park* (Canadian Stage), Lighting Designer: *Brébeuf's Ghost* (Theatre@York).

DIANNE WEINRIB (Publicist)

Dianne Weinrib is the Director of DW Communications, one of the leading public relations firms for the arts in Toronto. Publicity and marketing projects range from multi-disciplinary festivals to theatre and dance companies to independent performance events. DWC previously did publicity for Theatre Asylum's *BéBé*, *The Trials* and *My Mother's Courage*. Current and recent clients include BuskerFest 2015, Canadian Rep Theatre (*How Do I Love Thee*), CrazyLady Productions (*A George F. Walker Double Bill*), DanceWorks Mainstage season, Esmeralda Enrique Spanish Dance Company (*Letters to Spain*), Peggy Baker Dance Projects (*locus plot*), princess productions (2015 dance: made in canada festival), ProArteDanza (Season 2015), Sampradaya Dance Creations (*nirantara*), Tarragon Theatre season, Show One Productions' *Smile at Us*, *Oh Lord* and the 2015 Dora Mavor Moore Awards.



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“Irene shared with me the way she started writing plays that has inspired me my whole writing life. She said she was a secretary and one day she had an idea for a play. She called in sick to work and started writing it. The next day she called in sick again. She called in sick for three weeks. And then she had written her first play. Then she quit her job because she was a playwright. I share this story with my students. Because one of the things Irene taught me is we become what we do and what we practice.”

-- Lisa Schlesinger, “Notes from Iowa 1993-94”

(Caridad Svich, “The Legacy of Maria Irene Fornés: A Collection of Impressions and Exercises.”

PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art 31.3 (2009).



Maria Irene Fornés (Fornes: “The Rest I Make Up” documentary by Michelle Memran. Facebook. 16 February 2014)

SELECTED PLAYS OF MARIA IRENE FORNÉS

The Widow (1961)

There! You Died (1963) (produced as *Tango Palace* in 1964)

The Successful Life of 3 (1965) (OBIE Award)

Promenade (music by Al Carmines) (1965) (OBIE Award)

Fefu and Her Friends (1977)

Eyes on the Harem (1979) (OBIE Award for Directing)

Blood Wedding (adapted from *Bodas de Sangre* by Lorca) (1980)

Life is a Dream (adapted from *La vida es sueño* by de la Barca) (1981)

A Visit (1981)

The Danube (1982) (OBIE Awards for Playwriting and Directing)

Mud (1983) (OBIE Awards for Playwriting and Directing)

Sarita (1984) (OBIE Awards for Playwriting and Directing)

Cold Air (adapted and translated from a play by Piñera) (1985) (Playwrights USA Award for Translation)

Lovers and Keepers (music by Tito Puente and Fernando Rivas) (1986)

Drowning (adapted from a story by Chekhov) (1986)

"The Mothers" (1986; revised as *Nadine* in 1989)

Abingdon Square (1987) (OBIE Award)

Uncle Vanya (adapted from the play by Chekhov) (1987)

Hunger (1988)

And What of the Night? (four one-act plays: *Nadine*, *Springtime*, *Lust* and *Hunger*) (1989) (Nominated for Pulitzer Prize)

Oscar and Bertha (1992)

Terra Incognita (music by Roberto Sierra) (1992)

Summer in Gossensass (1995)

Manual for a Desperate Crossing (1996)

Balseros (Rafters) (opera based on *Manual for a Desperate Crossing*, music by Robert Ashley) (1997)

Letters from Cuba (2000)

OTHER AWARDS

John Hay Whitney Foundation fellowship (1961)

American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters (1985)

New York State Governor's Arts Award (1990)

Robert Chesley Award (2001)

PEN/Laura Pels International Foundation for Theater Award for a Master American Dramatist (2002)

“We have to be totally exposed as writers. When we lie on the floor here, we have to imagine ourselves cut open, trusting that no one is going to come along and put his foot in. That is the obligation of the writer.”

- Maria Irene Fornés

(Caridad Svich, “The Legacy of Maria Irene Fornés: A Collection of Impressions and Exercises.”

PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art 31.3 (2009)