

KEN URBAN

CONTACT INFO

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Literatures in English, Rutgers University, 2006
M.A., Literatures in English, Rutgers University, 2000
B.A., with Honors, Magna Cum Laude, English, Bucknell University, 1996

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, GRANTS, AND OTHER HONORS

New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship for Playwriting/Screenwriting, 2016–17
Member Playwright, New Dramatists, New York, 2016 – 2023
Participating Playwright, The Civilians R&D Group, New York, 2015– 2016
Artist in Residence, Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA, Summer 2015
Core Writer, Playwrights' Center, Minneapolis, MN, 2014– 2017
Bronze Award, Manhattan Short Film Festival, 2013
Juror, Temple University Film Festival, 2013
Playwright in Residence, Epic Theatre Ensemble In-School Program, Chelsea Career Vocational High School, NYC, 2013
Djerassi Resident Artists Program, Woodside, CA, Summer 2012
Selected Playwright, Groundbreakers Lab, terraNOVA Collective, NYC, 2011– 2012
Lark Romania Exchange, Tirgu-Mures, Romania, July 2011
SPF/Donmar Warehouse Playwright Residency, Donmar Warehouse, London, June 2011
Artist in Residence, Byrdcliffe Artist Colony, Woodstock, NY, Summer 2011, Summer 2010
Dramatists Guild Fellowship, NYC, 2010-2011
Writer-in-Residence, New York Stage and Film and the Lark, Vassar, NY, Summer 2010
Emerging Writer Fellowship, Writers' Room of Boston, 2010
MacDowell Fellow, MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, NH, 2009 and 2008
Winner, L. Arnold Weissberger Prize, Williamstown Theatre Festival, 2008
Playwriting Fellowship, Huntington Theater, Boston, MA, 2007-2009
Winner, Nancy Quinn Grant, A.R.T./NY, NYC, 2007
Playwright in Residence, Wounded Warriors Program, National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped, Belfast, ME, 2007
Winner, Puffin Grant, Puffin Foundation, NYC, 2007
Winner, Nancy Quinn Grant, A.R.T./NY, NYC, 2006, 2005
Tennessee Williams Fellowship, Sewanee Writers' Conference, TN, 2006
Winner, Moving Arts Premiere One-Act Competition, Los Angeles, CA, 2004
Selected Participant, Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, NYC, 2002 – 2003
Winner, Hothouse Playwriting Residency, Annex Theatre, Seattle, WA, 2001

PLAYS

Full-length

A Future Perfect

Comedy, 5 actors (2M, 2W, 1 Girl)

Claire and Max find their values put to the test when best friends Alex and Elena announce they are having a baby. Claire is climbing the corporate ladder in advertising, while her husband is a puppeteer for PBS. With friends entering into parenthood, what happened to the indie rock kids that hated everything their parents believed in?

Produced at SpeakEasy Stage Company in Jan-Feb 2015.

Developed at Playwrights Horizons and the Huntington Theatre (Boston).

Published by Dramatists Play Service.

A Guide for the Homesick

Drama, 2 actors (2M)

On his way home after a year in East Africa, a young aid worker goes back to a shabby Amsterdam hotel room with a fellow American. The two strangers replay their pasts and confess their shared fear that they betrayed the people who needed them most.

To be produced at the Huntington Theatre in 2017–18.

Developed at the Huntington Theatre and The Playwrights' Center (Minneapolis).

Nibbler

Comedy, 6 actors (4M, 2W)

In the summer of 1992 in Medford, New Jersey, Adam and his gang of friends face life after high school. But when they encounter a mysterious visitor from another world, their lives are forever changed.

To be produced by The Amoralists at Rattlestick Playwrights Theater in Winter 2017.

Sense of an Ending

Drama, 5 actors (3M, 2W)

Five years after the genocide that took the lives of over 800,000 Tutsis, Charles, an African-American journalist, arrives in Rwanda for an exclusive interview with two Hutu nuns. Once a rising star, Charles' life is in turmoil, and he needs this story to salvage his reputation. The younger nun confides in Charles about her work helping Tutsis evade certain death. But when the massacre's sole survivor contradicts the nun's account, Charles must decide between a story of hope and a murkier truth.

Winner of the L. Arnold Weissberger Playwriting Award (nominated by the Huntington).

Produced at Theatre 503 in London, May–June 2015 and 59E59 Theatres in New York in August–September 2015.

Published by Methuen and Dramatists Play Service.

The Absence of Weather

Drama, 7 actors (5M, 2W)

Secretary of Defense James Forrestal enjoyed a meteoric rise to power during World War II. By 1949, he has been forced out of office and committed to Bethesda Naval Hospital, convinced that Soviets are infiltrating the U.S. government. As the hospital staff struggles both to treat and protect their patient, Forrestal worries that he has betrayed those he loves in pursuit of ghosts. An American tragedy about the wages of fear.

Developed at PlayLabs 2014 @ The Playwrights' Center and Rattlestick Playwrights Theater.

The Awake

Drama, 7 actors (3M, 3W, 1 Girl)

A mysterious corporation connects the lives of three strangers. Faced with lives they no longer recognize, this trio – a devoted son, an Eastern-European actress, and a Canadian man on the run – take shelter in dreams. But a series of chance encounters force these strangers to face the truth.

Produced by 59E59 Theatres in Aug-Sept 2013. [*New York Times* Critic's Pick], and First Floor Theatre in Chicago, Feb-March 2016.

Readings at Donmar Warehouse, Primary Stages, Portland Stage Company, and Theatre @ Boston Court.

Published by Dramatists Play Service and in *TheatreForum* (Issue 46). Monologue included in *The Best Men's Stage Monologues 2015*.

The Correspondent

Drama, 3 actors (2M, 1W)

A grieving husband hires a terminally ill woman to deliver a message to his recently deceased wife in the afterlife. He begins to receive letters signed by his wife, describing events that only she could know. This mysterious correspondent, the husband hopes, can answer the questions he never asked his wife before her untimely death. But are the letters from her spirit or a clever con artist?

Produced by Rattlestick Playwrights Theater in Jan-March 2014.

Published by Dramatists Play Service.

The Happy Sad

Comedy, 7 actors (4M, 3W)

Armed with art and flowers, Stan discovers his girlfriend Annie wants to take a break. Meanwhile, long-term boyfriends Aaron and Marcus struggle with the question of monogamy. In a city with too many options, the lives of these two couples (and their friends) become intertwined when Stan and Marcus meet online and hook up.

Produced by Summer Play Festival @ The Public Theatre in July 2009.

Developed at Playwrights Horizons and the Flea.

Published by Dramatists Play Service.

The Private Lives of Eskimos

Comedy, 5 actors (2M, 3W)

Marvin finds himself alone in his grief after the sudden death of his sister. When he loses his cell phone, Marvin falls for the mysterious woman who has the stolen phone only to get entangled in a dangerous world of international criminals.

Produced by The Committee, NYC in Sept 2007, Stage Left/The Mill, Chicago in Jan 2009, and Open Circle, Seattle in March 2010.

Published by Dramatists Play Service and excerpt included in *DUO!: Best Scenes for the Twenty-First Century* (Applause Books, 2010)

Wasps

Comedy, 9 actors (3M, 4W, 2 puppeteers)

Bedazzler needs help. Her dad is a war vet addicted to beer, trailer park women, and, most of all, jury duty. With the help of her libidinous gal pals, Bedazzler devises a plan to put her old man on the straight and narrow. An adaptation of Aristophanes's *The Wasps*.

Produced at Studio 42.

Shorter plays

A Sticky Memento Ten-Min. Comedy, 2 actors (1M, 1W)
Nerd rage and Midwestern values collide when a tourist comes to Harvard, only to realize she has little tolerance for rich kid drama. An audio play to be listened to at the statue of John Harvard in Harvard Yard.

Commissioned and produced by the Huntington Theatre in 2011.

Listen: <soundcloud.com/huntington/sticky-memento>

E-published in *Ken Urban Short Plays* <indietheaternow.com/playwright/ken-urban>

A Tale of Two Emmas One-Act Drama, 4 actors (2M, 2W)
Young Emma needs to write an essay about the Statue of Liberty and finds help from an unlikely source. An educational play about Emma Lazarus commissioned by the Visitors Center at the Statue of Liberty.

Produced at the Visitors Center, Statue of Liberty in Summer 2011.

Custodians One-Act Drama, 3 actors (2M, 1W)
After a rowdy night, Brian finds a woman covered in goo in his parents' kitchen. She claims she is from the future. That's when things get weird.

Produced by Lesser America in September 2011.

E-published in *Ken Urban Short Plays* <indietheaternow.com/playwright/ken-urban>

Edgar and Patrick Ten-Min. Drama, 3 actors (2M, 1W)
On a field, a bully and his victim meet and discover they share more than they think.

Produced as part of benefits for The Trevor Project, "It Gets Better" Campaign and Pride Weekend NYC, throughout 2011, as well as the 2012 Boston Playwrights Marathon and Rattlestick's 2013 Theatre Jam. Also produced in *Play By Play: Festival of New One Acts* at Stageworks/Hudson in July 2013.

E-published in *Ken Urban Short Plays* <indietheaternow.com/playwright/ken-urban>

I ♥ KANT One-Act Comedy, 5 actors (1M, 4W)
Four women who call the Garden State home are lost, stifled by dead-end jobs and unfinished dissertations, until a mysterious encounter with the Kantian sublime.

Produced by Collaborative Arts in March 2009, The Committee in Sept 2006, Rude Guerrilla in July 2003, Back Pocket Theater in March 2002, and Moving Arts in 2001.

E-published: <<http://www.indietheaternow.com/playwright/ken-urban>>

Pseudoephedrine Ten-Min. Drama (Cast Variable)
Ted calls his college friend Annemarie ready to reminiscence about college and his love of pseudoephedrine. A chorus of Indigo Girls fans help them out.

Produced by Collaboracion in April 2009 and the 2010 Boston Playwrights Marathon.

Published in the anthology *Boston Playwrights Marathon XII* (Smith & Kraus, 2011).

E-published in *Ken Urban Short Plays* <indietheaternow.com/playwright/ken-urban>

Termination of Species Ten-Min. Drama, 3 actors (2M, 1W)
When Henry finds a VHS tape in his basement, little does he suspect that it contains a message from Steve, an extraterrestrial who must end the world tonight.

Produced by Collaboraction in June 2011.
E-published in *Ken Urban Short Plays* <indietheaternow.com/playwright/ken-urban>

White People Ten-Min. Comedy, 4 actors (3M, 1W)
Billy and Pam share a moment of unexpected New England intimacy on the Boston T, leaving these two strangers to ask: is happiness possible when you're a Masshole?

Produced in the 2009 Boston Playwrights Marathon.
Published in the anthology *Boston Playwrights Marathon XI* (Smith & Kraus, 2010).
E-published in *Ken Urban Short Plays* <indietheaternow.com/playwright/ken-urban>

PLAYS-IN-PROCESS

The Remains
Married for a decade, Kevin and Theo are the ideal couple in the eyes of their families. But at dinner this Sunday, Kevin and Theo have big news for everyone. A comedy about the tragedy of loving.

Inappropriate Sexual Relations
An erotic novel for the stage for four actors.

The Immortals
An African-American professor fascinated by a controversial case of medical racism wrestles with tremendous pressures in the classroom and the bedroom as she refuses her quest for the truth.

TV WRITING

The Art of Listening Hour-Long Cable Pilot
A recently divorced NSA contractor whose only friend is an imaginary vision of his ex-wife falls in love with a Syrian woman whose phone calls, emails and texts he is assigned to monitor, but after answering her online ad, he decides to clear her name. But is he wrong to trust her? *Mr. Robot* meets *Homeland*.
In-development with Echo Lake Entertainment (Zadoc Angell).

Throuple Half-Hour Cable Pilot
On his 40th birthday, a married school teacher decides he wants to have a child but his husband isn't sure. When his ex-girlfriend re-enters his life, he convinces his husband that she is a potential mother for their child, but what he doesn't anticipate is a sexual attraction between all three. What's a homosexual to do in order to create the family he has always wanted?
In-development with Echo Lake Entertainment (Zadoc Angell).

SCREENPLAYS

Feature-length

The Happy Sad

Feature-Length Screenplay

Tired of dating Stan, Annie pretends to be seeing a female coworker. Heartbroken, Stan finds himself hooking up with Marcus, who just started having an open relationship with his long-term boyfriend, Aaron. But as they explore new relationships, a chance encounter on a subway platform makes each of them reevaluate their sense of who they are and what they want. A screenplay adaptation of the play.

Directed by Rodney Evans.

Featuring Charlie Barnett, Sorel Carradine, Maria Dizzia, Sue Jean Kim, LeRoi McClain, Michael Nathanson, Cameron Scoggins, Jamie Harrold and Devon O'Brien.

U.S. Festival screenings include Frameline–San Francisco LGBT Film Festival, Outfest Film Festival Los Angeles, Philadelphia Qfest Film Festival, Sacramento International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, Dayton LGBT Film Festival, Tampa International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, Seattle Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, Eau Queer Film Festival, Out on Film: Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, Fort Lauderdale Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, NYC Gay Men of African Descent, and Pittsburgh LGBT Film Festival.

International Festival screenings include MIX COPENHAGEN LesbianGayBiTrans Festival, Hong Kong Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, Out In Africa-South African Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, and Florence Queer Film Festival.

Theatrical Releases at the IFC Center in New York, Sundance Cinema in Los Angeles as well as cinemas in Seattle, Chicago and Berlin.

Digital Release on 14 January 2014 (iTunes, Netflix, Hulu, Amazon VOD)

DVD Release in February 2014

The Correspondent

Feature-Length Screenplay

A screenplay adaptation of the stage play. In-process.

Shorts

Get The Balance Right

Short Screenplay

A short story writer has an affair with his wife's sister. When one of his characters appears in his office, he knows he's in over his head.

Directed by Jeff Stern.

Named One of the Best Films of the 2010 "48 Hour Film Project Festival" in Boston.

Included on "Best of the 2010 Festival" DVD.

I Am A Great Big Ball Of Sadness

Short Screenplay

At a swanky, rooftop party in New York City, three guests try to get past their cocktail smiles.

Directed by Chris Tyler

Screened at Manhattan Short Film Festival (took place across six continents and at over 200 venues) and New York Shorts Fest.

Winner of the Audience Bronze Prize.

PUBLICATIONS

Plays

A Future Perfect. New York: Dramatists Play Service, forthcoming in late 2016.

Sense of an Ending. New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2015.

Monologue from *The Awake*. *The Best Men's Stage Monologues 2015*. Ed. Lawrence Harbison. Hanover, NH: Smith & Kraus, 2015.

Sense of an Ending. London: Methuen, 2015.

The Awake. *TheatreForum: An International Journal of Innovative Performance*. 46.1 (2015).

The Awake. New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2014.

The Correspondent. New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2014.

The Happy Sad. New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2014.

The Private Lives of Eskimos. New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2014.

Pseudoephedrine. *Boston Playwrights Marathon XII*. New York: Smith & Kraus, 2011.

White People. *Boston Playwrights Marathon XI*. New York: Smith & Kraus, 2010.

Excerpt from *The Private Lives of Eskimos*. *DUO!: Best Scenes for the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Applause Books, 2010.

The Female Terrorist Project. *New York Theatre Review*. Ed. Brook Stowe. New York: Black Wave Press, 2005.

Articles and Essays in Books

“John Guare,” in *Methuen Drama Guide to Contemporary American Playwrights*, Ed. Martin Middeke (London, Methuen, 2014).

“The Censor in the Mirror,” in *Out of Silence: Censorship and Self-Censorship in Theatre and Performance*, Ed. Caridad Svich (Eyecorner Press, 2012).

Commentary to Sarah Kane’s *Blasted* (London: Methuen, 2011).

“Sarah Kane,” in *Methuen Drama Guide to Contemporary British Playwrights*, Eds. Martin Middeke, Peter Paul Schnierer and Aleks Sierz (London: Methuen, 2011).

Contributor, “Pinter: In Memoriam” *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 19.2 (May 2009).

Book review of Clare Wallace’s *Suspect Cultures: Narrative, Identity and Citation in 1990s New Drama, Modern Drama*, 52.1 (Spring 2009).

- “The current war is their war’: An Interview with Playwright and Actor Ellen McLaughlin,” *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 19.1 (February 2009).
- “A Happy Union,” Book review of Scott Cummings’ *Remaking American Theater: Anne Bogart, Chuck Mee and the SITI Company*, *Theater (Yale)*, 38.1 (Spring 2008).
- “Cruel Britannia,” in *Cool Britannia: British Political Drama in the 1990s*, Eds. Graham Saunders and Rebecca D’Monte (London: Palgrave, 2007).
- “Ghosts from an Imperfect Past: Philip Ridley’s Nostalgia,” *Modern Drama*, 50.3 (Fall 2007).
- “The Issue of Legacy in Contemporary American Playwriting: A Roundtable,” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 84 (September 2006).
- “Thoughts on Globalization and *The Female Terrorist Project*,” *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 16.1 (February 2006).
- “Towards a Theory of Cruel Britannia: Coolness, Cruelty and the ‘Nineties,” *NTQ: New Theatre Quarterly*, 80 (November 2004). Translated into Czech in *Svet a Divadlo (World and Theatre)*, 5–6 (2005).
- Review of Sarah Kane’s *Crave*, *Theatre Journal*, 53 (2001).
- “An Ethics of Catastrophe: The Theatre of Sarah Kane,” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 69 (September 2001).
- “AIDS and Literature” and “Television,” in *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory*, Ed. Michael Payne (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).