

AL D'ANDREA NARRATIVE BIOGRAPHY

Al D'Andrea is a stage director, teacher, performer and writer who has spent his theatrical career specializing in the development of new work for the stage. He was based in New York from 1979-1993, Los Angeles from 1993-2009, and currently resides in Portland, Maine.

Al spent his early years studying and obtaining degrees in law and chemical engineering while avidly pursuing acting in school and later in the experimental theater scene in Washington, D.C. In 1979, he left a lucrative D.C. patent law practice and returned to New York, where he studied with Stella Adler and pursued a professional career in the theater. After several years of acting, directing and producing in New York, including producing and directing the N. Y. premiere of Eugene Ionesco's *The Killing Game* and playing the title role in the N. Y. premiere of Ionesco's *Macbett*, Al co-founded The Third Step Theatre Company in 1984 in order to foster a nurturing and creative environment for artists to collaborate in the development of new works for the stage.

As Artistic Director of Third Step from 1984-1993, Al formulated and implemented a unique artistic mission for the company based on strong humanistic and aesthetic values. He oversaw all aspects of the Company's artistic work, including mainstage productions of 14 new works and an ongoing workshop and staged reading program highlighted by five yearly festivals of new American and international plays. He created and directed the Collaborative Workshop Project, a theater lab for the collective creation of new theater works through structured collaboration between writer, director, actor, composer and designer. Al formed PlayLab to support the goals and development of a resident body of playwrights, directors, composers and dramaturgs, including playwrights Vincent Sessa, MK Wolfe, Darryl Curry, Andrew Young, Rick Balian, Noel Katz, Pat Kaufman and Academy Award nominee Will Rokos. Al provided strong artistic guidance and inspiration to the ever-expanding body of Third Step resident and affiliated artists.

While in New York, Al developed, produced and directed many new works, and made direct literary contributions as project director and story contributor to numerous new plays. He developed and directed the Company's premiere production of *Onlyman*, a contemporary retelling of the Greek myth of Narcissus and Echo, co-authored with MK Wolfe. Al directed the Company's developmental workshop and premiere production of *In Available Light*, a humorously pithy exploration of "give and take" in contemporary work and social situations. He directed the premiere production of *Temporary Lucidity*, an absurdist satire of American culture that played to sold-out houses at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival after a successful New York run. He oversaw the development and directed the premiere production of the Company's first original musical, *The Christmas Bride*, book by Wolfe and music by Noel Katz, based on the Charles Dickens short story *The Battle of Life*. He directed the Company's developmental workshop and critically acclaimed production of the new musical *The Elephant Piece*, co-authored with Darryl Curry, an absurdist-environmental exploration of violence in *homo sapiens* as a species. Additionally, Al co-produced and directed many workshops and readings in Third Step's annual *Spring Festival* of new work and involved several well-known international playwrights in Third Step's popular *Voices: An International Reading Festival*.

Subsequent to Third Step, Al continues to collaborate with Wolfe and Curry in the development of new works for the stage. He was project director and story contributor for the musical *George Q*, a contemporary retelling of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, workshopped at Theatre@ St. Clements in New York in 2000 under Al's direction. He wrote the book to the new musical *Mesmerized* (with Curry and Wolfe) which received a workshop directed by Al at the Women's Club of Hollywood in 2004. *Mesmerized* is the story of the infamous Dr. Mesmer and his controversial cure of the blind prodigy pianist Maria Theresa Paradies using the mysterious force he called animal magnetism. (www.mesmerizedthemusical.com) In 2008, Al directed sold out workshop performances of the new musical *The Freaks Club* by Tom Adams and MK Wolfe at The Blank Theatre in Hollywood (www.thefreaksclubmusical.com).

Additional highlights of Al's years in Los Angeles from 1993-2009 include directing a developmental workshop creating three new one-act musicals for the Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop (now the Academy for New Musical Theatre); and several workshops at the Mark Taper Forum, including *The Cider House Rules* by John Irving, stage adaptation by Peter Parnell, directed by Tom Hulce and Jane Jones (Literary Assistant to Mr. Parnell), *The Chemistry of Change* by Marlene Mayer (Literary Assistant to Ms. Meyer), and *Ikebana* by Alice Tuan (Directing Assistant to Lisa Peterson). Al has directed shows for such Los Angeles companies as The Blank Theatre, Colony Theatre, Theatre Neo, Eclectic Theatre, Company of Angels, the Playwrights Group, Vox Humana and LEMTW. In Spring 2003 he directed an acclaimed production of the musical *The 1940's Radio Hour* for Musical Theatre Southwest in Albuquerque.

Since moving to Portland, Maine, Al has directed a production of *The Sock Who Lost His Mate* (Adams & Wolfe) with the musical theatre majors at the University of Southern Maine (Gorham), John Patrick Shanley's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Doubt* for LCCT (Damariscotta), and a sold-out run of *The Christmas Bride* at Lucid Stage for Snowlion Repertory Company (Portland). He regularly teaches Basic and Advanced Acting Workshops in Portland sponsored by Mad Horse Theatre Co., and a Theater Improv Workshop for Merrymeeting Adult Education in Brunswick.

Al's theatrical training includes studies with Stella Adler, Anne Bogart, Stephen Book and Anthony Abeson. He has an extensive resume as an actor. TV appearances include *N.Y.P.D. Blue*, *Family Law*, *Profiler*, *Brooklyn South*, *Murder One*, *The New Adventures of A.R.K.*, *Tracey Takes On* and *It's Like, You Know*. Film credits include *Temptation*, the award-winning *Joey Petrone: TV Cop*, and *The Runaway*. Among Al's innumerable stage appearances are numerous roles with Third Step Theatre Company in New York, including Berenger in Ionesco's *Exit The King* and Angelo in Ugo Betti's *Crime On Goat Island*; and numerous roles with Colony Theatre in Los Angeles, including Paul Sears in Kaufman's *June Moon*; a variety of "plagued" characters in Anthony Clarvoe's *The Living* (L.A. Times "Critic's Choice"); Eddie in Simons' *Lost In Yonkers*; and the curmudgeon Horace Vandergelder in Wilder's *The Matchmaker*, for which he received a *DramaLogue* Performance Award.

Al is a member of SDC, Lincoln Center Directors Lab West, AEA, SAG and AFTRA. He lives in Portland, Maine with his wife, the playwright Margit Ahlin, and their two cats Loki and Rana. He recently co-founded Snowlion Repertory Company as a vehicle for his continued work in the theatre (www.snowlionrep.org).