

## Les Hunter, NEW YORK

### What was your goal with this production?

I've always found it easier to produce my own work if I put it in a lineup with not only my own work, but also other people's plays as well. That way we share the burden, and you get a lot more people involved and generate more interest. We started Brooklyn Playwrights Collective ([www.brooklynplaywrights.org](http://www.brooklynplaywrights.org)) to do just that—create new, meaningful work from people in Brooklyn, and support each other in the process from writing to production. Each year BPC hosts a festival where our writers respond to the work of a theatre practitioner, always in an alphabetical order (Artaud, Brecht, Chekhov, and this year, for something a little different, Dante). With each of these festivals, our goal is to get a quality show out to as many people as possible, while still maintaining a high quality of work. We do this by trying to keep the prices very low. Our first two years we didn't charge at all, we only took donations. Since then, we've started charging, but we're still one of the cheapest shows in New York. Confronting Chekhov, our last festival, was only six dollars for entry, and we got good reviews and great feedback, so we know we're not being cheap on the quality of the presentation. We're a playwriting collective, so we really want to highlight

the writing—this leads to a lot of work that focuses on the actor acting. We don't go in for a lot of fancy lighting and set design.

### How did you market the show?

For Confronting Chekhov last year we had eleven playwrights, fourteen directors and assistant directors, four venues, and about 70 actors. The pieces are always short so we can put a few together each night and run them on a schedule A and B. We get lots of people to show up to see their friends acting. It can be a big headache, but it's been worth it. We also have a press list, and we make lots of calls and emails, sometimes calling the same person a few times. I also used to write for a review site, so I know some people through that. It works, we've been written up in *The L Magazine* (twice), *Time Out New York*, [offonline.com](http://offonline.com) (twice), [nytheatre.org](http://nytheatre.org) (also twice), and a few other places.

### How did you finance the production?

Most of the money we make goes towards facility fees. But we don't usually need to put a lot of money down because we've often managed to get free or drastically reduced facility fees. We're on our fifth festival, and we've made inroads with a number of places. Some of them beg to have us back each year because we draw such big crowds to their venues, so we can usually get a good price.

We still have no budget, but at first we didn't know anybody either. We couldn't pay for facilities, so we put up the shows at bars where we knew we could get people to drink. Needless to say, we weren't getting top of the line venues. Our first year, we put the shows up anywhere. One of the places was a real seedy bar with a stage in midtown Manhattan where all kinds of shenanigans happened at night. I remember I sat down on the couch one night, and the bartender, who had told us about the wild stuff that went on there, told me not to sit on the couch because, as he put it, "you never know what's been on there." It was the kind of place that didn't have a sign out front and had



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