

G. BRUCE SMITH READILY ADMITS Playwrights 6, founded in 1999, is a kind of misnomer. "We grew out of the old Playwrights Kitchen Ensemble that used to meet Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Coronet Theatre to read and critique new plays," he recalls. "There were originally six of us who formed P6, which very quickly became five and occasionally four." Though P6 has had a sketchy producing history over the years, they hold true to one of their original conceits: the playwright as producer.

"This fall we are producing three new works, at three different theatres," says Smith. "We have made some successful alliances with various theatres over the years. That is pretty much how we have to do things for now."

Playwrights 6 is presenting three world premieres in 2007, all by Los Angeles writers. Nancy Beverly's *Godislov* was at Santa Monica's Miles Playhouse in August. Smith's *Canvas* runs four performances only (Sept. 13-16) at the Electric Lodge, in Venice. "Our final production for this year will be Gib Wallis' *Nymphomaniac in 12-D*," says Smith. "We haven't set the date or the theatre yet."

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Whatever its method of operation, P6 has managed to keep a steady stream of work flowing. In six years, P6 has staged 17 productions, garnering three LA Weekly Theatre Award nominations, four Garland Award honorary mentions, three Critics Top 10 "Best of the Year" postings and two GLAAD honors. In addition, P6 nurtured the development of the hit musical *Play It Cool* at Celebration Theatre in 2006 and *Solicitation*, which went on to the New York Fringe Festival the same year.

"I am particularly proud that P6 has become a resource to other LA theatre companies," adds Smith. Indeed, over the years, the company has partnered with theatres like The Ark, Celebration and Ruskin Group Theatre on wildly successful co-productions such as *The Big Ever After* (Ark), *The Mitchells* (Ruskin) and *Christmastime is Queer I, II and III* (Celebration).

The group has run a successful Writers/Actors Workshop since 2001 and launched a Reading Series in 2004. All five of the current Playwrights 6 principals—Laura Black, Larry Dean Harris, Amy Heidish, G. Bruce Smith and Monica Trasandes—are LA residents.

The Playwright as Producer

By Julio Martinez



G. Bruce Smith, Larry Dean Harris, Amy Heidish, Laura Black and Monica Trasandes

Smith, who spent many years as a journalist including a stint on *LA Daily News*, has also put in time as a theatre publicist. "For a while now, my fulltime job has been as the Public Information Director for Santa Monica College," he admits. "But I keep being dragged into being publicist for live theatre in LA because I love it so much."

When asked about the goals of Playwrights 6 for the future, Smith just smiles and refers to the group's on-going mandate. "As we continue to grow, P6 will remain true to its mission: to develop, produce and promote high-quality new works by Los Angeles playwrights; foster a cooperative of theatre professionals in an atmosphere of mutual support and artistic integrity; and connect the diverse Los Angeles communities to the power of theatre—its immediacy, energy and cultural impact." ■

CANVAS

Plays Sept. 13-16
Thurs. - Sat. 8pm;
Sun. 2pm
Tickets: \$20
Electric Lodge
1416 Electric Ave., Venice
323-860-6625
or www.playwrights6.com