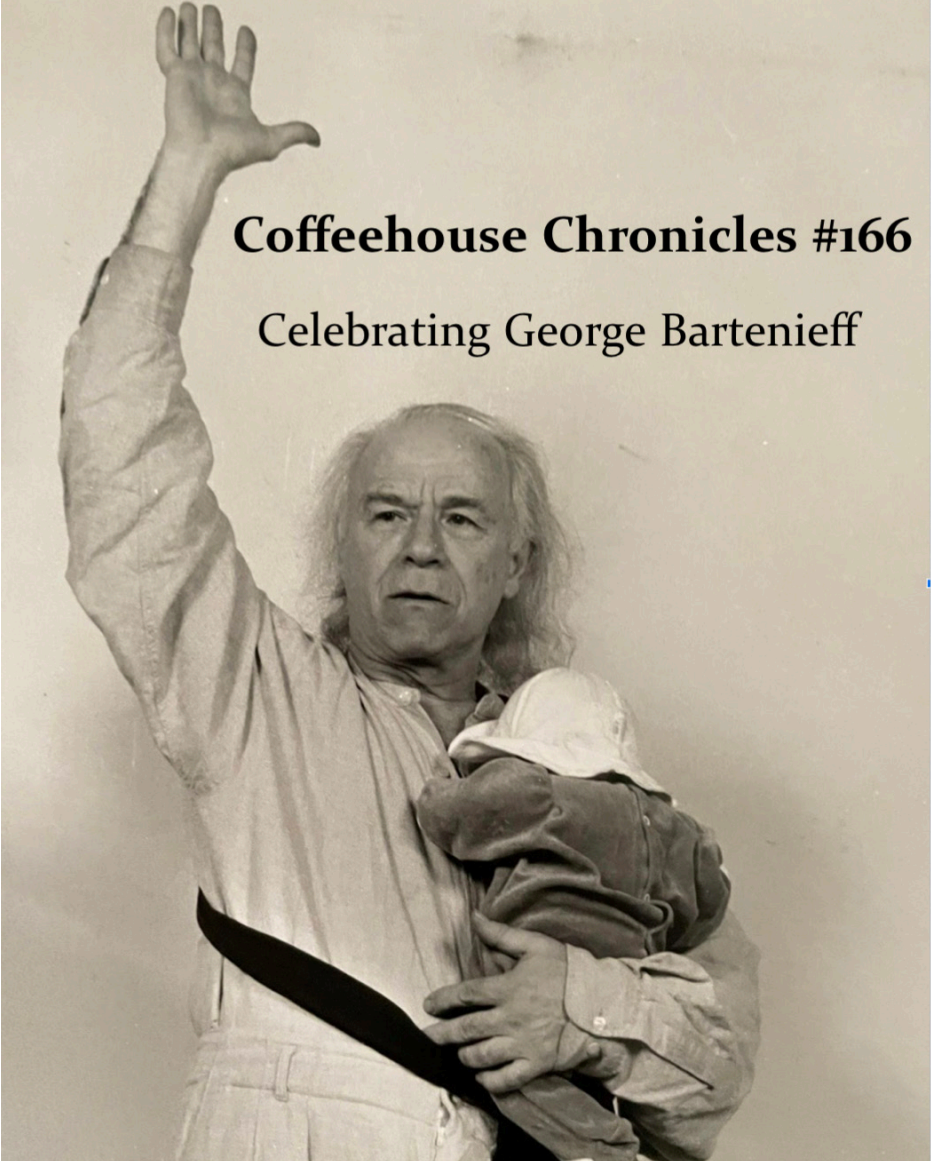




presents

## Coffeehouse Chronicles #166

Celebrating George Bartenieff



Ellen Stewart Theatre  
66 East 4th Street, NYC, 10003  
October 1, 2022

# Coffeehouse Chronicles #166: Celebrating George Bartenieff<sup>x</sup>

Moderator: Cindy Rosenthal

## Participants:

Karen Malpede, Alex Bartenieff,  
Briana Bartenieff, JoAnne Akailitis,  
Kathleen Chalfant, Sally Ann Parsons,  
Christen Clifford, Tony Giovannetti,  
Rocco Sisto, Tommie J. Moore,  
Andrew Guilarte, Beatriz Tiche Schiller,  
Di Zhu, and Peter Schumann (on video)

Curated and Directed by Michal Gamily

*Photo: George Bartenieff, as Robert, in "The Beekeeper's Daughter," written and directed by Karen Malpede, 1995*

Opening the house (slideshow)  
Michal welcomes the audience  
Clip#1: Scattering the ashes  
Cindy Introduction  
Clip# 2: An excerpt from Penny' Arcade's interview for the LES  
Journal Reading #1: Rocco and Andrew  
Clip#3: " I Will Bear Witness  
Cindy / Karen  
Clip#4: An excerpt from Penny's interview for the LES  
*The Brig* log reading: Tommie Moore,  
JoAnne, Cindy and Karen  
Clip#5: An excerpt from Penny's interview for the LES  
Alex and Brianna  
Alex reading/speaking about George  
Brianna  
Clip#6 - Peter Schuman  
Clip#7: An excerpt from Penny's interview for the LES  
Beatriz  
Clip#8: Another Life  
Tony and Sally Ann- Design aspects  
Kathy, Di and Christen - Acting with George  
Clip#9 *Blue Valiant*  
Karen tribute to George  
Clip#10: Angel speech from *I Will Bear Witness*  
Clip#9 - Scattering the ashes  
Final words by Cindy  
Music by Bach  
The End

Video excerpts from Penny Arcade interview with George for the LES Biography Project, photographed and edited by Steve Zehentner. Video excerpts from the scattering of Georges ashes at Bread & Puppet in Vermont, photographed by Michal Gamily, edited by Halleli Gamily Peleg.

La MaMa will be celebrating the life of George Bartenieff. We will show clips from George's final performance *Blue Valiant*, a film of an outdoor performance with Kathleen Chalfant and Millie Ortiz, music by Arthur Rosen, written and directed by Karen Malpede, and clips from his Obie-winning Victor Klemmer in *I Will Bear Witness* from the Dresden performance, alongside photos of George in many plays during his storied career. There will be readings from his Brig Log, a chronicle of the Living Theater's 1963 production of *The Brig* and from the memoir he was writing shortly before he died of his childhood in Nazi Germany. We will also show excerpts from Penny Arcade's interview with George at the LES Biography Project, photographed and edited by Steve Zehentner, and excerpts from George's farewell, photographed by Michal Gamily and edited by Halleli Gamily Peleg.

**George Bartenieff** was born in Berlin in 1933 into a family of dancers, and immigrated to the United States in 1939. As a child, he studied at Maria Ley Piscator's childrens' wing of the Dramatic Workshop, established by her husband, Irwin Piscator. There he was in two plays with Judith Malina, who would co-found The Living Theatre. He began his professional acting career on Broadway at age 14 in 1947, in *The Whole World Over*, directed by Harold Clurman and starring Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof. He was on Broadway again two years later in Lillian Hellman's *Montserrat*, a metaphor for the McCarthy Hearings, directed by Hellman. He graduated from RADA and The Guild Hall in London, in acting, but while a student in London, he also directed several well-reviewed plays, including *Samson Agonistes* by John Milton. When he returned to New York, he began to act regularly at Judson's Poets Theater, while balancing a commercial career. He played Krapp in *Krapp's Last Tape*, and Peter in Edward Albee's *Zoo Story* for six months, directed by Allan Schneider. Bartenieff co-founded Theater for the New City with Crystal Field, where he produced over 400 new American plays, including the Pulitzer Prize winning *Buried Child* by Sam Shepard and seven plays by Irene Fornes. He also co-founded the Greenwich Halloween Parade, and produced four Eco-Festivals at TNC and with six other theaters nationwide. In 1987, Judith Malina directed Karen Malpede's *Us*, starring Bartenieff, at Theater for the New City. Malpede and Bartenieff have worked together ever since, co-founding with the late Lee Nagrin, the Obie-winning Theater Three Collaborative in 1995. Bartenieff and Malpede produced, with Bartenieff acting major roles in, Malpede's poetic, social justice plays on themes ranging from Bosnia and rape in war (*The Beekeeper's Daughter*), the Iraq war (*Prophecy*), U.S. torture program (*Another Life*) to climate change (*Extreme Whether*) and to utopian visions for a species (*Other Than We*), their last production before the pandemic, in November 2019. They co-adapted *I Will Bear Witness: the Holocaust Diaries of Victor Klemmer*, which toured Europe and U.S. for four years.

Their work has premiered in New York (Theater for the New City, La MaMa, NYTW, Classic Stage, Irondale, Gerald W. Lynch Theater), and has been staged in London, Paris, Berlin, Prishtina, Kosovo, and Veroli, Italy. *Blue Valiant*, a play about a grieving horse, was written for Bartenieff and Kathleen Chalfant. *Blue Valiant*, with an original piano score by Arthur Rosen, premiered at Farm Arts Collective in May, 2021; the film of this production is now streaming on YouTube. Bartenieff also acted major roles with Bread & Puppet Theater, Mabou Mines, The Public Theater and Shakespeare in the Park, and many regional theaters. He was on Broadway as the Rabbi in Harvey Fierstein's *Fiddler on the Roof*, and with Al Pacino in *Richard II*. He taught acting and play making at HB Studios. Bartenieff is winner of four Obie-awards for Acting and Sustained Excellence in Theater, and for producing, and a Drama Desk Award. Bartenieff's great love was socially transformative, poetic language theater. George Bartenieff died on July 30, 2022, with his collaborator/wife Karen Malpede at his side, in his Brooklyn home.

**Cindy Rosenthal** is Professor of Drama at Hofstra University and a performer and director. Her essays on George Bartenieff and Karen Malpede have been published in The New York Times, Women and Performance, TheTheatreTimes.com and Plays in Time, an anthology devoted to Malpede's work. Rosenthal's books include *Restaging the Sixties: Radical Theatres and their Legacies*, *Modern American Drama: Playwriting 2000-2009* and *Ellen Stewart Presents: Fifty Years of La MaMa Experimental Theatre*, which received the George Freedley Memorial Award. She is honored to be back at La MaMa, celebrating the brilliant legacy of George Bartenieff.

**Karen Malpede** is the author/director of 22 ecofeminist plays, produced in the United States, Europe, and Australia and translated into French and German. Malpede is the co-founder with George Bartenieff, of the Obie-winning Theater Three Collaborative. *Another Life*, a surreal look at the U.S. torture program, workshopped in Kosovo, premiered on the 10th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks, at the Gerald W. Lynch Theater, was staged in two subsequent New York productions, and then in London, 2011–14. Her play *Extreme Whether*, premiered at Theater for the New City in 2014, was staged in French and English as part of ARTCOP15, at the UN Climate Conference in Paris, 2015, and in Copenhagen, then in revival at La MaMa Experimental Theater Club, 2018. *Other Than We* premiered at La MaMa in 2019 and is available as a recorded reading at the Columbia Earth Institute. She is also the author of numerous essays on theater, ecology, and politics, as well as short fiction, and short plays published nationally and internationally. *Dinner During Yemen*, produced at the Signature Theater, as part of *Imagine: Yemen*, 2018, is published online

by The Kenyon Review and anthologized in *She Persisted; Troy Too*, about Covid, Climate Change and Black Lives Matter, is anthologized in *Staging Twenty-first Century Tragedies*. She is the editor and contributing author of seven books, including *Plays in Time: The Beekeeper's Daughter, Prophecy, Another Life, Extreme Whether; Acts of War: Iraq & Afghanistan in Seven Plays; Women in Theater: Compassion & Hope*. She is on the Theater and the Environmental Justice faculties at John Jay College, CUNY. She is a McKnight National Playwrights Fellow, and a recipient of a New York Foundation on the Arts playwriting award.

**JoAnne Akalaitis** is a Lithuanian American theatre director and writer and cofounder of Mabou Mines. Among works she directed are *Endgame*, *The Balcony* (by Jean Genet) and *The Birthday Party* (by Harold Pinter) – she has staged works by Euripides, Shakespeare, Strindberg, Schiller, Tennessee Williams, Philip Glass, Janáček, and her own work at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York City Opera, Goodman Theatre, Hartford Stage, Mark Taper Forum, Court Theatre, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and the Guthrie Theater. She is the former artistic director of the New York Shakespeare Festival and of the Public Theater, and was artist-in-residence at the Court Theatre in Chicago. Ms. Akalaitis was the Andrew Mellon co-chair of the Directing Program at Juilliard School, and was the Wallace Benjamin Flint and L. May Hawver Flint Professor of Theater at Bard College until 2012. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts grants, Edwin Booth Award, Rosamund Gilder Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre, and Pew Charitable Trusts National Theatre Artist Residency Program grant.

**Kathleen Chalfant** — BROADWAY: *Angels in America* (Tony and Drama Desk nom.), *Racing Demon*, *Dance With Me*. OFF-BROADWAY: *Four Quartets*, *A Woman of the World*, *Wit* (Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics Circle, Drama League, Connecticut Critics Circle, Obie Awards), *For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday*, *A Walk in the Woods* (Drama Desk nom.), *Tales from Red Vienna*, *Miss Ovington & Dr. Dubois*, *Talking Heads* (Obie Award), *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Nine Armenians* (Drama Desk nomination), *Henry V* (Callaway Award). OTHER NY CREDITS: *The Vagina Monologues*, *Iphigenia and Other Daughters*, *Endgame*, *Sister Mary Ignatius...*, *The Investigation of the Murder in El Salvador*. FILM: *Old, Isn't it Delicious?*, *R.I.P.D.*, *The Bath*, *In Bed With Ulysses*, *Lillian*, *Duplicity*, *The People Speak*, *Lackawanna Blues*, *Perfect Stranger*, *Dark Water*, *Kinsey*, *Laramie Project*, *Random Hearts*, *A Price Below Rubies*, *Murder and Murder*. SELECT TELEVISION Recurring on "The Affair,"

"The Strain," "The Americans," "House of Cards," "Rescue Me," "The Book of Daniel," "The Guardian," "Law and Order" "One Life to Live"; "Madam Secretary," "High Maintenance," "Elementary," "Muhammad Ali's Greatest Fight" (HBO), "Georgia O'Keeffe"(Lifetime), "Voices from the White House" (PBS). AWARDS: 1996 OBIE Award for Sustained Excellence, 2004 Lortel Award for Sustained Excellence of Performance, 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award from the League of Professional Women. 2018 OBIE Award for Lifetime Achievement. She has received the Drama League and Sidney Kingsley Awards for her body of work and hold an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters from Cooper Union.

**Christen Clifford** is a multidisciplinary feminist artist, writer, curator, actor, filmmaker, and mother. As an actor, she performed in the plays of Karen Malpede with George Bartenieff at TNC, the Dionsyia festival in Italy, Lee Nagrin's theatre, John Jay Theatre, RADA, and the Irondale. Clifford's first risograph artbook, *BabyLove*, was acquired by The Watson Library at The Met. Awards and fellowships from: Women Make Movies, NYFA, NYSCA, Creative Catalyst, and NYC Artists Corps. Her work has been written about in ARTFORUM, artNews, ArtNet, Hyperallergic, NYLON, and Dazed. She teaches at The New School and curates at Dixon Place. Her studio is at Project for Empty Space in Newark and she lives in Queens and online @cd\_clifford

**Tommie J. Moore** is the Founder of "Dare to be Black." Through theater and film, this company educates and protects the legacies of African-American Icons. Mr. Moore is a writer, director and an actor who has performed in over 30 plays. He graduated with a B.A. in Theater Arts/ Communications. His film work includes; Robinson (rookie FBI agent) in the feature film "Al Qarem," Larry in the web series "LabCats," Abraham in the film "The Lure" and Dr. Mali in the Innovating Microsoft Volumetric Film "Fly Angel Soul" being released in 2023. In November 2019, Mr. Moore originated the character Tenaka in Karen Malpede's production of "Other Than We." In this production, he was honored to grace the stage alongside George. Mr. Moore was also Blessed to originate the role of Bass Reeves, in the "2019 National Black Theater Festival's" number one play "Cowboy." Mr. Moore is well-known for writing and starring in his Regional one-man play "Dare to be Black: The Jack Johnson Story." And has most recently, written an one-woman production titled "Queen Bess," a play about Bessie Coleman. Mr. Moore is dedicated to writing stage plays and screenplays focusing on African American History and/ or God's Goodness. Please visit [Daretobebblack.com](http://Daretobebblack.com)

**Beatriz Schiller** moved to New York City in 1970. Photographer, writer, visual artist, journalist, she started her work as a correspondent for the daily newspaper from her native country, Jornal do Brasil, 1972-1982, became a United States Citizen in 1982, and a full time photographer from 1983 to now. Her subjects cover a broad range of people and events—politicians such as Ronald Reagan, Ted Kennedy, George H. W. Bush, Tom Hayden; great theater and film stars: George Bartenieff, Vanessa Redgrave, Kirk Douglas, Gregory Peck, Steven Spielberg, Werner Herzog, Robert Wilson; writers: Noam Chomsky, Edward Bernays, Tom Wolfe, Marguerite Yourcenar, William Burroughs; singers, composers: Pavarotti, John Cage, Phillip Glass; dance: Rudolf Nureyev, Pina Bausch, Mark Morris. Exhibited/ published: The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Lincoln Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Museum of Modern Art – NYC; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and worldwide. Photographic work published in The New York Times, The New Yorker, Vogue, N.Y. Magazine, Time, Newsweek, Art in America, Opera News, Dance Magazine, Jornal do Brasil, and publications worldwide.

**A full program with information on this  
production can be found on the  
*Coffeehouse Chronicles #166:*  
*Celebrating George Bartenieff*  
page of the La MaMa website.**

**In addition you can scan the  
QR code Poster located in the theatre  
lobby for access to the digital program.**

# LA MAMA



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*Rendering: 74 East 4th St.*

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To learn more about the renovation, or to make a donation please visit [www.lamama.org/remakeaworld](http://www.lamama.org/remakeaworld)

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July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

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**Lazarus 1972–2022**  
Sept 29 - Oct 16, 2022  
The Downstairs

**Coffeehouse Chronicles #166:  
Celebrating George Bartenieff**  
Oct 1, 2022  
Ellen Stewart Theatre

**Poetry Electric: Alexandra Tatarsky**  
Oct 3, 2022  
The Downstairs

**Last Gasp: A Recalibration**  
Oct 14 - Oct 30, 2022  
Ellen Stewart Theatre

**La MaMa Kids: Let's Celebrate  
the Harvest Festival Together!**  
Oct 15 - 16, 2022  
The Downstairs

## COMING SOON

**Posaka**  
Oct - 23, 2022  
The Downstairs

**The History of Empires**  
Oct 27 - Nov 6, 2022  
Ellen Stewart Theatre

**Remake a World Gala**  
Nov 10, 2022  
Ellen Stewart Theatre

**Betsy**  
Nov 12 - 20, 2022  
Ellen Stewart Theatre

**Once Upon El Barrio**  
Nov 18 - 20, 2022  
Ellen Stewart Theatre

**Jump Start: A Presentation of  
Puppet Works in Progress**  
Dec 1 - 4, 2022  
The Downstairs