



## The Little Theatre of Alexandria celebrates **Pride Month**

**Pride Month is celebrated every June as a tribute to those who were involved in the Stonewall Riots. President Bill Clinton first declared June as Gay and Lesbian Pride month in 2000, and President Barack Obama expanded the observance by designating June as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month. During June, we celebrate the notion that diversity is a gift. “The story of America’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community is the story of our fathers and sons, our mothers and daughters, and our friends and neighbors who continue the task of making our country a more perfect Union. It is a story that all people can live with dignity and fairness under the law.” Each June, we rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of equal rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. The LGBT Community continues to contribute to the history, culture, and the society of this country.**

### **Tennessee Williams**

(Born: March 26, 1911, Columbus, MS  
Died: February 25, 1983, New York, NY)



An American dramatist whose plays revealed a world of human frustration in which sex and violence underlie an atmosphere of romantic gentility. Williams became interested in playwriting while at the University of Missouri (Columbia) and Washington University (St. Louis) and worked at it even during the Depression while employed in a St. Louis shoe factory. Little theatre groups produced some of his work, encouraging him to study dramatic writing at the University of Iowa, where he earned a B.A. in 1938. His first recognition came when *American Blues* (1939), a group of one-act plays, won a Group Theatre award. Williams, however, continued to work at jobs ranging from theatre usher to Hollywood scriptwriter until success came with *The Glass Menagerie*. (1944). Williams’ next major play, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), won a Pulitzer Prize. His *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), was awarded a Pulitzer Prize and was successfully filmed, as was *The Night of the Iguana* in (1961).

### **Moms Mabley**

(Born: March 19, 1894, Brevard, NC  
Died: May 23, 1975, White Plains, NY)



Moms Mabley, original name Loretta Mary Aiken, an American comedian who was one of the most successful black vaudeville performers. She modeled her stage persona largely on her grandmother, who had been a slave. Wise, clever, and often ribald, Mabley dressed in frumpy clothes and used her deep voice and elastic face (and, in later years, her toothlessness) to significant effect. Her father died when she was 11 years old. By age 15 she had borne two children. To escape a despised stepfather, she moved to Cleveland, Ohio. There she was first exposed to performers and their lives, and she soon chose show business as a career and entered the “chitlin circuit” of venues that catered to African American audiences. After a brother objected to her career choice, she took a stage name, borrowing that of a boyfriend and fellow entertainer, Jack Mabley. She is said to have been given the nickname Moms because of her compassion for other performers. Discovered by the vaudeville team known as Butterbeans and Susie, she went to New York City with them and made her debut at Connie’s Inn. She later performed in such noted venues as Harlem’s Cotton Club. She was the first female comedian to appear at the Apollo Theater, and she became a regular there, appearing more often than any other act in that theatre’s history. Mabley for many years the only female African American comic, was sometimes underestimated because of her standard jokes about old men and her use of sexual innuendo. Nonetheless, she possessed great comic timing and a remarkable ability to ad lib. She was also a sly and astute social commentator. Several of her comedy performances were recorded live, including *Moms Mabley, the Funniest Woman in the World* (1960), her first of some two dozen comedy albums.

### **Pyotr Tchaikovsky**

(Born: May 7, 1840, Voronezh, Russia  
Died: November 6, 1893, St. Petersburg, Russia)



Tchaikovsky isn’t a Broadway star, but he is one of the most famous composers of all time. His music has always had great appeal for the general public in virtue of its tuneful, open-hearted melodies, impressive harmonies, and colorful, picturesque orchestration, all of which evoke a profound emotional response. His oeuvre includes 7 symphonies, 11 operas, 3 ballets, 5 suites, 3 piano concertos, a violin concerto, 11 overtures, 4 cantatas, 20 choral works, 3 string quartets, a string sextet, and more than 100 songs and piano pieces. In 1869 Tchaikovsky completed *Romeo and Juliet*, an overture in which he subtly adapted sonata form to mirror the dramatic structure of Shakespeare’s play. It became the first of Tchaikovsky’s compositions eventually to enter the standard international classical repertoire. His instrumental works began to earn him his reputation, and, at the end of 1874, Tchaikovsky wrote his *Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor*, a work destined for fame. The concerto premiered successfully in Boston in October 1875. During the summer of 1875, Tchaikovsky composed *Symphony No. 3 in D Major*, which gained almost immediate acclaim in Russia.

### **Nicholas Dante**

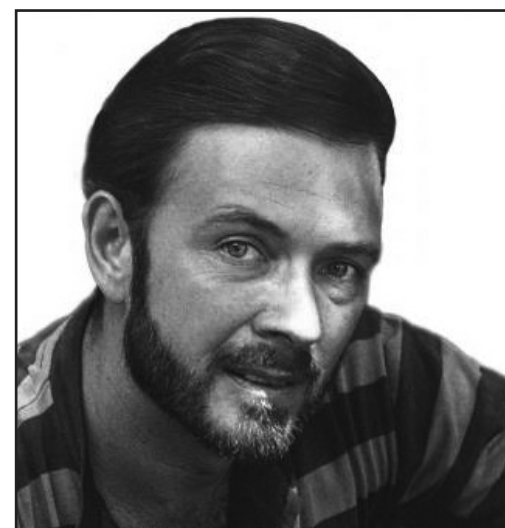
(Born: November 22, 1941, Manhattan, New York, NY  
Died: May 21, 1991, Manhattan, New York, NY)



*A Chorus Line* (1974) was the first major Broadway book musical to let gay characters discuss (in both dialogue and song) the sexual aspects of their lives. Nicholas Dante won a Pulitzer Prize and a Tony Award as a co-author of *A Chorus Line*, the longest-running show in Broadway history. Mr. Dante started his career as a dancer, appearing in the choruses of shows including *Applause*, on television shows and in nightclubs. His experiences became one of the prominent stories in *A Chorus Line*, in which chorus dancers auditioned talking about their lives, dreams, and fears. *A Story of Isolation*. Mr. Dante wrote *A Chorus Line* with James Kirkwood, based on tapes of dancers’ real-life stories. His own story – about growing up poor in New York City and feeling scorned and lonely because of his homosexuality – was told by Sammy Williams, who won a Tony Award as best supporting actor for his portrayal of the character, Paul.

### **James Kirkwood, Jr.**

(Born: August 22, 1924, Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA  
Died: April 21, 1989, Manhattan, New York, NY)



James Kirkwood, Jr. was an American playwright and author. In 1976 he received the Tony Award, the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Book of a Musical, and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for the Broadway hit *A Chorus Line*. Kirkwood wrote many novels including *P. S. Your Cat Is Dead!* adapted into a play of the same name, which was, in turn, adapted into a film. Kirkwood also wrote the comedic play *Legends!* which toured the United States with Mary Martin and Carol Channing in 1987. The plot concerns a producer with a sure-fire commercial script, but no credibility, who lures two out-of-work but long-time feuding actresses “of a certain age” to star in his putative Broadway production. *Legends!* was the most financially successful road production of that season, but when producers insisted on cutting an important speech about breast cancer by Mary Martin’s character, the actress declared she would complete her contractual obligation, but would not open the play on Broadway, and the show closed on the road. A revival of *Legends!* was mounted with Joan Collins and Linda Evans. It toured more than 30 cities in the United States and Canada beginning in autumn 2006. In 1968, Kirkwood signed the “Writers and Editors War Tax Protest” pledge, vowing to refuse tax payments in protest against the Vietnam War.

### **Michael Bennett**

(Born: April 8, 1943, Buffalo, NY  
Died: July 2, 1987, Tucson, AZ)



Mr. Bennett’s legacy includes the choreography for *Follies* (1971), that he also co-directed with Harold Prince, and two shows he directed himself – *A Chorus Line* (1975) and *Dreamgirls* (1980) – which featured new levels of stagecraft and storytelling devices that dazzled critics and theatregoers alike. These three shows alone put him in the top ranks of those who contributed invaluable to the 20th century American musical. From the 1966 *A Joyful Noise* through the December 1981 opening of *Dreamgirls*, he received Tony Award nominations for every musical with which he was associated and won seven.

### **Alison Bechdel**

(Born: September 10, 1960, Beech Creek, PA)



Bechdel is a cartoonist from Pennsylvania whose 2006 graphic novel *Fun Home* has since been turned into a Broadway musical. It deals with her own journey discovering her lesbianism, her relationship with her gay father, and much more, plus some catchy songs like “Ring of Keys.”

**Stacey Becker, Governor for Membership**



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### **Moises Kaufman**

(Born: November 21, 1963, Caracas, Venezuela)



Moisés Kaufman, a playwright and director best known for perceptive and moving plays often rooted in issues of sexuality. He was cofounder in 1991 of Tectonic Theater Project, a company dedicated to examining the structure and language of theatre as well as addressing contemporary social issues. Kaufman was born in Venezuela to Orthodox Jewish parents and was of Ukrainian and Romanian descent. He attended a yeshiva (Jewish religious school) as a child and was exposed to broader culture on family trips to New York City. A Caracas theatre festival he attended as a young teenager brought him exposure to the avant-garde plays in which he cites as his early influences. While attending Metropolitan University in Caracas (B.A. in business administration, 1985), Kaufman joined a touring experimental theatre group as an actor. In 1987 he moved to New York City, where he studied theatre directing at the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, meanwhile directing a variety of plays. It was at NYU that he honed his ideas about the purpose and most-effective means of presenting theatrical performances. Four years later Kaufman, together with his partner, Jeffrey LaHoste, established Tectonic Theater Project. Kaufman’s writing debut was *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*. He was interested in what he termed “watershed historical moments,” events that reveal the foundations of society’s beliefs. A powerful and moving play that used actual trial testimony, *Gross Indecency* won an Outer Critics Circle Award for outstanding Off-Broadway play. Kaufman and his troupe then began work on *The Laramie Project* (performed 2000, published 2001, television movie 2002), interviewing numerous residents of the small Wyoming city in which gay college student Matthew Shepard had been brutally murdered. The play had particular resonance with Kaufman, who was gay, and it proved popular throughout the world. In 2003 Kaufman directed a one-man show, Doug Wright’s *I Am My Own Wife: Studies for a Play About Charlotte von Mahlsdorf* (performed 2003–04), the story of a gay transvestite who survived life in Nazi Germany and Soviet East Berlin. It was critically acclaimed and resulted in a Tony Award nomination for Kaufman. In the next several years Kaufman directed a variety of plays, including Wilde’s *Lady Windermere’s Fan* and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. He also directed his own play *33 Variations* (first performed 2007), starring Jane Fonda as a musicologist obsessed with Beethoven’s *Diabelli Variations*, and received another Tony nomination. In 2009 Kaufman and other Tectonic members arranged for 150 simultaneous readings in theatres across the globe of a sequel, *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*. In 2016 Kaufman received the National Medal of Arts.

### **Marga Gomez**

(Born: June 19, 1960, New York, NY)



Marga Gomez has been a writer/performer of five previous theater solos, *A Line Around The Block*, (Public, 1996) *Memory Tricks*, (Public 1993), *Marga Gomez is Pretty, Witty & Gay*, (Whitney Museum & PS 122, 1994) *Jaywalker* (PS122, 1999) and *The Twelve Days of Cochina* (which worked-in-progress at Dixon Place, as well as out of town in San Francisco and Boston during 2001). She received Theatre LA’s Ovation Award for *Carpa Clash*, a collaboration with Culture Clash at the Mark Taper Forum, and the Bay Area Theater Critics Circle Award for *Memory Tricks*. She was called “gut busting hilarious” and given “Best Comic Performance of 2002” for *Single Wet Female* by the New York Blade. Theatrically, she has appeared in three engagements of *The Vagina Monologues* (Twice in SF; once in NY in November 2002). Gomez started doing solo theater after building her stand-up career in the ’80s, motivated by wanting to write something about her parents. Her father had been a comedian and founder of the Teatro Latino variety house during an earlier time (which fought a losing battle against television), so it was in her blood. She tested the waters in a theater festival in 1991 and subsequently wrote her first extended work, *Memory Tricks*, about her mom. Selections from Gomez’ work have been published in several anthologies including “Extreme Exposure” (TCG Books), “Out, Loud & Laughing” (Anchor Books), “Contemporary Plays by American Women of Color” (Routledge) and “Out of Character” (Bantam Books). Currently she is collaborating on an erotic thriller with Carmelita Tropicana.

### **Jane Chambers**

(Born: March 27, 1937, Columbia, SC

Died: February 15, 1983, Greenport, NY)



Jane Chambers was one of the first American playwrights to create openly lesbian characters who were comfortable with their own homosexuality. She believed that this would help eliminate homophobia. One of the most important dramatists of the twentieth century, Chambers’ reputation rests largely on “the lesbian plays” she wrote during the 1970s, though these constitute only a fraction of her astonishing creative output. In her brief life. Chambers wrote at least thirty-five plays, seventeen novels (two of which were published), thirty-two screenplays and television scripts, thirteen short stories, one poetry collection, and dozens of articles. The lesbian plays feature characters and plots inspired by the antics and amorous escapades of Chambers’ friends and lovers. *A Late Snow* (1970), the first in this series, is set in rural Maine, where she lived with the figure on whom Pat, a charismatic butch with a drinking problem, is based. Five women, all current or former love interests of the protagonist Ellie, a college professor, find themselves trapped in a remote cabin during a blizzard. Ellie is worried that her tribe will out themselves to Margo, a famous author she has invited to campus. Margo reveals that she too is a lesbian, one who chooses, like Tally in *The Eye of the Gull* (1971), to remain in the closet to protect her reputation. The plot proved prophetic when *A Late Snow* debuted in 1974 at The Clark Center (later Playwrights Horizons). Chambers lost her job at CBS and was blacklisted from the television industry, despite having garnered a Writers Guild Award for her work on “Search for Tomorrow.” Chambers was asked to stage *A Late Snow* as part of the First Gay American Arts Festival in New York. The play was still under option, so Chambers proposed *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove* (1974). A resounding success, the festival run at the West Side Mainstage Theatre was extended, followed by a transfer to the Actors Playhouse in Greenwich Village. Starring a young Jean Smart as Lil, a rakish dyke who finds the love of her life just months before she dies of cancer, *Bluefish Cove* resonated with audiences and critics alike. Nicknamed *The Girls in the Sand* – a reference to Mart Crowley’s trailblazing 1968 gay drama *The Boys in the Band* – *Bluefish Cove* received a Villager Downtown Theatre Award, and a California production garnered the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award (1983).

### **Kate Bornstein**

(Born: March 15, 1948, Neptune City, NJ)



Since 1989, trans trailblazer Kate Bornstein has—with humor and spunk—ushered us into a world of limitless possibility through a daring re-envisionment of the gender system as we know it. Today, Kate identifies as nonbinary: not a man, and not a woman—and she’s been writing about nonbinary gender identity for nearly thirty years. Kate was born Albert Bornstein in 1948, in Asbury Park, New Jersey. She transitioned to female, in 1986 She realized that being a woman was for her no more than acting and pretending...just like it had been for being a man. So, in 1988, Kate gave up the idea of being a woman, and now she lives on the edge of paradox: she is not a man, and not a woman. She looks beyond the gender binary to see gender as both a conscious practice, and a playful journey. Kate’s work is taught in five languages, in over 300 high schools, colleges, and universities around the world. The titles of her books say a lot about who she is, and how she views things. In 2016, she was a regular cast member of the second season of E! TV’s “I Am Cait,” with Caitlyn Jenner. Kate is the subject of Sam Feder’s award-winning documentary, “Kate Bornstein Is a Queer and Pleasant Danger.” Kate’s work on suicide prevention, and her advocacy for marginalized and at-risk youth has earned her two citations of outstanding citizenship from the New York City Council. Kate has been on the road lecturing and performing for over 25 years, at colleges, high schools, and anywhere people gather to talk about gender. She’s now authoring a new book: *Trans! Just For the Fun of It: compassionate gender strategies for divisive times*, sections of which she’s developing interactively on her blog, where she invites your input and feedback. If you haven’t read Kate’s work or heard her speak before, get ready—she is the radical role model, the affectionate best friend, and the guiding mentor all in one. You will come away energized, comforted, and full of hope.



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### **Billy Porter**

(Born: September 21, 1969, Pittsburgh, PA)



Billy Porter is an actor, singer, and author who is most recognized for his Broadway performances and runway attire. Porter found his love for theatrical singing and performing during the summers of 1985-1987, when he performed daily with the group Flash at Kennywood Park in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania.

He then began attending the Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts High School and graduated in 1987. Porter then attended Carnegie Mellon University College of Fine Arts, graduating with a B.F.A. in 1991. Porter began his Broadway journey after graduation, as part of the ensemble in the play *Miss Saigon*. In 1992, he performed on the CBS network show *Star Search* as a vocalist, ultimately winning 1st place and \$100,000, and in 1994 he starred in the Broadway revival of *Grease*. Porter appeared in three plays in 1995: *The Merchant of Venice*, *Songs for a New World*, and *Smokey Joe's Cafe*. Billy has performed in over twenty-two plays, both on and off Broadway, including *Dreamgirls* (2004). In 2005, he wrote and performed in *Ghetto Superstar*, his one-person autobiographical play. He is most noted for his original role of Lola in *Kinky Boots* (2013-2015). He has won numerous awards but most notably for his role in *Kinky Boots*, a Tony for Best Leading Actor in a Musical (2013), and a Grammy for Best Musical Theater Album (2014).

### **Matthew Lopez**

(Born: March 24, 1977, Panama City, FL)

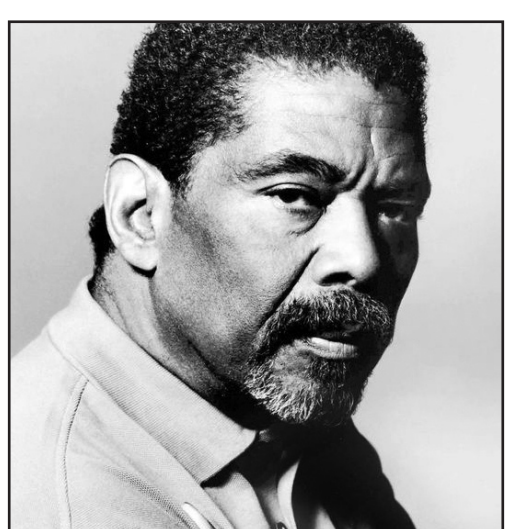


Playwright Matthew López made history by becoming the first Latino to win the Tony Award for Best Play. *The Inheritance*, also won Tony Awards for Best Actor, Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Role, and Best Director. *The Inheritance* is a two-part, six-hour play about the legacy of the AIDS epidemic.

It premiered in London in 2018 and garnered an Olivier Award for Best New Play, Best Director, Best Actor and Lighting Design. Mr. Lopez is also the author of *The Whipping Man*, one of the most widely produced new American plays of the last several years. The play premiered at Luna Stage in Montclair, NJ and debuted in New York at the Manhattan Theatre Club. The sold-out production extended four times, ultimately running 101 performances off-Broadway and garnering Obie and Lucille Lortel Awards. Matthew was awarded the John Gassner New Play Award from the New York Outer Critics Circle for the play. Since then, it has received over 40 productions worldwide. His play *Somewhere* has been produced at the Old Globe, TheatreWorks in Palo Alto and at Hartford Stage Company, where his play *Reverberation* received its world premiere in 2015. His newest play, *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, premiered at the Denver Theatre Center for the Performing Arts. His play *The Sentinels* premiered in London at Headlong Theatre Company in 2011. Matthew currently holds new play commissions from The Roundabout Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, Hartford Stage, and South Coast Rep.

### **Alvin Ailey, Jr.**

(Born: January 5, 1931, Rogers, Texas  
Died: December 1, 1989, New York, N.Y.)



An American dancer, choreographer, and director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Having moved with his family to Los Angeles in 1942, Ailey became involved with the Lester Horton Dance Theater there in 1949. Following Horton's death in 1953, Ailey was director of the company until it disbanded in 1954.

He moved to New York City that year. There he performed in various stage productions and studied acting with Stella Adler and dance with Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, Charles Weidman, and others. In 1958 Ailey formed his own dance company. The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, composed primarily of blacks, toured extensively both in the United States and abroad. In addition to works by Ailey, the company performed the works of several pioneer choreographers of modern dance, including Horton, Pearl Primus, and Katherine Dunham. The company's signature piece is *Revelations* (1960), a powerful, early work by Ailey that is set to African American spirituals. Ailey subsequently continued to choreograph works for his own and other modern-dance companies. The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, through its highly successful tours on every continent, made him the best-known American choreographer abroad from the 1960s through the '80s.

### **Peggy Shaw**

(Born: July 24, 1944, Belmont, MA)



Peggy Shaw is a performer, writer, and teacher of writing and performance. She is a 2019 Guggenheim Fellow, a 2016 USA Artist Fellow, and was the 2014 recipient of the Doris Duke Artist Award. Peggy has received five NYFA Fellowships and three OBIE Awards including an OBIE for Performance in 1987 for *Dress Suits to Hire* and in 1999 for *Menopausal Gentleman*. She was the recipient of the 1995 Anderson Foundation Stonewall Award, the 1998 Out on the Edge Theater Award for Sustained Achievement in Boston, The Foundation for Contemporary Performance Theatre Performer of the Year Award in 2005, the 2012 Edwin Booth CUNY Award for her significant impact on theatre and performance in New York, and an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Queen Mary University of London in 2017. Peggy co-founded Split Britches and WOW in NYC. She is a veteran of Hot Peaches and Spiderwoman and has collaborated with Lois Weaver since 1980.

### **L. Morgan Lee**

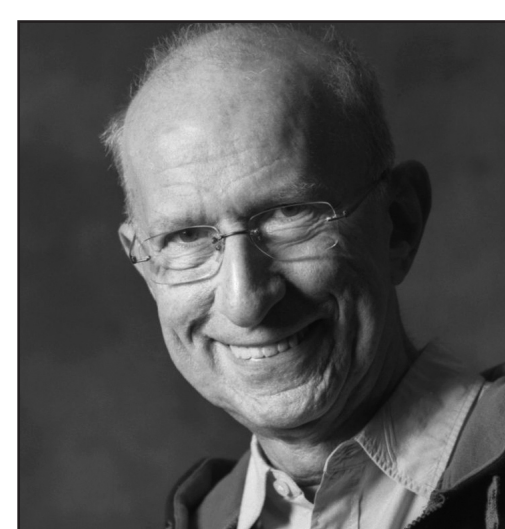
(Born: Suburb in Maryland)



L. Morgan Lee is an Obie award-winning actress and storyteller. She recently portrayed artist Lili Elbe in the stage adaptation of the novel, *The Danish Girl* in London. She is also known for her performance in the Pulitzer Prize winning musical, *A Strange Loop* which garnered her Lucille Lortel and Antonyo nominations for Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical and distinction of being the first openly transgender actor to originate a role in a Pulitzer Prize winning piece of theatre. She is making her Broadway debut in *A Strange Loop*. Dedicated to championing stories centering women, as well as underrepresented voices on both stage and screen, she has been developing a slew of new work including a piece formally titled, *The Women* (2021). With visionary and theatre artist, Raja Feather Kelly. The piece asks a group of women and nonbinary writers to create vignettes speaking to various experiences and expectations of womanhood – and is a sort of present-day response to the 1936 Clare Boothe Luce play. L. Morgan is the recipient of the 2021 Mark O'Donnell Prize awarded annually to an emerging theatre artist by Playwrights Horizons and The Actors Fund.

### **Martin Sherman**

(Born: December 22, 1938, Philadelphia, PA)



Martin Gerald Sherman is an American dramatist and screenwriter best known for his 20 stage plays which have been produced in over 55 countries. He rose to fame in 1979 with the production of his Pulitzer Prize-nominated play *Bent*, which explores the persecution of homosexuals during the Holocaust. *Bent* was a Tony nominee for Best Play in 1980 and won the Dramatists Guild's Hull-Warriner Award. It has been produced in 35 countries and was adapted first by Sherman for a major motion picture in 1997 and later by independent sources as a ballet in Brazil. With dozens of other productions under his belt – everything from the screenplay *Mrs. Henderson Presents...* to the Tony-nominated book for the Hugh Jackman musical *The Boy from Oz*.

### **Jo Clifford**

(Born: 1950, Staffordshire, United Kingdom)



Jo Clifford (formerly known as John Clifford) is an award-winning playwright, translator, poet, and performer, who has also worked as a journalist and academic. She was instrumental in establishing the reputation of the Traverse Theatre Company in the 1980s. Jo Clifford is the author of over 100 plays. Her work has been translated into many languages and has been performed all over the world. Plays include: *Every One*, *The Tree Of Knowledge*, *Faust Parts One And Two*, *Ines De Castro* and *Great Expectations*. As a writer performer, she is best known for *Eve* (co-written with Chris Goode) and *The Gospel According To Jesus Queen Of Heaven*. She was awarded the Olwen Wymark award for "Exceptional encouragement of theatre writing." She is also a proud father and grandmother and is based in Edinburgh.