

*SATURDAY'S VOYEUR In the Room ~
Thursday, May 20, 2010*

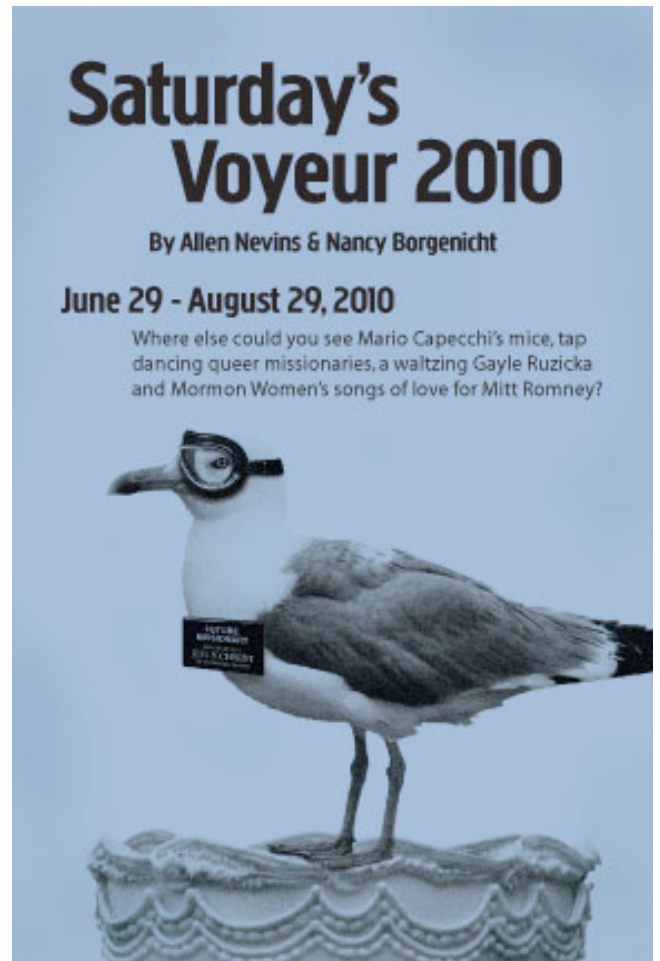
*Playwright/Director Nancy Borgenicht,
Director/Choreographer Cynthia Fleming, Set Designer
Keven Myhre, and Cast Member Shannon Musgrave discuss
Salt Lake Acting Company's upcoming production of
SATURDAY'S VOYEUR
By Allen Nevins & Nancy Borgenicht
with SLAC's Daisy Blake, Andra Harbold,
Una Pett, & Becky Santti.*

SLAC to Nancy Borgenicht. How is it getting back to VOYEUR after being away from it for a year? Is it more of a release or a challenge?

NANCY BORGENICHT. Once I got into it it was good, but it was hard. It's like some instrument you don't use for a while. Every year I think, "There's nothing left to say," or "I'm never going to write another song," or "I don't know what the music is," or "It's not going to come," or "*Nothing's* going to come," or... (*Laughing. Laughter.*) You just do, but then it's why we're so dependent on the material and the news; it feeds you and it feeds you, and then you just get better. I could just feel myself getting better, getting into it, but boy – it's just a different zone.

SLAC. Could you describe your writing process and how you gather information?

Ms. BORGENICHT. Both Al and I read newspapers and cut out articles everyday of the year. Al's much more organized, so all of his are cool and smooth in their little files (*Laughter*) – and mine are – (*Makes ripping sound. Laughter*) and in big piles. Then we go through when it gets to be the time and divvy them up according to theme or subject, and from each pile comes the material for both the song and the skit or the whatever it is. Googling some more. Sometimes the news subject matter itself tells you what the song is. There was a headline from [David] Litvack and Pat Jones from the Legislature about halfway through, and they said, enough is enough. Let's quit these message bills and get to substantive... You guys are crazy. Well, there's the song. (*Laughter*)



LEGISLATORS
OPEN the 2010
SESSION
with a
PRAYER...

...then
SOLEMNLY
RETIRE...

...to GET DOWN
to BUSINESS.



PAT BAGLEY
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

[Pat Bagley, Salt Lake Tribune, Image dated: 01/27/10 \(Daryl Cagle's Political Cartoon's Index\)](#)

I like the song to be multi-leveled, so you recognize it one level – or hopefully there's recognition so there's already a parody of itself, but then it also has something to say. It sometimes takes two weeks to create a two-minute song -- because it's like poetry, you have to get to the essence of the thing. That's assuming you have the song; finding the song is another deal...

SLAC. Do you & Al sit together and brainstorm or do you work separately? I'm really curious about how that collaboration works.

Ms. BORGENICHT. We work together in terms of defining the idea of what it's going to be. We talk a lot about the things that we think there's enough to write about, so there's a lot of conversation especially when it gets to crunch time. Or something will happen, and he'll say, "Hey, did you see that?" and we'll save it. There are conversations all the time, but then ultimately we sit, and we talk about what we think the idea for the year should be: is there one? what are our ideas? what are his ideas?... And we have this exchange, and we decide what should be in it; it's driven by what interests each of us separately, and we often agree. I think the [Governor's Gala](#) is just great because it just says everything – about money, and about how it all works, and about a certain kind of entitlement, and who's involved. I also really, really like doing the research: who donated from website donor lists and the discoveries of connections. Al likes taking the thing and then pushing it imaginatively, and I like the facts. I don't like making stuff up; I like saying, this really happened.

Then we separate, and we each have the outline and the thinking about the songs – I’ll say I’m thinking of these songs, and he’ll say, I’m thinking of these. We’ll have our own stuff, and then we just go to it. Then Al combines it and connects it and makes it make sense, and then he gives it back to me, and I say, “I don’t get this. I don’t like this. This is too long. And don’t touch my words...” (*Laughter*)

SLAC. What would be the defining news story of the last year for you?

Ms. BORGENICHT. I think that the angry racist response to Obama hope and change is just overwhelmingly nuts and awful, and I’m shocked and don’t get it. So it’s been about understanding it. It’s why the Sarah Palin stuff is interesting and in the show, plus she’s been here, plus the States’ rights stuff, and hating the federal government. When something happens like [Sheldon Killpack](#) or the [hot tub incident](#), it justifies your take on the hypocrisy of it. It’s an example.

SLAC. This is what people always want to know – what’s VOYEUR about this year?

Ms. BORGENICHT. They ask me the same thing. I say, we collect the news and the information tells you what to do. You have to have an attachment to it. I always think, I don’t know how long I can keep doing this. I guess I can do it as long as it still makes me mad. (*Laughing/laughter*) Or as long as I care, or I get pissed off, or... The problem with the events this year is that they beat you down until you just go away. You know? Anyway. We decided to do a chronological timeline – so it was about categorizing the information, but it was also about the timeline. What was interesting – and it comes from saving newspapers everyday – is that when you go back and look at it, you think, “My god, I forgot that happened. I forgot all about that, and that was huge.” In fact, maybe that’s the answer to your question about the big event – for me, it was the Indian artifacts story. I thought that was huge and enormous in just so many ways. You’re doing a timeline – and Al’s always saying, nobody remembers anything after sixty days. You have to remember something that’s current right now by the end of August is going to seem stale and old. That’s true. It depends on how you present it, and so it’s kind of scary. I remembered David Frost’s [That Was The Week That Was](#), back in the sixties. It was pre-Monty Python, pre-Saturday Night Live, pre-Jon Stewart and the Daily Show. David Frost did a weekly take on the news in Britain on television with song and dance and whatever. It was biting and so cool. So we thought, OK, so what this year is about is: That Was the Year That Was. We took the year chronologically; it’s about what happened this whole year – from March to now. And then I’ll say stuff like, “You know [the Blanding Indian artifacts?](#)” [article: [Pillaging the Past](#)] Well, three people commit suicide; it’s not really funny. How do you deal with it? It’s huge because they’re coming to trial now and for what it says about the state – it’s a huge news event, so how do you handle it? And then you get a [Pat Bagley cartoon](#). You see it, you cut it out, you save it. I remember this conversation with Al, “This story is just incredible, but how do you deal with it?” And I said, “Do you remember the Bagley cartoon with the truck load of Indians with shovels driving into a white cemetery being guarded by a white guy...?” Well, we can do that. So our version is off the Pat Bagley cartoon.



[Pat Bagley](#), *Salt Lake Tribune*, Image dated: 07/08/09 ([Daryl Cagle's Political Cartoon's Index](#))

SLAC. This year, there are quite a lot of cast members who are totally new, and some of them haven't even seen VOYEUR before. It must be really interesting to be in rehearsals to watch their journey to the VOYEUR style.

Ms. BORGENICHT. Yes, but we're only three days in. However, the new people are – I can't tell the difference. Don't you think?

Ms. MUSGRAVE. Yes. Fantastic.

Ms. BORGENICHT. I mean, a couple of them are saying, "Am I doing okay? Is it okay?" Three days in. [to SHANNON MUSGRAVE] You may be able to describe it better from your point of view. You're in the shoot, so you've got to come with something. We figure it out later, but (*laughing*) there's no namby pambying around about process and character; just go for it and then we tell you does it ring true or not, or does it work, or we don't know what we're doing yet, or... That's the process right now. They seem right there. They also see where the bar is raised – 'cause they are pretty funny, experienced people in this cast. I think mainly they must feel honored that they're part of it, because you know everybody is so good. Don't you think?

Ms. FLEMING to Ms. MUSGRAVE. Yes, what's your take on it?

Ms. MUSGRAVE. Yes. It was the same with last year being my first year. You see Alexis [Baigüe] come in with his scene fully memorized and blocked, and he just does it –
(Laughing/laughter)

Ms. BORGENICHT. *(Laughing)* – And he’s insane.

Ms. MUSGRAVE. Yes, he is crazy. *(Laughing)*

Ms. BORGENICHT. He has pushed it. He is out there –

Ms. MUSGRAVE. – he is at the highest you can possibly go. And then it’s like – “Great. Next scene.” You work as you go, and it gets fine-tuned, but you have to come in and be really brave.

Ms. BORGENICHT. Yes, be really brave.

Ms. MUSGRAVE. It’s fun. And it’s a great cast.

Ms. FLEMING to Ms. MUSGRAVE. How did you feel working on completely new work, for example, when lines get cut? This is something that would be helpful to talk to the VOYEUR newbies about – to not take it personally if their lines are cut –

Mr. MYHRE. – or characters – *(Laughter)* – hats, songs – *(Laughing)*

Ms. FLEMING. *(Laughing)* – or when their songs are axed... When we get to that point, how did it feel when people’s lines and scenes are getting cut?

Mr. MYHRE. And that’s after becoming invested because it can happen the last week.

Ms. BORGENICHT. That’s a really good point.

Ms. MUSGRAVE. It is actually a good thing to hear at the beginning before anything *is* cut. *(Laughing)* Things will get cut, and it’s not personal. We were told that at the beginning last year, and so then when it happened, it was okay. You also just know it’s for the good of the show, and that this is such a different experience from any other show you’ll ever do. We all have to have the same goal in mind. It’s not about someone’s personal feelings; it’s about making this thing and making it good.

Ms. BORGENICHT. You get attached though. You get attached after two days. Justin’s not the FBI guy anymore, and he was really good. So he said to me yesterday, “Don’t worry about it,” which is so great, but he’s been around.

Ms. FLEMING. It happens on our end, too. I’ve choreographed a whole huge number that got cut. You just really have to have a thick skin and put your ego aside, and you’re right: it’s all about what’s good for the play.

SLAC. Obviously people have taken on slightly different roles this year. Cyn, could you talk about how your role’s changed?

Ms. FLEMING. For the most part I've choreographed SATURDAY'S VOYEUR, and I could say with my numbers, I take each song very seriously, and that each song to me is like a play . So my process has been working with the playwright, Nancy, and finding out everything we could do. I've always – and maybe I've never said this aloud – but have always wanted to be able to direct SATURDAY'S VOYEUR. So this year, we are working as a team, especially Nancy and I. VOYEUR is a collaborative event; it's always been like that. What I want to do this year is to really learn from her process with these scenes, learn so that I can someday say I'm fully directing it. Now, I'm co-directing it, but I get to have a legal voice at tech, which I'm really happy about. *(Laughing)*. I've always had a voice at tech, but it was always like, "Keven, can I say this? Can I do that?" I always love to learn, and I've got Nancy here to learn from. Nancy's also in a different capacity from what she's been in the last five years. She's always helped with the show and helped to fine-tune it, but when Al and Nancy used to direct it, I used to leave that to them. I took care of the songs. I can direct and choreograph like Bob Fosse and Michael Bennett and Jim Christensen. But it's always a collaborative project. Things this big are only great because you take everyone's viewpoint and merge it into one. The people who are the best of the best – like Michael Bennett, like Tommy Tune – who I have been around – they brought people; they said, "Look at this; help me see what it is." VOYEUR's always been like that. That's what I've loved from the beginning with Al and Nancy; they've always allowed me to have a voice, even when I was new to this process, and I was only choreographing one new song. They have always allowed me to say what I needed to say. To have that opportunity to be heard is so important.

Mr. MYHRE. Nancy, if you were in Lehi at a McDonald's, would you ever [rap your order](#)? *(Laughter)*

Ms. BORGENICHT. *(Laughing)* I would like to try it. We could both go. That is so beautiful. I forgot about them, too, and I just saw that they got released. It was a freedom of speech deal. I like that. I forgot to put that in. Is it too late?

Ms. MUSGRAVE. It's never too late.

Mr. MYHRE. There's an individual who essentially made a stand, and that's what VOYEUR does. It takes a point of view and a stand on an issue and presents it.

Ms. BORGENICHT. People always ask me, "What are you doing now?" I say, "Making trouble." *(Laughter)*
Was it a shock that we went to [Costco](#)?

Ms. FLEMING. To the cast? Yes. A little bit.

Ms. BORGENICHT. "What'd you go see [Sarah Palin] for? Research?"
Uh-huh.



[Pat Bagley](#), *Salt Lake Tribune*, Image dated: 12/10/09 ([Daryl Cagle's Political Cartoon's Index](#))

Ms. FLEMING. Well, Keven, Nancy and I went to a three-hour Mormon funeral one year.

Mr. MYHRE. And then the play didn't turn out to be about a funeral. (*Laughing*)

Ms. BORGENICHT. Oh, there's time.

Mr. MYHRE. (*Laughing*) We're not dead yet.

Ms. FLEMING. Let's talk about some of the research we've done. One of my first research experiences was with Nancy going to the Miss Utah pageant because we were doing a pageant in VOYEUR, so we wanted to see the real live thing, but it was sold out – completely sold out. So I'm in the parking lot at SLAC to meet Nancy, and she gets out, and she's pregnant! She said, "Maybe they'll feel sorry for me, and we'll get a ticket if I'm pregnant." (*Laughing*) We got in. It was hysterical. I think you were fifty then. Fifty and pregnant.

Ms. BORGENICHT. The show lets you do this stuff. I spent weeks at the Legislature looking at these guys. You have to. How does it get inside you, you know? I went to La Verkin. I interviewed all kinds of people. It's the part that keeps the thing vital and lets it evolve and be connected to who we are. What did we do this year...?

Ms. FLEMING. You went the midnight showing of the Legislature.

Ms. BORGENICHT. I missed [\[Kevin Garn's\] confession](#) though – I was late.

Ms. FLEMING. And so they didn't have a show because of the confession, right?

Ms. BORGENICHT. In the past when the session closes, they all do their own parody – they sing songs, and do skits, and tease each other about stuff, and do goofy things, like it's all been a joke, and they love each other or something. And you're just going, *(sotto voce)* "What the fuck?" So I wanted to see it this year, and I got there late and missed Garn's confession. I saw his wife. Everybody was standing out in the hall, and they're all looking somber, and I said, "What happened?" I asked Carl Wimmer, "Isn't there a show?"/

Mr. MYHRE. *(Laughing)* /There *was* a show, but...

Ms. BORGENICHT. /*[as Wimmer]* "No, no... not after Garn's..."
[as herself] "What'd he say?" And he walks away. I didn't know! *(Laughter)*

And we went to Wendover, my God, of course. And [The Dead Goat](#).

Ms. FLEMING. Oh yeah, we saw the strippers at The Dead Goat!

Ms. BORGENICHT. We did a big night, that's right! *(Laughter)* We didn't ever ride Trax to Larry Miller's diving restaurant. –

Ms. FLEMING/Ms. MUSGRAVE. – [The Mayan](#).

Ms. FLEMING. I still haven't been there, have you?

Ms. BORGENICHT. No. Some things are better left to the imagination.
(Laughing/ laughter) Reality's never as vivid as your imagination.

Ms. FLEMING. So this is the community's 32nd year of VOYEUR. From your point of view – what you've heard, what they've told you – can you speak at all to their connection with VOYEUR?

Ms. BORGENICHT. Well, it's hard to know – if it's just what people say to you because they know you're connected, and so it's how you can have a conversation. The VOYEUR thing is pretty well recognized. Everybody I run into that I don't know but gets the connection, they're always so positive – and sort of proud – even if they haven't seen it for a while... So it's a pretty amazing phenomenon. I can't explain it.

Ms. FLEMING. They have an ownership of it. In what other play in the nation would they have that connection? It's really brilliant how you and Al really hit that cord with us, so that it's ours. Well, it's about us.

Ms. BORGENICHT. When Meg [Gibson] was here directing, she was walking to SLAC, and it was raining or cold, so she decided to take a cab. She said, "To Salt Lake Acting

Company. Do you know where that is?” And the driver said, “Yeah, that’s where we go to cathart.” (*Laughter*)

I had a terrible sinus infection this winter, and I went to this ear doc, and he gave me this horrible prednisone, and I had to wait in the pharmacy for it. I’m half-dead, and they call my name, and I go up – and I’ve never been to this pharmacy – (*as if over intercom*)

“Nancy Borgenicht.”

I go up. I feel like I want to die.

And the pharmacist goes, “What’s going to be in VOYEUR this year?” (*Laughter*)

It did make me feel better. I started to laugh. And I said, “What do you think should be in there?”/

Mr. MYRHE. (*as Nancy*) /“My sinus infection!” (*Laughing/ laughter*)

Ms. BORGENICHT. /Usually I say that to people, “What do you think is funny?,” because I really want to know. They always say, “You know, you’ve got so much.” And I always think, why don’t you try to do it if you’ve got sa much? He said something about, “Buttars eliminating the twelfth grade – what the hell’s that?” You get what’s on peoples’ minds, and I want to hear from them. Because they write it in their heads. Probably you do, too.

SLAC. We’ve had people e-mail in suggested song lyrics for VOYEUR.

Ms. BORGENICHT. Yeah, I’ve had people send me stuff. I used to go to a dentist who would call me and sing them. And then he mailed them. I have a book of his stuff that’s like this big [*gestures ample book*]. We should do him one year, the singing dentist. (*Laughter*)

Ms. FLEMING. The songs this year are so eclectic. Where did they come from? I know they come from the news article, but for you to even remember – I forgot about *Enough is enough. The Funny Farm...*

Ms. BORGENICHT

It comes from the news. There was a [Paul Rolly article about Mike Noel](#) – to watch for him and the federal beast – the rallies down at the Paria River. Paul Rolly said something about [Noel’s] into “They’re coming to take me away” (*Ha, ha*)... So there’s that.

Sarah Palin’s book gave you that *How do you like me now?* was her favorite song, Big & Rich, Rolling, that she listens to Gretchen Wilson’s *Redneck Woman*; you’re taking notes, and you just save it. You’re just taking notes and when you’re in the zone thinking about it, and after doing it so long, that’s just how I think. And I save stuff.

There was a [Garrison Keillor](#) article about vetting the news, and I remember thinking, what was that song? (*hum/singing*) “..da da the news away, vetting the news away...” I don’t know, it just comes. I don’t know if it’s right or wrong, but you just go, “Thank God.” (*Laughter*) *Kill the Beast*. You want a beast song – federal beast, federal beast... Oh! That song – *Kill the Beast*. Maybe now the material gives it to you.

This year, my brother Art and Steve Allnatt sent us some lyrics, and I saved them. My brother Art just writes and writes. The political stuff possesses him. We’re open to that if it works and fits into what you’re doing. I said to Art, “This is great, and this is what’s missing for me, and I don’t know how we can use it...” The criticism of the work and how it fits in starts getting a little tricky. You finally have to say, “Hey, do it for yourself if you want to. It’s great. If we can use it, we will.”

He doesn't know this yet, but he had the idea of the [*Habanera*] song from *Carmen* by Bizet. I took it and made it work for our show. It is a great song; I never would have thought of it in a million years. Such arrogance – and if you have to think of a song for the Patrick Henry right-wing [caucus]... That they're entitled to say, "Ethics? Who needs it?" Please. You know? So what do they sing? That song was just perfect. (*Singing the Habanera*) "De de de de...we don't give a shit, shove it up your..." You just feel it, right? (*Laughter*)

So Michael Jackson dies. I'd already forgotten he died. That's like old news. It's also that's horrible discovery about who really cares if you live or die. It's over, you're done. But it meant something to Al, and he thought there should be some recognition of it – it was a big thing – maybe not locally, but we made it work. In the cemetery, boy – it's brilliant. I wouldn't have gone there, but he knew. It's brilliant. What's the other? Well, there's [Orrin's Hanukkah song](#) – that was just too good to be true. (*Laughter*) There are the plaza kissing songs – there are more to come... You get the idea. There's a lot in here – we have been through *a year*.

That Was The Year That Was.

Thank you Nancy!