

# La MaMa

Experimental Theatre Club

presents

## Coffeehouse Chronicles #181: Karen Malpede - into the future



The Club

74a East 4th Street, NYC, 10003

November 8, 2025

# Coffeehouse Chronicles #181: Karen Malpede - into the future

On the occasion of the publication of her memoir,  
*Last Radiance: Radical Lives, Bright Deaths* and publication of an  
anthology of her plays, from the 1987 to 2022, 4 by Malpede  
*Plus an Intervention*.

Curated by Michal Gamily

Moderated by Evangeline Morphos

With

Marvin Carlson, Kathleen Chalfant,  
Christen Clifford, Carl Halberg, Yana Landowne,  
Karen Malpede, Tommie Moore, and Dee Pelletier

Scenes from *US and Better people* directed by Yana Landowne  
Media and programing: Jane Cathy Shaw  
Production Photos: Beatriz Schiller  
Special Thanks to Nina Kamberos

**Coffeehouse Chronicles** is an educational performance series exploring the history of Off-Off-Broadway. Part artist-portrait, part history lesson, and part community forum, Coffeehouse Chronicles take an intimate look at the development of downtown theatre, from the 1960s' "Coffeehouse Theatres" through today.

Coffeehouse Chronicles 2025–2026 is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Additional support provided by the Howard Gilman Foundation and The Shubert Foundation.



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### **Pre-Show**

Carl performs songs of resistance and peace

Michal welcomes the audience & Introduces Evangeline

Karen Introduction

Karen reads excerpts from *Last Radiance*, about becoming a playwright

Evangeline & Karen speak about playwriting, Karen then introduces Us,  
with a short reading from LR

Live performance: US

### **Segment 2**

Conversation between Karen and Evangeline about: battering, incest,  
mother/daughter estrangement/ about staging the forbidden

Karen reads *George Was My Muse*

Karen introduces *Better People*

Live performance: *Better People* – Carl & Dee

Live performance: The Mother Earth Speech from *Better People*, performed  
by Christen and directed by Yana

### **Segment 3**

Evangeline introduces Marvin & Nina  
who discuss their interest in Karen's plays.

### **Segment 4**

Karen introduces *Other Than We* and Tanaka

Live performance: Tanaka – Tommie J. Moore  
Karen reads from  
*The Owl Transformation*

Carl performs the closing song from *Other Than We*

### **Segment 5**

Karen brief into to *Dinner During Yemen*

*Dinner During Yemen*, performed by Kathy & Dee

### **Segment 6**

Conversation with Kathy, Karen, and Evangeline about the creation of  
*The Horse*

Video clip: *Blue Valiant*

Kathy reads from *Last Radiance*

### **Segment 7**

Video clip: George's tree in the Memorial Grove

Karen reads from *The Second Trip to the Grove*

Carl performs the song that Karen has spoken about and that he performed  
in Vermont

**End**

**Karen Malpede** is a playwright, director, and essayist whose groundbreaking work spans over six decades in New York City's cultural avant-garde. She is the author and director of 22 plays and the co-founder of Theater Three Collaborative, established in 1995 with her late husband and artistic partner, the OBIE-winning actor and producer George Bartenieff. Together, they created socially and politically charged theater that challenged conventional narratives and championed justice.

Her memoir *Last Radiance* (Vine Leaves Press, October 2025) marks her first work in nonfiction, following a lifetime devoted to the stage. Earlier in her career, Malpede published the seminal *People's Theater in Amerika* (1972), a classic of theater history, and *Women in Theater: Compassion & Hope* (1984), one of the first books to spotlight women theater artists during the second wave of feminism. She also co-founded New Cycle Theater in Brooklyn.

Her recent plays include *Troy Too* (HERE), *Other Than We*, which follows *Extreme Whether* (La MaMa, New York, 2018; ArtCop21, Paris, 2015; Theater for the New City, 2014), and the short pieces *Dinner During Yemen* (Signature Theater, 2018) and *Hermes in the Anthropocene: A Dogologue* (University of Iowa, 2019; Reed College, 2015). Her earlier work includes *The Beekeeper's Daughter* (revived in 2016 at Theater for the New City), *Another Life* (RADA, London; Irondale, Brooklyn; Gerald W. Lynch Theater), *Prophecy* (English Theatre Berlin; New End Theatre, London; 4th Street Theatre, NYC), and the docudrama *Iraq: Speaking of War* (Culture Project, CUNY). Her play, *Blue Valiant*, written for Kathleen Chalfant and George Bartenieff, was staged at Farm Arts Collective, immediately after lockdown ended, in May 2021, and filmed for YouTube, where it is still available to view. It was Bartenieff's final live acting appearance. He and Chalfant had earlier played a couple in a tumultuous yet loving marriage in Malpede's *Prophecy*.

Malpede is the author of the recent play anthologies, *4 by Malpede Plus* and *Intervention, Plays in Time: The Beekeeper's Daughter, Prophecy, Another Life, Extreme Whether*; lead editor of *Acts of War: Iraq & Afghanistan in Seven Plays*; and author of the anthology *A Monster Has Stolen the Sun and Other Plays*. Her essays, fiction, and short plays—often centered on ecofeminism, climate justice, war, and witness—have appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, *TriQuarterly*, *Dark Matter*, *HowlRound*, *Transformations*, *Torture Magazine*, *New Theater Quarterly*, *TDR*, *The New York Times*, and more.

She was an adjunct associate professor in the Environmental Justice and Theater programs at John Jay College (CUNY), and a McKnight National Playwrights', NYFA, and Vogelstein fellow. Malpede is also a member of PEN, the Dramatists Guild, the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE), and Brooklyn for Peace.

**Kathleen Chalfant**, BROADWAY: Angels in America (Tony and Drama Desk nom.), Racing Demon, Dance With Me. OFF-BROADWAY: 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: Pen Pals, Here There Are Blueberries, The Year of Magical Thinking, Hellzapoppin': What About the Bees?, The Vagina Monologues, Iphigenia and Other Daughters, Endgame, Sister Mary Ignatius..., The Investigation of the Murder in El Salvador. FILM: Familiar Touch, 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: Series Regular on "Copenhagen", 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. Chalfant currently stars in the acclaimed film Familiar Touch, winning Best Actress at the 2024 Venice Film Festival.

**Christen Clifford** is an actor, writer, and artist who has appeared in 3 of Malpede's plays: Going to Iraq/Blue Heaven(TNC), The Beekeeper's Daughter (Veroli, Italy; Lee Nagrin's Blue Whale; and Off B'way), and Another Life (John Jay; Irondale; RADA London). Clifford has performed at the Public Theatre, Joe's Pub, The Culture Project, HERE, The Town Hall, Classic Stage Company, and regionally in Boston, Burlington, and Buffalo among others. Her writing has appeared in the anthologies The M Word: Real Mothers in Contemporary Art and Women in Clothes(NYTimes bestseller, reissue coming in 2026). She has also published in Salon, The Huffington Post, The Brooklyn Rail, Cultbytes, CultureBot, Hyperallergic, VICE, Broadly, and Filmmaker Magazine. Her art has been seen at The Brooklyn Museum, The Lyman Allyn Museum, Crystal Brides/The Momentary, Eva Presenhuber, The Newark Museum of Art, The New Museum, LACE, Project for Empty Space, The Armory Show, Times Square Arts, and The Museum of Motherhood. She has co-curated Experiments and Disorders with Tom Cole at Dixon Place for over 15 years, and she teaches at The New School. More at [www.christenclifford.info](http://www.christenclifford.info) and @cd\_clifford.

**Tommie J. Moore** is the Founder of Dare to Be Black Corp, a company committed to educating audiences and preserving the legacies of African-American icons through theater and film. An accomplished actor, screenwriter, playwright, and director, Moore has performed in over 30 stage productions and continues to develop works that merge entertainment with history. He is a graduate of York College (CUNY), where he earned a B.A. in Theater Arts and Communications. His film credits include portraying Robinson, a rookie FBI agent, in the feature film *Al Qarem*; Abraham in *The Lure*; and most recently, Dr. Mali in *Fly Angel Soul*, a Cloudred/Microsoft volumetric film project. On stage, Moore's performances include originating the role of Tenaka in Karen Malpede's *Other Than We* at La MaMa Theater in New York City, where he performed alongside the late legendary actor George Bartenieff. At the 2019 National Black Theatre Festival, Mr. Moore originated the role of U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves in *Cowboy*, the festival's #1-ranked play. Moore is best known for writing and starring in his regional one man play *Dare to Be Black: The Jack Johnson Story*, which chronicles the life of the first African-American heavyweight boxing champion. His latest work, *Queen Bess*, is an engaging one-woman play about pioneering aviator Bessie Coleman, the first American to earn an international pilot's license. Dedicated to preserving history through art, Moore continues to create stage plays and screenplays with a focus on African-American history.

**Dee Pelletier** – Downtown: *Not Not Jane's* (Clubbed Thumb Summerworks); *A Woman Among Women* (Bushwick Starr/New Georges); *Extreme Whether* (La MaMa); *BUG* (Barrow Street); Axis Theatre Co Uptown: *The Minutes*, *August: Osage County* (Broadway); *Night of the Iguana* (Signature/La Femme); *Women Without Men* (Mint Theater) *Out of Town: Scrooge in A Christmas Carol* (McCarter Theatre); *Cymbeline, Hamlet, Hedda Gabler* (Shakespeare Theatre Co); *Cyrano*, (Opera House Arts)

**Marvin Carlson** is an American theatrologist, currently the Sidney E. Cohn Distinguished Professor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and also previously the Walker-Ames Professor at University of Washington. A largely collected author, his work covers mainly the history of theatre in Europe from the 18th to the 20th century.

**Carl Hallberg** is an actor from Minnesota. After arriving in New York he graduated from Juilliard while also pursuing a Bachelors in Creative Disruption with *Reverend Billy* and *The Church of Stop Shopping*. A frequent collaborator with Bread and Puppet Theater and Red Wing Blackbird Theater, Carl enjoys work that reconnects us to the land and to each other as we develop our resistance to fascism and imagine the world to come.

**A full program with information on this  
production can be found on the**

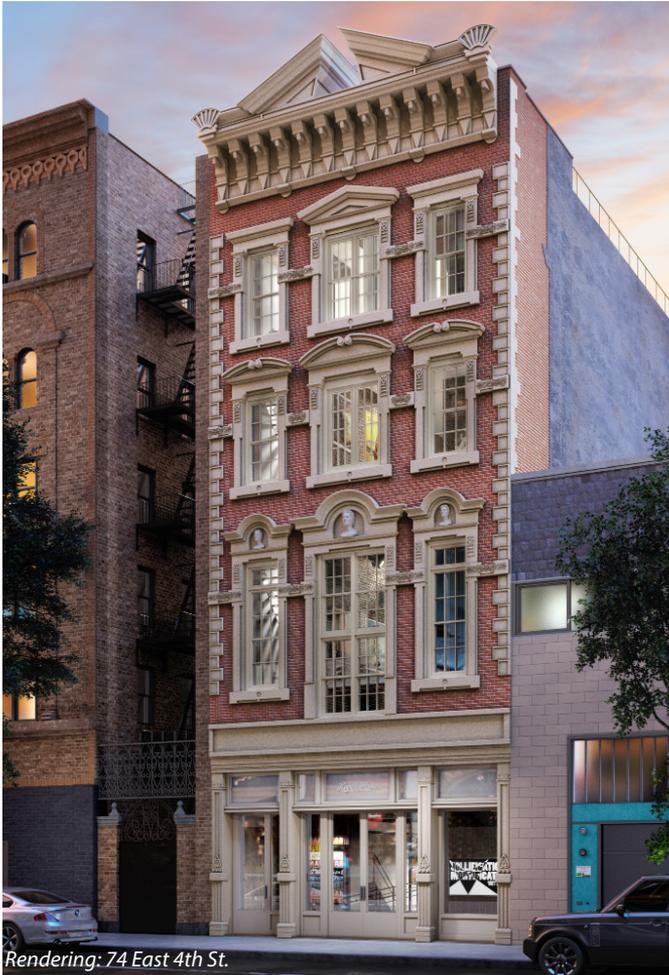
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**In addition you can scan the  
QR code Poster located in the theatre lobby for  
access to detailed information on this program.**

# LA MAMA



## RESTORE A BUILDING REMAKE A WORLD



*Rendering: 74 East 4th St.*

La MaMa's historic, landmark building at 74 East 4th Street underwent an urgently needed complete renovation and restoration to preserve the historic façade, create building-wide ADA accessibility, and provide much needed performance, exhibition and community space for decades to come.

La MaMa, founded by Ellen Stewart in 1961, has been on east 4th Street since 1967. La MaMa embraces every person in its community and is legendary as the place where new artists of all nations, cultures, races, and identities are given opportunities. It is the place where art begins.

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

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Nov 6-23, 2025  
The Downstairs Theatre

**ArtsLink Assembly 2025:  
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Nov 6-7, 2025  
Ellen Stewart Theatre

**The Reflections of Native Voices  
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Nov 6-8, 2025  
The Club

**Jump Start - Shared Evening**  
Nov 13-16, 2025  
The Club & Community Arts Space

**The Divine Comedy**  
Nov 20-22, 2025  
Ellen Stewart Theatre

## COMING SOON

**Osni the Flare**  
Nov 20-23, 2025  
The Downstairs Theatre

**La MaMa Kids:  
You Have Arrived**  
Nov 22-23, 2025  
Community Arts Space

**Silent Green**  
Dec 4-7, 2025  
Community Arts Space

**Protest Song**  
Dec 4-21, 2025  
The Club

**From the Other Side  
Reimagining Theatre From  
The Balkans, Edition 1.0**  
Dec 4-14, 2025  
Ellen Stewart Theatre