

CAST & CREW

"The Source For Theater Happenings"

SHE THE WOMAN

Cast & Crew approached Cathy Plourde of Add Verb Productions about an interview, and since she's such a terrific writer, who better to discuss her work than the creator herself?

Contrary to what some of the Portland area folk might think after seeing my mug in the second-to-last Casco Bay Weekly, my personal income as a playwright and social activist has **not** hit the 100-grand mark. Add Verb Productions is beginning to hit its stride though, and gross revenues are climbing. The pie is expanding because the number of people involved in Add Verb is also expanding, and if I'm going to make a pie, I want to make sure everyone gets a nice piece! The goal of socially conscious theater, isn't wealth and fame but rather to effect social change, dialogue, awareness-raising---yup, "cutting edge" stuff, except you'll recall that's what the Greeks used theater for! But in an era of the remake, both on Broadway and in Hollywood, I can see where some might widen their eyes and wonder at the "radicalism" of it all. Is it theater, or is it social work? Do you have to ask?

How about I just ask more questions that I'd imagine you might have, and frame this piece that C&C editors asked for?

Why the name "Add Verb" ... ?

Well, in practical terms, if you have a name that starts with an A, you'll always be at or near the beginning. But to "add a verb" connotes writing and, most importantly, means to create action.

What Is Add Verb Productions?

Founded in 1998, Add Verb is a professional non-AEA touring educational theater company based in Portland, with a growing national presence, producing two plays: *The Thin Line* (one-woman show on eating disorders) and *You The Man* (one-man show on sexual assault and dating abuse). Add Verb is dedicated to promoting consciousness and understanding of socially relevant issues and seeks to evoke change through awareness, dialogue and action. Venues generally include schools, colleges, and conferences.

How did Add Verb happen?

The short and snappy answer is that I've always had an adolescent sense of justice (not necessarily a bad thing, if you think about it), and at last I've found a way to channel it.



Cathy Plourde, Director of Add Verb Productions

But I'll give you a quick thumbnail. I'm a former high school English and drama teacher, based in the mid-coast for most of the 90's. Growing up, I was heavily involved in the now-defunct York County Playhouse, and my folks were a part of the insurgence that created Sanford Maine Stage back in the mid 80's. I did everything from props to illegally wiring footlights to painting the SMS sign on the side of the building. I did very little acting, though, until I got to college. I did theater coursework and directing on a National Endowment for the Humanities at Middlebury College's Bread Loaf School of English in the early 90's. In 1996-1997, I created a master's degree in Theater and Social Change from Vermont College, now Union, to get an understanding of what the mid-90's found me doing: using theater as a way to dialogue and make change.

What brought about doing activist theater? And in the mid-coast?

In my high-school teaching days, I found myself in an advocate-ombudsman position for students who were experiencing harassment and other inequities, Human Rights Commission caliber stuff. I was a co-creator of the first of