

Liza Lentini



Creative Director **Elephant Ensemble Theater**



After receiving her MFA in Playwriting in 1997, Liza came to New York City to work with the Theatre Development Fund in their Special Projects division. Since then she has enjoyed work with many other New York City non-profits, with a special affinity for those that support women and children.

As a journalist, she's published an array of controversial and timely articles, including an in-depth exposé of a rare brain disorder in children called Landau-Kleffner syndrome ("Boy, Interrupted", Discover magazine, November 2007).

As a playwright, her works have garnered international awards and recognitions, and have been produced all over the globe. Her subjects range from a fictional three-footed *near-do-well* who acquires insurmountable fame (*Roxy Font*, FringeNYC 2007) to a series of historical dramas about remarkable women who were considered too outrageous for their time.

In conceiving Elephant Ensemble in 2006, Liza drew on her early training with brain injured children, and the value of giving kids—regardless of their circumstances—the right to be kids. *Thumbelina: The Story of a Brave Little Girl* was written specifically for hospitals, but its spunky, fearless, good-hearted heroine appeals to all young children.

All of Elephant's plays, written by Liza, highlight themes of family, bravery, and the power of hope. Elephant's next production, *Sacajawea*, the story of the Shoshone Indian girl who led Lewis and Clark through their Northwest expedition, is also educational. *Sacajawea* is expected to begin touring hospitals in the fall of 2008.

Liza holds an MFA in Playwriting from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, where her thesis on presenting the lives of women on stage won a campus-wide thesis/dissertation award. Her play *Woodhull*, about the woman who ran for president against Grant in 1872, is featured in the new edition of the book *Creating Historical Drama*. She is a frequent speaker and panelist on Women in the Arts.

More information on Liza's writing can be found on her website: www.lizalentini.com.