



Introduction to Susan Westfall. 1:17 min. Interview: Raymond Elman. Post-Production: Elijah Pestana. **Recorded via Zoom:** 6/2/2022, Miami.

Susan Westfall: Playwright + Founder of City Theatre

By Elman + Pestana

SUSAN WESTFALL is a playwright, co-founder of **City Theatre** in Miami, Florida, and long-time advocate for playwrights. As a playwright Westfall's works include "The Bestseller," "Two Weekends and a Day," "A Stitch in Time," "Look At Me" (Published in "Best Short Plays 2011"), "Rats," "The Boy From Russia," "Uprising," "The Wedding Party," "Passing Through" (Heideman Finalist), "With the Patience of Angels" (Heideman Finalist), 1962, "You Are Here," and "Voices at the Mary Elizabeth Hotel." Her original one minute play "Feel the Tango" has been produced as a ten minute play for **City Theatre's SUMMER SHORTS**, been adapted as "Be The Change," a 2016 LGBT political ten minute play for **Shorts Gone Wild**, and most recently evolved as "Feel the Tango! The Short Opera!," libretto by Westfall and music by composer Joseph Illick, that was performed at Performance Santa Fe and the Fort Worth Opera in a program of short operas called "Brief Encounters." In 1996, Westfall co-founded City Theatre, the only professional theatre in the country dedicated to developing and producing new short form plays and musicals. Currently Literary Director, she coordinates the company's outreach to playwrights, agents and publishers, its City Theatre National Award for Short Playwriting Contest, and literary responsibilities for City Theatre's productions of **SUMMER SHORTS, WINTER SHORTS, CITY SHORTS, SHORTS GONE WILD, SHORT CUTS, FIRST READS**, and programs including the NextGen student playwright development program, and CityWrights: Professional Week for Playwrights, a summer conference and occasional series of workshops for local, regional, national playwrights and other artists to engage in creative and professional development. She has expanded City Theatre's national relationships in support of its work with plays and playwrights, with the **Dramatists Guild**, the Dramatists Foundation, the National New Play Network, NPX and Samuel French Publishing, where she is a frequent judge for its prestigious OOB Festival in New York City. Westfall previously worked at the **Folger Theatre Group** in Washington, D.C., the **Coconut Grove Playhouse**, and taught playwriting for the high school and college programs at the **New World School of the Arts** in Miami. She was a founding board member of the **South Florida Theatre League**, a recipient of a **Florida Arts Council Playwriting Fellowship**, and has a **Remy Award for Outstanding Contribution to Theatre by the South Florida Theatre League**. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, The Playwrights Center, and Theatre Communications Group. Susan is a rare native Miamian, holds a BFA in Playwriting from FSU, has two sons, and lives on Key Biscayne with her husband Alan and their menagerie of critters.

— *The Dramatist Guild*

The videos below were **recorded via Zoom**, are organized by Success Factor, and run between 30 seconds and 15 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 3:54 min.



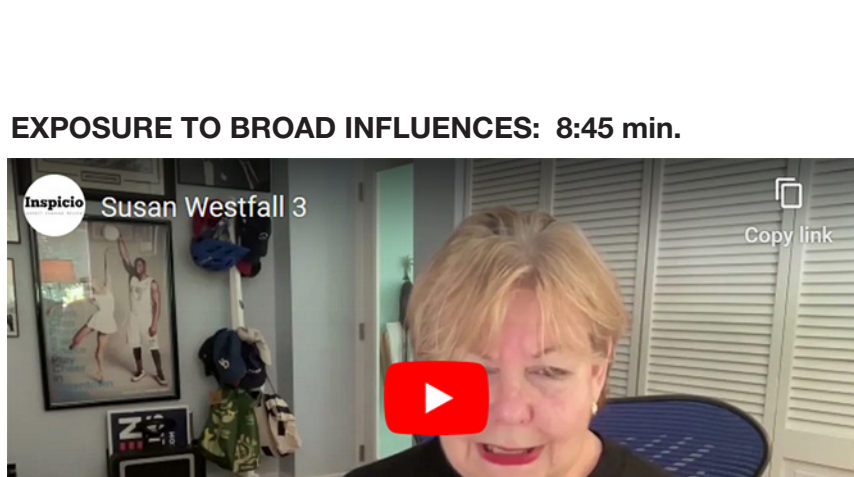
Where did you grow up and what was your earliest memory of art or any discipline?

COMMUNITY VALUES: 5:43 min.



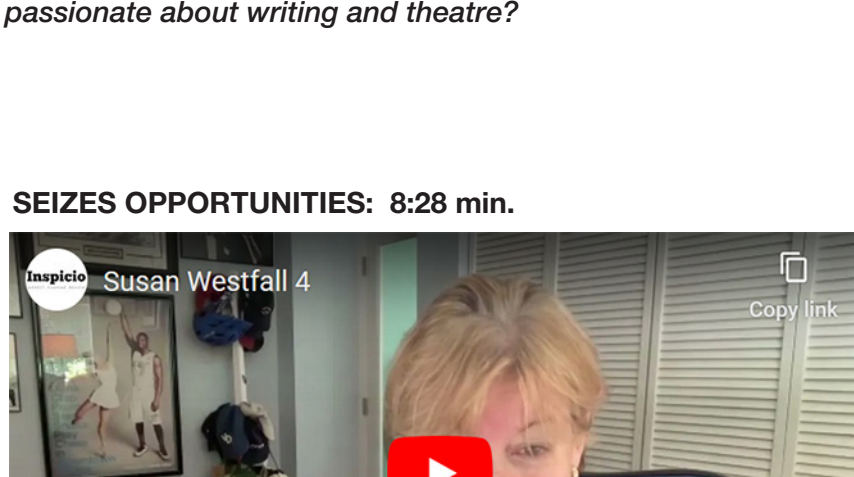
Why did you decide to live on Key Biscayne?

EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 8:45 min.



Where did you go to school, and when did you become passionate about writing and theatre?

SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 8:28 min.



Talk about the evolution of your writing and theatre experiences from the time you returned to Miami until you founded City Theatre.

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 2:55 min.



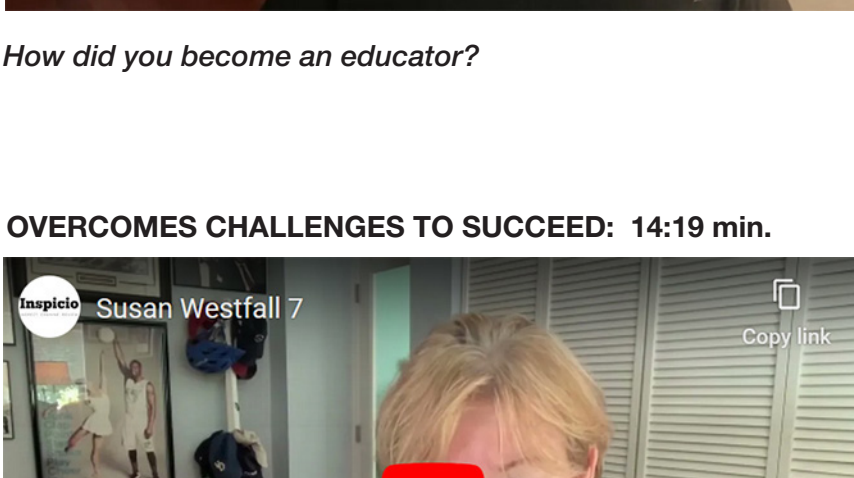
Tell us about the play you wrote about Overtown.

VALUES FIRST-RATE EDUCATION: 4:27 min.



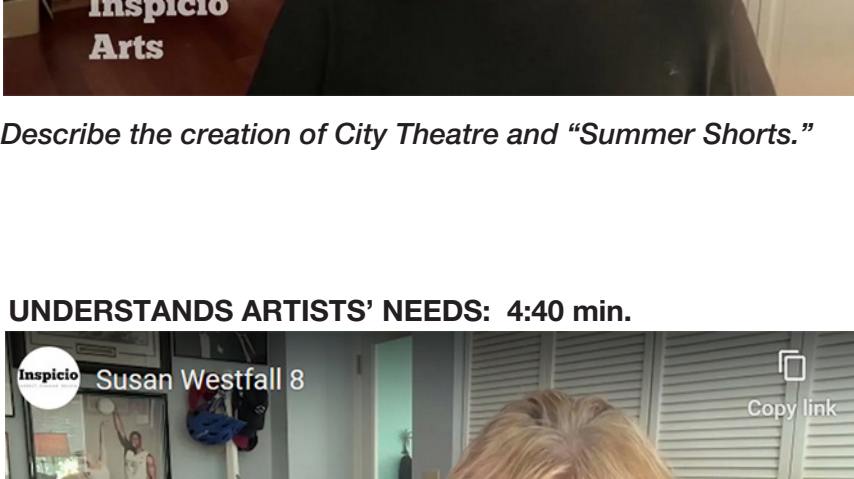
How did you become an educator?

OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 14:19 min.



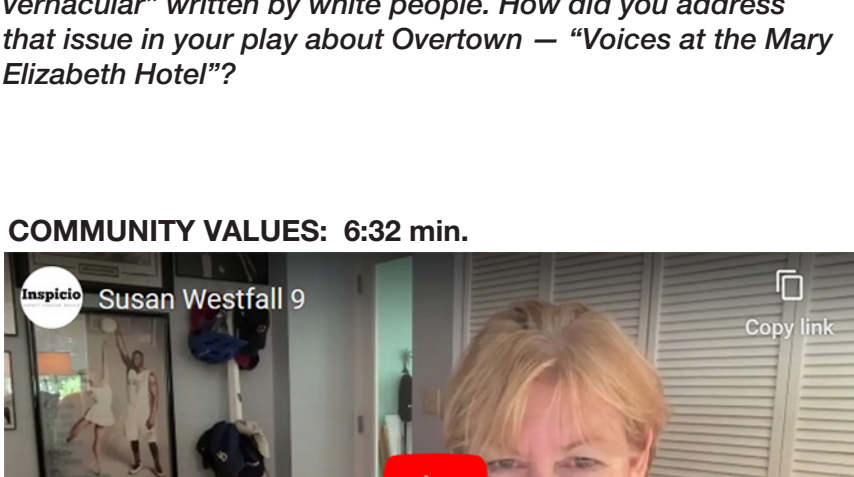
Describe the creation of City Theatre and "Summer Shorts."

UNDERSTANDS ARTISTS' NEEDS: 4:40 min.



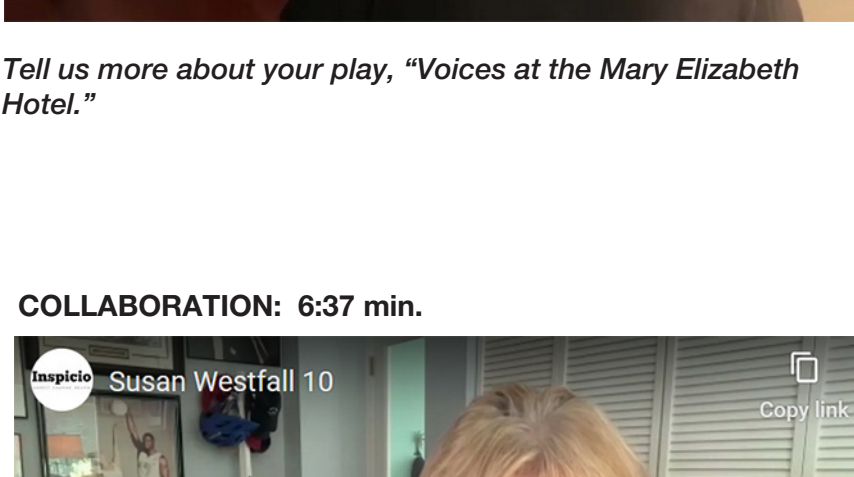
I have seen many interviews with Black actors in which they complain about having to speak stereotypical "Black vernacular" written by white people. How did you address that issue in your play about Overtown — "Voices at the Mary Elizabeth Hotel"?

COMMUNITY VALUES: 6:32 min.



Tell us more about your play, "Voices at the Mary Elizabeth Hotel."

COLLABORATION: 6:37 min.



Tell us about your short play "Feel the Tango," which you converted from a mini-opera to a mini-musical.

SERENDIPITY: 4:04 min.



Explain the connection between you, prolific author Les Standiford (whom we also interviewed), and your uncle, Douglas Fairbairn.