

Get to Know the CREATIVE TEAM

Dr. Doug Larche (Playwright-Composer-Lyricist) is an internationally recognized playwright, professor, poet, performer, director and composer, who was a Senior American Fulbright Scholar to Ukraine. He holds a B.A. from Graceland University, an M.Ed. from Wichita State University, a Ph.D. from Indiana University, and an MFA in Playwriting and Dramaturgy from the University of Iowa Playwrights Workshop, where he was a Norman Felton Fellow. He has done short residential post-doctoral work at Yale, Harvard and Oxford.



Among his over sixty plays, *Truth on Trial: The Ballad of Sojourner Truth* (Dramatic Publishing) won both the prestigious 21st Century Playwrights Festival of New York and the Gold Medal of the Prairie Playwright Festival of Original Drama; *Young Comfort* won the Award for Best Original Script at the Pohang, Korea New Play Festival. *Number the Stars* (Dramatic Publishing) based on the Newbery award-winning novel by Lois Lowry, has had over 240 productions, opening two Holocaust Museums and playing for two summers at the International Danish Immigrant Museum; *Angels in the Snow!* has been performed in New York, in Europe, in the Caribbean and across America; *S*M*A*S*H* toured sixty cities for the National Centers for Disease Control, U.S. Dept. of Health; he is the author of the international best-selling children's book, *Father Gander Nursery Rhymes: The Equal Rhymes Amendment*, named on seven "Best of" Lists for children's books of both the 20th and 21st Centuries. He sings Dieter on the *Angels in the Snow* vocal CD. A former member of the cabinet and staff of Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack as Director of Cultural Affairs and Head Speechwriter; Executive Director of the Iowa Arts Council and Very Special Arts Iowa; a six-time Playwright-in-Residence, the founder of five playwrights workshops and a member of four; a long-time Artistic Director, Chair and Professor of Theatre and Communication - a three-times tenured full professor and European Distinguished Professor, with professional stints in Ukraine, Korea, Canada, the Caribbean and across America; Doug currently lives in Iowa City, Iowa, a UNESCO City of Literature. He has a daughter, Elisa (who sings Frau Hanna Schroeder on the *Angels!* CD), two grandchildren, Emma and Logan, and in-law Gwyn, who live in Chicagoland. Composer-Lyricist-Dramaturg Jason was and is his son.

Jason D. Larche, MA. Prof.D. (1972-2009) (Composer-Lyricist-Dramaturg) attended Millikin University and Grand View College on Performing Arts scholarships, then studied Jacobean Theatre at Oxford University and earned a six-term Professional Diploma with Merit from the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London, England. Upon his return to America, he earned a Masters Degree in Theatre from Minnesota State University and had finished one year of study toward his Ph.D. in Directing from Wayne State University in Detroit. At the time of his passing, he was Director of Theatre and Instructor of Speech and Theatre at Eastern Iowa Community College in Muscatine.



Earlier in his career, he taught at Central Michigan University, the University of Wisconsin Marinette, and Central High School in Marinette, Wisconsin. He composed *TWIT*, a musical which premiered at the University of Northern Iowa; co-composed for the 60-city tour of *S*M*A*S*H*; co-composed for *Father Gander and The Family Geese* and several short films, dramaturged a London performance of *Angels in America*; and did scholarly work on Edmund Kean and Jean Paul Sartre. Jason directed scores of plays across London and middle America and served as Artistic Director of the International Danish Immigrant Outdoor Museum Theatre, Theatre on the Bay Shakespeare Summer and Classical Summer seasons for Youth, and was the co-founder of Bohemian Renaissance Theatre Company and the Railhouse Dinner Theatre. He had recently finished directing a film version of his adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Still, he was best-known publicly for his more than 200 performances as an actor and singer, playing Shakespeare, musical theatre, farce and many other genres - his well-known and revered roles read like a *Who's Who* of great theatre. A tall, strong and physical man of room-filling *gravitas*; Jason was known on two continents for his huge and beautiful bass-baritone voice, and is featured as Erich Honecker on *the Angels in the Snow* vocal CD. An early and lifetime prodigy in the arts, he composed, notated and published his first song in the Herald House book, "Children: Of Such is the Kingdom," in the International Year of the Child. He was six years old. At the time of his passing, he had just written music and lyrics for, sketched a scenography and characters for a new musical he called "Harmony" - the story of a man's search, discovery, loss and beautiful consummation in finding and building a family. It was his most-hoped-for dream. He asked his father to continue the project, which is still in progress. His contributions and his heart are seen, felt and heard throughout this entire project.

Susan Elliott (Transcriber-Arranger- Dramaturg and Contributing Composer) is a graduate of Simpson College in Iowa and has done graduate work at the University of Iowa, Drake University, and Laverne College. A lifetime teacher of middle school English and Creative Writing, she became the principal teacher of English as a Second Language at the University of Wisconsin Marinette, and was an active teacher, tutor and lecturer in Ukraine. She was a contributing editor to *Number the Stars*. With Doug, Jason, Stephe and Mickie Larche, she performed with the musical group, *Father Gander and the Family Geese*. Susan has two children, Scott Kelley, Mark Kelley (and wife Sarah), and grandchildren Jacob and Elliott. She sings Frau Burkhardt on the *Angels in the Snow* vocal CD. Susan resides in Lone Tree, Iowa, frequenting Wales and Northern California. *Angels* would never have gotten off the ground without Susan's work in transcription, arrangements and dramaturgy at the inception of the project, and she was an equal partner in the creation of the beautiful musical transition from the *4/4 A Christmas Without You* to the *¾ Snow Skies of Christmas* and the stirring *Angels Trilogy Duet*.

