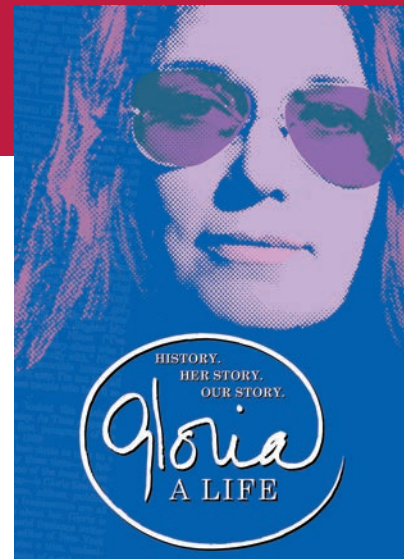


## Highlighting Women's Stories

An Interview with  
Daryl Roth, Daryl Roth Productions



**EDITORS' NOTE** *Daryl Roth is a theatrical producer working in New York who is proud to hold the singular distinction of producing seven Pulitzer Prize-winning plays: Anna in the Tropics; August: Osage County (2008 Tony); Clybourne Park (2012 Tony); Paula Vogel's How I Learned to Drive; Proof (2001 Tony); Edward Albee's Three Tall Women; and Wit. The recipient of 12 Tony Awards and London's Olivier Award, her over 120 award-winning productions*



Daryl Roth

*both on and off Broadway include: Angels in America; Bea Arthur on Broadway; Buyer and Cellar; Caroline, or Change; A Catered Affair; Closer Than Ever; The Crucible; Curtains; The Divine Sister; Driving Miss Daisy; Fela!; Gloria: A Life; The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia? (2002 Tony Award); Harlem Song; The Humans (2016 Tony Award); Paula Vogel's Indecent; Nora Ephron and Delia Ephron's Love, Loss, and What I Wore; The Normal Heart (2011 Tony Award); Old Wicked Songs; One Man, Two Guvnors; Our Lady of 121st Street; The Play About the Baby; A Raisin in the Sun (2014 Tony Award); Shuffle Along; Sunset Boulevard; The Tale of the Allergist's Wife; The Temperamentals; Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992; A View from the Bridge (2016 Tony); War Horse (2011 Tony Award); Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?; Wiesenthal; The Year of Magical Thinking; and De La Guarda and Fuerza Bruta, which ran for 14 years at the Daryl Roth Theatre on Union Square.*

*Roth was recently named to Crain's 2017 "50 Most Powerful Women in New York." She is a Trustee of the Kennedy Center, the New York City Police Foundation, and the Mayor's Theater Sub-district Council, and an Honorary Trustee for Lincoln Center Theater, having served on the Board for 21 years. Recent honors include: the Lucille Lortel Lifetime Achievement Award; the Town Hall Friend of the Arts Award; The New Dramatists Outstanding Career Achievement Award; The Elly Award from the NY Women's Forum; and the New York Living Landmarks award. She was inducted into the 2017 Theater Hall of Fame. The Daryl Roth Creative Spirit Award, now in its 20th year, annually honors a gifted theater artist or organization, providing them with financial support as they develop new works in an artistic residency.*

**ORGANIZATION BRIEF** *Daryl Roth Productions (darylrothproductions.com) has produced more than 120 Broadway and off-Broadway plays and musicals since its first production in 1988. The Daryl Roth Theatre, which opened in 1996 in the landmarked former Union Square Savings Bank, is home to the 299-seat main stage; the DR2, an intimate 99-seat theater that welcomes new plays as well as programming for young audiences; and the D-Lounge, an intimate cabaret space.*

### Are there strong opportunities for women in theater and the arts?

That subject is very timely. Until somewhat recently, I was one of the few women producers around the table and, happily, that is now changing.

By mentoring other women and bringing more women onto creative teams, we are working towards parity. We still have far to go.

I feel a responsibility to highlight women's stories by the plays I choose to present, encouraging my daughter and granddaughters and the generations that follow to find their own strength, confidence and independence.

I am currently producing a play about Gloria Steinem's life. She's such an icon and visionary, and we all stand on her shoulders in ways that we never fully appreciated. The play itself, written beautifully by Emily Mann and directed by Diane Paulus, is a project I'm very proud of, primarily because I'm honored to be telling Gloria Steinem's story but also because, as a way to pay tribute to her, I made the decision to have only women on the creative and producing teams.

We started developing this play over three years ago, and I never expected it would be a play that was so needed at this moment in time – for both women and men.

### When you're telling women's stories, is it important that the shows also reach men to bring them into the conversation?

Yes, it has to be intersectional on all levels. With *Gloria: A Life*, for example, we have done that very well because Act One is about Gloria's life and work, and the activism that she has inspired in all of us; Act Two is a Talking Circle, which is a conversation among all audience members. They respond to what they have

seen and heard within the play and they comment on life experiences, many of which are either told by men in the audience or women talking about their fathers, brothers and sons, and how opening up lines of conversation has made such a difference.

Gloria always said that we live in a patriarchy. That patriarchy lives within us, but we have to create a world that is focused on acceptance and parity and equality. The job of all genders is to open a dialogue and come to an understanding.

The beauty of theater is that it can really change our minds about things and enlighten and educate us, as well as entertain us.

### How valuable has it been to have a venue like the Daryl Roth Theatre that is so appropriate for telling these stories?

It has been a great gift for me to have the theater venue. It has been an inspiration in terms of what I can choose to produce there. It has an intimate feel and is an open space, so we can configure it in the appropriate way for each different production that we produce there.

For *Gloria*, we have made the seating in the round so that the second act Talking Circle is indeed that. People feel comfortable sharing their stories with one another and, in the words of Gloria, "we are all linked, not ranked."

For other plays, we have used a more traditional, presentation design.

It's wonderful to also have the DR2, the 99-seat theater next door. In March, we are opening a new play *Accidentally Brave*, a true story written by the actress performing it. This smaller space is ideal for intimate storytelling.

This wonderful venue is also where we introduce young children to theater under our DR2 Kids programming umbrella. It's welcoming and hopefully starts them on a theater-loving journey.

### What advice do you offer young people interested in building a career in the arts?

It's important for people that love theater to expose themselves to as much theater as they can, as they can learn something new from every production.

I also tell people who are interested in producing to trust their instincts, be tenacious, and choose projects that are meaningful to them. At the end of the day, what one produces becomes their legacy. ●