

CARAVAN THEATER (1963-1975)

In 1963, Bobbi Ausubel and Stan Edelson invested the grand sum of \$50 to create an experimental theater dedicated to political awareness.

Caravan is best known for developing *How to Make A Woman (HTMW)*. Under Ausubel's direction, a committed acting company explored women's issues and themes - their daily improvisations scripted finally by Edelson into open-ended scenarios resulting in HTMW, which is set in a dress shop offering only limited choices (society's roles) for women. Bobbi filled the space around spare, bold dialogues with broadly drawn body movements, costumes, make-up. The results were metaphorical images, sounds and words expressing clear yet complex meaning, while evoking strong feelings, laughter, thought and action... a signature Caravan style.

Company led post-performance discussions, in separate men and women's groups, significantly supported the creation of consciousness raising groups in greater Boston. For three years, *HTMW* toured New England; then Poland. Historian Rosemary Curb wrote that *HTMW* was the earliest play of the Second Wave of the Women's Movement. As feminist consciousness grew, the play grew. Unlike other feminist theaters, Caravan had both female and male actors. Several feminist theaters were founded from our model, including the first Australian women's theater.

Production shortlist: *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Mother Courage*, *Exception and the Rule*, (Brecht); *Iphigenia in Aulis* (Euripides); *Family* (company created); *Come Closer*, *You're Smothering Me* (Edelson & company); *Focus on Me* (Ausubel)

Caravan Theater won multiple awards for Best Ensemble, while receiving National Endowment for Arts and Massachusetts Arts and Humanities Foundation grants.