

Lauri Bortz

Lauri Bortz is a critically acclaimed author of children's literature and an award-winning playwright. With her husband, the artist Mark Dagley, she owns and operates Abaton Book Company, a small press and independent record label they co-founded in 1997. She employs her own design talents in creating the cover art and layouts for most of Abaton's books and CDs.

Bortz has produced and directed her work at many venues in New York City, and that of other playwrights in her ongoing series of recorded audio dramas, Abaton Radio Theater, as well as numerous concerts and videos by the musicians she represents. She is also a gifted performer who's acted in films and on stage. She began her New York career producing, co-writing and starring in *Sordid Lives*, a live East Village soap opera performed weekly at Pyramid Club. Bortz left the show in 1991 to pursue playwriting. Her first full-length drama was adapted for film and screened at the United Nations in 1993, as part of a program hosted by the Mercury Theatre's Ruth Warrick and featuring Prince Carl Bernadotte of Sweden. Several one-acts by Bortz were subsequently produced by Manhattan theater companies.

Since founding Abaton, she has published two illustrated volumes of her own plays, *Tonight at 8:00* (1997) and *PLAYBORTZ* (2001), which were both lauded in the U.S. and international press. These books were discussed in scholarly forums and included in the syllabus of a writing workshop at NYU. *A Modicum of Passion*, a one-act from Bortz's first book, was transposed into a chamber opera with a score by New York avant-garde composer Elliott Sharp and released on CD. *Skirting the Issue*, from Bortz's second book, was the recipient of the 2001 Pen and Brush Best Play Award.

Between 1998 and 2008, Bortz discovered and launched the careers of singer-songwriters Marianne Nowotny, Julia Vorontsova and Sharon Van Etten, booking their first few dozen gigs and releasing their debut recordings. She also produced limited edition art books by such luminaries as George Condo, Olivier Mosset and Steven Parrino.

Lauri Bortz has devoted much of the past decade to the writing, production and publication of *Kung Fu Kitty*, a children's novella and DVD retelling the Biblical story of Exodus set in ancient China with animal characters, and *Kung Fu Kitty: Laying Down the Law*, a sequel to the book, in which the saga is completed. But she is by no means finished with the "charming and enthralling" tale, which she plans to transform into a martial arts ballet danced by children and an animated feature film. She is currently in the midst of a new novel for readers both young and young-at-heart, a reinterpretation of another Old Testament story.