

# Ingenius Opens This Week at Manhattan Theatre Source

January 10, 2:09 AM - [Greenwich Village Examiner](#) - Laura Rohrman

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Erin Wilhelmi/Likeness at Manhattan Theatre Source



Everyone has a favorite hang out in his or her favorite city that is usually near where they live. When I lived on the Ile St. Louis in Paris, I'd pop over the bridge to the Left Bank to hear a local poet read at *Shakespeare and Company*, a two-story, musty bookshop that brims with histories of some of the most famous expatriates to ever don a writing cap in Paris.

In San Francisco, it was the coffee shop *Bean There*, which in my opinion serves the best toasted bagel west of the Mississippi. In Sonoma County, where I drive to get a good coffee, *Oliver's Market* is my favorite spot, even though it's a grocery store.

Not surprisingly, I have many favorite "spots" in Greenwich Village. I couldn't possibly rattle them off in one setting. But I imagine I'll have a good time revisiting them and writing about them - one at a time. Plus, I can always take suggestions.

Look for my series coming up on how to spend a perfect Valentine's Day in the Village. I'd like to interview my colleagues and friends about what their favorite spots are and why. And please drop me a line about things you want to know more about.

**Now, back to tonight's adventure.**

*Manhattan Theatre Source* is hands-down one of my favorite spots in the Village. To me, *Manhattan Theatre Source* is my *Shakespeare and Company* of New York. Filled with plays and theatre people, it's a sanctuary of sorts.

Located on McDougal Street, near Washington Square Park, this small, 40 seat theatre run by volunteer artists is your best bet in the village to find artists creating work for other artists. It's very community, underground and yet, a place where you can see quality theater at very decent prices.

Volunteers work for the theater and in exchange can take advantage of the many opportunities that the Source offers its members. For example, many playwrights use the *Flop Night Development Series* to showcase new work. It's a three-day workshop and a chance to get the kinks out of a play.

*Estrogenius Festival* and *Spontaneous Combustion* are just a few examples of the programs set up to help artists. One of their latest inventions is *The Writer's Forum*. Founded by the Source's artistic director Jim Lawson, it's become a developmental lab for playwrights meeting weekly to discuss new work. Because of the economic downturn the theater was dark for the month of January, so the writers from the forum decided to

commandeer the space and produce *Ingenius* a play-a-thon of sorts where 15 plays are being presented in repertory during the month of January.

Tonight a friend and I saw *Likeness* by David Caudle. *Likeness* is one of the three full-length plays being presented as part of *Ingenius*. The play, which has already won several awards, tells the story of a young painter in Colonial Boston who gets his first big break painting the portrait of a wealthy Loyalist's spoiled daughter. Set a few years after the French and Indian war, the play crackles with well observed dialogue, understated sexuality and truths about what it means to be an American then and now. Plus, the costume and wigs are pretty amazing. I highly recommend you check out *Likeness* and the whole festival.