

Good afternoon. My name is Tim Cusack, and I am an adjunct lecturer in the Theatre Department at Hunter College, but I am here today to stand in solidarity with my former Communications and Theatre colleagues at John Jay College for Criminal Justice. I say former because in March of this year, the faculty were informed, much to their shock and dismay, that after this current semester, their department was to be eliminated. Seasoned teachers with decades-long experience were to be summarily tossed into the street, even those who had attained multi-year contracts.

These are not numerals on a page; they are the human beings who make CUNY one of the jewels of New York City. One of the adjunct professors you tossed out is the preeminent American playwright and director Karen Malpede. Now that name might not ring a bell for you, but I assure you, for those of us who have made our creative lives working in Downtown theatre, she is a living legend. She learned that she was losing her job just a few months after she lost her husband and creative partner, the great actor George Bartenieff, to cancer. Yet despite her grief, despite her panic at not knowing what she is going to do to earn a living, she has continued to show up for her students at John Jay because not only is Karen a brilliant artist, she is also a dedicated teacher. Two days from now, on May 10, her new play *TROY TOO* is premiering at HERE Arts Center in SoHo, one of the most prestigious venues presenting cutting-edge, experimental work. I thought it might be worthwhile to share with you a section of that play here today to drive home just what is being denied our students at John Jay. This is the final chorus that ends the play:

Once, we lived with abandon in this city

That was our home.

We have come from many places

That would not let us live.

We were chased, or we ran,

we came of our free will

To live in a crush next to others

That we did not know.

Once, we pushed and shoved, and helped,

Gave of ourselves, laughed, took the chance,

Dodged, grabbed what we wanted,

What we craved.

Once, we stepped over,

around, or stopped to offer a hand,

Carried someone else's stroller

up the subway stairs,

Someone else's child smiling in our eyes,

silver saliva bubbling from her mouth.

Once we waved our fists and marched,

Spilled out (in)to the streets

To yell for justice.

The knee on the neck. (all together)

Once we loved with abandon, in this city

That was our home

Once, if we thought about all that we had

We thought it ~~(was)~~ not enough,

not quite what we hoped for,

We thought it ~~(was)~~ not enough,

But we were sure, next year,

around the next corner, soon

the break, new life, success.

Once, we stopped sometimes

We stopped to give thanks.

Stopped to give thanks.