



**A CFA PROFESSOR SAYS  
THERE'S GOOD THEATER IN  
YOUR NIGHTTIME VISIONS**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA SHARP (COM'08)

that the value of dreams is not in analyzing them. The value of dreams is in reexperiencing them. It's not figuring out what they mean so much as reentering the dream space and feeling the resonance of the dream images to your real life."

In psychological dream groups, Lipsky says, people reexperience dreams by talking about them. "Another way of doing it is actually putting yourself in the dream space. By doing theater, you can reexperience your dream in 3-D. If you have other people playing characters,

you can confront or encounter the dream figures you've seen in the night — you can touch them and speak to them."

It's a technique he's used with CFA students for more than twenty years, wrapping up his freshman theater classes each semester by having students enact their dreams in performance. And it is driving another theater project, something he's calling the Dream Café, which he hopes will be an ongoing series of performances based on dreams. The first of these cafés happened last November at the Central Square Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A group of CFA acting students performed *The Wild Place*, a play that Lipsky wrote with actress Susan Thompson, based on dreams she had while nursing her first child and pregnant with her second.

They were appropriately fertile, with lots of mother imagery and scary medical settings that translated into compelling drama. But for Lipsky, who won a Boston Theater Critics Association Elliot Norton Award in 2007, all dreams hold emotional significance, even the most seemingly banal. "You feel the full range of your emotional life telling dreams. In real life, you may have a fight with your boss, but you don't stab him in the back. You may fantasize about a woman on the elevator, but you don't unbutton her blouse. And in dreams, you do." **BW**

## The Dreams That Plays Are Made On

The dream was seemingly random, as Jon Lipsky recounts it. A woman in one of his workshops dreamt she met the actress Mia Farrow in a café. "This was Mia after her break with Woody Allen," says Lipsky, a playwright, director, and College of Fine Arts theater professor, "when he had betrayed her by having an affair with her adopted daughter. The woman didn't have any particular feeling for Mia Farrow until, in the workshop, we had someone play Mia, and at the moment their eyes met, she burst into tears.

"She discovered that she felt close to Mia Farrow because she, too, had been betrayed in her own life. She didn't know the dream was about betrayal until their eyes met."

Dreams, it turns out, make great drama. That's one of the drivers of Lipsky's longtime interest in the psychological process of dream work, an interest that has now resulted in a book, *Dreaming Together: Explore Your Dreams by Acting Them Out*. In it, he blurs the line between dreamer and playwright, arguing that each of us stars — if only at night — in dramas worthy of Shakespeare, or at least a stage in your own living room.

"People think of dream work in terms of Freud and Jung," Lipsky says, "and there is a big tradition there, of course. But my experience is



In a scene from *The Wild Place* (top photo), written by CFA theater professor Jon Lipsky and actress Susan Thompson, Lianne Becker (CFA'10) plays a woman who dreams she sees her pregnant mother on an airport tarmac. Helping to enact the dream are Collin Meath (CFA'10) (left), and Chris Bannow (CFA'09). Above, the cast of *The Wild Place*.