

## Intern Journal: Liz Allen

By Camille Adkison

The 2019 season of Winter With the Writers will kick off with a visit from improv coach and performer extraordinaire Liz Allen. She will lead an improv Master Class February 7<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m. in Bush Auditorium. The event is free and open to the public. In addition to coaching *The Commune*, the improv ensemble featured in Mike Birbiglia's film *Don't Think Twice*, Allen coached the ImprovOlympic (IO) teams *Valhalla* and *Mission Improvable*. She teaches at The iO Theater Chicago and is a three time-recipient of the Del Close Coach of the Year Award, now called the Liz Allen Excellence in Teaching Award. Allen's twenty-five years of experience also include being a member of the IO team *Frank Booth*, which performed the first long-form improv to take place at the 1995 Edinburgh Fringe Festival and co-authoring the book *Improvising Better: A Guide for the Working Improviser* with Jimmy Carrane.

Returning Winter With the Writers fans may ask, "What do improv and writing have in common?" The answer is, quite a lot. From finding the courage to tackle unpalatable subjects to simply saying yes to ideas, Allen has a multitude of lessons for all creators. Indeed, there may be no better practice for frustrated writers than to participate in spontaneous storytelling. This theory will be tested when the Winter With the Writers Interns participate in an improv Master Class led by Liz Allen. Anyone who possesses the desire to be entertained is encouraged to attend. Those expecting a slap-stick comedy of errors are warned, Allen has a gift for producing heartfelt and gut-wrenching moments.