

PORTLAND
CENTER
STAGE
THEATER
LIVE

PRESS CONTACT: Thom Trick
503-432-2950
thomt@pcs.org
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N E W S

**EIGHTH ANNUAL JUST ADD WATER/WEST CONTINUES TO SET THE PACE AS
PORTLAND'S LEADING CRUCIBLE FOR ORIGINAL NEW THEATER**

**First-Ever Benefit Event Auctions Award-Winning Playwrights for Instant
Commissions To Be Performed the Same Evening**

Adding the first-ever *Commission! Commission!* fundraising event emphasizes the dynamic and catalytic nature of the eighth annual **Just Add Water/West (JAW/West)**, a celebration of new dramatic work at **Portland Center Stage**. Organized by Festival Director/Associate Artistic Director **Rose Riordan** and Director of Literary and Education Programs **Mead Hunter**, JAW/West will be held at Portland's **World Trade Center** this year as PCS prepares for a move into the new **Gerding Theater** in September. The festival culminates with public readings of the four primary plays workshopped during the festival. Five-minute "curtain raisers" from the Promising Playwrights of PCS' 2006 Visions and Voices high school playwriting program will open each public JAW reading.

The readings take place at 4 PM and 8 PM on Saturday, July 22 and Sunday, July 23 on the sky bridge level (3rd floor) of the World Trade Center at 121 SW Salmon St., in downtown Portland. Advance Tickets for the public readings are available through the PCS Box Office: 503-274-6588 or online at: www.pcs.org. Single and four-play Festival Pass prices for the readings have been kept affordable and there are several other public events that may be attended FREE of charge. Advance tickets for readings go on sale June 19 and are \$9/reading or \$27 for a Festival Pass for those 30 and under; \$12/reading or \$36 for a Festival Pass for all others. **"Day of Event", cash-only** walk-up sales will be available with prices for individual readings at \$10 for those 30 and under and \$15 for all others. **JAW/West 2006** has been made possible by **SmartForest Ventures, Mentor Graphics, Portland General Electric, The National Endowment for the Arts and the Oregon Cultural Trust**.

JAW/West: Plays, Playwrights and Process

The reputation of Just Add Water/West as a veritable hotbed of creativity continues to grow and attract an eclectic combination of playwrights with traditional credentials *and* experience on the fringe. Playwrights for 2006 include two Yale School of Drama graduates: **Sarah Treem**, who wrote her first award-winning play at age 12 and now teaches playwriting at Yale, and **Liz Duffy Adams**, who is also an alumna of NYU's Experimental Theater Wing and is distinguished as a New Dramatists Resident Playwright. Two featured playwrights have Pacific NW roots. **Kristin Newbom** co-directed Seattle's experimental performance group, *The Compound*, before earning her MFA in playwriting at Brown University; and **Steve Patterson**, local author of over 25 plays, was the inaugural recipient of the Portland Civic Theatre Guild Fellowship in 1997 and co-founder/co-artistic director of Pavement Productions, specializing in new work development. In addition to PCS directors Chris Coleman and Rose Riordan, noted stage, screen and television actress/director **Blair Brown** (*The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd*) will proffer her directing talents at the festival.

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All will be eager to get right to work with teams of dramaturgs, actors and stage managers on the intense and intimate process known as JAW/West. This year, however, JAW/West will tap that anticipation and the creativity of several JAW alumni in a first-ever fundraising event for the festival known as ***Commission! Commission!*** For the first evening of the festival, 50 local and enthusiastic patrons of the arts will assemble to bid on the creative talents of these four playwrights as well as those of Portland favorites **Tom Spanbauer, Itamar Moses, Ebbe Roe Smith, Glen Berger, Sam Gregory** and others. Once contracts are signed, patrons will enjoy a fine meal while playwrights work feverishly with directors, stage managers and actors to bring the vision of their personal “Medicis” to fruition in time to be performed after dessert. Tickets for this unique event are \$50. Opening bids to commission a playwright with *your* vision for almost-instant theater gratification begin at \$250. **[For Inquiries call 503/432-2955]**

The next day, it’s down to business as the curated festival scripts are read, re-worked, revised and re-written, with new pages arriving every day. The aim is to sharpen the work for public presentation and the non-judgmental feedback known as Critical Response. For the playwrights, the entire process is invaluable as they discover what works and what doesn’t in the transition from page to stage. Theater lovers get the thrill of experiencing the fresh product of these labors, which may well launch one or more of these playwrights to new heights of national esteem and public popularity. Each of the main event readings will be preceded by a short “curtain raiser” play from one of the four Promising Playwrights whose work was developed during the **2006 Visions and Voices** program for area high school students.

The 2006 JAW/West plays and playwrights are:

***Lost Wavelengths* by Steve Patterson** directed by Lisa Abbott **Saturday, July 22 4 PM**
Musicologist Murray stalks the wilds of Middle America in search of songwriters for his public radio program. From among the parade of odd and deluded amateurs, he hopes to spot “Enola Guy”—an elusive, death-obsessed guitarist who never grants interviews or plays in public—and lure him into the open.

Curtain Raiser: *Neon Orange* by Evan Thomas

***The Listener* by Liz Duffy Adams** director TBA **Saturday, July 22 8 PM**
At a time when a small band of scavengers may be all that still inhabit planet Earth, Listener’s job is to detect signs of life beyond Junk City. But when life detects her, the rag-tag survivors find that humanity is more than a voice in the dark.

Curtain Raiser: *Insanity/Sane?* by Meghan McNeill

***A Feminine Ending* by Sarah Treem** directed by Blair Brown **Sunday, July 23 4 PM**
Amanda’s music career’s on hold while she copes with other people’s needs: the almost-famous fiancé, the boy-next-door, aka the-one-who-got-away, the mother who’s been leaving her husband for decades. Well, they better watch out—Amanda’s making plans of her own.

Curtain Raiser: *The Early Applicant* by Anthony Levy

***Telethon* by Kristin Newbom** directed by Rose Riordan **Sunday, July 23 8 PM**
Every holiday that calls for a costume, the group convenes at Dunkin’ Donuts to celebrate, or maybe to detox, or to squabble, or to flirt. Out of their savage camaraderie, something like a family begins to emerge...or not.

Curtain Raiser: *Working Title* by Eric Andrews

Festival Activities

In keeping with tradition, this year's festival includes a number of **free**, open-to-the public events on the third floor of Portland's World Trade Center. This wrap-around programming for JAW/West reflects the wider and deeper community involvement that PORTLAND CENTER STAGE has planned for its new home, The Bob and Diana Gerding Theater, to open October 1. The complete festival itinerary is as follows.

Friday, July 14 **6:30 PM** **2WTC**

Commission! Commission! The First Ever

The services of ten talented playwrights are auctioned off to the highest bidders. Winning bids will commission short plays on the subjects of their choice and see them performed the same evening.

This is an invitation-only event. To inquire call 503/432-2955.

Saturday, July 15 **3:30-6:30 PM** **2WTC**

Practicing Bewilderment

A Community Artists Lab with Glen Berger

This nationally renowned playwright (*O Lovely Glowworm, Underneath the Lintel*) leads a special writing laboratory exploring our sources of inspiration and how to channel that inspiration into dramatic form.

Enrollment in this lab will be determined by random lottery. To participate in the lottery, send a brief letter of interest to: literary@pcs.org.

Monday, July 17 **7:30 PM** **2WTC**

Devise and Conquer: Making Portland a Mecca for New Work

A community conference hosted by Portland Area Theatre Alliance (PATA)

Join us for a panel discussion and town-hall meeting about the proliferation of original theater in Portland and its increasing importance to our city.

This event is FREE and open to the public!

Tuesday, July 18 **6:30-9:30 PM** **2WTC**

Properties

A Community Artists Lab with W. David Hancock

An investigation of the relationship between props and narrative. Participants will invent magical objects and implant them into classical scenes. Writing exercises will attempt to reconcile this clash between the old and the new.

Enrollment in this Lab will be determined by random lottery. To participate in the lottery, send a brief letter of interest to: literary@pcs.org.

Thursday, July 20

Devising Performance **6:30-9:30 PM** **2WTC**

A Community Artists Lab with Michael Rohd

An on-your-feet intro to the techniques & strategies Sojourn Theatre uses in collaborative work to devise performance material, build ensemble and explore the potential of site-specific activity.

Enrollment in this Lab will be determined by random lottery. To participate in the lottery, send a brief letter of interest to: literary@pcs.org.

Friday, July 21 **8 PM** **2WTC**

Let There Be Word

A special event to launch JAW/West's **performance phase**, written by William S. Gregory and Matthew B. Zrebski, and interpreted by Theatre Vertigo, Oregon Children's Theater, BodyVox, Fever Theatre and Rick Lewis.

This event is FREE and open to the public, but reservations are required and can be made through the PCS Box Office after June 19.

Saturday, July 22

1:30 – 3:30 PM

2WTC

Theater Fair

Portland Area Theater Alliance hosts this second annual gathering of Portland theaters. Representatives will be on hand to share information about their companies and to raffle-off free tickets to upcoming productions. Prepare to be dazzled by the wide range of aesthetic styles and cultural events that take place right here in Portland every year.

This event is FREE and open to the public.

Running Simultaneously with the Theater Fair:

You Are There

Three site-specific plays by different Portland theater companies, including Many Hats, defunkt and Artists Repertory Theatre.

These events are FREE and open to the public. Reservations will be taken on-site on a first-come, first-served basis.

Lost Wavelengths by Steve Patterson

4 PM

2WTC

With curtain raiser *Neon Orange* by Promising Playwright Evan Thomas

This is a public JAW reading; tickets go on sale June 19 through the PCS Box Office.

The Listener by Liz Duffy Adams

8 PM

2WTC

With curtain raiser *Insanity/Sane?* by Promising Playwright Meghan McNeill

This is a public JAW reading; tickets go on sale June 19 through the PCS Box Office.

Sunday, July 23

2:30-3:30 PM

2WTC

Playwrights' Slam

Hosted this year by Portland Theatre Works and specially curated by impresario Andrew Golla, some of the city's top playwrights will read excerpts from their current projects.

This event is free and open to the public

A Feminine Ending by Sarah Treem

4 PM

2WTC

With curtain raiser *Working Title* by Promising Playwright Eric Andrews

This is a public JAW reading; tickets go on sale June 19 through the PCS Box Office.

Telethon by Kristen Newbom

8 PM

2WTC

With curtain raiser *The Early Applicant* by Promising Playwright Anthony Levy

This is a public JAW reading; tickets go on sale June 19 through the PCS Box Office.

History and Accomplishments of JAW/West

JAW/West, originally created in collaboration with New York Theatre Workshop, has, for the past six years, been produced entirely by **PORTLAND CENTER STAGE** under the guidance of Festival Director **Rose Riordan**.

The festival itself is an extraordinarily focused and internally rewarding environment for playwrights, but it also accomplishes significant tangible results.

From JAW/West 1999: Kira Obolensky's *Lobster Alice* has been produced at several other theaters across the U.S., including Playwrights Horizons; Sue Mach's *The Shadow Testament* was a semi-finalist in the highly prestigious O'Neill National Playwright's Conference; and Sunil Thomas Kuruvilla's *Fighting Words* premiered at Yale Rep.

JAW 2000: Alex Thomas' *Throw Pitchfork* was produced by New York Theatre Workshop and Peter Gaitens' *Flesh and Blood* became the first JAW/West project to be produced by PCS (November 2001) and was later produced by New York Theatre Workshop.

JAW 2001: Lauren Gunderson's *Parts They Call Deep* won a Kennedy Center Award for Young Playwrights; Joseph Fisher's *Tundra* won a 2002 production grant from the Kennedy Center's Fund for New American Plays and was produced by Portland's Stark Raving Theatre; Craig Lucas and David Schulner's *This Thing of Darkness* was produced by the Atlantic Theatre Company; and Itamar Moses' *Outrage* was produced by Portland Center Stage (February 2002) and Wilma Theatre (2005) and won a 2002-03 Drammy Award for Best Original Script.

JAW 2002: *Another Fine Mess* by Steven Drukman launched PCS' Next Stage series in the Winningstad Theatre (September 2003).

JAW 2003: Joseph Fisher's *Thunderbird* was chosen for The Cherry Lane Alternative's Mentor Series; Melanie Marnich's *Tallgrass Gothic* was included in Actors Theatre of Louisville's 2004 Humana Festival of New Plays; and Glen Berger's *O Lovely Glowworm* closed PCS' 2004-'05 Season to high acclaim, going on to win the 2004-05 Drammy Award for Best Original Script.

JAW 2004: Julia Cho's *BFE* was produced at Playwright's Horizons and Long Wharf Theater in 2005 and Alison Moore's *Hazard County* was included in the 2005 Humana Festival and produced by The Thematics Group in NYC.

JAW 2005: Itamar Moses' captivating *Celebrity Row* premiered in the Winningstad Theater in March 2006. Jordan Harrison's *Act a Lady* was featured in the 2006 Humana Festival and is also included on the 2006-2007 Portland Center Stage inaugural season in the Gerding's Studio Theater (see below for dates). *The Thugs*, by Adam Bock, will enjoy a late-night run in the Gerding's Studio Theater following Friday and Saturday evening performances of *Act a Lady*.

About Portland Center Stage

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE, established in 1988, is Portland's flagship theater company, attracting more than 90,000 theatergoers annually. With five mainstage and four studio theater productions on the 2006-2007 Season, PCS produces a blend of classical, contemporary and world premiere works in addition to its annual summer playwrights' festival, Just Add Water/West. PCS has embarked upon a \$36 million capital campaign to renovate the historic Portland Armory and create a permanent home for the company in Portland's Pearl District. The Bob and Diana Gerding Theater, which will house a 599-seat main stage and a 200-seat black box theater, is designed to be the first historic renovation, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. To date, more than \$25 million has been secured for the project. The new Gerding Theater opens to the public with an all-day celebration on October 1, 2006.

Portland Center Stage 2006-2007 Inaugural Season in the Bob and Diana Gerding Theater

- JAW/West, July 21-23, 2006 (World Trade Center, sky bridge level)
- *West Side Story*, Book by Arthur Laurents; Music by Leonard Bernstein; Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, Directed by Chris Coleman, October 3 – November 5, 2006, Main Stage
- *I Am My Own Wife* by Doug Wright, Directed by Victor Pappas, November 7 – December 17, 2006, Studio
- *This Wonderful Life* by Steve Murray, Conceived by Mark Setlock, Director TBA, November 26 – December 24, 2006, Main Stage
- *Misalliance* by George Bernard Shaw, Directed by Chris Coleman, January 9-February 4, 2007, Main Stage
- *Act a Lady* by Jordan Harrison, Directed by Cliff Baker, January 28 – March 11, 2007, Studio
- *The Thugs* by Adam Bock, Directed by Rose Riordan, Feb. 9 – March 10, 2007 (10:30 pm, Friday and Saturday nights only), Studio
- *The Pillowman* by Martin McDonagh, Directed by Rose Riordan, February 18 – March 18, 2007, Main Stage
- *Fences*, by August Wilson, Directed by Jonathan Wilson. April 10-May 6, 2007, Main Stage
- *Bad Dates* by Theresa Rebeck, Directed by Timothy Near, April 15 – June 10, 2007, Studio