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NINTH ANNUAL JAW PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL EXPANDS IN SCOPE AND ACCESSIBILITY

ALL READINGS ARE **COMPLETELY FREE** TO THE PUBLIC

First Festival in the Gerding Theater at the Armory includes the return of *Commission Commission!* fundraising event and leverages two state-of-the-art venues to include 13 Public Readings and more special events than ever before.

The 2007 incarnation of **Portland Center Stage's** annual playwrights festival has everything that hard-core Portland theater lovers have come to enjoy about it for nearly a decade. This year it has also been re-engineered to invite more casual dramaphiles to take a peek at how new plays make the leap from page to stage. For one week in July, seven playwrights will converge on the **Gerding Theater at the Armory** with the expressed purpose of taking a work in progress, exposing it to scrutiny, rewriting, cutting, rephrasing, reorganizing and re-envisioning it until the week is up, at which time live actors read all the plays on-stage for a live audience.

Performances don't include elaborate sets, ornate costumes or extensive sound/lighting effects. They are bare bones and completely focused on the plays themselves. Hence the new JAW motto: **we play rough**. A **Theater Fair, Artists Labs, Playwrights Slam, Site Specific-Performances** and other readings and events round out the experience for the public and create an intense week dedicated to the Portland theater community; artists and aficionados alike.

A key feature making JAW 2007 an invaluable experience for some of the nation's most talented playwrights and also an incredibly entertaining and eye-opening event for a large and vastly diverse audience is the **Gerding Theater at the Armory**, Portland Center Stage's home since October 2006. The variety and atmospheric range of spaces available allows JAW 2007 to be more of a true "festival" than ever before. Everyone will love JAW 2007 ticket prices: **ALL PUBLIC READINGS ARE ABSOLUTELY FREE!**

All events occur in the Gerding Theater at the Armory, 128 NW Eleventh Ave., on the Portland Streetcar line in the Pearl District. **Main Stage** readings take place at 4 PM and 8 PM on Saturday, July 21 and Sunday, July 22, **Studio** readings take place at 8:30pm on Monday July 16, Tuesday July 17 and Thursday July 19. No Tickets Are Required for the public readings and No Reservations will be taken. For additional event information visit: www.pcs.org. **JAW 2007** has been made possible by **SmartForest Ventures, Mentor Graphics, The Kinsman Foundation, The Regional Arts & Culture Council, the Oregon Cultural Trust and the Oregon Arts Commission.**

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JAW - We Play Rough

The reputation of the JAW Playwrights Festival grows more robust every year. One play work-shopped at the Festival in 2005, *The Thugs*, by Adam Bock, was produced during Portland Center Stage's inaugural season in the Gerding Theater at the Armory. It won a stunning 4 Drammy Awards and also earned Bock an **Obie** (Off-Broadway Theatre) award for playwriting in 2007. Playwrights for JAW 2007 include: **David Adjmi**, a Sundance/Ucross playwriting residency alumnus with several commissions spanning two continents already under his belt; **Jacqueline Reingold**, a writing teacher at New York University and staff writer for *Law and Order*, *Criminal Intent* whose previous play *String Fever* enjoyed a sold-out run off-Broadway; **Jason Grote**, a screenwriting instructor at Rutgers University and current member of New Dramatists; and **Dan LeFranc**, recent graduate of Brown University's playwriting program where he is now Playwright in Residence/John C. Russell Fellow for 2007-2008. Additionally, current works from three of Portland's most audacious playwrights will be featured in the Studio. **Nick Zagone**, **Matt Zrebski** and **Cynthia Whitcomb** are sure to change the way you think of "local."

Returning to the festival this year is the compressed creativity of ***Commission! Commission!***, a fundraising event for the Festival during which several playwrights will receive a commission for a script to be written in 25 minutes. Their plays will be performed by professional actors the same evening. The event began in 2006 and was such an overwhelming creative and financial success that Festival Director Rose Riordan and Festival Literary Manager Mead Hunter couldn't even consider the possibility of not repeating it this year. For the first evening of the Festival on July 13, 50 local and enthusiastic patrons of the arts will assemble to bid on the creative talents of several professional playwrights. 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 commissioners to fruition in time to be performed after dessert. **Commission! Commission!** playwrights this year will include: **Bridget Carpenter, Nancy Keystone, Rolin Jones, Jordan Harrison, Rick Lewis and William S Gregory (musical production), David Adjmi, Jason Grote, Jacquelyn Reingold, Dan LeFranc, Sam Marks, Rachel Axler, Tommy Smith and Karen Karbo**. This exhilarating event is invitation only. [For Inquiries call 503/445-3845]

The next day, it's down to business as Festival scripts are read, re-worked, revised and rewritten, with new pages arriving every day. The aim is to sharpen the work for public presentation and critical response. For the playwrights, the entire process is invaluable as they discover what works and what doesn't in translating their inspiration into live performance. 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 Stage readings will be preceded by a short "curtain raiser" play from one of the four **Promising Playwrights** whose work was developed during the *2007 Visions and Voices* program for area high school students. *Visions & Voices/Promising Playwrights* was made possible this year by **Pacificorp Foundation for Learning, The H.W. Irwin and D.C.H. Irwin Foundation, The BWH Foundation, The Juan Young Trust, RBC Dain Rauscher Foundation, The Holzman Foundation and Union Pacific Foundation**.

The JAW 2007 Main Stage plays and playwrights

Marie Antoinette by David Adjmi

Saturday, July 21 4 PM

How is a queen to keep her head in the middle of a revolution? And more importantly, who will draw her bath? Marie's husband Louis is clueless; her brother the King of Austria is no help; and her fancy friends only chatter and natter. But wait: perhaps that talking sheep will steer her right.

Curtain Raiser: Eric's Eulogy by Kathryn Sullivan (Cleveland High School)

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***Bruise Easy* by Dan LeFranc**

Saturday, July 21 8 PM

Single, pregnant, bitter Tess returns home to suburban hell, only to find that her mom's MIA and her loser brother has parked himself on the driveway. As the laws of physics morph all around them, they are coached by a weirdly articulate gang of neighborhood skater punk rappers, whose message gradually comes into focus....

Curtain Raiser: ***Hiking Boots* by Conor Eifler** (Cleveland High School)

***A Story about a Girl* by Jacquelyn Reingold**

Sunday, July 22 4 PM

Once upon a time there was a girl who had no words. She met a boy who had no friends. They make their own language of love, friendship and ultimate betrayal as they journey through life with and without each other.

Curtain Raiser: ***Two Feet on the Ground* by Carrie Nicholson** (Lincoln High School)

***Box Americana (A Dream of Wal-Mart)* by Jason Grote**

Sunday, July 22 8 PM

Congratulations, you've just joined the Sprawlville U.S.A. Wal-Mart family. GO TEAM! All you want is to make a living, but when the spirit of Sam Walton starts haunting you, is it really worth the \$6.47/hour?

Curtain Raiser: ***Pick It Up* by Kate Crabb** (Cleveland High School)

The JAW 2007 Studio Plays and Playwrights

***Driving under the Influence* by Nick Zagone**

Monday, July 16 8:30 PM

"Life," they say, "is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans." Find out what John and Yoko mean as you follow eight crazy kids past their post-high school daze and on into suburbia, marriage, 2.5 kids—or not—and you'll see it's more fun when life doesn't turn out as planned.

***First Beard* by Matthew B. Zrebski**

Tuesday, July 17 8:30 PM

All Presidents have skeletons in their closets. But now President-elect Thomas Hewitt is about to come out of one. And his First Lady is locking the door from the inside.

***Book of John* by Cynthia Whitcomb**

Thursday, July 19 8:30 PM

Face it: the justice system makes mistakes. Maybe a lot of them. Prisoner John Doe banks on that, even as his life hangs in the balance. What's a man with a rap sheet but no identity doing on Death Row, anyway? Is he hiding his guilt...or his innocence?

Additional Festival Activities

In keeping with tradition, this year's Festival includes a number of additional **free** events throughout the Gerding Theater at the Armory.

The Labs

Please note: space in the Community Artists Labs is very limited, so enrollment is determined by random lottery. To participate in the lottery, email us at literary@pcs.org and let us know which Labs interest you.

Saturday, July 14

Breaking and Entering with Nancy Keystone

A lab for directors and actors by the creator of The Apollo Project. Participants will learn techniques for breaking open a text, entering the world of the play, and discovering ways of expressing ideas, organically and collaboratively. Through a series of exercises designed to engage the imagination and activate the muscles and nerves, we will explore the script intuitively through body, voice and basic composition.

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Saturday, July 21, 11:00am-1:30pm

Your Man in Manhattan with Mark Subias

The head of the Subias Agency gives you the skinny on how playwrights and directors should go about seeking representation. Where do you look, and what makes you attractive to an agent? When in your career do you need agents, and what's in it for them....and oh yeah, what's in it for you?

Sunday, July 22, 11am-2pm

Theater on Paper: The Art of Reading Plays with Adam Greenfield

Playwrights Horizon's Literary Manager invites you to investigate several new scripts with him (including some appearing in this year's Festival) to discover how playwrights compose scripts as blueprints for live performance. Looking at a variety of voices and writing styles, you'll explore techniques to read each work as a unique, realized world.

Public Events

Sunday, July 22

Sometimes a Great Notion

adapted and directed by Aaron Posner

World-premiere reading based on the novel by Ken Kesey.

Time TBA

Friday, July 20, 8:30pm

365 Day/365 Plays

by **Suzan-Lori Parks**

JAW kicks off its Big Weekend with our contribution to the largest theater collaboration of U.S. history. In 2004, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Ms. Parks wrote one short play for every day of the year. This year, cities all over the country have stepped up to produce the epic cycle one week at a time, and it's no accident Portland's turn falls during our Festival. Participants include Many Hats, defunkt theatre, Miracle Theater, Skinner/Kirk and Self-Enhancement, Inc.

Saturday, July 21, 2-3:45 pm

Come for the Fair and see the performances while you're at it, or come for the shows and win a PCS season subscription (or two) at the Fair.

Theater Fair

Portland's bounty of theaters and performance venues will all be on display hawking their wares, raffling off tickets and related items, and making some surprise announcements.

Running concurrently with the Fair:

You Are There

Four site-specific performances are imbedded somewhere deep within the Armory. Perhaps the boiler room. Or the secret passageways. Or even "the slab." All we know is that some of Portland's most inventive minds are devising something special for you.

Sunday, July 22, 2:30-3:30pm

Playwrights' Slam curated by Andrew Golla

Portland Theatre Works' Artistic Director returns to host this popular annual event where playwrights read excerpts from their current projects, most of which will be produced locally in next season.

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History and Accomplishments of JAW/West

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

JAW 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, winning a Drammy Award for Outstanding Lighting Design – Daniel Ordower. Jordan Harrison's *Act a Lady* was featured in the 2006 Humana Festival and was also included on the 2006-2007 Portland Center Stage inaugural season in the Gerding's Studio Theater. *Act a Lady* won two Drammy Awards; Outstanding Costume Design - Jeff Cone and Outstanding Performance by a Supporting Actor – Ebbe Roe Smith. *The Thugs*, by Adam Bock, was performed as late-night theater in the Gerding Theater Studio in 2007, winning a stunning 4 Drammy Awards (Outstanding Direction – Rose Riordan, Ensemble Cast, Outstanding Performance by a Supporting Actor – Sharonlee McLean and Outstanding Sound Design – Jen Raynak) and Adam Bock went on to win an Obie Award for *The Thugs* in 2007 as well. Also in 2007, Bock was invited to develop a new play at the prestigious Sundance/Ucross playwriting residency. Ebbe Roe Smith's *Number Three* premiered in early 2007 at Third Rail Repertory Theater and won a Drammy Award for Outstanding Original Script the same year.

JAW 2006: Sarah Treem's *A Feminine Ending* will be performed at Portland Center Stage and South Coast Repertory as a co-production during their respective 2007-2008 seasons.

About Portland Center Stage

Established in 1988, **PORTLAND CENTER STAGE** is Portland's flagship theater company, attracting more than 100,000 theatergoers annually. With five Main Stage and four Studio productions in the 2006-2007 Season, PCS produces a blend of classical, contemporary and world premiere works, in addition to JAW, the PCS annual summer playwrights festival. PCS also offers a variety of education and outreach programs for youth and adults, including the new Portland Center Stage GreenHouse, a school of theater.

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE'S new home in the Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public with facility tours and an outdoor community celebration on October 1, 2006. The rehabilitated Armory houses a 599-seat Main Stage and a 200-seat black box Studio, along with production, rehearsal, and administrative office spaces. The facility is also a national model for sustainable design: it is the first building in Portland, the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue in the world to achieve the pinnacle of green building certification, Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). The \$36.1 million capital campaign to fund this new home continues, with over 76% of that amount raised to date.

The Portland Center Stage 20th Anniversary, 2007-2008 Season in the Gerding Theater at the Armory

Main Stage

Cabaret, September 25 – October 21, 2007

Music by John Kander

Lyrics by Fred Ebb

Book by Joe Masteroff

A Christmas Carol, November 27 – December 24, 2007

Based on the novel by Charles Dickens

Adapted by Mead Hunter

The Beard of Avon, January 15 – March 9, 2008

By Amy Freed

Studio

The Underpants, October 16 – December 2, 2007

By Carl Sternheim

Adapted by Steve Martin

A Feminine Ending, February 5 – March 23, 2008

By Sarah Treem

Timothy Douglas

The Little Dog Laughed, April 29 – June 15, 2008

By Douglas Carter Beane

IN REPERTORY WITH...

Twelfth Night; or What You Will

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Jane Jones

Sometimes a Great Notion, April 1 – 27, 2008

Based on the novel by Ken Kesey

Adapted and Directed by Aaron Posner

Doubt, May 19 – June 15, 2008

By John Patrick Shanley

www.pcs.org