

N E W S

Act a Lady and *The Thugs* Come of Age at Portland Center Stage

Two products of PCS' JAW/West Playwrights Festival Take Their Turn in Gerding Theater Studio

January 18, 2006 – PORTLAND Portland Center Stage's first Studio performance run of 2007 features two plays work-shopped during the company's 2005 JAW/West Playwrights Festival. The main event is **Seattle native, Jordan Harrison's *Act a Lady***; a gender-bending farce, set in an early 20th century, small Midwestern town. ***The Thugs***, playing only **late on Friday and Saturday nights**, is a humorous tale of paranoia and tedium in the lives of a group of law firm temps. Both works are the exciting products of a new generation of American playwrights offering a fresh perspective on the reality of theater and the drama of everyday life.

In *Act a Lady*, three middle-American men decide to stage a French melodrama, in drag, to benefit the town's children. The play itself, and the "**play within the play**", fold in on one-another until it becomes hilariously challenging to distinguish between the two. In the process, the characters awaken to, and come to terms with, previously unrecognized and under-actualized aspects of their personalities. In the world of theater, the men find a rational "excuse" to embrace their Venusian proclivities and the women wield their Martian faculties with equal vigor.

Act a Lady previews in the Studio at the **Gerding Theater at the Armory, 128 NW Eleventh Ave. at Davis, Sunday, January 28 - Thursday, February 1 (Dark Monday); opens Friday, February 2** and closes with matinee and evening performances on **Sunday, March 11**. All evening performances take place at **7:30 PM** while **Noon Thursday and 2 PM Saturday and Sunday matinées** are also available. **General Admission Tickets: \$16.50, 30+under SUN – THUR eves, \$21.50 – \$41.50, general; box office: 503-445-3700; information: www.pcs.org.**

Adam Bock's *The Thugs* is brilliantly built on the everyday language and the humdrum lives of seven working stiffs who while away the hours coding legal transcripts; no benefits, no recognition, no future. In this eternal twilight, amid the ominous machine noises of a downtown skyscraper, though their work is dull, they must try to stay alert; as one-by-one their kind are turning up dead.

The Thugs is a special **late-night production**, running on **Friday and Saturday nights only, at 10:30pm**, following performances of *Act a Lady* (Separate admission is required). *The Thugs* **opens on Friday, February 2** and **closes on Saturday March 10**. All tickets for *The Thugs* are **\$21.50**, and as with all performances in the Studio, **seating is General Admission**.

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The **all-local cast** for these two plays includes several Portland favorites and JAW/West veterans like actor/playwright **Ebbe Roe Smith (O Lovely Glowworm, Celebrity Row)**, **Val Landrum** and **Debera Ann Lund** who all participated in the most recent, 2006 festival at Portland's World Trade Center. Several current cast members participated in the original staged readings of these two plays in the 2005 festival, and are excited for the opportunity to participate in these full productions. Four of the actors are doing "double-duty," performing in both *Act a Lady* and *The Thugs*.

The playwright of *Act a Lady*, Jordan Harrison, grew up on Bainbridge Island, nine miles west of Seattle. His plays include *Act a Lady*, *Finn in the Underworld*, *Kid-Simple*, *The Museum Play*, *Fit for Feet*, *Amazons and Their Men*, and *Doris to Darlene*. Jordan's work has been seen and developed at GeVa Theatre, MCC Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, Rattlestick Theatre, Seattle Rep, Signature Theatre Company, Soho Rep, the Tokyo International Arts Festival, Vineyard Theatre, and the Williamstown Theatre Festival. *Act a Lady* was a finalist for the 2005 Weissberger Award and is a nominee for the American Theatre Critics/Steinberg New Play Award. A graduate of Brown University's MFA Playwriting program, Jordan is a resident playwright at New Dramatists. He is currently working on a play about the history of typography for South Coast Rep.

The director of *Act a Lady*, Cliff Fannin Baker, is Arkansas Repertory Theatre's founding producing artistic director. During his 23 years of leadership, The Rep produced hundreds of plays of every genre, including more than 30 world premieres. Among his favorite directing credits for The Rep are *Evita*, *Waiting for Lefty*, *Goodwoman (of Setzuan)*, *Private Eyes*, *Art* and *Gypsy*. Mr. Baker was the first recipient of the Arkansas Governor's Award for Outstanding Individual Artist and he has also received the golden Circle Award for Regional Achievement, the Award of Distinction from the Arts and Humanities Commission and the 1999 Arts Award for Lifetime Achievement. Previously for Portland Center Stage, Mr. Baker directed the 2006 production of *This Wonderful Life* and the Fall 2003 world premiere production of Steven Drukman's edgy and intelligent *Another Fine Mess*.

The playwright of *The Thugs*, Adam Bock, has written plays including *Swimming in the Shallows*, *Five Flights*, *The Typographer's Dream*, *Thursday*, *The Shaker Chair*, *The Drunken City* and *The Receptionist*, with productions in the United States, Canada and Britain. *Five Flights* won the Glickman Award, was nominated for the ATCA and Osborn Awards and moved to New York's Rattlestick Theatre. *Swimming* won three BATCC Awards, a Clauder and was nominated for the Weissberger. In 2005, *Swimming* was produced by New York's Second Stage. The sold-out production was called "a screwy little jewel" by the *NY Times*, named Top Ten by *TimeOut*, featured on the cover of *American Theatre* magazine, nominated for a GLAAD Media award and published in the *Best Plays of 2005*. *The Shaker Chair* was at the Humana Festival in 2005 and published by DPS; Encore Theater's production of *Typographer* was named Top Ten by the *SF Chronicle* and remounted in Berkeley; and *The Audience*, a musical Bock helped Jack Cummings III create, was nominated for three Drama Desk awards.

The director of *The Thugs*, Rose Riordan, is the Associate Artistic Director of Portland Center Stage. She has been an actress, writer, producer and director and has directed plays in Alaska, Seattle, Miami and New York – some of her credits include *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Bent*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, and *Noble & Weller*. In 1999 she co-founded Portland Center Stage's annual Just Add Water/West Playwrights Festival, now in its ninth season. JAW/West has been instrumental in developing new work for the PCS repertory. Some of the plays work-shopped at JAW/West: *Outrage*, *Flesh and Blood*, *O Lovely Glowworm* and this season's *Act A Lady* and *The Thugs* have gone on to stages at other theaters around the country.

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The Cast of *Act a Lady*

Act One:

Miles/Lady Romola Von Plofsdorf.....Ebbe Roe Smith*
True/Countess Mathilde St. Roquefort.....James Farmer*
Casper/Greta the Maid.....Casey McFeron*
Dorothy.....Sharonlee McLean*
Lorna.....Torrey Cornwell*
Zina.....Debera Ann Lund*

Act Two:

Lady Romola von Plofsdorf.....Ebbe Roe Smith*
Countess Mathilde St. Roquefort.....James Farmer*
Greta the Maid.....Casey McFeron*
Dorothy/Miles.....Sharonlee McLean*
Lorna/True.....Torey Cornwell*
Zina/Casper.....Debera Ann Lund*

The Cast of *The Thugs*

Mercedes.....Sharonlee McLean*
Elaine.....Debera Ann Lund*
Diane.....Laura Faye Smith*
Mary.....Kelly Tallent*
Bart.....Kelsey Tyler
Daphne.....Val Landrum*
Chantal.....Torrey Cornwell*
Joey.....Casey McFeron*

The Creative Team (for both plays, except where noted):

Playwright (<i>Act a Lady</i>)	Jordan Harrison
Playwright (<i>The Thugs</i>)	Adam Bock
Director (<i>Act a Lady</i>)	Cliff Fannin Baker
Director (<i>The Thugs</i>)	Rose Riordan
Scenic Designer	Jeff Seats
Costume Designer	Jeff Cone
Lighting Designer	Don Crossley
Sound Designer (<i>Act a Lady</i>)	Casi Pacilio
Sound Designer (<i>The Thugs</i>)	Jen Raynak
Stage Manager	Mark Tynan*
Assistant Stage Manager	Creon Thorne*
Production Assistant	Jacob Fenston
Accordion Coach (<i>Act a Lady</i>)	Jacob Fenston
Casting	Rose Riordan

*The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

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Act a Lady

By Jordan Harrison

Directed by Cliff Fannin Baker

Portland Center Stage * Gerding Theater at the Armory * 128 NW Eleventh Ave.

Tickets \$16.50 - \$41.50 * Box Office 503-445-3700 * info: www.pcs.org

In the STUDIO

EVENINGS 7:30 PM

Tuesdays Jan. 30(P), Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27, Mar. 6
Wednesdays Jan. 31(P), Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28, Mar. 7
Thursdays Feb. 1(P), 8, 15, 22, Mar. 1, 8
Fridays Feb. 2(O), 9, 16, 23, Mar. 2, 9
Saturdays Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24, Mar. 3, 10
Sundays Jan. 29(P), Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25, Mar 4, 11(C)

MATINEES

Noon with Q&A after show
Thursdays Feb 8, 15, 22
Mar. 1, 8
2PM
Saturdays Feb. 10, 24
Sundays Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25
Mar. 4, 11

(P) = Preview • (O) = Opening Night • (C) = Closing Evening

Student/Senior Matinees

Every Thursday Matinee at Noon is programmed especially for our student and senior audiences. Patrons enjoy discounted ticket prices and post-show Q&A sessions with the cast and crew of *Act a Lady*.

Prologue

Join us for a lively pre-show introduction to the play you are about to see with PCS Literary and Education staff and/or special guests.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, November Feb. 6-22. (No Prologues for Act a Lady after 2/22)
6:30PM In the Studio

Access Performances

Audio Described

Friday, February 9 7:30 PM

Sign Interpreted

Thursday, February 15 7:30 PM

The Gerding Theater at the Armory's Studio is fully accessible for all people with disabilities. Assistive listening devices are available from the coatroom in the main lobby, **free** of charge.

Price List for Act a Lady (seating is General Admission for all performances)

		30 and Under	18 and Under
Preview Evenings	\$21.50	\$21.50	\$16.50
Sunday – Thursday Evenings	\$31.50	\$16.50	\$16.50
Friday/Saturday Evenings	\$41.50	\$41.50	\$16.50
Sunday Matinees	\$41.50	\$41.50	\$16.50
Thursday/Saturday Matinees	\$26.50	\$16.50	\$16.50

DUE TO THE INTIMATE NATURE OF THE STUDIO, THERE WILL BE
ABSOLUTELY NO LATE SEATING or **RE-ADMITTANCE**

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The Thugs

By Adam Bock

Directed by Rose Riordan

Portland Center Stage * Gerding Theater at the Armory * 128 NW Eleventh Ave.

Tickets \$21.50 * **Box Office 503-445-3700** * info: www.pcs.org

In the STUDIO, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY EVENINGS AT 10:30 PM

FRIDAYS

Feb. 9(O), 16, 23

Mar. 2, 9

SATURDAYS

Feb. 10, 17, 24

Mar. 3, 10 (C)

(O) = Opening Night

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(C) = Closing Night

All Seating for The Thugs is General Admission and All Tickets are priced at \$21.50

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PORTLAND CENTER STAGE, established in 1988, is Portland's flagship theater company, attracting more than 90,000 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 its annual summer playwrights festival, Just Add Water/West. PCS is engaged in a \$36 million capital campaign to fund the renovation of the historic Portland Armory, our new home in Portland's Pearl District. The Gerding Theater at the Armory houses a 599-seat Main Stage and a 200-seat black box Studio, and is 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). To date, more than 76% of required funds have been secured for the project. The new Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on October 1, 2006.

The Remaining Portland Center Stage 2006-2007 Inaugural Season in the Gerding Theater at the Armory

- *Misalliance* by George Bernard Shaw, Directed by Chris Coleman, January 9 – February 4, 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
A co-production with Hartford Stage Company and Dallas Theater Center
- *Bad Dates* by Theresa Rebeck, Directed by Timothy Near, April 15 – June 10, 2007, Studio

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