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M E D I A R E L E A S E

JAW: A Playwrights Festival

Portland Center Stage's developmental festival of new works brings exciting stories to the Main Stage July 24-26, 2014



JUNE 12, 2014 – PORTLAND, ORE. Portland Center Stage is pleased to announce the four new plays that will receive staged readings during the 2014 JAW: A Playwrights Festival. This year, three playwrights will make their JAW debuts with exciting new scripts – Penny Penniston's surprising *Keys of the Kingdom*, Tommy

Smith's electric *db* and Mat Smart's mysterious *The Royal Society of Antarctica* – and Portland favorite Adam Bock will return with his new play, *A Life*, commissioned by Portland Center Stage.

After two weeks of intense rehearsals and rewrites, **public staged readings** of these new works will be presented on **July 25 and 26 at 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.** Performances are **free and open to the public** on the Main Stage of the Gerding Theater at the Armory. No reservations are required.

This year, a **kick-off event on Thursday, July 24 at 8:00 p.m.**, will feature staged readings from Portland's own **Promising Playwrights**; six Portland-area high school playwrights whose work will be performed in the Ellyn Bye Studio. To add to the excitement of JAW, **Press Play** will bring dynamic performance pieces to engage audience members before and after the readings; including dancers, puppeteers and musicians that have been hand-selected for JAW. **Community Artist Labs** will also be held during the festival. Attendance for these labs is limited and determined by lottery. More information about JAW online: www.pcs.org/jaw.

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JAW SELECTION PROCESS: Scripts for consideration at JAW are submitted from literary managers, dramaturgs, playwrights' centers, and directly from playwrights. The selection process is "blind," meaning that the reading committee – made up of PCS staff members and Portland-based theater artists – reads each script without the knowledge of title or playwright. Only when the final plays are selected by the committee do they learn who the author is and the actual title of the play.

2014 JAW: A PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL LINE UP

Keys of the Kingdom

By Penny Penniston

Friday, July 25 at 4 p.m.

As assistant to the celebrity pastor of an evangelical mega church, Arthur obeys orders, attacks paperwork, and guards against sin. Arthur is surprised when the church pastor commissions a mural from Irene Hoff, an atheist New York artist married to another woman. Arthur is even more surprised when the pastor explains that he believes Irene has been chosen by God. But the biggest surprise of all is what happens when Irene shows up and starts to paint.

Penny Penniston is the author of *now then again*, *Spin*, *7 Years at the Mayfair Mall*, *Miss Julie* (an adaptation), and *The Roaring Girl* (co-adapted with Jeremy Wechsler). Her work has been produced/developed in Chicago with Theater Wit, Bailiwick Repertory, Shakespeare's Motley Crew, Collaboration, Stage Left Theatre and Lookingglass Theatre. Also, Gorilla Rep (NY), the Depot Theater (NY), the Blank Theater (CA), The Old Globe (CA), Milwaukee Repertory Theater (WI), plus numerous others. Awards include multiple Joseph Jefferson citations for excellence and the Sloan Prize at the 2005 Tribeca Film Festival.

db

By Tommy Smith

Story by Teddy Bergman and Tommy Smith

Friday, July 25 at 8 p.m.

Thanksgiving weekend 1971. A man calling himself D.B. Cooper boards a plane in Portland, hijacks it for \$200,000 at the SeaTac Airport, then parachutes into a snowstorm over Mount Rainier, never to be seen

again. *db* brings to life this electric story, showing how the enduring myth of Cooper has created a canvas for regular Americans to act out fantasies of heroism, celebrity, revenge, retribution and rage.

Tommy Smith's plays, including *White Hot*, *Zero*, *Firemen*, *PTSD*, *Pigeon*, *The Wife*, *Sextet*, *Caravan Man* (music and lyrics by Gabriel Kahane), *Demon Dreams*, *A Day In Dig Nation*, and *Air Conditioning*, have been produced at Ensemble Studio Theatre, P.S. 122, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Here Arts Center, The Flea Theater, Access Gallery (NYC), Echo Theater Company (LA), Washington Ensemble Theatre, The Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference, The Public Theatre, La Mama, The Warhol Museum, MCA Chicago, ICA Boston, On The Boards and PICA: TBA, among others. Tommy is the recipient of the PONY Fellowship at The Lark, a two-time winner of the Lecomte du Nouy Prize, a recipient of the E.S.T. Sloan Grant, a winner of the Page73 Productions Playwriting Fellowship, a member of the Dorothy Strelsin New American Writer's Group at Primary Stages, a recipient of the Creative Capital award, and a two-time winner of the MAP Fund. Publications include *Pigeon* for Dramatists Play Service, *Streak* by Vintage, and *White Hot* in the *New York Theatre Review*. Tommy is a graduate of the playwriting program at the Juilliard School. He lives in New York City and Los Angeles.

The Royal Society of Antarctica

By Mat Smart

Saturday, July 26 at 4 p.m.

Dee is the only person ever born at McMurdo Station in Antarctica. Shortly after giving birth, Dee's mother mysteriously disappeared. Now, 24 years later, Dee returns to the otherworldly brightness at the bottom of the earth to work as a janitor – scrubbing toilets 60 hours a week and discovering something about what it means to disappear.

Mat Smart is the recipient of the 2014 New Voices Award from the William Inge Center for the Arts. Plays include: *Naperville* (Slant Theatre Project, Fall 2014), *Tinker to Evers to Chance* (Geva), *The Steadfast* (Slant, published by Dramatic Play Service), *Samuel J. and K.* (Williamstown Theatre Festival, Steppenwolf, Passage Theatre), *The Hopper Collection* (Magic Theatre, Huntington Theatre Company) and *The 13th of Paris* (City Theatre, Seattle Public Theatre, LiveWire). An avid baseball fan and traveler, Mat has been to all 30 current MLB stadiums, all 50 states and 6 continents – including a stint working as a janitor at McMurdo Station in Antarctica. He lives in Manhattan.

A Life

By Adam Bock

Saturday, July 26 at 8 p.m.

Nate Martin is a simple man, living his simple life in a simple world. Sort of. Well, I guess, not really, actually.

Adam Bock's plays include *The Colby Sisters of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania* (Tricycle Theater, London), *Phaedra* (Rose Riordan - director, Shotgun Players, 8 BATCC nominations), *A Small Fire* (Playwrights Horizons, Drama Desk nomination for Best Play), the book for *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, with music by Todd Almond (Yale Rep), *The Receptionist* (MTC, 2008 Outer Critics nomination, Best Plays of 2007-2008, The Evidence Room with Megan Mullally), *The Drunken City* (Playwrights Horizons, 2008 Outer Critics nomination), *The Thugs* (Soho Rep, 2007 OBIE Award for Playwriting, JAW: A Playwrights Festival 2005), *The Shaker Chair* (2005 Humana Festival, Kesselring nomination), *Swimming In The Shallows* (Shotgun Players, Second Stage Uptown, 2000 BATCC Award, Clauder Prize, GLAAD nomination), *Five Flights* (Encore Theatre and Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, 2002 Glickman Award), *The Typographer's Dream* (Encore Theatre/Shotgun Players) and *Three Guys and a Brenda* (Heideman Award). Adam is the resident playwright at Encore Theatre, and a Shotgun Players Artistic Associate. He is a 2012 Guggenheim Fellow, a NEA grantee, a Guernsey Award-winner, a three-time resident at Yaddo, a former member of the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, and a TDF Open Doors mentor. Adam's plays are published by Samuel French, Dramatists Play Service and Playscripts, Inc. He is an alumnus of New Dramatists.

ABOUT JAW: For 16 years JAW (short for Just Add Water) has created a space for playwrights to grow as writers and professionals. Of the 60+ plays that have received workshops at the festival, more than 50% have received world premiere productions at a regional theater, ranging from the NY Theater Workshop to Steppenwolf to Berkeley Repertory Theatre to Portland's own Third Rail Repertory Theater. Thirteen JAW plays have later received fully staged productions at Portland Center Stage, giving Portland a strong national reputation for not only incubating new work, but helping to see that work to successful fruition.

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#pcs_JAW, #WePlayRough

ACCESSIBILITY: PCS is committed to making our performances and facilities accessible to all of our patrons. For every production here at PCS, we are happy to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers, as well as provide professional audio description and sign interpretation. For questions, information, or if you need assistance, please contact the box office at 503-445-3700 or email access@pcs.org.

AGE RECOMMENDATION: Recommended for high school age and up. Children under 6 are not permitted.

[JAW: A Playwrights Festival](#) is made possible in part by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, Kinsman Foundation and the Oregon Cultural Trust. Promising Playwrights is funded in part by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, Wells Fargo and Work for Art. Portland Center Stage's 2013-2014 season is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank; Season Sponsors the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Regional Arts and Culture Council and Work for Art; and Season Supporting Sponsor KINK fm. Portland Center Stage's official hotel partner is the Mark Spencer Hotel. Portland Center Stage is a participant in the Audience (R)Evolution Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the professional not-for-profit American theater.

[Portland Center Stage](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PCS became an independent theater in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May 2000. The company presents a blend of classic, contemporary and original productions in a conscious effort to appeal to the eclectic palate of theatergoers in Portland. PCS also offers a variety of education and outreach programs for curious minds from six to 106, including discussions, classes, workshops and partnerships with organizations throughout the Portland metro area.

[The Gerding Theater at the Armory](#) houses the 590-seat Main Stage and the 190-seat black box Ellyn Bye Studio. It was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on Oct. 1, 2006. The capital campaign to fund the renovation of this hub for community artistic activity continues.

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