

ANPF

ASHLAND NEW PLAYS FESTIVAL

Celebrating 20 Years of New Works for the Stage

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SPRING 2012

Robynn Rodriguez to Grace Our Stage in *Golda's Balcony*

In 1973, at the age of 75, Golda Meir, the Russian-born Israeli prime minister who grew up in Milwaukee, grappled with a decision that might have triggered a nuclear Armageddon.



OSF actress Robynn Rodriguez, member of Actors' Equity Association

On August 27, nearly 40 years after that Mideast war, actress Robynn Rodriguez will dramatize those tense moments during a staged reading of *Golda's Balcony*, a one-woman show produced by ANPF to kick off our 2012 season.

The play by William Gibson, who wrote *The Miracle Worker*, was produced on

Broadway in 2003. The script toggles between Meir's life on the world political stage and personal family recollections.

Gibson reveals just how close Meir came to ordering a nuclear strike. Bombs had already been loaded on planes awaiting her order when promises of conventional arms support from the United States brought nuclear war back from the brink.

Rodriguez, a perennial player at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, can also be seen this summer in *Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella* and *Party People*. See our summer newsletter for ticket information.



Board of Directors, left to right: Melissa Brown, Mary Pat Power, Fred Wright, Sunny Anderson, Tilly Gibbs, Dolores Marx, Gray McKee, Norma Wright, Amanda Berkeley, Linda Young, Alan "Rosey" Rosenberg, Joe Collonge, Bill Faiia, and Terry Ansnes

ANPF Board Is Planning a Banner Year

To celebrate our twentieth year, our Board of Directors is planning several special events, including a gala reunion for past playwrights and others who have participated in the Ashland New Plays Festival during the past two decades. Details of the gala event, to be held at the Schneider Museum of Art, are being kept on the QT for now, but there's no question it will be a fitting celebration to honor past and current winning playwrights as well as the many patrons and participants who have loyally supported ANPF since its beginnings 20 years ago.

Also stay tuned for information about a patrons' dinner to be held before the reading of *Golda's Balcony*, featuring a special guest who will share some of the fascinating circumstances surrounding this extraordinary woman and her story.

We're also looking for volunteers to help with the fun! If you'd like to become involved, let us know. Call us at (541) 488-7995 or send an e-mail to info@AshlandNewPlays.org. We'll welcome your help in planning the many activities for this special year.



Elizabeth von Radics, marketing director, and Douglas Rowe, artistic director, members of ANPF's Artistic Board



Our Reading Committee is well into the second round of the play selection process. During a long first round, the 50 committee members sorted through nearly 200 submissions. Each submitted play was read by three readers, and, based on a 5-point scoring system, 34 semi-finalists were selected to move into round 2.

In the second round, all 34 plays will be closely scrutinized by all readers. Now employing a 10-point scoring system, the Reading Committee will select 12 finalists. The four winning scripts are selected by our artistic team, comprising Artistic Director Douglas Rowe and the four theatrical directors.

Reading Committee members are excited to be evaluating some excellent plays, and are eagerly anticipating a fabulous twentieth-year season!

ANPF Board of Welcomes Four New Directors

Sunny Anderson has been a lifelong supporter of the performing arts. She has more than 25 years of fundraising and board experience with theater and dance companies in Seattle and Ashland. She performed as Grandmother in Pacific Northwest Ballet's *Nutcracker* for 12 years and as Court Lady in PNB's versions of *Swan Lake*. She has been an ANPF Reading Committee member for three years and a group leader for two. Her professional experience is in managing organization development for large telecommunication and medical companies, where she focused on long-range and succession planning, team development, and cultural integration.

Joe Collonge was raised in Los Gatos, California, and attended Stanford University. He worked as an electrical engineer in the construction industry until retirement. Somewhere (actually in a play in 1958 in which he played the villain), he came to love theater and became involved in all aspects of it. He met his lovely wife, Jean, when he joined the board of San Jose Stage. (She was board president, and it was like the nonprofit version of marrying the boss's daughter.) When they retired in 2009 and moved to Ashland, they discovered wonderful new ways to be involved in theater. Live theater is a growing and organic entity that thrives on the energy and interaction of the players and the audience, says Joe, who feels that ANPF is a greenhouse nurturing its seeds.

Growing up as a young lad in Brooklyn, **Alan "Rosey" Rosenberg** had a passion to become a real estate broker in a small Southern Oregon town. So it may come as a surprise that, having waited for so many decades to live his dream, he has no regrets about the detours along the way. In fact, he credits his education in theatre, careers in journalism and public relations, a dozen failed attempts to publish novels, and, especially, a stint as a horse-logger in the forests of northwestern Montana for his success as a Realtor. Rosey is also a prolific theatre critic; check out his local theatrical reviews at ashlandplayreviews.com or [facebook.com/Ashland.New.Plays](https://www.facebook.com/Ashland.New.Plays).

Linda Young is an energetic and committed HR generalist who not only has a strategic outlook but is also highly tactical in day-to-day operations. Over the past 25 years, her focus has been with medical device companies, where she worked on mergers and acquisitions, ramped up a number of start-ups, created compensation and incentive plans, and coached several senior management teams. Linda has been consulting for the past seven years and is lucky enough to base her business in Ashland. Prior to consulting, she was the vice president of human resources at IntraLase Corp. Linda is actively involved with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and for the past three years (two as chair) has been on the Fundraising Committee of the Schneider Museum of Art and Southern Oregon University.

Save the Dates!

Golda's Balcony

Starring Robynn Rodriguez

Monday, August 27

Unitarian Center

87 4th Street in Ashland

ANPF 2012

Featuring Four New Plays

October 24 to 28

Unitarian Center

87 4th Street in Ashland

Become a member of ANPF!

one of the premier new plays festivals in the country

All gifts are significant and tax-deductible, and every little bit helps. We appreciate your support!

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ANPF is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.

ATTENTION PAST WINNERS AND PARTICIPANTS OF ANPF

Did you act, direct, or serve on the Board of Directors for ANPF over the past 20 years? Are you a past winning playwright? If so, we're trying to reconnect with you! If you receive our printed newsletter, you're obviously on our mailing list. If not, please get in touch so that we can send your invitation to the gala reunion at the ANPF 2012 kickoff this October! You can enter your contact information via the link on our home page or e-mail it to info@AshlandNewPlays.org.



Spotlight on ANPF

A Look Back on the First 20 Years

This is the first in a two-part series by Norma Wright, who served as ANPF president from 1996 through 1999 and is on the current Board of Directors.

Ashland New Plays Festival is celebrating 20 years of history – a history shaped by hundreds of men and women working together to bring this unique theater experience to the Rogue Valley.

In March 1992 two women from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival – Cynthia White, associate director for play development, and Ann Seltzer, marketing director – first considered organizing a collaboration of local theater companies. The plan for the state of Oregon to celebrate the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the Oregon Trail gave White and Seltzer an exciting idea.

They were convinced that the perfect Rogue Valley project would be for Ashland theater groups to offer unstaged readings of new plays with themes related to heritage, adventure, and the perseverance of the early pioneers. A meeting was held in early May, and representatives from eight groups enthusiastically embraced the proposal. The team to produce the first annual Ashland New Plays Festival comprised the Lyric Theatre, Southern Oregon University, Actors' Theatre of Ashland, Ashland Community Theatre, Studio X, Cygnet Theatre Group, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. This collaboration was supported in part by the Southern Oregon Arts Council and the Ashland Visitors and Convention Bureau. The event's debut was extremely successful, and plans began almost immediately for the second ANPF to be held in 1994, with another to follow in 1995.



From 1992 to today, it has been enthusiastic people who make ANPF what it is: aspiring playwrights, talented directors and actors, the boards of directors who navigate the policies and overall plans, the dedicated readers who plow through new scripts to select the four that will be produced, the generous donors, and the many volunteers who continue to make the festival a reality.



One might think that after 20 years, the names and the faces might change. In many cases they do, but Brandy Carson, Liisa Ivary, Shelly Austin, Dolores Marx, Livia Genise, and Dale Luciano are just a few who served on those first steering committees from 1993 through 1995 and continue to be involved with the organization today. Hollis Greenwood and Penny Mikesell traveled from San Francisco for the first ANPF in 1993, and the two friends continued to make the trek each and every year. In 2004 they, along with Hollis's partner, Mary Pat Powers, moved to Ashland, and they remain active and loyal volunteers. Michael Hume served as vice president from 1997 through 1999, has directed scores of readings, and continues to play an active role in ANPF. These are just a few of the names as familiar to our community now as they were then.



The energy and the enthusiasm continued, and in 1995 a Board of Directors was formed with President Rick Soued at the helm. The organization applied for §501(c)(3) nonprofit status under the name ArtWork Enterprises. At last ANPF was officially recognized by the state and federal governments.

The program changed significantly in 1997, when ANPF became the single producing organization. Rather than eight readings presented by eight different theater groups in as many locations, five new plays were presented in just one venue.

One play that year was David Rambo's *Speaky-Spikey-Spokey*. Rambo's enthusiasm for ANPF led to the Board of Directors asking him to return as our first Host Playwright in 1998, a role he continued to fill for the next several years. Many theater patrons remember the lively discussions he led, his entertaining and educational workshops, and his sensitivity in mentoring the playwrights. He has continued to this day to offer generous moral and financial support even though the demands of his career as a writer/producer of the *CSI* TV series made it impossible for him to return for every festival. ANPF has honored his contributions by naming a special membership category for him: the Rambo Playwright Circle.



Another change was suggested in 1996 by ANPF board members Bill Faiia and Corbet Unmack, owners of Arden Forest Inn. The two men contacted Ashland bed-and-breakfast innkeepers and asked them to host our visiting playwrights. For 15 years Bill and Corbet have continued to make arrangements with these local businesses, who, in providing this service, contribute thousands of in-kind dollars to the cause while providing our visiting playwrights with a gracious home away from home.

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Return Service Requested

Snail mail or e-mail?

In our efforts to be green, we are also delivering this newsletter via e-mail on request.

If you'd prefer to receive it in your inbox rather than your mailbox, please contact us at (541) 488-7995 or info@AshlandNewPlays.org.

Save the dates! ANPF 2012 is October 24 to 28.

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Derrick Lee Weeden
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A Look Back on the First 20 Years *continued from page 3*

Over the years ANPF has expanded its services to the community by adding other events. In 1998 a one-week summer program for young playwrights, titled Fresh Ink, was held in partnership with Southern Oregon University. Twenty high school students created an evening of short plays around a single theme. In 2004 the first of many Ten-Minute Play Festivals was introduced, also a collaboration with the university. The 24/7 Project was launched in 2007, another successful and innovative event. While often these were onetime productions, the ANPF Board continues to explore ways to bring exciting new works to the Rogue Valley. Ashland New Plays Festival has remained a small but vital force in the community for 20 years. This success is a reflection of the many people who recognize the value of theater in their lives and believe in the need for a continuous search for new works. This is what ANPF is all about.

This summary of our first 20 years will continue in our summer newsletter.

**OUR
MISSION**

Ashland New Plays Festival assists playwrights in the development of new works through public readings and offers an educational forum to the community through discussions and workshops.

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