ANPF 2010 Set the Bar for Future Festivals

If anyone thought in 2008 that Ashland New Plays Festival was down for the count, they were very much mistaken. The banner flying over Main Street proudly announced the revival of the festival, one of Ashland’s theatre treasures. Four outstanding playwrights, four exceptional plays, and 31 talented directors and actors brought life and energy back to this event. Enthusiastic audience members packed the houses and offered useful comments to our visiting playwrights during talkback discussions; and Ellen Lewis, our gracious host playwright, was a constant and supportive presence throughout the festival, charming everyone with her delightful and engaging personality.

As our Artistic Director Doug Rowe points out, “The bonding of the writers and the directors during festival week fostered an artistic give-and-take after each performance that markedly enhanced each playwright’s vision of his or her work. Our Ashland audiences contributed greatly to this end with their discerning comments during the postproduction talkbacks.”

There is no question that the Ashland New Plays Festival belongs to Ashland. And there is no question that it was our vibrant community who insisted that the festival be restored to offer emerging playwrights an opportunity to showcase their work. Who is this community? It’s the new, hardworking board of directors; the 40-member Reading Committee, who spent hundreds of hours ferreting out the winning plays; the B&B hosts who so warmly fed and lodged our playwrights; the generous patrons who contributed to make the festival a reality; the local actors and directors who lent their considerable talents to bring the winning scripts to life; and our amazing artistic director, Doug Rowe, who orchestrated the readings and brought the playwrights’ visions to the stage with such professional skill. And last but certainly not least, the community is our loyal audience, some of whom come from the Bay Area, and even as far away as Washington and Texas, specifically for ANPF.

Together, we all made it happen. Now we’re gearing up for 2011 with plans for fundraising and theatrical events you won’t want to miss—plus another exciting festival next October with four new plays to culminate the year. The script reading has commenced!
Breathing a little easier after our whirlwind week, the ANPF board members and I are carefully examining this year’s proceedings in all areas for possible improvement. We are excited about not only your numbers but also your enthusiastic response to ANPF 2010. It has been heartening, and the planning for ANPF 2011 is already well under way. The Reading Committee has begun reading scripts—two of them coming from Europe. We’re searching for a venue, and pre-festival events are being planned. I am also thrilled to announce that EM Lewis will be returning next year as our host playwright.

My longtime friend Mike Farrell, of M*A*S*H* fame, and I are looking for a two-person vehicle to do as a benefit reading sometime this summer. We are also trying to put together a reading of Stephen Vincent Benêt’s epic poem John Brown’s Body, which will feature three actors from Oregon Shakespeare Festival and a full chorale. As you are all on our mailing list, you will receive first notice. Any fellow theatergoers you may know who are not on our list would be well served by sending us their contact info via the link on our website, www.AshlandNewPlays.org. You will be doing both them and us a favor! We do our best to get the word out and keep everyone in the loop.

Somewhere in the involvement and evolution of more than 200 theatrical productions, I discovered that a play never stays the same. It gets better or it gets worse. I believe that can be true of an organization as well. An open dialogue with its membership is one of the best ways to ensure the former. As we consider all of you members of ANPF, we would like to hear from you—suggestions, ideas, and, yes, even complaints! Call me; I’m listed.

Get Your Tax Break

Many of you donated to ANPF in 2010. Thank you, thank you. Every dollar you gave us is fully tax-deductible from both your state and federal income tax. Be sure to list it as a contribution.

But—do you know that for every dollar you give, you can give a matching gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust and take the total off the state tax you owe? True. It comes right off the bottom line. So for every $2 you give to Oregon arts groups, it costs you as little as 85 cents. Is that a deal?

Remember that you have to make both contributions by December 31. There’s still time!

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!

☐ RAMBO PLAYWRIGHTS CIRCLE: $3,000+
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☐ CONTRIBUTING MEMBER: $250 to $499
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ANPF is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.
SPOTLIGHT ON ANPF 2010

“The good people of Ashland New Plays Festival treat all playwrights with the utmost respect, and, just as important, they are spirited, hardworking champions of new plays. Simply put, ANPF is an invaluable organization, and I couldn’t be more grateful for my experience. They give me hope for the future of new plays. I wish I could come back every year!”

—Jami Brandli, playwright, *Technicolor Life*

“It would be hard to overstate the immense value of the Ashland New Plays Festival. The collaborative and supportive environment, the incredibly warm and generous people, and above all the smart, savvy Ashland audience—all contribute to a focused, enjoyable developmental experience. And the chance to spend a week talking about plays and writing with other playwrights is itself a gift. I have come away from ANPF with not only a stronger play but a stronger sense of my own writing identity. Fabulous.”

—David Hilder, playwright, *The Insidious Impact of Anton*

“There are not enough adjectives to describe the scope and depth of my pride and gratitude for having been honored with a reading at your prestigious festival. From the day I arrived to a “welcome basket” of wine and goodies at the sweet B&B you generously provided, to the welcoming reception, the director/playwright dinner with the phenomenal Doug Rowe, my wonderful director, Lenny Neimark, and spot-on cast—Doug, Judith, Eve, Brent, Paul, and Holly—the opportunity to meet awesome playwrights David and Bob and Jami, not to mention Ellen, who tended us with such grace, to more wine, more receptions, the writers workshop, and two glorious readings of *A Gold Star in the Window*, plus $500! It could not have been more perfect. Hats off to all of you for stepping up to the plate and not letting this beautiful tradition die. I hold who you are and what you’ve done in high esteem. You are truly awesome.”

—Harlene Goodrich, playwright, *A Gold Star in the Window*

“When my play *Song of Extinction* was chosen as one of the four winners of the Ashland New Plays Festival in 2008, I had no idea what a wonderful experience I had ahead of me. That week in Ashland—a small town with a big love for theater—was amazing! I worked with a great director and an excellent cast of local actors. Full houses of smart and passionate audience members watched and responded to all of our readings. I walked in the park, I had drinks and conversation with my wonderful fellow playwrights, I saw a show at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival—I immersed myself in *theatre* all week long. I felt like a real playwright. Thank you so much, ANPF!

—EM Lewis, ANPF 2010 Host Playwright

**Arden Forest Inn** Ashland New Plays Festival is off to a great start. The playwrights arrived on Sunday and the ANPF Board, playwrights, and a few donors enjoyed a relaxed reception. Everybody has been hard at work and the readings begin tomorrow. Arden Forest Inn is filled with guests who will be attending ANPF... Let the fun begin!

**Sarah Foster** Thank you to the amazing people who put their talent, time, and effort into this years’ ANPF! What an enlightening and thought provoking experience. It has been simply wonderful to be a part of this amazing event! :)

**Shane Rogers** Ashland New Plays Festival was a huge success. I had a great time being a part of it.

**Sarah Jane Nelson Millan** The playwriting workshop was WONDERFUL today. So inspiring. I love the Ashland New Plays Festival. Thanks to all the people who made that happen... :)

**Jeff King** Good job, everybody. I thought the performances went really well. Jami, I hope those audience responses made you feel really good about the play. They sure liked it. It was great to feel how they hooked onto it so early and stayed with the changes so tightly.

“From the vantage point of being 3,000 miles and a little more than a week away from Ashland, I realize ever more clearly that the week I was in residence with ANPF was an extraordinarily valuable experience for me. While I could list a slew of reasons, including the generous and attentive audiences and the great ‘salons’ every morning at my breakfast table (hosted by Corbett and Bill), this was the first new plays festival I have attended in which each script was read on two separate occasions. As for how that affected my own script, I was able to experiment with two different choices at junctures in the script where I had the greatest uncertainty. This allowed me to leave Ashland with confidence that whatever had seemed to work either well or not so well was a function of the script itself and not the particular likes and dislikes of one particular audience on one particular night or afternoon. I also found that in listening twice to my fellow writers’ plays as well, I was able to let myself experience the first reading of each writer’s play as any audience member would and the second as an opportunity to focus in a more workmanlike way on the sort of dramaturgical questions playwrights need to be able to raise with each other.”

—Bob Clyman, playwright, *The Exceptionals*
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 2011 is slated for October 19–23

ANPF Welcomes New Advisory Board Members

ANPF is thrilled to welcome five new members to our Advisory Board, which comprises members of the local theatre community. Peter Alzado is an actor and the former producing artistic director of Oregon Stage Works, the longtime home of ANPF. Livia Genise is an actress and the artistic director of Camelot Theatre, which was a critical venue for ANPF during our rebuilding year. Ellen Lewis was our ANPF 2010 host playwright and an ANPF 2008 winning playwright for Song of Extinction. Bill Rauch is the artistic director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, which has been incredibly generous with its venue space as well as its acting company and technical crew. Shane Rogers is an actor at OSF, and he played the title role in The Insidious Impact of Anton. All are longtime supporters of ANPF and unique partners in our efforts to bring new works to the stage. ANPF is honored by their endorsement and their continued support.

Visit Us Online! www.AshlandNewPlays.org
We’re also on Facebook. “Like” our page and stay in touch!