ANPF Names This Year’s Winning Playwrights

The Ashland New Plays Festival has announced the lineup for its flagship festival in October: Suzanne Bradbeer of New York City for *The God Game*; Richard Manley of New York City for *This Rough Magic*; Cary Pepper of San Francisco for *How It Works*; and Joshua Rebell of New York City for *Omission*.

Through a process of reading 200+ blinded scripts, ANPF has, for the second year in a row, coincidentally selected three East Coasters and one San Franciscan. The winners will travel to Ashland for a week in October to workshop their plays and see their scripts taken from the page to the stage, featuring professional actors and directors from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the community.

Host playwright EM Lewis, an ANPF 2008 winner with her play “Song of Extinction,” is returning to Ashland this year as the ANPF 2012 host playwright. She will welcome this year’s winners, moderate the talkbacks, and lead playwriting workshops.

Lewis won the 2009 Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award from the American Theater Critics Association for “Song of Extinction,” which premiered in Los Angeles. Lewis also wrote the Iraq War hostage drama “HEADS” (winner of the 2008 Primus Prize for an emerging woman theater artist, and Best of 2007 from the Los Angeles Times).

Lewis is from Oregon, was in Los Angeles for quite a while, and is now living in Princeton, New Jersey. She will moderate all the talkbacks after the readings and will lead the playwriting workshops on Friday and Saturday, October 26 and 27, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ashland New Plays Festival is celebrating its twentieth year, which will be marked by special events to commemorate its rich history, including a gala reunion at the Schneider Museum for past playwrights and others who have participated in the festival during the past two decades.

For more information visit AshlandNewPlays.org.

Host playwright EM Lewis.

Ashland Library and Hospital Team Up for Literacy

Margie Cicerrella, the Children’s Librarian at the Ashland branch of the Jackson County Library, has allocated funds raised by Friends of the Ashland Library to a new program: **Welcome Baby Book Bags**.

With financial support from the **Friends of the Ashland Library** and the local **Kiwanis Club**, about 360 bags of books are given to the parents of newborns at **Ashland Community Hospital** each year. The bags contain three carefully selected, bilingual books to promote language development and engage infants with the printed page. Margie also includes information about the importance of early literacy and a list of books recommended for reading to children.

“I could see clearly the importance a family placed on reading affected the attitude their children developed towards reading—and it was true across many different social and economic situations,” Margie said.