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CATF ANNOUNCES 2012 REPERTORY

*New Plays by Johnna Adams, Bob Clyman, Neil LaBute, Evan M. Wiener, and Bess Wohl
22nd Season to be held July 6 – 29, 2012*

Shepherdstown, West Virginia: The **Contemporary American Theater Festival (CATF) at Shepherd University** has announced the 2012 five-play repertory for its 22nd season of producing and developing new American theater. The season will feature new plays from Johnna Adams, Bob Clyman, Neil LaBute, Evan M. Wiener, and Bess Wohl. The four-week festival, consisting of 94 performances and other programming, will be held **July 6 – 29** in Shepherdstown, WV.

In addition to the plays – produced in rotating repertory, which allows audience members to see all five shows in just two days – the 2012 Season will also feature free lectures, stage readings, panels, and an art exhibition. Plus, patrons have the opportunity to purchase tickets to audience immersion events including lunches and workshops with artists, and breakfast with the Theater Festival’s producing director.

“The Contemporary American Theater Festival is the summer home of fearless, irreverent, brave, and provocative new plays,” said **Founder and Producing Director Ed Herendeen**. “We collaborate with some of the most important theater artists working today and discover the foremost artists of tomorrow. We push at the boundaries of what theater can be. We launch rigorous, adventurous, and passionate new works for the contemporary stage. The 2012 repertory continues the vibrant and electrifying conversation between our artists and our audiences that began 22 years ago. These five plays—filled with humor, anger, love, and lust—explore, examine, and celebrate the ethical, moral, and dangerous choices we face every day.”

The 2012 repertory includes two world premieres, two second productions, and a new play from one of the most well-known and daring writers for the stage and film. The plays are:

Gidion’s Knot by Johnna Adams. World Premiere. Directed by Ed Herendeen

Over the course of an unexpected parent/teacher conference in a 5th grade classroom, a mother and her son’s teacher have a volatile conversation about Gidion. Was he a bully? A victim? A protector? Or, was his imagination too powerful a tool for the adults around him? As his story is uncovered, the women try to construct an explanation for his behavior and come to terms with who, or what, is at fault. Gidion’s

Knot is a heart-wrenching, devastatingly beautiful work about the power of words and freedom of expression. It explores the dangerous, emotional, and often painful world of elementary school.

Johnna Adams is the 2011 recipient of the prestigious Princess Grace Award for playwriting and was a finalist (with *Gidion's Knot*) for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Her plays include *Sans Merci*, *Cockfighters*, and *The Secret Geometry of S&M Porn*; she is currently pursuing her M.F.A. from Hunter College, studying with playwright Tina Howe.

The Exceptionals by Bob Clyman. Directed by Tracy Brigden

Five years after participating in a fertility program experiment, two mothers, with distinctly different backgrounds, are faced with complicated choices surrounding their extraordinarily gifted children. Set in the near future, this wonderfully smart play of high-stakes social experimentation sheds light upon the competitive sport of parenting and raises the question: how far would you go to provide your child every possible opportunity? Gwen and Allie battle over their children's – and their own – lots in life while learning that, perhaps, they need each other more than they realize to successfully raise their super babies.

Bob Clyman is a playwright and clinical psychologist. His work has appeared Off-Broadway and at Denver Center Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, The Laguna Playhouse, and elsewhere. *The Exceptionals* premiered at Merrimack Repertory Theatre in 2011.

In A Forest, Dark and Deep by Neil LaBute. Directed by Ed Herenden

In this compelling new play by the dark prince of the American stage and indie cinema, all Bobby thinks he is doing is helping his sister, a university dean, clear out her cottage in the woods. But in this cabin of lies, nothing is as it seems and the truth refuses to be packed away. Love, lust, and sibling rivalry escalate into a psychological thriller that bursts with savage conflict and insight into human relationships and moral failings. On this dark and stormy night, what is Betty hiding? And what will Bobby do when he finds out?

Neil LaBute's plays include *The Shape of Things*, *reasons to be pretty*, *Fat Pig*, and *Wrecks* (CATF '08). His films include *In the Company of Men*, *Your Friends and Neighbors*, and *Possession*. *In A Forest, Dark and Deep* premiered on London's West End in 2011.

Captors by Evan M. Wiener. Directed by Ed Herendeen

For 10 days in Buenos Aires in 1960, covert Israeli agents held captive the world's most wanted war criminal and Hitler's architect of the Holocaust – Adolf Eichmann. In a hidden safe house, a thrilling battle of wills unfolds in this historical first-person account of the fight against Fascism. Captors is a portrait of two men: the Mossad agent burdened with bringing evil to justice, and Eichmann, the self-declared "Good German," who is ready to utilize his every last ounce of charm, intelligence, and humanity in hopes of surviving and escaping his final interrogation. On the 50th anniversary of Eichmann's conviction and execution, this absorbing new play is a haunting reminder of the consequences and complexity of closing society's darkest chapter.

Inspired by Eichmann In My Hands by Peter Z. Malkin and Harry Stein.

Evan M. Wiener is an emerging American voice for stage and film and a graduate of Columbia University; his screenplay *Monogamy* won top honors at the Tribeca Film Festival. *Captors* premiered at the Huntington Theatre and was a "critic's pick" of *The Boston Globe*.

Barcelona by Bess Wohl.

In the shadows of Gaudi's Sagrada Familia, Barcelona's famous cathedral, an American woman drunkenly goes home with a Spanish stranger. In what begins as a wine-drenched, carefree one-night-stand of cross-cultural lust and libation, soon embarks a dangerous lesson in consequence, truth, and moving on. In this funny, sensual, and elegant work, there unfolds a surprising story that tears down the artificial borders of a global world, while proving the universal struggle of healing the human heart.

Barcelona is produced as part of a rolling world premiere agreement between the Contemporary American Theater Festival and People's Light & Theatre in Malvern, PA.

Bess Wohl writes for theater, film, and television. Her play *Touched* was recently produced at the Williamstown Theatre Festival and other work has been seen at The Vineyard Theater, Pittsburgh Public Theater, and Northlight Theater. Also an actor, she received her M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama.

Matinee and evening performances are held Wednesday – Sunday throughout the Festival. Single ticket prices to the 2012 repertory are \$55. Four-show and five-show ticket packages (Rep Passes) are available, ranging from \$100-\$230. All performances take place at various venues on the Shepherd University campus.

In addition to the production schedule, the Theater Festival will again return with numerous ancillary events for audiences and community members. For purchase, patrons can attend:

- **Breakfast with Ed:** a continental-style breakfast and discussion with CATF’s Founder and Producing Director Ed Herendeen that allows for in-depth discussion about the plays, the craft of theater, and the inner-workings of the Festival. \$25.00
- **Lunch & Art:** Introduced in 2011 and expanded in 2012 to seven unique events, these intimate lunch forums pair up audience members and the CATF artist company and allows the community to learn more about their careers and path to Shepherdstown. These lunches, which sold-out last year, provide a unique perspective into the lives of the directors, designers, actors, and technicians who create the Festival each summer, and feature the menus of several local restaurants and eateries. \$30.00
- **Theater 4-1-1:** New in 2012, these Saturday morning workshops will allow attendees to participate in the actual practice of making theater through an introductory class on playwriting, directing, design, and acting, taught by CATF professionals and guest artists. \$30.00

Returning this year will be several free programs – **“Humanities at the Festival”** – which provide opportunities for CATF audiences to “talk theater” with each other, CATF artists, guest lecturers, and Festival leadership. The 2012 Humanities programming, annually supported by the West Virginia Humanities Council, will include an expanded **stage reading series** at the **Shepherdstown Opera House**; **Saturday afternoon lectures**; **post-show discussions** with actors; and brand new after-hours **salons**, held in the **Bavarian Inn’s Rathskellar**, which will allow patrons to continue their conversation about the plays and the Festival experience beyond the shows and with CATF board members and staff.

All **ticketed performances** and programs can be purchased through the **Theater Festival Box Office**, which is open off-season Monday to Friday from noon to 5 p.m., **by calling 800-999-CATF (2283)**, or 24-hours a day online by visiting **www.catf.org/boxoffice**.

Over the last 21 years, the Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University has become a leading center for the production and development of new plays, having fully staged **90 American works, including 34 world premieres, by 64 different playwrights**. In 2011, the Theater Festival broke all box office records with a total attendance of 12,697, a 15% increase over the previous year. With a budget of more than \$1 million, the Theater Festival **brings patrons and visitors to West Virginia’s Eastern Panhandle from 35 different states**. A 2008 economic impact survey reported that the Theater Festival generates more than \$2 million for the local economy each season.

A 501(c)3 nonprofit, the Contemporary American Theater Festival has enjoyed major grant support from the State of West Virginia, The Shubert Foundation, Ted Snowdon Foundation, National

Endowment for the Arts, The Weissberg Foundation, West Virginia Humanities Council, The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, The Nora Roberts Foundation, and the Venturous Theater Fund of the Tides Foundation. The Theater Festival operates under a LORT D Actors' Equity Association contract and has agreements with United Scenic Artists and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. The Theater Festival is hosted by Shepherd University, a public liberal arts institution founded in 1871.

Complete season information – including playwright bios, schedule, photos, and ticketing – is available at www.catf.org. Social media connections can be made at twitter.com/thinktheater and facebook.com/CATFatSU.

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