

NKU's 13th Biennial Year End Series Festival of New Plays Premieres 3 Plays Plus Student Playwright and Faculty Director

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS, KY – The Department of Theatre & Dance at Northern Kentucky University announces the selection of three World Premiere plays which will be produced during its 13th Biennial Year End Series (Y.E.S.) Festival of New Plays. This year's festival productions will be presented in repertory from April 12-22, with specific performances including talkback discussions with the playwrights, directors and special guests. Highlights of this year's festival include the selection of a work written by NKU senior Brad Cupples, and the directorial debut of Broadway veteran and faculty member Teresa De Zarn.

***The Chester County Automaton(s)* by Brad Cupples** will open the festival on Thursday, April 12 at 8:00pm in the NKU Corbett Theatre. When the members of the First Uniform Church of Perpetual Joy and Humility learn that the local scientist, Dr. Metternich, is in the process of creating an Automaton, a mechanical man, they believe the Apocalypse is at hand and will do anything to exorcise this demon from their midst. This fast-paced comedy examines the battle between science and the religious right through the eyes of a town full of people who choose emotion over reason.



Mr. Cupples, a senior who will graduate in May with a B.F.A. in playwriting, submitted the play under a pseudonym to the festival contest. It is the first time in the history of the Y.E.S. Festival that the work of an NKU student has been chosen for production, and Brad says he is "honored and excited to have his world premiere and first major production at the school he has called home for the past five years." Originally from Jackson, Tennessee, Brad staged his first play (*Adolf's Follies*, a rollicking fun musical set in Nazi Germany) at the age of 17 at the local high school theatre. He has developed a reputation for works of political and social satire. While at NKU, he has had various student productions of his work mounted, including *Funny Sunny Beach Blanket Luau Extravaganza* and a one man show titled *All the Hot Chicks are in Hell*. He has also performed in *The Bald Soprano*, *The Crucible* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. ***The Chester County Automaton(s)*** will be directed by faculty member Mary Jo Beresford.

***The Aaronville Woman* by Stephen Spotswood** will make its debut on Friday, April 13 at 8:00pm in the NKU Stauss Theatre. When the skeletal remains of a woman believed to be thousands of years old are discovered in the small town of Aaronville, Pennsylvania, renowned forensic anthropologist Eve Beecher is called back to the hometown she left over 20 years ago to verify the find. Although she tries to keep the trip strictly professional, a visit from her childhood friend and first love, Samantha, forces Eve to confront the painful past that caused her to leave Aaronville. When the bones of the "Aaronville Woman" are stolen, Eve must solve two mysteries: what has happened to the bones, and why did Sam betray her so many years ago?



Mr. Spotswood is a journalist and playwright living and working in the Washington, D.C. area. He is currently pursuing his M.F.A. in playwriting at The Catholic University of America (CUA). His previously performed works include *Give Unto Caesar*, winner of the CUA Religious One-Acts Festival, *3 a.m.*, *Fire Burn and Cauldron*, *Teaching Silence* and *Says Eugenia*, for which he was commissioned as co-author by The Cardboard Box Collaborative theatre company in Philadelphia. His play *The Aaronville Woman* was read at The Kennedy Center's Page to Stage Festival in September and workshopped at the Region II Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in January. The premiere production of ***The Aaronville Woman*** will also be the directing debut for faculty member Teresa De Zarn.

***In the Wake of King Death* by Chuck Spoler** will premiere on Saturday, April 14 at 8:00pm in the NKU Corbett Theatre. In 1348, the Black Death wiped out thousands in Europe, including Princess Joan of England, daughter of King Edward III, who was on her way to be married to Prince Pedro of Spain. The alliance, which would have made Edward the most powerful man in the world, was prevented when Joan's entire retinue was consumed by the Plague... but what would have happened if the princess had lived? In the play, Joan survives her journey to Spain, and we see what turns history may have taken as she encounters Pedro, his servant Gracias, an itinerant monk called Thimblebrig, the beautiful prophet Oracle, and King Death himself in a story of confused identities and imminent Armageddon.



Mr. Spoler wrote his first play, *Blood Memory*, in 1999. When it won the Arts and Letters Prize in Drama, as judged by John Guare, Chuck was hooked. His work has also won the Baltimore Playwrights Festival, The Pennsylvania Playwright Right to Performance Award (twice), The Promising Playwright Award and The National One-Act Playwriting Competition, as well as a Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Mr. Spoler's plays have been produced in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, Ohio and Off-Off Broadway. Along the way, he has also taught playwriting at Goucher College in Baltimore, and conducted Hepatitis-C and HIV research while running a support group at Johns Hopkins Hospital. He lives on a goat and alpaca farm in Shrewsbury, Pennsylvania with his wife and muse, Linda Apuzzo, an HIV researcher and fiber artist, and his daughter Shannon is a sophomore at the Savannah College of Art and Design. Mr. Spoler is a member of the Dramatists Guild. ***In the Wake of King Death*** will be directed by faculty member Brian Robertson.

The performance schedule for the three plays in the 2007 Y.E.S. Festival of New Plays is as follows:

<i>The Chester County Automaton(s)</i>	April 12, 16, 19 and 21* at 8pm; April 14 at 1pm*
<i>The Aaronsville Woman</i>	April 13, 17, 19 and 20* at 8pm; April 14, 15* and 21 at 4pm; April 22 at 1pm
<i>In the Wake of King Death</i>	April 14, 15*, 18 and 20 at 8pm; April 21* at 1pm <i>*indicates performance with talkback to follow</i>

Reservations may be made by contacting the NKU Fine Arts Box Office by phone at 859-572-5464. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$9 for NKU faculty and staff, \$8 for senior citizens 60 or older and \$6 for students. All seating is general admission; space is limited, so advance reservations are recommended.

All three of this year's Y.E.S. Festival plays contain mature language and themes, and are recommended for ages high school and above.

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