2011 Spring Season

O’NEILL’S WHERE THE CROSS IS MADE AND GOLD ARE FEATURED IN PLAYWRIGHTS’ THEATRE OFFERINGS

Haunted by the Sea: From Transcendence to Greed is the theme of the upcoming Playwrights’ Theatre playbill for May, 2011. Following a highly successful performance of three plays from Eugene O’Neill’s Glencarin Cycle in January, the spring offerings will further illustrate the playwright’s attraction to the sea.

Sunday, May 1 — Josy Miller, Artistic Director of the Hapgood Theatre Company in Antioch, will direct a staged reading of the one-act play, Where the Cross is Made, written in 1918. Acclaimed Bay Area actor Ken Ruta will be featured in the role of Captain Isaiah Bartlett.

In addition to the O’Neill work, three short plays from PlayGround, the San Francisco based company that develops new playwrights, were selected from over 30 entries submitted in November for presentation at the Berkeley Rep. They were “prompted” by the word-sculpture at the O’Neill Commemorative in downtown Danville dealing with transcendence. Joel Roster and Ken Sonkin will direct.

Sunday, May 22 — Daren A.C. Carollo, Artistic Director of Diablo Theatre Company, will direct Gold, written in 1921. The full-length play of conscience, vengeance, and ghosts, is based on the one-act work to be presented on May 1. The cast will include Ruta and the other actors from Where the Cross is Made.

Both performances are scheduled for 3:00 pm in the Old Barn at Tao House. The National Park Service will provide bus transportation to the site. They will leave from the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, 205 Railroad Avenue, Danville, beginning at 2:00 pm. Admission is $25 for individual performances, $45 for both. For reservations, visit our website www.eugeneoneill.org or call 925.820.1818.

Tom Leatherman is New Superintendent at Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site

In early January 2011 Tom Leatherman was named the new superintendent of Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site, replacing Martha Lee. Tom had been serving as the deputy superintendent for the past two years at Eugene O’Neill as well as three other National Park sites in Contra Costa County. Prior to his assignments in the Bay Area, he served as the superintendent of Manzanar National Historic Site. But, Tom is no stranger to the Bay Area. He was born in Oakland and grew up in the Santa Cruz Mountains on a small farm. He attended college at the University of California at Santa Cruz and began his NPS career in 1989 as an intern at Pinnacles National Monument. Upon graduation in 1990, he started working seasonally for the NPS at Pinnacles and went on to work at several other parks in the west, including Great Basin National Park, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and Point Reyes National Seashore. Tom lives in San Ramon with his wife, Jeanie and two children, Marissa and Max. While not at work, he enjoys spending time with his family, hiking and cooking gourmet food.
‘O’NEILL IN BOHEMIA’ IS THEME OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN NY

O’Neillians from far corners of the globe will gather in New York early this summer for the 8th International Eugene O’Neill Conference.

Sponsored by the Eugene O’Neill Society, over 100 scholars and others interested in O’Neill and his works will come together June 22-26 in the Greenwich Village area where O’Neill and his colleagues began the Provincetown Playhouse at the center of the early 20th century Bohemian culture.

The conference program will focus on O’Neill’s early career and those of other Provincetown Playhouse contemporaries. Most of O’Neill earliest plays were produced by the Provincetown Players in Greenwich Village beginning in 1916.

Among the activities planned are a keynote address by a well-known theater professional; a tour of the recently rebuilt Provincetown Playhouse, and several panel discussions, paper presentations covering facets of O’Neill’s life and forces that shaped his work; and a tour of O’Neill’s New York “haunts” put together by biographers Barbara and Arthur Gelb.

A highlight of the conference will be the Medallion Awards Banquet, with recognition given to three long-time O’Neill luminaries: director Robert Falls, actor Brian Dennehy, and our own Dianne Schinnerer, past president of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, and long-time secretary of the O’Neill Society.

Book signings and a Greenwich Village tour of sites important to O’Neill’s life and those of the Provincetown Playhouse, along with just being able to attend professional theatre in New York will only add to the Conference’s excitement.

Two previous O’Neill International Conferences have been held at Tao House, Danville, CA with others held in Boston, Bermuda, the Loire Valley of France, and Provincetown MA – all locations where the playwright once lived.

Most of the 2011 conference events will take place in Greenwich Village, and on campus at New York University. Registration is $200 for O’Neill Society members, and $235 for non-members; and $90 for graduate students. Details and conference registration are available on the Society’s website: www.eugeneoneillsociety.org.

SHANGHAI GOVERNMENT HONORS ‘FATHER OF AMERICAN DRAMA’

In late 1928, Eugene O’Neill and his future wife Carlotta Monterey sailed to the Far East, and spent time in Shanghai. It was not a particularly happy time for O’Neill, who suffered from sunstroke during his time there.

A much more pleasant event occurred for the Nobel Prize winning playwright in 2010 when the Shanghai Government honored O’Neill as the “Father of American Drama” with the placement of a commissioned sculpture on Theater Way, part of a large development project in central Shanghai.

This recognition is another example of how important O’Neill and his plays are around the world. His impact on the evolution of drama in the United States is well documented, and his plays continue to be produced frequently throughout Europe and Asia. O’Neill moved America drama from its nineteenth century melodramatic and “stagy” past, into a whole new genre of realism that has influenced American playwrights ever since.

Chosen for the bronze commission by the City of Shanghai was Jon Hair, a noted American sculptor whose studio is in Cornelius, North Carolina, near Charlotte. Hair has received many commissions over the years including the monumental, including the monumental 35’ bronze and steel globe, “Olympic Strength” at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs.

Hair and his family were invited to the dedication ceremony as guests of the City of Shanghai. The dedication speech was provided by a representative of the U.S. Consulate. The ceremony was attended by the Vice Mayor of Shanghai Municipal Government, the Secretary General of the People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and the director of the Shanghai Theater Academy. The ceremony received extensive press and television coverage.

The O’Neill sculpture is one of 19 sculptures of different playwrights that have been commissioned for Shanghai’s Theater Way project. The Vice President of the Shanghai Theatre Academy told Hair “We feel that your (sculpture) is the only one which captures the soul of the playwright.”

Jon Hair has had thirty major sculpture commissions since 1999 for public agencies, corporate and private collections. He majored in Fine Arts at Ohio State Universality and the Columbus College of Art and Design. The O’Neill sculpture was Hair’s second commission in China.
Twentieth Anniversary of Student Days Attracts Students From Sixteen Bay Area High Schools

Magic happens in the Old Barn at the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site, when aspiring students come with a passion for the arts, ready to learn from professionals in their chosen fields. This year marked the 20th anniversary of the Student Days Program sponsored by the Eugene O'Neill Foundation in partnership with the National Park Service. The program welcomes students to Tao House for explorations in drama, art, photography, and writing. To mark this milestone during Drama Day on March 5th, a 20th Anniversary Proclamation was presented to the Foundation by Heather Schiffer from the office of State Senator Mark DeSaulnier.

Over the years, more than 2000 students have participated in Student Days. This year, 72 students from 16 different Bay Area high schools attended. There were 14 artists on March 2nd, 18 actors on March 5th, 19 photographers on March 9th, and 21 writers on March 10th. Each day began with guided tours of Tao House provided by the National Park Service. After the tours, students met in the Old Barn to hear a presentation by professionals in the students’ chosen fields.

The guest speakers this year included Annie Smart, Costume & Scene Designer currently at Berkeley Rep; Amy Potozkin, also associated with Berkeley Rep as Casting Director & Artistic Associate; Benjamin Krantz, a photographer and film producer with comedy theater in his background; and Aaron Loeb, Bay Area playwright whose Abraham Lincoln’s Big Gay Dance Party premiered Off-Broadway in 2010.

Following the guest lectures, students participated in direct instruction and application of new skills. On Art Day, Annie Smart stayed on to facilitate students who worked in pairs to create costume and set designs based on specific scenes. On Photography Day, Ben Krantz remained with students throughout the day, instructing as they practiced shooting, and, with the benefit of digital cameras, providing instant feedback on their work.

On Drama and Writing Days there were guest instructors in addition to the lecturers. Chad Deverman, an actor with twenty years experience provided the mentoring and acting exercises for Drama Day students. Two playwrights, Evelyn Pine and Erin Phillips, worked with the young writers to produce scenes, using a variety of exercises, one of which involved visualizing two characters and then writing a 3-line interchange between the two. Evelyn is associated with PlayGround, a playwriting group in the Bay Area that has four times bestowed on her the Emerging Playwright Award. Erin, originally from the Bay Area, holds a BFA in acting from Cornish College of the Arts and two masters degrees, one from UCSB in dramatic arts and the other in playwriting from the University of Texas.

On each of the four days, Kerri Shaw and Richard James, outstanding local actors whose performances most of us have enjoyed at Center REP and other Bay Area venues, presented a gripping performance of “The Triple Door.” This short piece by Travis Bogard reveals details of O’Neill’s life with excerpts from Long Day’s Journey Into Night and Moon for the Misbegotten, both written in the upstairs study behind the three doors. For many of the students, this was the first time that they had been exposed to the plays of Eugene O'Neill.

Student work from the art and photography days will be displayed later at the Visitor Center at Tao House, and drama and writing students, based on their work, will be selected to participate in O’Neill’s Studio Retreat, a week-long summer program where writers compose one-act plays and a group of actors join them later to collaborate and perform the original works.

Student Days 2010 was coordinated by Vice President of Education, Jack De Rieux, assisted by members of the Foundation Board of Directors. National Park Service staff provided transportation for students from Walnut Creek BART and the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, led the tours of Tao House, and offered support to board members throughout each day.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN AWARDED NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR

In early March the National Endowment for the Arts announced that Robert Brustein was to be one of eight recipients of the 2010 National Medal of Arts. President and Mrs. Obama presented the award in an East Room ceremony at the White House on March 2.

Brustein was recognized with the Eugene O’Neill Foundation’s prestigious Tao House Award as part of the Seventh International Conference on Eugene O’Neill, held locally in June 2008. Robert Brustein is a major force in the American theatre. He is the former professor of English at Harvard University, past Dean of the Yale School of Drama, and an important critic, author, director and actor.

“It was the opinion of the Foundation Board that Robert Brustein has served the American Theatre with distinction,” said former Foundation President Gary Schaub. Past Tao House awardees have included Travis Bogard, Jason Robards Jr., Edward Hastings, Cherry Jones and others.

Other National Medals of Arts recipients at the White House ceremony included actress Meryl Streep, musician Quincy Jones, poet Donald Hall and pianist Van Cliburn.
We Can’t Do It Without You!

Each year the Foundation looks to its members to help secure the community support we need to sustain the Foundation’s programs. You can help us do this by signing on as a Foundation member, or by renewing your current membership.

Without those memberships:

- **We can't** produce the Playwrights’ Theatre productions each May.
- **We can't** stage the annual Eugene O’Neill Festival in the Fall.
- **We can't** maintain the largest O'Neill archival collection and scholar’s resource on the West Coast.
- **We can't** bring scores of high school students to Tao House to learn about O'Neill, and his contributions to the American theatre.

There’s lot’s **we can’t do** without you … and so much **we can do** if you’re a member.

While we work closely with the National Park Service, we receive no direct program support for these programs. We depend on community members like you to help make it happen. Be a Crew Member for as little as $35/yr, or a Playwright’s Circle Member for just $100/yr. Other membership levels are available as well.

It’s easy to join or renew. Go on-line to [www.eugeneoneill.org](http://www.eugeneoneill.org), and click the Memberships button on the Home Page. Your annual donation to the Foundation is needed and is greatly appreciated.

Contact Us:

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Reservations for tours of Tao House: 925.838.0249

Calendar of Events:

**May 1**  PLAYWRIGHTS’ THEATRE
Where the Cross is Made
Three Scenes Inspired by O'Neill

**May 5**  ARTIST DAYS AT TAO HOUSE
6, & 7  Plein-air, Still life, Photography

**May 22**  PLAYWRIGHTS’ THEATRE
Gold - Full-length play

**July**  STUDENT RETREAT

**Sept 18**  EUGENE O’NEILL FESTIVAL - thru Sept 24