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Playwrights Selected for ‘Collider’ New Play Project for St. Charles’ Inaugural Summer Theater Festival July 2011

February 2011, St. Charles, IL –Fox Valley Repertory is pleased to have selected three playwrights for Fox Valley Repertory’s Inaugural Collider Project, taking place during the St. Charles’ Summer Theater Festival in July. Each of the three playwrights has an impressive list of credentials, and has submitted excellent samples of their previous work. Their writing samples and their proposals for new plays fit well with our purpose of “developing new works that help us better understand the universe and who we are while illuminating and celebrating the worlds of art, science and technology.”

The three playwrights and their respective plays are Reina Hardy of Chicago with “Stars and Barmen,” K. Frithjof Peterson of Saginaw, MI with “A Scientist’s Guide to Love and Poetry”, and Garret C. Schneider of Nashville, TN with “Clockwork Child.”

“We’re thrilled to offer this new initiative for playwrights,” says Artistic Director John Gawlik. “Our Collider 2011: New Play Project will offer a unique experience for three playwrights to work one-on-one with local scientists. By gaining insight into the viewpoint of scientists, playwrights will have the opportunity to expand their storytelling as they write a world premiere.”

Stars and Barmen

Reina Hardy’s “Stars and Barmen” tells the story of Rupert, an astrophysicist in a city where the streetlights hide the stars, spends his nights manning a dim telescope and a computer, waiting to observe spectacular events in distant galaxies. Rupert tries to cross the boundary between life as it is observed or represented, and life as it is actually lived. He also has to get his doctorate, avoid the wrath of his advisor and find a date for his sister’s wedding, but he never lets go of his two main goals: truly experiencing the stellar event of his lifetime, and having a really good time at a party.

“Stars and Barmen” is inspired in part by Hardy’s own experience studying “Astrophysics for Poets” in college. According to Hardy, “That’s when I started to understand that astrophysics isn’t just poetic, it’s poetry. It’s the process of leashing something inconsequential as a word around something as monumental as a star, so that when you tug the leash, you see the star. And what we needed to do was learn how to look at words, numbers, collections of metaphors, *dots...* and see stars. *Understand stars.*”

Hardy has a B.A. in English from Columbia University in New York. She is a Chicago-based playwright and the co-

founder of “The Viola Project,” an NFP Shakespeare performance workshop for girls.

“Stars and Barmen” will be directed by Chicago’s award-winning director, Matt Miller. The staged reading and talkback is scheduled for Saturday, July 16 at 1pm.

Clockwork Child

Garret C. Schneider’s “**Clockwork Child**” is based on the true story of two 19th Century mathematicians, Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace who worked to create a computer 100 years before the first computer was actually invented. Ada’s contribution off of Babbage’s initial work blossomed into a treatise on the capabilities of the machine, with additional diagrams, figurative examples, and the world’s first *computer program* to run on the as-yet realized machine, called the *Analytical Engine*.

After the landmark work, Ada never published a scientific or mathematical paper again, and Babbage broke their partnership, and shortly thereafter abandoned his Engine. The two rarely spoke until weeks before Ada's death when she called Babbage to her side one last time.

Schneider’s education includes and M.F.A. in Playwriting from Ohio University and an M.A. in Teaching from Belmont University. He has had several full-length and short plays read and workshoped throughout the Midwest.

“Clockwork Child” will be directed by Jason W. Gerace. The staged reading and talkback is scheduled for Saturday, July 23 at 1pm.

A Scientist Guide to Love and Poetry

K. Frithjof Peterson’s “A Scientist Guide to Love and Poetry” tells the story of a physics undergrad named Jeremiah Hardgrove who is in love with a literature student named Lucy. Lucy doesn’t believe there is enough poetry in Jeremiah to love and understand her. Jeremiah sets out on a quest to prove to Lucy that there can be poetry and love in the world of physics, and he writes a myth about their relationship based on the four fundamental interactions of nature. And as is guide to the galaxy, Jeremiah often gets visits from the legendary Gene Rodenberry who provides wisdom on love and the stars.

Peterson’s education includes a MFA in Playwriting from Western Michigan University, and has had his plays performed and read throughout the country. His awards include being a finalist for the Heideman ten minute play contest at the Actor’s Theater of Louisville.

“A Scientist Guide to Love and Poetry” will be directed by Fox Valley Rep’s Artistic Director, John Gawlik. The staged reading and talkback is scheduled for Saturday, July 30 at 1pm.

About Collider 2011

As part of the Collider: New Play Project, these selected playwrights will be partnered with area scientists to further develop their new works. This collaboration will allow both artist and scientist to share their personal outlook and creativity while ushering in a new play. The final script will be work-shopped with professional directors and actors during the St. Charles Summer Theater Festival from July 14-31, 2011. Public, world premiere staged readings will be held on Saturdays and Sundays.

For more information on Fox Valley Repertory, the St. Charles Summer Theater Festival or the Collider New Play Project, please visit www.summertheaterfest.org or www.foxvalleyrep.org.

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