

WOMEN PLAYWRIGHTS SERIES 2017

April 12, 19 & 26

Wednesdays at 7:30pm

Sitnik Theater of the Lackland Performing Arts Center

This series is dedicated to providing a working forum for the unique voice of women writing for theatre today. The WPS has helped to develop the work of over 60 playwrights from around the country, producing more than 14 world premieres on the CSC mainstage. Staged readings are followed by a lively discussion with the playwrights and cast.

SHAME by Sholeh Wolpe

Wednesday, April 12 at 7:30pm

A dramatic comedy about secrets, a clash of cultures and the “cost” of happiness. *2016 Eugene O’Neill National Playwrights Conference, semifinalist.*

SHAME is a fast-paced dramatic/comedy about secrets, a clash of cultures and the “cost” of happiness. Under the guise of a food delivery man, an Iranian nuclear scientist comes to the apartment of Noor and her older married sister Sahar, to confront Noor about her affair with his own sister. The women’s mother who has just arrived from overseas mistakes him for Noor’s fiancé and before long, they are all in a head to head clash with each other’s moral values, sexual identity, and cultural expectations.

The greatest number of human rights violations worldwide has been and are committed against women and girls. “Honor” and “shame” play a major part in many of these atrocities. Sholeh Wolpe herself comes from a culture affected by the central question posed in “Shame”: what is the cost of happiness and personal freedom? And are we willing to pay it if we are able to do so? The stories of SHAME are based on true events. There is poetry in the tragedy of these stories, stories that Wolpe felt compelled to tell in the format of one of the most powerful art forms on earth: the stage, where “limitations of life” is possible and can be explored with the same intensity as poetry.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Born in Iran, Sholeh Wolpe spent most of her teen years in Trinidad and the UK before settling in the United States. Her awards include: 2015 Switzerland’s Le Chateau de Lavigny residency, 2014 PEN/Heim Translation Fund award, 2014 Hedgebrook residency, 2013 Midwest Book Award, and 2010 Lois Roth Persian Translation prize. Wolpe is the author of three collections of poetry and two books of translations, and is the editor of three anthologies. Her new book will be forthcoming from W.W. Norton in 2017. She lives in Los Angeles. www.sholewolpe.com.

Learn more about Sholeh Wolpe!

Wolpe’s “Letter to America” was published by the Jaipur Literary Festival, following her visit this past January. <http://www.terrain.org/2017/poetry/letter-to-america-wolpe/>

Sholeh Wolpe’s modern translation of *The Conference of the Birds* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2017) by the 12th century Iranian mystic poet, Attar, has been hailed by Reza Aslan as “timeless as the masterpiece itself.” Learn more at www.sholewolpe.com.

The *Conference of Birds* <http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=4294992721>

Composed in the twelfth century in north-eastern Iran, Attar’s great mystical poem is among the most significant of all works of Persian literature. A marvelous, allegorical rendering of the Islamic doctrine of Sufism- an esoteric system concerned with the search for truth through God- it describes the consequences of the conference of the birds of the world when they meet to begin the search for their ideal king, the Simorgh bird. On hearing that to find him they must

undertake an arduous journey, the birds soon express their reservations to their leader, the hoopoe. With eloquence and insight, however, the hoopoe calms their fears, using a series of riddling parables to provide guidance in the search for spiritual truth. By turns witty and profound, *The Conference of the Birds* transforms deep belief into magnificent poetry.

APPLES IN WINTER by Jennifer Fawcett

Wednesday, April 19 at 7:30pm

Miriam is making a pie for her son. It will be the last time she will do it for him. This is a play about mothers & sons, about how we care for each other and about how to make a really good apple pie. Winner of the Smith Prize for Political Theater, encouraging emerging playwrights to tackle the pressing issues of our times.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Jennifer is a founder and Co-Artistic Director of Working Group Theatre. She is the winner of the NEFA National Theatre Project Award (KC/ACTF) for *Atlas of Mud*, and she was nominated for the ATCA/Steinburg New Play Award for her play *Birth Witches*. Her work has been developed and produced by Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Ground Floor, the Lark (New York), Hancher Auditorium (University of Iowa), Riverside Theatre (Iowa City), Available Light Theatre (Columbus), Tennessee Women's Theatre Project (Nashville), the Source Festival (Washington, DC), Palm Beach Dramaworks (West Palm Beach), and Halcyon Theatre (Chicago), among others. A graduate of the University of Iowa MFA Playwrights Workshop, she was the NNPN Playwright-In-Residence at Curious Theatre Company (Denver). *Apples in Winter* won the 2015 NNPN Smith Prize for Political Theatre and was developed at the Banff Playwrights Colony.

HITLER'S TASTERS by Michelle Kholos Brooks

Wednesday, April 26 at 7:30pm

Inspired by the true story. Three times a day, every day, a group young women have the opportunity to die for their country. They are Adolph Hitler's food tasters. And what do girls discuss as they wait to see if they will live through another meal? Like all girls, throughout time, they gossip and dream, they question and dance. They want to love, laugh, and above all, they want to survive.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Brook's play *Hostage* was chosen as a finalist for the 2016/17 Woodward/Newman Drama Award. It was first presented as a reading at the Skylight Theatre's INKubator series and later at The Road Theatre Summer Playwrights Festival. *Hostage* was also a semi-finalist for Premier Stage Play Festival. It is scheduled for production at the Skylight Theatre in January 2018. *Kalamazoo*, co-written with Kelly Younger was the winner of the Riva Shiner Comedy Award, Bloomington Playwright's Project, among others. *Family Planning* made its world premiere at the Colony Theatre, Los Angeles with additional support from EST-LA and Pacific Resident Theatre. It was a finalist for the Riva Shiner Comedy Award, Bloomington Playwrights Project. Brooks' play, *Chair* was a finalist for the Firehouse Theatre's Festival of New American Plays. Other select works for the stage include: *Two Parents, Two Weddings, Two Years*, (Wings Theatre, New York City; Laurelgrove Theatre Company, Los Angeles); *See How We Are* (Laurelgrove Theatre Company); *Love and Other Allergies* (Vox Humana Theatre Ensemble); and *Famous in Luxembourg* (Rogue Machine, Around-the-Clock Short Play Festival), among others. Additional staged readings of various works have been produced at Snapshots, a benefit to raise funds for the Susan G. Komen Foundation; Venue 9 Theatre, San Francisco; The Barrow Group, New York; Drama West, Los Angeles; and the Bay Street Theatre, New York. Bad Outfit Productions produced Brooks' play, *Cab and Allergic to Walnuts* as short films. Publications include *Room Magazine* and *The Daily Beast*. Brooks earned a B.A. from Emerson College and an M.F.A. in Fiction from Otis College of Art and Design. She is a member of The Dramatists Guild of America and Pacific Resident Theatre in Los Angeles, CA. She lives in Venice, California with her husband and son.

Reservations encouraged and a \$5.00 donation suggested. To reserve must call box office at (908) 979-0900.

ABOUT THE WOMAN PLAYWRIGHTS SERIES:

Now it its 24th season, the WPS is a developmental program dedicated to providing a working forum for the unique and underserved voice of women writing for the theatre today. Each season 3-4 plays are selected for a collaborative workshop process, with a professional director and actors. At the end of the rehearsal, a staged reading of the play is presented at CSC (50 miles w. of NYC) for our regional audiences, giving CSC audiences larger exposure to new work, as well as offering the playwright an opportunity to get feedback from the audience during the developmental process.

Women writers from around the country will converge in Hackettstown for the three week event, which will bring dramatic workshop-presentations of the three new full-length plays by women writers.

Plays presented in the developmental WPS program are finalists in the Susan Glaspell Award competition, and are under consideration for full production in a subsequent season at the Centenary Stage Company, the professional, Equity theatre in residence on the campus of Centenary University.