

Fat Pig, by Neil LaBute

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Readers' Theatre Highlights Workshop Instructors

Three Actor's Workshop instructors will star in The Readers' Theatre's third play of their season, *Fat Pig*, by critically acclaimed playwright Neil LaBute. The readings will be performed at Buffalo Street Books on Friday, March 18, and Saturday, March 19 at 8:30pm, and Sunday, March 20 at 6:30pm. *Fat Pig* is an unconventional love story between two people that, in society's eyes, are not supposed to be together. The love relationship LaBute wrote exploits the difficulties two people face when trying to stand up for something they believe in.

Amina Omari, Masa Gibson, and Abby J. Smith will make their debut with The Readers' Theatre and this razor-sharp comedy. Also part of the cast is local actor Tim Perry. Peter Stein, local politician, and a former actor, will be reading stage directions. The performance readings will be directed by Anne Marie Cummings, Artistic Director of The Readers' Theatre, and will once again take place at Buffalo Street Books.

"It's wonderful to collaborate with The Actor's Workshop," said Cummings. "Since the actors are so open to challenges, and this play has plenty of them, it makes steering them to the edge of where they need to be relatively easy." The Readers' Theatre schedules only six rehearsals for each performance reading. "This forces the actors to make spontaneous decisions, not question their instincts, and dive head-first into the play," Cummings said.

Eliza VanCort, Founder and Director of The Actor's Workshop, is excited about the collaboration with The Readers' Theatre. "I feel like the more we can collaborate and work together in the arts, the better. It's also amazing that Anne Marie has reached out to us. Her formidable talents are really a gift to our theater community and I'm happy Workshop instructors are going to be directed by someone of her caliber."

This provocative play tells the story of Tom (Gibson), an eligible bachelor who falls for the bright, funny, and plus-sized Helen (Omari). Tom is overjoyed with his new relationship, but his snarky co-workers (Perry and Smith) are less enthusiastic. Their cruel jabs force Tom to question his own values and the importance of conventional good looks.

Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* reviewed the Off-Broadway production of *Fat Pig* in NYC, starring Jeremy Piven and Ashley Atkinson, in 2004, writing that it's "the most emotionally engaging and unsettling of Mr. LaBute's plays."

"Who hasn't questioned being with someone 'out of their league' because they were afraid of what their friends and family would do or say?" said Cummings. "*Fat Pig* demands brave actors to undertake roles that, by the end of the play, will make audience members question their own ability to change what they find unattractive in themselves."

All of the actors are eager to tackle the complex relationship issues in *Fat Pig*. "We can work really hard on accepting ourselves," said Omari, "but we still want to be accepted by others. This play addresses that human desire." This is Gibson's first time acting in a LaBute play. "I'm really looking forward to sinking my teeth into *Fat Pig* in its entirety (pun intended)." And Smith said, "I can relate to the self-doubt and insecurity Jeannie experiences due to the pressures to 'fit in.' Her vulnerability is so transparent I imagine audience members will understand her, and maybe even have empathy as well."

This will be The Readers' Theatre's last performance reading at Buffalo Street Books: *Burn This* by Lanford Wilson, May 13-15, will be performed at the Community School of Music and Arts. All tickets for *Fat Pig* are \$8. Performance dates for *Fat Pig* are March 18th and 19th at 8:30 p.m., and March 20th at 6:30 p.m. at Buffalo Street Books. Reservations are highly recommended, since seating is limited, and can be made by calling 607.273.8246. For more information about FAT PIG go to www.thereaderstheatre.blogspot.com.

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