



**BOSTON
PLAYWRIGHTS'
THEATRE**

“The Wrestling Patient” Named Finalist Outstanding New American Play by the National Endowment for the Arts

**For immediate release:
October 27, 2008**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
Jim Torres (617) 529-1670**

(WASHINGTON, DC) – SpeakEasy Stage Company, Boston Playwrights’ Theatre and FortyMagnolias Productions, are pleased to announce that **THE WRESTLING PATIENT**, the new play based on the Dutch Jewish writer Etty Hillesum that they will jointly produce this spring, has been selected as a finalist in the Outstanding New American Play competition administered by Arena Stage and sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) New Play Development Program (NPDP).

Written by Kirk Lynn in collaboration with critically acclaimed Boston actress Anne Gottlieb and Obie Award-winner Katie Pearl, **THE WRESTLING PATIENT** is drawn from the journals of Etty Hillesum, a young woman who was confronted with a remarkable choice: to hold onto a kind of integrity, or to save her own life as WWII engulfs her native Amsterdam and her family. With the help of a charismatic teacher, Etty wrestles to answer the demons of her time by looking within herself.

While the play finished out of the running for one of the two \$90,000 production grants, the New Play Development Program Panel chose to name **THE WRESTLING PATIENT** among the seven finalists and “was among the highest regarded applications in the pool” according to David Dower, Associate Artistic Director of Arena Stage.

Seventy-two applicants nationwide in association with large and small non-profit theatre companies competed in the Outstanding New American Play Category for the two grants being offered. Each was read by a minimum of three people. The readers were from all over the country and were reading “blind”-- no names of playwrights or organizations were visible and no supporting materials from the application were given. The recommended plays from that round were then read by six panelists who gathered in Washington DC at Arena Stage over the weekend of September 26-28 to review full applications and comments from readers. They then selected seven finalists and two winners.

“We are thrilled and deeply encouraged. It is an honor to be among this extraordinary group of finalists chosen by the NEA.” says co-creator/co-producer, Anne Gottlieb.

Kirk Lynn, lead writer for **THE WRESTLING PATIENT**, was also one of five recipients for Distinguished New American Play Award, for his work on “I Have Never Been So Happy,” a work currently in an earlier stage of development with his company, Rude Mechanicals, in Austin, Texas.

For more details on the New Play Development Program and the Outstanding New Play Development Program competition, please visit. <http://www.nea.gov/news/news08/NPDP2.html>.

**WRESTLING PATIENT Named Finalist Outstanding New American Play
SpeakEasy Stage Company**

THE WRESTLING PATIENT, which received a staged reading by SpeakEasy Stage last spring, will have its World Premiere from March 27 to April 11 in the Nancy and Edward Roberts Studio Theatre in the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts, 527 Tremont Street in Boston's South End. Ticket prices range from \$14-\$44.

For tickets and more information on **THE WRESTLING PATIENT**, the public is invited to call the BostonTheatreScene.com boxoffice at 617-933-8600.

About Etty Hillesum:

Etty Hillesum was a Dutch Jewish woman of 27 who wrote about her remarkable intellectual, social and spiritual transformation through diaries and letters before her death in Auschwitz on November 30, 1943. Etty's diaries provide an account of the whirlwind of the last two years of her life—when she met and began to work with the German Jewish Jungian analyst Julius Spier, nine months after the Nazis occupied Holland. Her writings chronicle her journey from a troubled but gifted young woman—erotically volatile and emotionally chaotic—to a human being consciously facing the horrors of her time with clarity and respect for human life while it was being systematically erased.

In Amsterdam 1942, round-ups of Dutch Jews for eventual deportation to camps began. Etty refused hiding and under pressure from her family, she applied for a menial job working for the Jewish Council, until torn with misgivings about the work, she decided to volunteer as a social worker to help the first round-up of Jews sent from Amsterdam to Westerbork Transit Camp, where Jews were sent while awaiting deportation to camps such as Auschwitz and Sobibor. Under the threat of weekly transport to death camps, Etty wrestled with the temptation to give in to the degradation surrounding her and instead helped to deliver messages and supplies between separated families sometimes intervening as best she could, to keep people off transport to the East. While at Westerbork, she wrote letters to Amsterdam which were shared among her friends that deeply reflected on the human nature, god and the importance of compassion in a murderous age.

Etty and her family were eventually, on sudden special orders from The Hague, transported from Westerbork to Auschwitz. She threw her final piece of writing on a postcard from the train on Sept. 7th, 1943, which was found by farmers and mailed back to her friends in Amsterdam:

Christine, opening the Bible at random I find this "The Lord is my hightower." I am sitting on my rucksack in the middle of full freight car. Father, mother and Mischa are a few cars away. We left the camp singing firmly and calmly. We shall be traveling for three days. Thank you for all your kindness and care.

Goodbye for now from the four of us.

Etty

About The Project:

THE WRESTLING PATIENT is the work of three talented theatre artists who came together specifically to create this piece in 2005. This new play is being collaboratively created by Artistic Director and critically acclaimed Actor Anne Gottlieb, Obie Award-winning Theater Artist and Director Katie Pearl, and nationally recognized Playwright Kirk Lynn ("Lipstick Traces", "Major Bang"). Collectively these artists have developed, produced and directed more than 120 shows in 13 cities, including three Off-Broadway premieres and seven national and international tours.

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SPEAKEASY STAGE CO.**

About The Artists

Anne Gottlieb (Artistic Director, Actor) is an acclaimed performer who has appeared in many New England and World Premieres (Crave, The Dazzle, and The Laramie Project), including several Elliot Norton award-winning productions. She has toured professionally to London, the New York International Fringe Festival and Moscow's Podium Festival. She produced, co-authored, and performed in the play Anam Cara: Two Women Fall into the Ancient Tale of Gilgamesh, which toured to The Roy Hart Theatre in France. Her classical work includes leading roles in As You Like It, Comedy of Errors (Shakespeare & Company) The Taming of the Shrew, and Macbeth (Boston Theatre Works). She is the 2004 IRNE (Independent Reviewers of New England) Award Winner for her work as Cleopatra in Antony and Cleopatra and Emma in Betrayal. Currently, she serves as a Resident Scholar in Collaborative Theater at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University.

Kirk Lynn (Playwright) is a Founder and Co-Producing Artistic Director of the theatre collective Rude Mechanicals in Austin, TX. Kirk has served as playwright with the Rude Mechs on 16 world-premieres. In May of 2001, Kirk's adaptation of Greil Marcus' Lipstick Traces enjoyed a critically acclaimed Off-Broadway run. In 2002 and 2003, Lipstick Traces toured the U.S. and internationally, to Austria. His latest work, Major Bang, commissioned by the Foundry Theatre, premiered in January 2006 and received rave reviews. Kirk holds a James A. Michener Fellowship from the University of Texas in Playwriting and Fiction.

Katie Pearl (Director) is an Obie-award winning collaborative theater maker working throughout the country on site-specific performance and new plays. Recent directing credits include D'Amours CATARACT (Women's Project, NYC), Steve Moore's Nightswim (State Theater, Austin TX), and Sally Oswald's The Painful Adventures (Labapalooza Puppet Lab at St. Ann's Warehouse). Pearl has developed work with writers at the Playwright's Center (MN), New Dramatists and Soho Rep (NY), and University of Texas/Austin. She has led workshops and taught youth theatre classes and is a proud member of Physical Plant Theater of Austin TX nationwide. Pearl has received numerous awards for direction and production from the Austin Critics' Table, and is the recipient of a Roothbert Fellowship, a Drama League directing fellowship and a 2003 Village Voice OBIE award.

For more information on **THE WRESTLING PATIENT**, the public is invited to call the BostonTheatreScene.com Box Office at 617-933-8600 or go online to www.BostonTheatreScene.com.

For more about Etty Hillesum or the play, you may visit www.wrestlingpatient.org

Press inquiries should be directed to **SpeakEasy Marketing Director Jim Torres**:
Office: 617-482-3279 Cell: 617-529-1670 Email: JimTorres@SpeakEasyStage.com

SpeakEasy Stage Company (www.SpeakEasyStage.com) is a proud to be the resident theater company at the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion at **The Boston Center for the Arts (BCA)**. *The Boston Center for the Arts (BCA) is the nonprofit performing and visual arts center whose mission is to support working artists to create, perform, and exhibit new work; to develop new audiences; and to connect the arts to a broad public. For more information, visit www.bcaonline.org.*

Founded in 1981 by Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott, **Boston Playwrights' Theatre** (www.bu.edu/bpt) is an award-winning small professional theatre dedicated to promoting the writing and production of new plays.

FortyMagnolias Productions is dedicated to bringing together local, national and international artists of diverse disciplines for on-going training and inquiry and to collaboratively create bold new works for the stage. www.fortymagnolias.com

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SPEAKEASY STAGE CO.**

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SPEAKEASY STAGE COMPANY

Calendar Listing Information

THE WRESTLING PATIENT

by Kirk Lynn, in collaboration with Anne Gottlieb and Katie Pearl

Presented by:

SpeakEasy Stage Company, a resident theatre company at the Boston Center for the Arts; Paul Daigneault, Producing Artistic Director;
Boston Playwrights Theatre, Kate Snodgrass, Artistic Director; and
FortyMagnolias Productions, Anne Gottlieb, Artistic Director.

Cast : Daniel Berger-Jones, Joel Colodner, Anne Gottlieb, Tom Gottlieb, Marya Lowry, Will Lyman, and Will McGarrah

Director: Katie Pearl

Production Stage Manager: Victoria Coady

Design Team: Richard Wadsworth Chambers, Scenic Design
Charles Schoonmaker, Costume Design
Franklin Meissner Jr., Lighting Design
Ben Emerson, Sound Design

Performing at: The Nancy & Edward Roberts Studio Theatre
in the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion
at the Boston Center for the Arts,
527 Tremont Street in Boston's South End

Press Performance: Sunday, March 29, 2009 3PM

Performance Schedule: March 27 – April 11, 2009
Wed., Thurs. at 7:30PM; Fri at 8 PM; Sat. at 4 & 8; Sun at 3PM
Added performance, Tuesday, April 7 at 7:30PM

Ticket Prices: Wed., Th. 7:30PM; Fri. 8, -- \$40.00 / \$35.00 student/sr.
Sat. 4 & 8 PM; Sun. at 3PM -- \$44.00 / \$39.00 student/sr.
Tuesday, April 7 – 7:30PM - \$40.00/\$35.00 student/sr.

Gallery Seats \$30 at all times, subject to availability!

Student Rush: \$14 with valid college ID, at the box-office only, one hour before curtain, subject to availability

Box Office: 617-933-8600; www.BostonTheatreScene.com

Press Contact Only: Jim Torres – (617) 529-1670 (cell)

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