



This May, Old Pueblo Playwrights Presents 30th Annual New Play Festival Free Online

Theatre, Culture and Lifestyle Editors

TUCSON, ARIZ.—Mar. 16, 2021—This spring enjoy thought-provoking literary theatre from your easy chair. Old Pueblo Playwrights’ 30th Annual New Play Festival features staged-readings of original works by Tucson authors. Stream it FREE for the first time on YouTube in May.

“OPP’s New Play Festival will again showcase Tucson’s amazing wealth of local talent,” said President John Vornholt. “This year, we feature plays by three very active octogenarians.”

“Our monologues and multi-character scripts will make you laugh, cry—and view the pandemic, Black Lives Matter, marital fidelity, and more from a new perspective. During quarantine, our members were busy honing their playwriting chops and tech skills to adapt to theatre’s new virtual habitat. The result? A peer-reviewed lineup that will appeal to short-attention spans or those preferring a more immersive experience.” The best-selling author, actor, playwright, director, screenwriter, and journalist co-founded Active Imagination Theatre, winner of the 2021 Tucson Fringe’s Best Local Show award for “Puppy Pawdemic.”

WHAT	Old Pueblo Playwrights’ 30th Annual New Play Festival
WHEN	May 1-31, 2021
WHERE	YouTube Old Pueblo Playwrights channel
WHO	<p>“Couples Quarantine”—OPP members Sydney & Vince Flynn wrote this comic one-act, which they perform in tandem.</p> <p>“Quarantine Poem”—OPP member playwright Gavin Kayner performs E. Reid Gilbert’s poetic monologue.</p> <p>“Confronting Delusions of Self-Sufficiency”—Dave Parke performs this monologue by Sheldon Metz.</p> <p>“The Letter”—Meagan Jones plays EMILIA in this monologue by Cheri Newton, Michael Mears is the voiceover for CECIL. <i>In the 1920s Cornish arts colony of Lamorna Cove (England), Emilia receives an unexpected letter that changes her life, and those of her four teenage children, forever.</i></p> <p>“Nana and Paige”—Regina Ford directed this one-act by Debra Vassallo. Nancy Ekstrum is NANA; Kira McNeill, PAIGE; Diana Ouradnik, MELISSA; and Richard Chomps Thompson, OFFICER JOHNSON; Linda Swanson was technical director. <i>It’s May 2020. Quarantined by her daughter for Covid, Nana’s going stir-crazy. Her granddaughter, Paige, a high-school senior, can’t stand missing out on all the fun. Nana and Paige devise a plan to fly the coop and join a Black Lives Matter march. Will they succeed?</i></p> <p>“Zoom Intervention”—David Zinke wrote and directed this one-act. Renata Rauschen is JANET; David Youngerman, JIM; Eric Quesenberry, JASON; and Sydney Flynn, THE ANNOUNCER. <i>A dysfunctional family hold a family Zoom meeting to try to communicate with their sullen and anti-social son during Covid, but things are not as they seem.</i></p>
WHO Playwrights	<p>Sydney & Vince Flynn</p> <p>The Flynn’s paint and write plays, two of which have been presented at prior OPP New Play Festivals. Active in the Tucson theatre community—Sydney acts and paints scenery, Vince directs—both have performed with John Vornholt on KXCI’s <i>Tales of Tucson</i>. The former Hallmark Cards illustrator met her husband at the University of Arizona where she was UA’s first MFA candidate. She was also art editor, he fiction editor, at <i>The Arizona Kitty Kat</i>, UA’s now-defunct UA campus humor magazine. They celebrate 55 years of marriage in June, after 40-plus years teaching art and English in Karachi, San Francisco, Tokyo, and Vienna.</p>

	<p>E. Reid Gilbert A former Fulbright scholar, Gilbert is associate professor emeritus of theatre at The Ohio State University. The former minister and National Theatre Conference member founded and directed The Wisconsin Mime Theatre and School, taught acting at Kentucky and Tennessee colleges, and directed West Virginia’s Valley Ridge Theatre. He has published eight books, written 14 theatre and production scripts, and directed 40-plus plays. He didn’t begin writing seriously until his 80s when his slave-era drama, “Ellen Craft—Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom” (directed by OPP’s Edward Donald Young) was read at the 2019 OPP New Play Festival and produced by The Community Players.</p> <p>Sheldon Metz Metz is an award-winning director and set designer whose love of theatre began at six (as Hansel opposite Gretel in Chicago). He has directed and designed hundreds of plays and sets in LA, New York, Tucson, and served on the board of several LA theatres. He founded theatre associations in LA and New York; served as producing director for LA’s Playwrights Kitchen Ensemble; taught acting and directing workshops; and was make-up artist to dozens of celebrities. A founding OPP member, he led Tucson’s Beowulf Alley Theatre’s Old Time Radio Theatre Company and served on their Artistic Development Committee; and co-founded the Alliance Performance Center of Tucson and Tucson Alliance of Dramatic Artists with John Vornholt.</p> <p>Cheri Newton Newton is an award-winning screenwriter, script consultant, and copywriter whose play, “The Letter,” made it to the penultimate round of Kenneth Branagh’s 2020 New Play Contest at Windsor Fringe (England). She was a semifinalist at the Moondance International Film Festival for a screenplay and a documentary short, and her screenplay, “Mudlarks,” placed in the top 20 percentile of the 2015 Academy Nicholl Fellowships. She has produced and edited films for the University of Arizona and local businesses; blogged for Contents Interiors as Freeway, a sophisticated canine with an eye for design; and worked internationally in disaster relief, development, and cross-cultural exchange. She writes for <i>Tucson Home and Garden</i> and <i>The Desert Leaf</i>, and has a master’s degree in American media and popular culture with an emphasis in screenwriting from Arizona State University.</p> <p>Debra Vassallo Words and stories have always mattered to Vassallo who worked as a child welfare worker in Laredo (Texas), a child development specialist in Sydney (Australia), and a school counselor in Salem (Oregon). After retirement, she studied playwriting with Matthew Zrebski at Portland Center Stage then wrote “Prima Donna” and “Ready, Set, Go!” Now a resident of Salem (Oregon) and Green Valley (Arizona), she wrote “Nana and Paige” in response to the challenges of the past year.</p> <p>David Zinke Zinke has performed with Tucson’s Beowulf Alley Theatre Company, Community Players, Festival Repertory Theatre, Live Theatre Workshop, Red Barn Theatre Company, Speak the Speech Theater, and Studio Connections. The native Wisconsinite (polite-speak for “Cheesehead”) is a member of the Tucson Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA) and secretary of Old Pueblo Playwrights. He studied theatre and dramatic arts at the University of Arizona and Pima Community College. This is his playwriting debut.</p>
WHEN	May 1-31, 2021
WHERE	YouTube/Old Pueblo Playwrights channel
TIX	No tickets or reservations needed. Admission is FREE.
TALKBACKS	Stay tuned to our YouTube channel and Facebook page for info about post-performance audience talkbacks.
FYI	Tucson nonprofit Old Pueblo Playwrights aims to inspire professional and aspiring writers of any age, race, religion, gender, ethnicity, or political persuasion to create new works for stage, film, radio, or TV. The public is invited to enjoy and critique original member works Mondays at 7 pm via ZOOM, in-person when it’s safe. PresOPP is supported by member dues, ticket sales, and the generosity of such organizations as the Arizona Commission on the Arts . Learn more about OPP at www.oldpuebloplaywrights.org or visit us on Facebook at Old Pueblo Playwrights.
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