

CHRIS PETERSEN/The Register-Guard

Ashley Apelzin (center) leads a cast of local actors that will bring "Tell Me" from New York City to the Actors Cabaret of Eugene stage starting Friday.

Way off Broadway

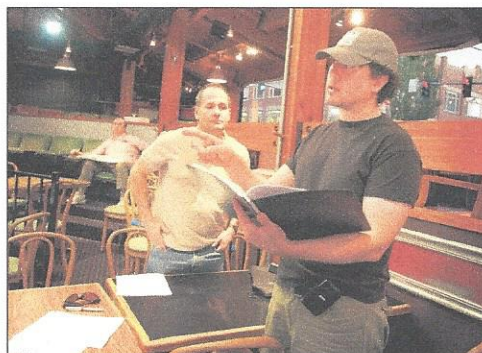
Two New York theater veterans try out their play at Actors Cabaret of Eugene

By BOB KEEFER
The Register-Guard

One of the chief fantasies that sustain artists of all kinds in places like Eugene is the idea of making it big in the big city. Sometimes it actually happens. Think Marin Alsop, the former Eugene Symphony artistic director, who's now a big shot in the classical music world with her appointment as music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

We knew her when, we like to say. Now think of Joe Zingo and Jim Roberts, the two guys who run the little community theater Actors Cabaret of Eugene. They headed off to New York City last fall with one of their top young actresses in tow, looking for a cutting edge play to produce — the kind of play we could see here, before it reaches a major run on Broadway, and say "we saw it when."

The three of them sat through staged readings of half a dozen new works at the annual National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals. Then they brought home the script to "Tell Me," a heretofore unproduced musical that spins a tale about a young girl dying of cancer.



Director Igor Goldin (right) and playwright A.D. Penedo work with actors at Actors Cabaret of Eugene. The pair came to Eugene for the play's first full production.

And so it was that New York director Igor Goldin and playwright A.D. Penedo, who are more accustomed to working with professional casts at big city theaters, found themselves in Eugene this month working with a determined cast of local community actors. Goldin truly is a pro at what he does. Including ACE's production of "Tell Me," which opens Friday, he will have directed 17 shows in 2008 by year's end, a pace that even he admits is insane the few back to New York for a couple of

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PLAY PREVIEW
Tell Me

What: New musical about a girl dying of cancer and the legacy of hope she leaves behind

Where: Actors Cabaret of Eugene, 996 Willamette St.

When: Opens 8 p.m. Friday; continues at 8 p.m. Saturday and Sept. 26-27, Oct. 3 and 10-11

Tickets: \$19, \$35.95 with dinner seating (683-4368)

Digital photographer moves panoramas into the great indoors

By BOB KEEFER
The Register-Guard

The humble workspaces of the Eugene art world are bent, folded and miraculously transformed in a collection of large panoramic photographs Dennis Gal-

loway is showing this month and next at the Eugene Public Library.

Galloway, a career professional photographer who moved here from the San Francisco Bay Area last year, visited more than a dozen local artists (and one gallery owner) in their studios, bringing

along an inexpensive digital pocket camera, a home-rigged panoramic head and his journeyman's sense of what makes a compelling image. And these photographs are absolutely compelling.

First off, they're printed brilliantly by Eugene printer Janet

Smith, who has a keen sense of how to make a color digital photograph look like an actual photograph (she doesn't try to disguise them as watercolors, say) without the harsh, artificial, hyper-saturated and oversharpened look kicked out by so many desktop

computer printers these days.

In fact, it's safe to say she's figured out how to make photographs beautiful again.

But then there are the photographs themselves. Stretched

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Leroy Douglas blends into the wood work in this panoramic photograph of the instrument maker's studio. Douglas used a compact digital camera and pieced together smaller images into detail-filled panoramas.



DENNIS GALLOWAY

ART REVIEW

Widescreen

What: Panoramic color photographs taken by Dennis Galloway in the studios of various Eugene area artists and crafters

Where: Eugene Public Library, 100 W. 10th Ave.

When: Through Oct. 31
Hours: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday through Sunday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. first Friday of the month

Tell: Director says community actors are more willing to experiment

Continued from Page E1

days during Eugene rehearsals to audition another show.

He wasn't quite sure what to expect from ACE. Goldin is certainly used to working in a totally different milieu. Professional shows are rehearsed eight hours a day, generally during the daytime. Paid actors are expected to show up on time, ready to go, parts learned.

Community theater actors, on the other hand, have day jobs or school to attend. They may struggle in 10 minutes late, tired from a bad day at the office and the classroom, and you can't fire them. They bring homework to rehearsal and personal issues.

And Goldin has loved working with them — because they're not pros.

"They are absolutely not afraid as performers to dive in to anything you ask, without any apprehension whatever," he said of the cast for "Tell Me." "With a new show that is so important."

Goldin wants his cast to be willing to try just about anything with great enthusiasm while he's working out the show's first-ever staging. As a director, he likes to experiment in rehearsal, trying out different approaches and letting his cast run with ideas before settling on a final solution and rehearsing them in.

The cast at ACE has been willing to try anything, he said; professional players are more likely to be fussy.

"I may give you something that doesn't work," he told the actors during one rehearsal. "But for me to know that for sure, I just really need you to jump in and do it, with conviction and trust."

New York actors are a bit more skeptical of experimentation.

"The stakes are higher for those performers," he said. "The higher they get on the



Amanda Fackrell and Colin Gray get their hats on in the Actors Cabaret of Eugene production of "Tell Me."

ladder the less limber they become."

For Ashley Apelzin, working with Goldin has been a dream come true.

She's the 17-year-old Eugene actress who went to New York with Zingo and Roberts last fall. A senior at South Eugene High School, she'd like to head back to New York again next year for college and, ultimately, a career on Broadway. Apelzin has been a busy

teenager. She played, among many other recent parts, the title role in South Eugene High's "Thoroughly Modern Millie" in 2006, one of the ghosts in ACE's "Christmas Carol" last year and Little Sally in ACE's 2005 "Urinetown."

Animated from her first screaming appearance on stage, Apelzin plays the lead in "Tell Me," the 10-year-old Jessie, who is taken ill with cancer and uses her lush fan-

tasy world to transform her ultimate death.

"I have played other characters who died," says Apelzin, who's been acting for 10 years. "This show is different. The first lines we read through the script, we all just cried. But the way the death is dealt with is great; she's leaving her body to go to this better place."

Playing Jessie's mother in the show is Erica Jean, another ACE veteran player.

"It's been an interesting kind of development process for a new show," she says. "The expectations are definitely higher."

ACE is an unusually intimate theater company. Many of its actors have been with the theater for years; Jean, who has no children of her own, calls the kids who work at the theater — such as Apelzin — "my children."

Thus, acting through the death of a child night after

night in rehearsal has been sometimes grueling.

"You know, the emotions of acting are real," she said. "In this case, I am watching a lovely young woman go through the process of death. That's really hard."

"It's hard to watch one of my family members die every night."

The cast also includes Tony Dwyer, Ben Klute, Caleb Hartsfield, Alex Mentzel, Amanda Fackrell, Laura Holden, Rebecca Teran, Colin Gray, Greg Mathans and Mark Van Beaver.

The show was written by Penedo, a one-time mergers and acquisitions lawyer from Tennessee who became entranced by the theater world while living in New York for the past 10 years. Under a previous title, "The Chocolate Tree," it's received staged readings but never a full production.

"I had always wanted to be a writer," Penedo said. "But I got married. Went to law school. Started a family. Then we moved to New York and I started dipping my toe in." Looking for an education in musical writing, he attended the BMI Musical Theatre Workshop in New York and learned his way around lyric writing. He's had early success with shows such as "Loch Ness," his first venture, and "Where It's At," which was produced at Yale University, where his musical collaborator, composer Marshall Pallett, is a senior this year.

Seeing his own words and lyrics done on stage is a huge high for Penedo. "The fact that this thing we've been working on for four years is actually now going to be a show — well, that doesn't happen to every writer in the theater," he said. "I'm very grateful to Jim and Joe. And to Eugene. "Go Ducks!"

NEA head Gioia leaving in 2009

The well-respected Bush appointee plans to return to private life and go back to writing poetry

By HILLET ITALIAE
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The confident baritone of Dana Gioia sounded a little hoarse during a recent telephone interview, as it often has since he became chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, a job that has exhilarated and exhausted him.

"I have traveled nearly every week for six years and I usually work six to seven days a week," said Gioia, who announced Friday that he will step down in January 2009, well before his second four-year term was to expire. "I feel I've earned the right to return to my private life as an artist."

Whether worrying about the decline of literacy or advocating the recital of poetry, the 67-year-old Gioia, a poet before going to Washington, is the most high-profile NEA chairman in recent history. He has been around long enough to make you forget that others held the job or that the NEA was once threatened with extinction by conservatives.

Instead, the NEA is known for cheering on the arts in general, with such programs as the Big Read, Poetry Out Loud and "Operation Homecoming," a compilation of stories written by soldiers in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. The NEA has made news, but by design,

with two widely discussed reports that signal a dangerously expanding population of nonreaders.

A native of California, Gioia wasn't even the first choice of President Bush. Composer Michael Hammond was nominated and confirmed in 2001, but died in early 2002 after a brief illness.

Gioia, not only an award-winning poet, but a former vice president of General Foods, replaced him and vowed at the time to get the NEA out of the "culture wars" and to "restore the endowment to its rightful place."

The NEA's current budget is around \$145 million, well below its peak of \$178 million in 1992, but a 20 percent increase from 2007. Gioia is admired by Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn., and Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., who jointly chair the House Arts Caucus. Shays cited Gioia's "talent for management and for handling controversy."

In fact, the biggest controversy about the NEA may be its lack of controversy. John Frohnmayer, of Corvallis, who headed the NEA from 1989 to 1992, was forced out by conservatives, says the mission used to be that "while the arts endowment is for everybody, not everything we do is for everybody."

Now, he worries, risk takers no longer can get help from the government.

"But I don't blame Dana for that," says Frohnmayer, who believes Gioia's options were limited. "He did what he had to do and he did it well."

Lord Leebrick advertisement for "DOUBT" featuring John Patrick Shanley's play. Includes dates (Sept 24-25) and ticket information.

Hult Center support group picks leaders for 2008-09

Support Hult Operations

VOX POP

Not football vs. Schnitzer

I am Eugene resident born and raised. It's definitely my fault that I didn't know the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art existed. But I have heard nothing of the museum offering free admission during Duck home games.

I do not appreciate local football fans were badgered by Mr. Beres (Vox Pop, Sept. 11). All we're trying to do is support the university. I have a Duck logo tattoo, not just because I support the football program, but because I've grown to love the university and want to sup-

has elected its new board of directors for 2008-09. Judy Collins was elected president. Paula Charboneau

is the vice president, Ruth Wisner the treasurer, Marilyn Mullanix the secretary and Dick Doering the president

PERFORMANCE NOTES

port it in anyway I can. It's not just about becoming the No. 1 college football program in the U.S. It's about having successful programs at Oregon, causing people to want to come to Oregon so that we may have an art museum.

So before you go bashing people who support the University of Oregon football program, Mr. Beres, maybe next time you should help get the word out about what the museum has to offer in a more positive way.

JEFF BARTSCH
Eugene

Chris Noth joins 'Farragut North'

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Television's Mr. Big is going off-Broadway.

Chris Noth, best known for his role as Sarah Jessica Parker's major love interest on "Sex and the City," will appear in the world premiere of "Farragut North," Beau Willimon's play of political intrigue.

The Atlantic Theater Company production opens Nov. 12 at its off-Broadway theater. According to Willimon, Noth will play "a veteran political operative, manager to an insurgent presidential campaign."

REGAL CINEMAS advertisement listing movies and showtimes for various locations like Valley River Center and Downtown Eugene.

CINEMARK advertisement listing movies and showtimes for the Eugene location.

RED BARN NATURAL GROCERY advertisement offering 10% off on purchases over \$50.

Hytrek's Jewellers advertisement for 14K Dangle Earrings with 30% off.

OREGON MOZART AUDITIONS advertisement for flute and viola players.

Marsalis Brasilianos advertisement featuring Branford Marsalis and the Philharmonia Brasileira.

PrepWeek advertisement for Wednesdays in Sports.