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THT announces an 'In the Wings' staged reading of Anna Ziegler's 'Boy'



Photo provided

Top, from left: Craig Souza and Craig Eychner; bottom: Alan Coyne, Gretchen Lee Salter and Adrian Deane.

Submitted by Susan Evans

Next up in Town Hall Theatre's staged reading series "In the Wings" is a one-night only reading of "Boy," a moving new play about gender identity by Anna Ziegler. "Boy" will have one performance only on Feb. 4 at Town Hall Theatre Company in Lafayette.

The true story of David Peter Reimer was the playwright's inspiration for "Boy." In 1966 Reimer suffered a botched circumcision as an

infant; on the advice of psychologist and gender identity specialist John Money, Reimer's parents raised him as a girl. At age 14, learning of his past from his father, Reimer decided to accept a male identity. But Reimer's actual story serves only as a jumping off point for the playwright. "Boy" focuses in on the complicated inter-dependent relationship between a doctor and a patient; and Ziegler is most interested in how parents can be blinded by love to the true needs of their

children.

The choice Adam's parents make reverberates throughout this life. Scenes in the play bounce back and forth from the 1960s to the 1980s: Adam's parents ask the advice of a psychologist after a surgical accident has left one of their twin boys without a penis; Adam is "trained" in being a girl as we witness many childhood appointments in a doctor's office; Adam finds love as a young man in his 20s. What's it like to grow up in an identity that doesn't fit you?

"Boy" is directed by Cynthia Lagodzinski and features five talented Bay Area performers: Alan Coyne, Adrian Deane, Craig Eychner, Gretchen Lee Salter, and Craig Souza.

In an interview given before the play's world premiere, the playwright discussed the recurring themes of betrayal, forgiveness and the durability of love in her plays: "At the heart of the play is an incredible betrayal, stunning in its scope and consequences. That Adam can ultimately find a way to forgive his parents speaks to his gradual recognition that it was in fact love that drove their decision, and to all the characters' deep humanity and good intentions, however flawed."

Tickets are \$10 general admission and free to subscribers, and are available through the box office at (925) 283-1557 or online.

Info: www.TownHallTheatre.com.

Live Poets Society - second episode



Photos provided

The three invited poets: Dani Gabriel



Jeremy Benson



Lisa Rosenber

By Sophie Braccini

A community that prides itself in its sophistication and prizes literary achievements could only welcome with warmth the initiatives taken by Lafayette-Orinda poet laureate Amy Glynn. Last year she organized the first Live Poets Society reading, which was excellent; enthused by the talents of local poets, the laureate is proposing a second it-

eration. Glynn has invited professional poets to share their work, and is giving the opportunity to budding talents on Sunday, Jan. 27 to be confronted, sometimes for the first time, with a live audience.

The Sunday afternoon presentation from 1 to 3 p.m. will feature three presenters who are all current or recent city poet laureates from different Bay Area municipalities. In October Glynn attended a gathering of California poet laureates in Los Angeles, hosted by state poet laureate Dana Gioia, who has just ended his term. She remembers the amazing day of readings and discussions of their various programs and how they got inspired to include each other in upcoming events.

The readers will be Dani Gabriel, Jeremy Benson, and Lisa Rosenberg. Benson is the current poet laureate of Napa County who has also written novels, short stories, articles, personal essays, stand-up comedy routines, and short films. Benson is also a consummate live presenter and Glynn anticipates that he will be a big success during the poetry session.

Rosenberg is the author of "A Different Physics," winner the 2017 Red Mountain Poetry Prize. A former Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University, she has degrees in physics and creative writing, and worked for many years in engineering. She served as the 2017-18 poet laureate of San Mateo County.

Gabriel is the author of a forthcoming children's book by Penny Candy Books, "The Woman You Write Poems About" (Civil Defense Press) and coauthor of "Molotov Mouths" (Manic D Press). She earned a bachelor's degree from UC Berkeley in peace and conflict studies and a master's in fine arts from Mills College in creative writing. She is a postulant for the diaconate in the Episcopal Diocese of California.

Glynn chose to host this second gathering at Orinda Books for its cozy atmosphere. She hopes that the Sunday afternoon time will be more convenient for her targeted audience than an evening during the week. Glynn's objective for these types of gatherings is to attract families and she has opened wide the door of the society to young writers.

Glynn believes that a very large portion of the mission of a poet laureate is education. She has started reaching out and inviting young writers, connecting with writing programs such as the Intuitive Writing Project. She is working on establishing a closer connection to the schools and is inviting high school students to contact her if they are interested, "or simply show up to the reading and introduce themselves," she adds.

The Poet Laureate is a program of the Lamorinda Arts Council and is supported by the cities of Lafayette and Orinda. Glynn's tenure as poet laureate is two years.

Info: <https://lamorindaarts.org/contact-poet-laureate-program/lamorindaarts.org/poet-laureate/>