

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

# ***ASF***

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## ***Alabama to Play Leading Role in ASF's Sixth Annual Southern Writers' Project Festival of New Plays!***

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

MONTGOMERY, AL (Friday May 9, 2008) The state of Alabama will play a leading role in the Alabama Shakespeare Festival's sixth annual Southern Writers' Project Festival of New Plays May 16 – 18. Four of the five new plays to be read at the three-day festival are set in Alabama. The festival celebrates the Southern storytelling tradition with concert readings of brand new plays, live music, a performance of the World Premiere of *Rocket City*, a ten minute play slam/music jam, a poetry slam featuring Sharrif Simmons of HBO/ Russell Simmons Def Poetry and a special appearance and book signing with noted playwright and author Pearl Cleage.

This year's readings include:

- ***Bear Country* by Michael Vigilant**  
Absorb the wit and wisdom of a man who rose from the child of dirt poor sharecroppers to become the standard by which college football coaches are judged – Paul “Bear” Bryant.
- ***My Last Days as Roy Rogers* by Pat Cunningham Devoto**  
Ten-year old tomboy Tabitha “Tab” Rutland comes of age in 1950s Alabama in an unforgettable confrontation with human frailty, injustice and the healing power of love.
- ***The Furniture of Home* by Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder (Osborn Award winner and author of *Gee's Bend*)**  
In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, residents of Bayou LaBatre, Alabama struggle to rebuild their lives and homes.
- ***Preparations* by Jeffrey L. Chastang (winner of Kennedy Center Award for New American Play for *Full Circle*)**  
Five sisters return to their Southern home for their church's annual lawn party. Tensions surface with family revelations in this tale of African-American familial and generational conflict.
- ***Nobody* by Richard Aellen**  
A provocative musical story based on the lives of Bert Williams and George Walker, African-American comedians who contrarily broke racial barriers by portraying racial stereotypes.

< more >

**2008 SWP Festival of New Plays continued**  
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## **Weekend Schedule**

### **Friday, May 16**

- 1:00pm Tours of ASF
- 2:00pm Event: Paul "Bear" Bryant: Nothing But a Winner presentation by Ken Gaddy of the Bear Bryant Museum in Tuscaloosa
- 3:30pm Reading: *Bear Country* by Michael Vigilant
- 5:30pm Reception in the Shakespeare Garden
- 7:00pm Reading: *My Last Day as Roy Rogers* by Pat Cunningham Devoto
- 9:30pm Event: Slam Jam – 10 minute play slam and music jam

### **Saturday, May 17**

- 9:00am YSWP Readings: Winning plays from the 2007 Young Southern Writers' Project
- 10:30am Reading: *The Furniture of Home* by Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder
- 1:00pm Lunch
- 2:00pm Event: Pearl Cleage Talk & Book Signing
- 3:30pm Reading: *Preparations* by Jeffrey L. Chastang
- 6:00pm Dinner
- 7:30pm SWP World Premiere: *Rocket City* by Mark Saltzman
- 9:30pm Event: Respect the Mic! Poetry Slam hosted by Sharrif Simmons of Russell HBO/ Simmons Def Poetry

### **SUNDAY**

- 10:30am Musical Reading: *Nobody* by Richard Aellen
- 1:00pm Talk Back (lunch available for purchase)

Attendees can get three days of exciting new theatre, plus all meals and surround events for the only \$144. Student and group rates are available. Individual readings are just \$10. For more information on the weekend and packages, call the ASF Box Office toll free at (800) 841-4ASF or go online at [www.southernwritersproject.net](http://www.southernwritersproject.net).

*The nationally-acclaimed, award-winning Southern Writers' Project was founded in 1991 as an exploration and celebration of the South's rich story-telling tradition. Today SWP commissions, develops and produces new plays that explore Southern issues and the African-American experience. Through SWP, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival seeks to fulfill its mission of creating theatre that speaks specifically to the people of the region. Endowed by an anonymous donor, the Southern Writers' Project is supported nationally by generous grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and locally by the Central Alabama Community Foundation.*

*The Alabama Shakespeare Festival is among the largest Shakespeare theatres in the world. Designated as The State Theatre of Alabama, ASF has been located in Montgomery since 1985 when it moved from Anniston as a result of Mr. and Mrs. Wynton M. Blount's gift of a performing arts complex set in the 250-acre Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park.*

*This program/project has been made possible by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.*

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