



# The Book of Adam

Autobiography of the First Human Clone



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## Theatre News

**LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE'S  
2003 PAGE TO STAGE PROJECT,  
SARAH SCHULMAN'S "THE BURNING DECK,"  
WILL BE DIRECTED BY KIRSTEN BRANDT**

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**DIANE VENORA HEADS A STELLAR ENSEMBLE**

**JULY 15 THROUGH AUGUST 3**

La Jolla Playhouse Artistic Director Des McAnuff proudly announces the Playhouse's 2003 Page To Stage project, Sarah Schulman's THE BURNING DECK. Kirsten Brandt, Sledgehammer Theatre's award-winning Artistic Director,



Sledgehammer Theatre's award-winning Artistic Director, and award-winning author Schulman make their Playhouse debuts with this exciting new work-in-progress inspired by Honoré de Balzac's *Cousin Bette*.

Now in its third year, Page To Stage invites audiences to experience the adventure of seeing a new theatre piece created in a critic-free workshop production. *THE BURNING DECK* will run for three weeks from July 15 through August 3 (PLEASE NOTE NEW DATES). Ticket prices range from \$15 - \$17.50 with special student, senior and subscriber prices of \$10-\$12.50.

Set in 1950s New York, *THE BURNING DECK* tells the story of Bette (Diane Venora), a secretary at an advertising agency who has forged a tidy life with her neighbor Earl (Lionel Mark Smith), a gay African-American actor. When her young cousin Hortense (Christine Albright) arrives from Ohio, that life suddenly falls apart, and Bette sets into motion a dark plan to get back what is rightfully hers.



"Sarah Schulman was the first writer commissioned by our artistic team when we came together in 2001," says Des McAnuff. "We're proud to present her work in the Page To Stage forum, allowing her the unique opportunity to rewrite, revise and restructure her script through three weeks of rehearsal and on a performance-by-performance basis. And, as my first feature film was *Cousin Bette*, I am excited to see her smart, new take on this tale of betrayal and revenge."

Author and playwright Sarah Schulman's fiction novels include *The Sophie Horowitz Story*; *Girls, Visions and Everything*; *After Delores*; *People in Trouble and Empathy*. Her non-fiction includes *Shimmer and Stagestruck: Theater, AIDS, and the Marketing of Gay America*. Her play *Carson McCullers (Historically Inaccurate)* was co-produced by Playwrights Horizons and the Women's Project and Productions. Schulman is the co-founder of the Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival and has been a contributing writer to *The New York Times*, *The Advocate*, *The Guardian*, *Interview*, *Village Voice*, *Mother Jones* and *Ms. Magazine*. She has been the recipient of the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship in playwriting.

Kirsten Brandt comments, "I was completely captivated when I read *THE BURNING DECK* and am looking forward to working with Sarah on the development of her complex and provocative script."

Page To Stage was created by the Playhouse in 2001 to facilitate the development of new plays and musicals. Past Page To Stage productions, Doug Wright's *I Am My Own Wife* (2001) and Leigh Fondakowski's *I Think I Like Girls* (2002), enabled their creators to develop their scripts while simultaneously giving theatregoers the rare opportunity to be part of a new work's creative process.

Playhouse Associate Artistic Director Shirley Fishman comments, "Page To Stage has proven to be a great process for getting works-in-progress ready for the next level of development. We're thrilled with the success of *I Am My Own Wife*. Doug Wright arrived with only the first act of his play and, while in residence at the Playhouse, wrote the second act and created what is now one of the hottest shows in New York, earning rave reviews at Playwrights Horizons. And several theatres have expressed interest in further developing *I Think I Like Girls*."

*THE BURNING DECK* director Kirsten Brandt has been the Artistic Director of Sledgehammer Theatre since 1999. For Sledgehammer, she directed the West Coast premiere of *A Knife In The Heart*, the world premieres of Kirsten Nash's rock opera *Alice In Modernland* and Kelly Stuart's *Furious Blood* and *The Universal Monster Show*, *Richard III* and *Sweet Charity*. She also wrote and directed *The Frankenstein Project* and *The Devil's River*. Her play *Berzerkergang* received its world premiere at Sledgehammer last February. Brandt has also directed for Diversionary Theatre, The Playwrights Project, V-Day International, *The Fritz*, 6th @ Penn and UCSD's MFA program. She has directed staged readings for New Dramatists, NYU Tisch School of Drama and A.S.K. Theatre Projects.

Diane Venora, who will be playing the role of Bette, has appeared in Eve Ensler's *Necessary Targets* at Variety Arts Theatre, *The Tongue of a Bird* at Mark Taper Forum, *Miss Julie* at Lincoln Center Theatre and several productions with

the New York Shakespeare Festival including Hamlet, The Winter's Tale and A Midsummer Night's Dream. Her numerous film credits include Hamlet, The Insider, Baz Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet, Heat, Surviving Picasso, The Cotton Club and Bob Fosse's All That Jazz.

Lionel Mark Smith, who will be playing the role of Earl, has appeared in Glengarry Glen Ross and Because He Can at McCarter Theatre, Oleanna at Tiffany Theatre and Mrs. Cage at Stages. His 25-year association with David Mamet includes appearances in nearly all of Mamet's films, including State and Main, The Spanish Prisoner and Homicide.

THE BURNING DECK cast also includes (in alphabetical order): Christine Albright as Hortense, José Chavarry as Joseph, Alex Cranmer as Hector, Sandra Ellis-Troy as Crevel, D.W. Jacobs as Frederick and Makela Spielman as Valerie.

THE BURNING DECK creative team includes set designer Ryan Palmer, costume designer Ivy Chou, lighting designer David Lee Cuthbert, sound designer Casi Pacilio and dramaturg Carrie Ryan.

For its three-week engagement, July 15 to August 3, the performance schedule for THE BURNING DECK is Tuesday through Saturday evenings at 8pm; matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 2pm and Sunday evenings at 7pm. Ticket prices are \$15 for performances Sunday through Thursday and \$17.50 for tickets on Friday and Saturday. Discounts are available for students, seniors and Playhouse subscribers.

The Playhouse's 2003 season opened with Anton Chekhov's Uncle Vanya (May 30-June 29), adapted and directed by Emily Mann. The season continues with Francesca Faridany's adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's Fräulein Else (June 10-July 13), directed by Stephen Wadsworth. Next up is the American premiere of Martin Crimp's The Country (July 29-August 31), directed by Lisa Peterson, and Tom Donaghy's Eden Lane (August 12-September 14), directed by Des McAnuff. The sixth production of the season is Beauty (September 16-October 19), written and directed by Tina Landau. The 2003 season closes with the Aquila Theatre Company's delightful take on Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors (October 14-November 16).

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Winner of the 1993 Tony(r) Award as America's Outstanding Regional Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse is led by Artistic Director Des McAnuff, Managing Director Terrence Dwyer and Associate Artistic Director Shirley Fishman. The Playhouse is a not-for-profit professional theatre-in-residence on the corner of La Jolla Village Drive and Torrey Pines Road in La Jolla, California. Administrative office (858) 550-1070. Box Office (858) 550-1010. Website: [www.lajollaplayhouse.com](http://www.lajollaplayhouse.com).

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