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PORTLAND STAGE

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Press Release

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Interview Appointments Available Upon Request

PORTLAND STAGE WORLD-PREMIERE *SAINT DAD* IS A COMEDIC AND TOUCHING EXPLORATION OF MAINE, CLASS, FAMILY, and CULTURE CHANGE by Maine playwright MONICA WOOD.

Portland, Maine – Portland Stage Company opens its 50th season with Monica Wood's new play, *Saint Dad*. This deeply relatable, timely story takes the audience into the layers of a fraught situation: what happens when adult children make decisions for an infirmed, unresponsive parent who makes an inexplicable recovery. Generational grievances, class differences, loss, life changes, and Maine real estate weave a story through characters so real, so true, they represent all of us.

"I'm interested in revealing the human condition in all its messy intentions," Monica Wood says of her writing. "The beating heart of this play is about class... it's about class without blaming and shaming."

A story we all know from one or more perspectives, *Saint Dad* explores the changing landscapes of Maine. As new residents buy properties with deep histories they encounter communities with deep roots. What happens when buyers "from away" make changes to the buildings they buy as well as the cultures they impact? Monica Wood says, "I don't deal with heroes and villains, there are no villains in this play." Of the out-of-state character who buys a family's camp she says, "Leona has a right to buy whatever she wants but has an obligation to understand where she has landed."

Of real people in Leona's shoes she says, "[They must ask] 'what did this town used to be? How does my 900 square foot deck alter the culture of the place I have arrived in? Should I know my neighbors?' Yes, you should know your neighbors. 'Should I shop locally?' Yes, you should shop locally."

Being a native Mainer and a 45-year resident of Portland, she says seeing Portland change "engages this class rage I've had almost all my life, and there is some of that in this play."

Yet this play is a comedy.

It begins with a trio of characters, adult children who sold their father's camp to a type-A out-of-stater believing he was dying. He did not die, and now they have a situation: a wild-at-heart medical miracle on the loose, likely on his way home to a camp occupied by strangers dealing with their own issues. Written during the pandemic, Wood wanted to create a comedy and, "because it's me, it also has heart and weight and depth." This play is different for her, though, as it is a comedy at its core rather than a drama with comedy woven into it.

Monica Wood's other plays produced at Portland Stage, *Papermaker* and *The Half-Light*, were incredibly successful and remain Portland Stages most and second most highly attended shows respectively. *Papermaker* went on to enjoy successful runs at other regional theaters, including Shadowland Stages in Ellenville, NY, and Chenango River theatre in Greene, NY. Portland Stage is incredibly thrilled and honored to again collaborate with Monica Wood and bring this story to the stage.

Wood is the author of many highly praised books including novels *Secret Language*, *The One-In-A-Million Boy*, *Any Bitter Thing*, and *My Only Story*. *Ernie's Ark* is an award-winning collection of short stories, some featured on NPR's *Selected Shorts*. Her memoir, *When We Were the Kennedys*, won the May Sarton Memoir Award and the Maine Literary Award. She has just finished another novel to be released soon!

Cast & Artists

Full Cast and Crew Coming Soon!

DIRECTOR Sally Wood

SCENIC DESIGNER Anita Stewart**

**member United Scenic Artists

Quick Info

Live In-Theater Dates: October 25 through November 19, 2023

Run Time: approximately 1.5 Hours

Box Office Hours: Tuesday through Saturday • Noon to 5 pm and 2 hours before performance time

Box Office Phone: 207.774.0465

Box Office Email: boxoffice@portlandstage.org

Tickets Online: available now via subscription or flex pass, single tickets on sale 9/12/23

In-Person: \$20-\$63. Discounts for seniors 65+ and students.

PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN TICKETS AVAILABLE: Find rules and restrictions on the website.

RUSH35 Tickets: \$15 at the door for registered participants ages 35 and under.

About PSC

50th Season

Portland Stage offers Mainstage performances, New Works, and Education programs. The 2022-23 Mainstage season includes seven Mainstage productions, staged readings of its commissions, and Studio Series productions. PS promotes and celebrates the creation of new plays with an environment that supports the region's playwrights, builds bridges between its theater and national writers, and develops awareness of theater with three exciting initiatives: the Clauder Competition, the Little Festival of the Unexpected, and From Away, a festival in collaboration with the International Writing Program (IWP) at the University of Iowa. This year, Portland Stage also celebrates its 13th season of the Susie Konkel Theater for Kids and the 100,000 student experiences it has provided in the last decade through its education programs. Subscriptions to Portland Stage are available, and subscribers gain insider access, significant savings, and flexibility. PS is committed to accessibility and is currently planning a renovation to meet this commitment as well as offering ticketing options and expanded community engagement. Visit portlandstage.org to learn more.