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New Harmony Project Sets the Stage for Upcoming Talent

NEW HARMONY, Ind.— For the past 20 years, actors, directors, playwrights and stage crews have come to New Harmony, Ind., once a year for The New Harmony Project. This new play development organization began as a forum to help young playwrights develop their talent and scripts, but has grown into a living, breathing entity—involving some of the best talents in the entertainment industry.

Actor Michael Gross, “The Cosby Show” and “Home Improvement” television producer Matt Williams, Heartland Film Festival President Jeffrey L. Sparks, and Angelo Pizzo, author of the screenplays for the films “Rudy” and “Hoosiers,” are just a few of the notable names that have played a role in this unique project. Matt Williams was one of The New Harmony Project’s founders.

The New Harmony Project process begins early each year with a call for entries; plays, musicals and screenplays are accepted for judging. Then approximately four authors are chosen to come to New Harmony to participate in The New Harmony Project.

“The foundation of the event is that we bring the playwrights into New Harmony two days before the talent and crews arrive, to relax and have some time alone,” said Project Director Joel Grynheim. “Then we facilitate the development of the piece through a series of round table rehearsals that allow different people from the industry to talk about and improve the piece. Then, on the last day of the Project, we hold a fund-raiser and a reading of the plays.”

This year’s New Harmony Project is from May 19 to June 4 and will feature three straight plays.

“New Harmony is an amazing place that you have to see to believe,” Grynheim said. “In fact, in 2004, a reporter from American Theater came to write a feature story about the project and ended up being so taken with the town that the article’s focus changed.”

This year Grynheim expects approximately 50 people to participate in The New Harmony Project. The New Harmony Project adds a sense of creativity to the already unique and rejuvenating atmosphere of the town.

“The New Harmony Project provides a place for people to create and finish something they started,” said New Harmony Inn Sales and Marketing Director Judy Stallings. “We look forward to these two weeks every year and are honored that The New Harmony Project has found a home here.”

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