

CATF donates panels to Bluemont Fair

The Contemporary American Theater Festival (CATF) at Shepherd University recently donated set pieces from their production of *The Wedding Gift*. The pieces will be used for the Indian Village that opens Sept. 17-18 during the 47th Annual Bluemont Fair.

The Indian Village theme is, "Where the Past and Present Meet Under a Harvest Moon," and is part of a cultural rescue by artists to teach children how to build the Indian Village while working alongside Native American Indians.

According to multiple reports, "a staggering 87 percent of references to American Indians in all 50 states' academic standards portray them in a pre-1900 context."

Article Photos



That means students are graduating from high school without even basic knowledge of contemporary Native challenges or culture.

A team of more than 100 volunteers are creating this interactive experience that combines modern technology with traditional sustainable living to give visitors a glimpse into the lives of Native American Indians who lived in the past and those living today. A full agenda is posted online.

CATF donated 16 various-sized panels averaging 20 feet tall to the host for the Indian Village non-profit Sanctuary on the Trail.

The panels were part of the set (designed by David M. Barber) for playwright Chisa Hutchinson's *The Wedding Gift*, a provocative 90-minute play that received its world

premiere at the Contemporary American Theater Festival. Due to the size of the flats, and the inevitable damage that occurs during disassembly, the walls were slated to be discarded. However, Rene Locklear White, president of Sanctuary on the Trail, learned that the Festival was open to the idea of donating the pieces.

"I saw *The Wedding Gift* with my neighbor, June Krupsaw," said Rene. "After the show, the audience was invited to stay and watch crew members transform the stage in preparation for that evening's performance of *20th Century Blues*, by Susan Miller. This involved changing sets. Trent Kugler and Joshua Midgett-CATF's Production Manager and General Manager-indicated there was a possibility of obtaining *The Wedding Gift*'s panels after I inquired about their use for the Indian Village. As soon as the Festival ended, Trent contacted us. We're so excited and thankful to CATF for this priceless contribution to our past and present theme."

The panels are currently stored in Bluemont waiting for September installation.

"Visitors will see many of the panels at the Indian Village along with a wigwam, and see all the panels next year during *The Gathering 2017*," said Chris who admitted they are seeking a few strong volunteers to help install the panels this year and next year.

To volunteer or contribute to the Indian Village visit www.HarvestGathering.org, email info4TheGathering@gmail.org or call Rene at 540-554-8730 or www.BluemontFair.org. This is a 501(c)3 non-profit initiative and all contributions are tax deductible.

"The Contemporary American Theater Festival (CATF) at Shepherd University produces and develops vital, topical, and engaging new American plays," according to Gabriel Zucker, Director of Communications and Marketing for CATF.

"The Festival tells daring and diverse stories and strives to create a profound dynamic between the audience, the artists, and the work."

"Inclusive of the 2016 season, CATF has produced 115 new plays, 43 world premieres, and 10 new play commissions. 56 of the Festival's plays have been penned by women; 59 by men, which puts the female to male ratio at 49 percent--nearly twice the national average," added Zucker.

The Festival's 27th Season will run July 7-30, 2017. For more information about CATF visit www.catf.org.