

# CATF expands offerings

The Contemporary American Theater Festival is ready to take the stage and tickets are on sale now. Theater-goers will have an opportunity to enjoy one more play this year as the CATF expands to six shows.

"We believe we have developed audiences with insatiable appetites for the arts," said CATF founder Ed Herenden. "If we give more opportunities, people will rise to the occasion to immerse themselves in theater."

Added to the commitment of the theater-goer in Shepherdstown that has helped make the CATF a success for 26 previous seasons, is the uncertain economic times where funding can play a role. An additional show will bring in additional revenue.

## Article Photos



Peggy McKowen, associate producing director, also stressed that "As a leader,

we need to show our colleagues and the country that there are people coming to the theater."

In an effort to get more people to experience the six plays, CATF will once again offer the "Pay What You Can" preview week From July 2-6. For as little as a penny, or as much as one can afford, they can see the plays before the official opening night. While lines form early and theaters fill up quickly, the CATF organizers hope that everyone who wishes to see a play can do so.

In addition to the "Pay What You Can" preview, the Festival also offers Sunday night and weeknight ticket discounts, a large batch of free student tickets, as well as discounts for military members and their families.

Herendeen made it clear that his desire is to have as many people experience theater as possible.

"We do not want to be seen as elitists," he said. "We want theater to be accessible and affordable for everyone." He went on to say that this is the year to invite people who have never seen the festival.

The addition of a sixth play as well as extended play hours will bring locals and tourists alike to Shepherd's campus. In addition, many of those tourists will stay in local hotels, shop in local shops and enjoy eating in Shepherdstown restaurants. Since its inception in 1991, the CATF has only increased the number of visitors to town.

This year's lineup includes the following: 'The Niceties,' by Eleanor Burgess; 'Welcome to Fear City; by Kara Lee Corthron; 'Wild Horses' by Allison Gregory; 'Byhalia, Mississippi,' by Evan Linder; 'Everything is Wonderful' by Chelsea Marcantel and 'We Will Not Be Silent' by David Meyers. Each play is unique and will be offered for public viewing at varying times to accommodate any schedule. Full descriptions of each play can be found at [www.catf.org](http://www.catf.org).

Historically, the CATF was created to produce and develop new American theater. Each summer, the rotating repertory allows patrons to see any or all of the plays as well as allows actors to play roles in more than one play.

"We provide the ultimate theater experience," Herendeen said. "This is the first time these new plays are being seen and they are seen here, in the oldest town in West Virginia."

"I've lived here now for 27 years," Herendeen shared. "And, I'm having a blast." He stressed that "place matters" and being in Shepherdstown partnering with Shepherd University, is directly responsible for the success of the CATF.

In addition to the plays, attendees can participate in a variety of other events labeled "talk theater" including free lectures, discussions and stage readings.

For a complete schedule and ticket information, visit [www.catf.org](http://www.catf.org).