

# EXIT THEATRE

156 Eddy (at Taylor), San Francisco, CA 94102

*For Immediate Release*  
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[\[PRESS PHOTOS\]](#)

## EXIT Theatre Announces 2009 DIVAfest

Women writers, directors, performers featured in 8<sup>th</sup> annual festival, April 2-25; World Premiere of *An Affair of Honor*, the newest play by **Lee Kiszonas**; plus new work by “Stealth Diva” **Sean Owens**; a reading of a new play by **Lauren Yee**; readings by poet **Diane di Prima** – and DIVA Cabaret returns

**San Francisco. February 23, 2009.** EXIT Theatre, San Francisco’s downtown indie home for new and alternative performance, announces its 2009 DIVAfest, featuring the work of established and emerging women writers, directors, and performers. The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual DIVAfest runs at the EXIT Theatreplex, 156 Eddy Street, in downtown San Francisco, Thursdays through Saturdays, April 2nd through 25<sup>th</sup>.

Featured at this year’s DIVAfest is a fully staged production of *An Affair of Honor*, the latest play by Lee Kiszonas, directed by Kathryn Wood.



*An Affair of Honor* by LeeKiszonas. L-R, Julia Heitner, Brittany McGregor. The story of Julie D'Aubigny, across dressing sword fighting opera diva . The featured production at DIVAfest, EXIT Theatre, San Francisco, April 2-25, 2009.

Photo: LaurieGallant

*An Affair of Honor* is the story of Julie D'Aubigny, a cross dressing sword fighting opera diva forced to fight in Parisian taverns for francs until she is discovered by Philippe Duc D'Orleans who takes her to Marseilles to sing in the opera. There she meets and falls in love with Bette, who believes Julie is a man. Ultimately she is unmasked by Philippe's jealous lover Georges and must fight for her honor with Georges as the horrified Bette runs away and joins a convent. Julie and Philippe concoct a gender bending plan to spring Bette from the convent only to have Julie challenged by the betrayed Bette to a duel...*of Honor*.

Director Kathryn Wood is taken by Kiszonas' view of platonic vs. erotic love. Here, it is platonic love that conquers all, saves the day, and rides off happily into the sunset.

"My personal delight in this kind of ending is that we don't see it enough," Wood says.

"We're still putting on shows where erotic love is privileged over the love of our chosen families or companions, even though we all know that, in real life, it is the platonic connections that are almost always stronger than the erotic ones.

*An Affair of Honor* was given an early reading at the 2007 DIVAfest, followed by a staged reading at EXIT Theatre in May 2008. Kiszonas' play was also workshopped that year at the Last Frontier Edward Albee Theatre Conference in Valdez, Alaska. A former San Franciscan, Kiszonas now lives in Philadelphia.

"EXIT Theatre is proud to continue its commitment to the development of new work by women writers with Lee Kiszonas's play, *An Affair of Honor*. It's a project that we've been mentoring over the last few years, and we're very pleased to present it as this year's DIVAfest main stage production," says EXIT artistic director Christina Augello.

"Lee and Kathryn have worked together in the past and I'm excited by their collaboration on this devilishly delightful peek into a slice of feminine history. It's filled with twists and turns, fun and frolic, cross-dressing, sword-fighting, opera, and an insightful look at love and life," Augello says.

*An Affair of Honor* previews Thursday and Friday, April 2 & 3. Preview tickets are \$10. Show opens Saturday, April 4 – tickets \$20. Runs Thurs-Fri-Sat, April 9-11, 16-18, 23-25; – tickets \$12-20, sliding scale. One matinee only: Sat. April 25 at 3:00 pm. All shows at 8:00 pm. at the EXIT mainstage, 156 Eddy Street, San Francisco.

## **Other DIVAfest events**

**NOTE: CENTER SQUARE HAS BEEN CANCELLED. (See February 26, 2009 Release)**

*Center Square.* “Stealth Diva” Sean Owens again redefines the medium of drag with this uncanny portrait of acid-tongued agitator Paul Lynde. Blessed with previous opportunities to play his other heroes, Carol Channing and Oscar Wilde, Owens is rounding out his personal Holy Trinity with this examination of a deeply troubled and deeply funny performer, whose antics preceded notions of ‘coming out.’ *Center Square* explores the life of an ambitious and ambivalent actor for whom fame was always out of reach, but notoriety was just around the corner.



Sean Owens pays tribute to Paul Lynde in a staged reading of Owens' *Center Square*, April 11 and 25 at DIVAfest.

Named San Francisco's Best Comic Playwright by SF Weekly, Sean Owens returns to the world of solo performance with this fierce and funny tribute to Paul Lynde, the flamboyant figure whose scathing wit and enigmatic twinkle illuminated 1970's television and film. With a swish and a sneer, Paul Lynde injected the blandest of scripts with arch innuendo and cryptic nuance, from “Hollywood Squares” to “Bewitched,” from “Bye-Bye Birdie” to “Charlotte's Web.” Owens' personal fascination with Lynde reaches back into his childhood. Having mystified his fellow third-graders with his impersonation of Paul, Owens has waited a long time to once again delve into the dark, churning waters of this sometimes vicious, always vivid comic legend.

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Poet Diane di Prima reads from her work April 4 at DIVAfest.

***“Dreams, Visions and Apparitions,”*** Poetry Reading by Beat icon **Diane di Prima**. Selections from poems written over the last half century, both published and unpublished, including “Recollections of My Life as a Woman.” Saturday, April 4 at 3:00 pm. Admission is free.

***Samsara.*** The latest play by Lauren Yee will have a workshop on April 25 at 2:00 p.m.. Yee is the author of the critically acclaimed *Ching Chong Chinaman*.

***DIVAfest Cabaret.*** Songwriting team Don Seaver and Sean Owens join forces with powerhouse performer Shannon Day for ***Lady of the ‘Loiin,*** a sizzling tribute to San Francisco's raciest, raunchiest, most unrepentant neighborhood: the Tenderloin. A dozen stories-in-song, about good girls gone wrong, wronged girls getting the goods, and low-lives living the high life. Fridays and Saturdays, April 4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25. All shows 10:00 p.m. EXIT Theatre, 156 Eddy St., San Francisco. Tickets, \$15. (415) 673-3847, [www.theexit.org](http://www.theexit.org).



Acclaimed chanteuse Shannon Daystars in *Lady of the 'Loin* at DIVAfest Cabaret, Fridays and Saturdays, April 4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25.

### **DIVAfest Opening Day – April 4<sup>th</sup> Activities at EXIT Theatre**

**3:00 p.m.** – Poet Diane di Prima reading from her “Dreams, Visions & Apparitions”

**5:30 p.m.** – Reception for featured DIVAfest artist Michelle Talgarow

**8:00 p.m.** – Opening performance of Lee Kiszonas’ *An Affair of Honor*

**10:00 p.m.** – Diva Cabaret – *Lady of the 'Loin* with Shannon Day, Sean Owens, Dan Seaver

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### **COMING UP LATER THIS YEAR AT THE EXIT**

**September 9-20.** *18<sup>th</sup> Annual San Francisco Fringe Festival.* Over 250 performances of 40+ shows in 12 days. Features international, U.S., and Bay Area theater companies and performers.

**Selected Thursdays, All Year Long.** *Mark Romyn’s Thursday Night Combo.* Theatre artists, musicians, and other performers try out new material at the EXIT Café.

For details on the 2009 season’s shows, go to [www.theexit.org](http://www.theexit.org).

### **About EXIT Theatre**

EXIT Theatre celebrates its 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. It produces the San Francisco Fringe Festival, the second oldest Fringe Festival in the United States and is a member of the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF). 2009 will mark the 18th annual San Francisco Fringe Festival.

Each year, EXIT Theatre presents over 500 performances of some 100 productions by more than 75 companies and is one of San Francisco's most successful and enduring centers of alternative performance. EXIT continues to commission, develop and produce new work and present independent artists. In addition to the San Francisco Fringe Festival, EXIT produces the annual DIVAfest, dedicated to developing new work by women writers. The EXIT Theatreplex includes EXIT Theatre, EXIT Stage Left, and EXIT Café at 156 Eddy Street, and EXIT on Taylor, around the corner at 277 Taylor Street, all in Downtown San Francisco. Visit the EXIT Theatre web site at [www.theexit.org](http://www.theexit.org).

## **DIVAFEST FOR CALENDAR EDITORS**

### **Theater**

**8th Annual DIVAfest**, plays and performances by women artists; includes staged readings of new plays and other events, some free, April 2-25, EXIT Theatre, 156 Eddy Street, San Francisco. Call for times, ticket prices, (415) 673-3847, [www.theexit.org](http://www.theexit.org)

**An Affair of Honor**, a new play by Lee Kiszonas about Julie D'Aubigny, the famed 17<sup>th</sup> Century cross-dressing, sword-fighting opera diva. Directed by Kathryn Wood. Previews April 2-3 - tickets \$10. Opens Saturday, April 4 – tickets \$20. Runs Thurs-Fri-Sat, April 9-11, 16-18, 23-25; – tickets \$12-20, sliding scale. One matinee only: Sat. April 25 at 3:00 pm. All shows at 8:00 pm. EXIT Theatre, 156 Eddy Street, San Francisco. (415) 673-3847, [www.theexit.org](http://www.theexit.org).

**Samsara**. Staged reading of the newest play by Lauren Yee, author of *Ching Chong Chinaman*. April 25 at EXIT Stage Left, 156 Eddy Street, San Francisco. Curtain at 2:00 p.m. Admission is free.

**DIVA Cabaret**, part of EXIT Theatre's 8th Annual DIVAfest. Songwriting team Don Seaver and Sean Owens join forces with powerhouse performer Shannon Day for "*Lady of the 'Loin*," a sizzling tribute to San Francisco's raciest, raunchiest, most unrepentant neighborhood: the Tenderloin. A dozen stories-in-song, about good girls gone wrong, wronged girls getting the goods, and low-lives living the high life. Fridays and Saturdays, April 4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25. All

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## **Readings**

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