



...cry "theater" in a Crowded FIRE...
—Antonin Artaud

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CROWDED FIRE THEATER COMPANY
Presents the West Coast Premiere of Lisa D'Amour's

ANNA BELLA EEMA

June 8th – July 1st
Opening Night Saturday, June 9th

SAN FRANCISCO (March 21, 2007) – Crowded Fire's 10th Anniversary Season continues with Lisa D'Amour's ANNA BELLA EEMA – a spoken-and-sung three-character gothic. Directed by Rebecca Novick, ANNA BELLA EEMA runs June 8th – July 1st at Traveling Jewish Theatre. To purchase tickets (\$20), visit crowdedfire.org, or call the Tix Central Box Office at (415) 439-2456. **Complimentary tickets for the press can be reserved by calling (415) 255-7846 or emailing erin@crowdedfire.org.** Press Photos can be downloaded at www.crowdedfire.org/pressroom.shtml.

"One of the most articulate explorers of the human (and particularly female) experience" (Austin Chronicle), Obie-award winning playwright Lisa D'Amour has rarely been produced on the West Coast. Crowded Fire is pleased to continue presenting the best of underground New York theatre to Bay Area audiences with D'Amour's ANNA BELLA EEMA – a work "so organic and cohesive it feels like a work of nature rather than a work of art" (Theater Mania).

Anna Bella Eema is an enthralling gothic story - a trailer-park odyssey about a precocious 10-year-old girl, Anna Bella, and her emotionally wounded mother, who live on the edge of extinction. As their home is threatened by interstate highway construction, Anna Bella conjures and then breathes life into a girl made out of mud. No sooner has the mud girl been dubbed Anna Bella Eema than the presence of this mysterious golem catapults them onto a pulse-quickening rollercoaster ride filled with vampires, police chases and the fierce complexities of the mother/daughter bond.

ANNA BELLA EEMA is the story of a family living on the margins. As our society struggles to push away and forget unseemly people and problems, D'Amour's work illuminates the injustices faced by the disempowered. ANNA BELLA EEMA vividly imprints a few individual faces on the reality of displaced people as experienced all over the world, even at your doorstep. The revelation of this family's secrets and deepest instincts vividly reminds us not only of how many in America are mistreated, silenced, and forgotten but also the tremendous power of their inner resources and resiliency.

About the Artists

Lisa D'Amour (Playwright) Lisa D'Amour writes plays and creates collaborative, often site-specific theater. Recent projects include *Nita and Zita*, created with Katie Pearl and Kathy Randels (for which they received a 2003 OBIE Award); *16 Spells to Charm the Beast*, produced by Salvage Vanguard Theater (Austin); and *LIMO*, a performance installation commissioned by the Whitney Museum of Art. D'Amour has received funding from the Jerome and McKnight foundations, the Minnesota and Louisiana State Arts Boards, and the MacDowell Colony, and has received commissions from Children's Theater Company, The Guthrie Theater, and Playwrights' Horizons. She is a core member of the Playwrights' Center and a member of New Dramatists. D'Amour received her M.F.A. in playwriting from the University of Texas at Austin, where she was a James A. Michener Playwriting Fellow.

Rebecca Novick (Director) is the Founding Artistic Director of Crowded Fire. She has directed fourteen of their twenty productions including, most recently, the world premiere of *Juan Gelion Dances for the Sun* by Dominic Orlando. She has also worked locally with Intersection for the Arts, the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, the Exit Theatre, Shotgun Players, Berkeley Opera, the Magic Theatre, Playground, and Woman's Will. She has been a recipient of the San Francisco Bay Guardian's Upstage/Downstage "Great Director" award and was a 2003 finalist for the TCG/NEA Director Fellowship. She has a BA in Theater from the University of Michigan and trained at the Royal Court Theatre with Ian Rickson.

CAST

Irene (#1): Cassie Beck
Anna Bella Eema (#3): Julie Kurtz
Anna Bella (#2): Danielle Levin

CREW

Playwright: Lisa D'Amour
Director: Rebecca Novick
Musical Director: TBA
Stage Manager: TBA
Assistant Stage Manager: Kathleen Schumacher
Lighting Designer: Jarrod Fischer
Set Designer: Melpomene Katakalos
Sound Designer: Cliff Caruthers
Costume Designer: Wendy Lynn

About Crowded Fire

Now embarking on its 10th anniversary season, Crowded Fire has earned a reputation for innovation, for the unexpected, for delighting and puzzling audiences with theatrical work that is genuinely on the edge. This past year, Crowded Fire was honored with a Guardian Outstanding Local Discovery (GOLDIE) award. In the Goldie article, Guardian critic Rob Avila wrote: "Success like this is always exceptional...One way Crowded Fire has gained that success is by establishing a well-deserved reputation for

challenging modern work as aesthetically rich as it is politically and socially provocative.”

Each year, Crowded Fire produces a three-play season that includes both new work (often commissioned by the company or created specifically for our artists) and existing work by noted contemporary experimenters such as Charles Mee, Mac Wellman, and Caryl Churchill. Recent productions have included the World Premiere of Rella Lossy Award-winner Christine Evans’ *Slow Falling Bird*, the World Premiere of Glickman award-winner Liz Duffy Adams’ musical fable *One Big Lie*, and the World Premiere of Erik Ehn’s lyrical *Maid* (featured in American Theatre in May 2004).

This season sees the departure of Crowded Fire’s founding Artistic Director Rebecca Novick. Crowded Fire is in the final stages of selecting her replacement.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT:

A reclusive mother and daughter's trailer park is doomed to destruction for the sake of a new highway. As menacing inhabitants of the outside world bear down on the tiny family, Anna Bella Eema, the muddy alter ego of Anna Bella, is born. Then the true odyssey begins. A spoken-and-sung three-character gothic, ANNA BELLA EEMA asks us to listen, and listen carefully.

WHEN:

June 8th – July 1st

Preview: June 8th

Open: June 9th

Close: July 1st

Run: Thursdays – Sundays

Time: Sundays at 2pm, all other shows at 8pm.

WHERE:

Traveling Jewish Theatre

470 Florida Street, San Francisco

TICKETS:

First week all tickets \$10 (June 8, 9, and 10)!

\$20 General Admission, \$10 Students, Seniors (60+), and TBA members.

Tickets can be purchased online at crowdedfire.org, or by calling the Tix Central Box Office: (415) 439-2456.

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