

Central Works
THE NEW PLAY THEATER

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**CENTRAL WORKS 25th SEASON CONTINUES WITH
WORLD PREMIERE ADAPTATION OF THE HAUNTING SHORT STORY:**

***Charlotte Perkins Gilman's*
*THE YELLOW WALLPAPER***

**adapted for the stage by Gary Graves
directed by Jan Zvaifler**

May 16 – June 21

(Press Night May 16, previews May 14 & 15)

Berkeley City Club
2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley

Central Works continues its 25th season with Gary Grave's haunting stage adaptation, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman's THE YELLOW WALLPAPER*, opening with a press night May 16 (previews May 14 & 15), and running through June 21 at the historic Berkeley City Club. Adapted from a classic of early American feminist literature, Gilman's chilling short story follows a Victorian woman's descent into madness. Confined in the attic of an old, dilapidated mansion, as part of a "rest cure" prescribed by her husband, "Jane" begins to see strange forms creeping around behind the torn and ragged yellow wallpaper in the room. First published in 1892, Gilman explained that the idea for the story originated in her own experience as a patient: "the real purpose of the story was to reach [her doctor], and convince him of the error of his ways." Oxford professor Alan Ryan describes the story as "one of the finest, and strongest, tales of horror ever written. It may be a ghost story. Worse yet, it may not." Graves' adaptation stays true to the words and spirit of the original.

THE YELLOW WALLPAPER is Central Works World Premiere #47, and will be directed by company co-director Jan Zvaifler. It features Elena Wright (member AEA) and Cybèle D'Ambrosio (member AFM) with stage management by Vanessa Ramos, costumes by Tammy Berlin, sound by Gregory Scharpen, and props by Debbie Shelley. Ms. D'Ambrosio will also be arranging and playing classical and original musical compositions for the piece.

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The script was created using the Central Works Method of collaborative play development. In a supportive workshop environment, group research and collective brainstorming contribute to the development of the script. The play emerges as a rich mix of group research, dramaturgical analysis and shared imagination. "The creative simmering that takes place gives a Central Works production a different brand from other more conventionally created productions...a unique style of theater not to be missed"—*San Jose Mercury News*.

Gary Graves has been a resident playwright and company co-director at Central Works since 1998. He has been a part of developing 46 world premiere productions with the company, many of which he has either written and/or directed. Titles of plays he has written include: *Lion and the Fox*, *Red Virgin*, *Richard the First (a trilogy)*, *Machiavelli's The Prince*, *The Inspector General*, *Achilles and Patroklos*, *The Grand Inquisitor*, *Chekhov's The Duel*, *Misanthrope*, *Mata Hari*, and *Penelope's Odyssey*. He has received two nominations from the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle for Original Script. He also leads the Central Works Writers Workshop, an ongoing commissioning program that develops new works. Since 2002, he has taught playwriting year-round at the Berkeley Rep School of Theater, including the annual Summer Playwriting Workshop that develops and presents a series of staged readings of 8 new plays.

Jan Zvaifler helped found Central Works in 1991. Since then she performed in over two dozen of the company's world premieres and directed another 15 productions. She has performed in London and Edinburgh and her work has been seen throughout the Bay Area in such venues as Theater Artaud, Berkeley Rep, Brava, Marin Theater Company, (the formerly named) Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, San Francisco Shakespeare and Theater on the Square.

Cybèle D'Ambrosio, a native of Berkeley, began playing the violin at age five. She studied with Anne Crowden as a youth and with David Abel in college. She holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in music performance from Brigham Young University and Mills College. While living in Italy for 7 years, Cybèle taught violin and chamber music at the *Accademia Musicale Mediterranea*. She now runs her own private teaching studio in north Berkeley, performs with local orchestral groups, and composes music for small ensembles. She currently serves as President of the San Francisco section of the American String Teachers Association.

Elena Wright earned her M.F.A. from the University of Washington. She has worked throughout the Bay Area at Marin Shakespeare (*As You Like It*, *A Comedy of Errors*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *The Liar*), Theatreworks (*Silent Sky*), Pacific Repertory Theatre (*Venus in Fur*), California Shakespeare Theatre (*The Verona Project*), Shotgun Players (*The Salt Plays, Part I and II*), Capital Stage, (*The Scene*, and *In the Next Room: The Vibrator Play*), and has also appeared at Marin Theatre Company, Symmetry Theatre, Sonoma County Repertory, Seattle Shakespeare, B Street Theatre, and Foothill Theatre among others. Film credits include *The Secret Life of a Hotel Room*, *By Chance*, and *Beatrice*. Ms. Wright will be appearing next at Marin Shakespeare in *Richard III*.

Central Works fills a special niche for theater artists in the San Francisco Bay Area, producing more new plays by local playwrights than any other company in the region. "The New Play Theater" utilizes three basic strategies: some come to the company fully developed, some are products of the Central Works Method (described above), and some are developed in the Central Works Writers Workshop, an ongoing commissioning program established in 2012.