

Guild Hall: Three Nights of Readings

In the tradition of oral poetry and the minstrels who once carried tales from village to village, the Los Angeles-based WordTheatre will present a weekend's worth of staged readings, tomorrow, Saturday, and Sunday, at 8 p.m., at Guild Hall in East Hampton. "I believe that storytelling is a primary need. There's food, water, and stories," said the producer of all three evenings, Cedering Fox.

Ms. Fox is the daughter of the poet and artist Siv Cedering, whose Sagaponack house was a gathering place for artists and writers. It was there she met Bill Henderson, the founder and publisher of the Pushcart Prize. In 1975, Mr. Henderson wrote to Anais Nin, Paul Bowles, and Ralph Ellison, asking them to suggest the names of accomplished young writers. Thus began the Pushcart Prize, an annual anthology that has been publishing the best work from the small presses for 30 years.

Ms. Fox became a Hollywood film producer. In the early 1990s she met the director Darrell Larson and they began staging literary evenings at the Met Theater in Los Angeles. First, writers read their works, and then actors took over. The WordTheatre grew out of those events.

Tomorrow, "Gonzo: The Life and Times of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson" will offer guidance for the future of our planet through Xander Berkeley's portrayal of the irreverent, iconic author whose outsized personality matched the wild phrasing of his classic novella, "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas."

On Saturday, short-short stories by the Pushcart Prize winners Joyce Carol Oates, Charles Baxter, Amy Hempel, Sydney Lea, Aimee Bender, Ian Frazier, and Anais Nin will be read by the actors Julianna Margulies, Samantha Mathis, Bob Balaban, Andrew McCarthy, Dana Delany, Chris McDonald, Carla Gugino, and Anson Mount. The evening will benefit the Pushcart Prize fellowships for young writers.

On Sunday, John Heard will perform in the American premiere of "The Rambler: The Principal Part of Dr. Johnson,"



Xander Berkeley

by the Bridgehampton playwright Kay Eldredge. Taken from his writings and those of his contemporaries, the one-man play is a portrait of this major figure of the 18th century, the subject of the first best-selling biography, Boswell's "Life of Johnson," and author of the "Dictionary of the English Language."

"The more technological we get, the more important it is to hear individual voices," said Ms. Fox, explaining how she works with actors, pulling stories apart to examine the specificity of language. WordTheatre readings are now distributed through HarperAudio — recordings can be downloaded to computers and iPods — and Ms. Fox said she hopes thereby to attract a broader audience to literature.

Tickets to the Friday and Sunday readings cost \$30, \$28 for Guild Hall members. Tickets to Saturday's reading cost \$45, or \$100 for the reading and a V.I.P. reception. They can be reserved by calling the Guild Hall box office or visiting www.guildhall.org. R.W.