

Dave Dixon

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How did you get involved with New Play Project?

I got a Facebook invite from Katherine Morris for the auditions for *Thorns & Thistles*. And I decided, what the heck, so I went and auditioned. I got double cast, and there's only been one show we've done since then that I haven't been involved with.

What have you done with NPP?

Like I said, in *Thorns & Thistles* I played two roles—I was the lead in one play and then a supporting character in another. And then it was the next show that I didn't do anything in, which was *America*. Right after that I directed “Sick Cat,” and then I was the lead in James Goldberg's play “Prodigal Son.” I acted in Mahonri Stewart's *Swallow the Sun* as J.R.R. Tolkien. And I'm currently directing Ben Crowder's play “Tree of Blood.” Aside from that, I've done a number of the workshops, I've submitted plays that I've written, I've gone to a bunch of the open staff meetings and helped set up things, I've helped to get us signed up in the National Community Theaters Association. So, some of it is, you know, acting and directing, and then another part is helping all the wheels turn.

Out of what you've done so far, what's your favorite show that you've worked on?

“Prodigal Son” was a marvelous experience because it required so much commitment—about twenty hours a week or more. When you have that short of a time budget to work on—two and a half weeks to put the whole thing together—and there's just three main characters and the director and assistant director, there's kind of a closeness and a camaraderie. It feels good to commit yourself *that* much to something. It's not just something you're doing on the side, but you're really spending nights. One night James and I went till seven o'clock in the morning just memorizing lines. I lay on the floor at his house, and he sat on the couch, and we just ran lines from about midnight till seven in the morning, because we had to get them through.

What has your experience with NPP been like?

I love it. I think the thing I love about it is that they want as much as you want to give.



If you want to write a play, then write a play. If you want to direct or assistant direct, then you tell them you want to do it, and if they trust you and they've seen what you've done in the past, they'll let you do it. If you want to act, then you go and audition, and if they like you, you can go act. There are opportunities to do pretty much everything—if you want to run the house, if you want to help run the lights, if you want to do stage props. You're not just a meaningless cog in an already established wheel, but you're very much a mover and a shaker from the very beginning, and *everybody* is. I think that's what I love the most about NPP.

That and I love what they're trying to do: to create a place where the LDS community can speak. Whether the plays are religious or not, everything's informed by who we are, and New Play Project provides a place to hone those skills as well as to connect with the entire community and let people know we have a voice. New Play Project's goal is basically, as Mormons, to say, “We have a voice and it's important that we're heard, because we have amazing things to say.”

How do you see NPP affecting and influencing the Mormon arts world?

I really do believe that Mormons have the most important message in the world to give. We clearly have an understanding of what they are, and if we can inspire the rising generation of artists—including ourselves—to really master the craft and commit themselves to serve God through art—not to serve art and let God be involved, which I think generations previous have done, but to really serve God through art and to make powerful, masterful pieces of art whether it be in theatre, movies, literature, poetry, whatever, based around what we know and what is real—then I think we're doing a tremendous service to the world. And I believe we can do it. ■