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How did you get involved with New Play Project?

When New Play Project started, I was going to grad school in the Midwest, and I'd heard about it through lingering on the Association for Mormon Letters discussion forum—I read some of the posts that James Goldberg had put up about his show, I read some of the reviews that other AML members had written about the show, and I got really excited. I also get the newsletter from the BYU Department of Theatre Arts, and they said NPP was looking for a stage manager. I thought it was a good way to get involved with a theater that was doing something I was interested in, which is producing new plays. I also like to call shows. I moved back at Thanksgiving of 2007, and I kind of fell in the deep end and called *America*, which was the first show they did in Provo Theatre Company.

You've got your play, *Little Happy Secrets*, coming up in a few months. How did it come about?

During my third year at grad school, one of the requirements was to take a special topics class, and that year the special topic was writing a one-act, and you could write about anything you wanted. I thought to myself, "Okay, I need to write a one-act. What do I do? What do I do? All of the things in my head are too big, too big, too big. What's going on?" And *Little Happy Secrets* came out of one night when I was just frustrated.

We were supposed to each bring in an eight- to ten-page snippet the following week to give everybody a taste of where the play was starting and where it was going, and I was freaking out because I had nothing. And then at about 1:30 in the morning the night before, I just started writing this monologue. All of a sudden the main character Claire was right there talking to me and I was putting her on the page, and in a couple hours I had the first ten pages.

The response from my class to those first pages was really strong. They liked it a lot and said, "This is a voice we haven't heard before." I went home that weekend and wrote the rest of it.

This play is very Mormon and very personal. I always have to put a disclaimer on and say it's not autobiographical—it feels like it is, because it's one person who gets up and tells an audience, "This is my story of being in love with someone."



The topic of the play, same-gender attraction, isn't exactly typical for a Utah Valley audience, is it.

It's a very difficult topic, but the intention was to write about it respectfully and in a mature way. That's the hope, anyway. Here's a real person dealing with this situation, and she's not going to make fun of it because it's her situation. She's not going to make light of it at the same time that she's not going to let it destroy her life.

I don't think that the play is overly negative. It does have some dramatic moments, but I think it also has some parts in it that are very funny—which is, for me, like real life. The best comedies make you laugh when you're either terrified or when you're in a very dramatic situation, where you're just so there in the scene dramatically, and then there's a laugh. It's a release. It feels good.

It's a subject that people need to talk about and be aware of. People make a lot of blanket judgments, and I think that's a mistake.

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

I just think that the media in general is such a powerful influence. Film and theatre and music and art and literature are incredibly influential to me. So much of what I do and say and think comes from what I read and watch and listen to. I have a pet peeve, which is where people basically write off Hollywood, saying it's the devil's land and that we should give it up. If it's the devil's land, we should take it back. I don't agree that Hollywood belongs to the devil, but I want to take it back—the media is an ongoing battle, and we can't stop fighting it.

New Play Project can, for lack of a better word, be life-changing. The theater is literally a place where lives change, on stage and in the audience. ■