

Interview with Davey Morrison Dillard

BY BOYD PETERSEN



What was the inspiration for “Adam and Eve”?

It’s hard to say, really. I’d recently been re-reading Genesis at the time—for me one of the most beautiful books of scripture—and I was at home watching Darren Aronofsky’s film *The Fountain* for the first time one afternoon, when suddenly the thought popped into my head, “What would it have been like for Adam dating the only woman on earth?” I put the movie on pause, went upstairs, sat down at the computer, and started typing.

After I read the play, I found some startling correspondences between Adam and Eve and my girlfriend (now my wife) and me, but she never saw them, and I honestly can’t remember what most of them were anymore. But I guess art imitates life imitates art, etc.

What was the writing process like? How many revisions did you go through?

I hammered out a first draft in a couple hours that afternoon, and then later that day I went back, read it over, moved a few things around, added a little, probably changed a couple lines, and that was my second draft.

I took that to a playwriting workshop hosted by New Play Project a day or two later. They had a few suggestions, and I changed a couple more lines, but for the most part, it was written just a couple of hours after I had the idea. I wish it would happen like that every time.

Where has “Adam and Eve” been performed?

So far it’s had one production at New Play Project (and I have to give kudos to the brilliant director and actors we had) and one at Payson High School, which I wasn’t able to see.

Who was your intended audience for the piece? Do you see it being performed elsewhere?

The play was written with New Play Project in mind—written for an audience interested in LDS theatre told from an LDS perspective. The play is definitely informed by a Mormon sensibility—the theological idea of the Fall as inherently necessary and even positive is a very Mormon idea, and it’s central to the play. That said, I like to think the piece would be entertaining to members of other faiths as well as those who don’t believe in God at all. The play is really about any couple—about the leap of faith required just to be with someone else. In the eternal scheme of things, we’re all Adams and Eves, facing a scary world with a companion we sometimes barely seem to know, and trying to make our own paradise with help from a Higher Power. Whether you call that power “God” or something else, I think, is much less important.

Have you thought about expanding the play or of adapting other scriptural narratives?

I’ve played around with the idea of a full-length play involving a number of different stories



from the Old Testament—Genesis in particular—inspired by the medieval “cycle plays.” In these kinds of plays, each cycle was made up of a

number of short plays based on some of the most significant biblical stories; the characters would speak in contemporary language and would use the stories to deal with contemporary issues. This was how whole generations learned the stories of the Bible, because if they didn’t know Latin, they couldn’t hear them any other way. This second-hand, entertainment-based form of presentation was more than a little problematic (who knew Cain had a funny, bumbling servant?), but there’s also something really beautiful about telling stories this way—they’re not just things that happened once. They happened then, they happen now, they’ll happen again, and they’ll always be happening, because truth is eternal. Sometimes our supposed reverence for our stories can remove us from what’s really important about them—that they still have the power to be as real and as immediate now as when they happened. My goal is to allow audiences to connect with the emotional and spiritual immediacy while finding new things to consider in these stories. ■