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**A Restless Spirit and Broken Archeologist Find Rebirth
in *Ankbst* -A Transcendent Drama about a Forgotten Pharaoh
Beginning February 17th at the American Theatre of Actors**

A man born way too soon, who could only speak to the future. Such was Akhnaton, ruler of ancient Egypt circa 1360 B.C., whose vision harmonized humanity with nature, in Clarinda Karpov's time-spanning drama *Ankbst*. Directed by Ted Mornel, and produced by the Alternative Theater of Manhattan, this tale of dreams, loss and rebirth will begin performances on February 17 at the Beckmann Theatre at the American Theatre of Actors, located at 314 West 54th Street.

At an Egyptian dig in the late 1980s, Dr. Alexandra Philips, an archeologist on her first excavation since recovering from a nervous breakdown, uncovers a heretofore unknown burial chamber. As she probes the mystery of the tomb, the imprisoned spirit of Akhnaton, the forgotten husband of Queen Nefertiti and the father of King Tut-Ankh-Amun, appears to her and shares his story of a time when he held the world in his hands, before it was all cruelly ripped away. It's a feeling Alex herself remembers, as she is continually second-guessed about her abilities to still do her job. Feeling an unexpected kinship with this lost soul, yet craving a return to academic heights, Alex is torn when Akhnaton's longing to be at peace challenges her duty to science and her own career. But can Alex, like Akhnaton, risk all to rise a phoenix from the ashes of her life and be true to her own conscience above all else?

First produced in 1989, *Ankbst* tells the story of a man who believed in the existence of only one god and who tried to teach his people new ways of understanding long before they were ready -- an idea which put him squarely in conflict with the priests of Egypt, who were determined not to lose the power they tightly held. Told in a style which combines blank verse, modern-day prose, incidental music and Near-Eastern dancing, the multi-ethnic cast of *Ankbst* features: Maggie Alexander, Seon Britton, Shelly Christian, Ryan F. Cupello, Izzy Durakovic, William York Hyde, Jharrel Jerome, Clarinda Karpov, Alia Thabit, Sly Turner*, Anwar Uddin, William J. Vila*, Joe Williams, and Michael Young. Dancers: Dena, Elisabeth, Sonziry. The set and lighting is by the show's co-producer William York Hyde, and the choreography is by Joe Williams. The production is an Equity Approved Showcase.

Clarinda Karpov's plays have been produced regionally; in England; in New York City (Expanded Arts Summer One-Act Festival, New York International Fringe Festival); and nationally (three plays in KVNO-FM's TekniKoloour Radio series, broadcast by National Public Radio). Karpov is the artistic director of performance troupe, *How Now!* She conceived and co-created The Earl of Southampton's Fair, a Renaissance Arts Festival at the ruin of England's Titchfield Abbey, home of Shakespeare's patron, the probable "young man of the sonnets." The Fair has since blossomed into an annual Shakespeare festival. Karpov writes, acts, directs, and performs as a musician on harp, penny whistle, bodhran, and psaltry.

Ted Mornel is considered one of the pioneers of the off-off B'way movement, having worked at such seminal theaters as Cafe Cino, White Masque, Theater Crossroads, Bastiano's Playwrights Workshop, Playbox Studio and many more. The playwrights he has worked with include Robert Patrick, Lanford Wilson, Michael Mathias, Michael McGrinder and Donald Kvares. He has premiered over 200 new plays, including *Secrets* by Gerald Zipper which played in the summer of 2006 off-B'way, at Theater at St. Luke's. He directed a revival of *Driving Miss Daisy* in Jersey City and the world premiere of Joel Shatzky's *Girls of Summer* at the Impact Theatre. His body of work has earned him inclusion in Don Marguis' *Who's Who In American Theater*.

Running through March 6th, *Ankbst* will be performed at Beckmann Theatre at the American Theatre of Actors, located at 314 West 54th Street (between 8th & 9th Avenues) on the 2nd Floor. Show times are Thursday-Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 3pm. Tickets are \$18.00 for adults and \$13.00 for students and seniors. Tickets can be ordered by calling 212-868-4444 or at www.smarttix.com. Further information can be found at www.ankhst.com. Members of the press are invited to all performances

The Saturday, February 19th performance will be a benefit for the Amarna Project, which is devoted to the exploration, preservation and study of the ancient Egyptian city of Tell el-Amarna (or simply Amarna), which was the short-lived capital built by the Pharaoh Akhenaten and which was abandoned shortly after his death (c. 1332 BCE). Information: www.amarnaproject.com

There will also be a special performance of *Ankbst* on Saturday, March 12th at 7:30pm at the New York Open Center, located at 22 East 30th Street, (between 5th & Madison Avenues). Tickets for this performance are \$16.00 for members, \$18.00 for non-members. Reservations: 212-219-2527, ext. 2 or www.opencenter.org.

Information for Listing Editors

WHAT:

Ankhs

By Clarinda Karpov

Directed by Ted Mornel

Sets/Lighting by William York (co-producer)

Choreography by Joe Williams

Featuring: Maggie Alexander, Seon Britton, Shelly Christian, Ryan F. Cupello, Izzy Durakovic, William York Hyde, Jharrel Jerome, Clarinda Karpov, Alia Thabit, Sly Turner*, Anwar Uddin, William J. Vila*, Joe Williams, and Michael Young.

Dancers: Dena, Elisabeth, Sonziry

An Equity Approved Showcase

Synopsis:

In 1980s Egypt, Dr. Alexandra Phillips, a once-respected archeologist, now recovering from a nervous breakdown, uncovers an ancient tomb. As she tries to uncover the secret of the crypt, the spirit of the pharaoh Akhnaton appears to her and shows her a time long-forgotten, when he held the world in his hands and had the chance to change the course of history. This drama about rebirth and beginning again was first staged in 1989.

WHERE:

Beckmann Theatre

American Theatre of Actors

2nd Floor

314 West 54th Street (between 8th & 9th Avenues)

(Please note: the theatre is wheelchair accessible)

WHEN:

February 17th-March 6th

Thursday-Saturday at 8pm

Sunday at 3pm.

TICKETS:

\$18.00 for adults

\$13.00 for students and seniors

Saturday, February 19th performance will be a benefit for the Amarna Project,

<http://www.amarnaproject.com>

RESERVATIONS:

212-868-4444 or at www.smarttix.com.

Members of the press are invited to all performances

INFORMATION:

www.ankhst.com

SUBWAY INFO:

Take the A, C or E train to 50th Street
or the A, C, B, D or 1 train to 59th Street

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* - member of Actors' Equity

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