

Theatre Exile logo featuring the words "theatre exile" in a white, monospaced, typewriter-style font on a black rectangular background.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 10, 2014**

**Theatre Exile Presents the Philadelphia Premiere of  
Sharr White's *Annapurna*,  
Starring Pearce Bunting and Catharine Slusar  
Directed by Joe Canuso  
April 17 – May 11, 2014**

PHILADELPHIA – [Theatre Exile](http://www.theatreexile.org) closes its 17th season with the Philadelphia premiere of *Annapurna*, a moving and explosive new play by critically acclaimed, emerging Broadway playwright **Sharr White**. Driven by the emotionally charged relationship between a husband and wife, Exile's production stars Barrymore Award-winning actors **Pearce Bunting** (Exile's *A Behanding in Spokane*, HBO's *Boardwalk Empire*) and **Catharine Slusar** (*Iron*, *Any Given Monday*) as Ulysses and Emma. Performances run **April 17 – May 11** in Theatre Exile's South Philadelphia **Studio X**.

Naked but for an apron and an oxygen tank, Ulysses unexpectedly finds his wife, Emma, at his trailer door. It's been 20 years since their marriage was torn apart by a horrific event that Ulysses can't remember and Emma can't forget. In the spirit of some of the greatest American dramas, *Annapurna* is built upon the hopefulness of reconciliation. Passionate, funny, fierce — it is the impossibility of scaling a mountain of pain that makes the climb so seductive.

"This idea of reconciliation for love or family — no matter how broken — is still an ideal. Why do we risk our lives to love each other?" asks director **Joe Canuso**, Exile's Founding Artistic Director. "*Annapurna* follows a literary tradition of exploring unrevealed secrets and truths that keep a family dysfunctional. What it uncovers is big and fierce, while exposing an intense vulnerability through the relationship we see onstage. Pearce and Catharine are a natural fit for these roles, bringing a natural depth to Ulysses and Emma's relationship through the existing friendship and trust they have built over the years."

*Annapurna*'s world premiere took place at The Magic Theatre in San Francisco in 2011, and will star Megan Mullally and Nick Offerman when it premieres in New York in April. The Huffington Post said of the production, "Sharr White has created two fine and ferociously damaged people caught in the emotional whirlpool of not being able to live with or without each other." Among White's other plays, two have opened on Broadway: *The Other Place* in 2012 and *The Snow Geese* (starring Mary Louise Parker and Philly native **Evan Jonigkeit**) in 2013.

“Sharr White is part of the next generation of up-and-coming playwrights,” continues Canuso. “He has already had two plays on Broadway in the last two years, a major accomplishment for any playwright, and we’re proud to be the first to produce his work in Philadelphia.”

***Annapurna*** runs **April 17 – May 11, 2014 (press opening: Wednesday, April 23, 8 p.m.)**. Tickets are \$20 – \$50 and are available online at [theatrexile.org](http://theatrexile.org) or by calling the Theatre Exile Box Office at **(215) 218-4022**. Performances will take place at Studio X, 1340 S. 13th St. (13th and Reed streets) in South Philadelphia.

## **About the Cast**

The role of Ulysses is performed by Philadelphia actor **Pearce Bunting**, currently in a recurring role as bootlegger Bill McCoy on HBO’s *Boardwalk Empire*. Stage credits with Theatre Exile include *A Beheading in Spokane*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Blackbird*, and *Killer Joe*. In Philadelphia, Pearce won a Barrymore for his work in The Wilma’s production of *Road*. He has also performed with The Arden (*Coyote On A Fence*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*); Philadelphia Theatre Company (*All In The Timing*, *Fifth Of July*); InterAct Theatre Company (*Mastergate*, *God’s Country*); and People’s Light and Theatre Company (*Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Sister Carrie*), among others. Regional stage credits include Minneapolis: Open Eye Figure Theatre, CTC, Ten Thousand Things; *Mamma Mia* (Broadway and National Tour); Big House: *Endgame*, *Hamlet*, *The Wild Duck*, *Across* and *Pink Melon Joy*.

Emma is played by veteran Philadelphia actor **Catharine Slusar**, who is well known to local audiences through her work at the Arden Theatre Company, InterAct Theatre, Lantern Theater Company, Bristol Riverside, People’s Light and Theater Company, and Act II Playhouse. With Exile, Catharine starred in 2010’s *Iron*. She also created the role of Risa in the world premiere of Bruce Graham’s *Any Given Monday*. A recipient of The F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Artist and several Barrymore Awards for Excellence in Theater, Catharine has taught acting at Bryn Mawr College, Rowan University, Özel Bilgi Lisesi in Istanbul, Turkey, and at her alma mater, Yale University.

## **About Sharr White**

Sharr White’s plays have been developed or produced at theatres across the country and Europe, including Manhattan Theatre Club, MCC Theatre, Nationaltheater Mannheim, Melbourne Theatre Company, The Magic Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and more. White’s *The Other Place* received its world premiere Off-Broadway with MCC Theatre, featuring Laurie Metcalf (Lucille Lortel and Obie awards) and directed by Joe Mantello (Lucille Lortel nom). *The Other Place* subsequently received its Broadway premiere at Manhattan Theatre Club with Joe Mantello again directing Laurie Metcalf (Tony nom). *The Other Place* was also a recipient of the 2010 Playwrights First Award; the 2011 Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation’s Theatre Visions Fund Award; and was an Outer Critics Circle Award nominee for Outstanding New Off-Broadway Play. White’s *Annapurna* premiered at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco and was a finalist for the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award. The Los Angeles premiere of *Annapurna* was directed at the Odyssey Theatre by Bart DeLorenzo, and starred Megan Mullally and Nick Offerman—a production that the New Group will move Off-Broadway in the spring of 2014. White’s *The Snow Geese* premiered on Broadway at the Samuel J. Friedman theatre in October 2013, starring Mary Louise Parker and directed by Daniel Sullivan, as a co-production between Manhattan Theatre Club and MCC Theatre. White is currently working on a commission from Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

## **About the Director**

Joe Canuso is the Founding Artistic Director of Theatre Exile in Philadelphia and has directed many of their shows including *A Behanding in Spokane*, *That Pretty Pretty*, *Mr. Marmalade*, *Red Light Winter*, *The Gin Game*, *Burkie*, and *Belmont Avenue Social Club*, as well as the world premieres of *Full Figured/Loves to Dance*, *The Philly Fan*, *Last Call*, *Amputation Nation*, *Cryptome*, *Big Blonde*, *Live at the Apollo Diner*, and *The Frankenharry Plays*. He was nominated in 2006 by the Barrymore Awards for Outstanding Direction of a Play for *Killer Joe* and was named Best Director in 2009 by The Philadelphia Weekly for *Blackbird*. He was nominated as Best Director for a Phindie Award for *The North Plan* in 2013. He was part of Exile's Barrymore Award winning ensemble for *Glengarry Glen Ross* in 2007 and recently appeared as Saul in *True West*.

## **About Theatre Exile**

Founded in 1996 by Joe Canuso and Trish Kelly, Theatre Exile was created by a group of artists who wanted to rattle the gates of the mainstream. Drawn to plays that explore the complexities of the human condition and contain a sense of true Philadelphia grit and passion, Exile has produced 54 full-scale productions, including 14 world and 25 Philadelphia premieres. They were the first Philadelphia organization to produce such powerhouse playwrights as Pulitzer Prize and Tony winner Tracy Letts, Noah Haidle, Rona Munro, David Harrower, Annie Baker and Rajiv Joseph. For their excellence in producing theatre, they have received 49 Barrymore Award nominations, with six awards total. Theatre Exile believes in freedom of expression formulated through innovation, exploration and provocation, all while providing a safe and creative environment, in which local artists can grow, experiment and ultimately, find their own voice.

## Annapurna FACTS

<p><b>Performances:</b></p> <p>Thu, 4/17                    7 p.m.          Fri, 4/18                    8 p.m.          Sat, 4/19                    8 p.m.          Sun, 4/20                    3 p.m.</p> <p>Tue, 4/22                    7 p.m.  <b>Wed, 4/23*</b>                    <b>8 p.m.</b>          Thu, 4/24                    7 p.m.          Fri, 4/25                    8 p.m.          Sat, 4/26                    8 p.m.          Sun, 4/27                    3 p.m.          Sun, 4/27                    7 p.m.</p> <p>Tue, 4/29                    7 p.m.          Wed, 4/30                    8 p.m.          Thu, 5/1**                    7 p.m.          Fri, 5/2                    8 p.m.          Sat, 5/3                    8 p.m.          Sun, 5/4                    3 p.m.          Sun, 5/4                    7 p.m.</p> <p>Tue, 5/6                    7 p.m.          Wed, 5/7                    8 p.m.          Thu, 5/8**                    7 p.m.          Fri, 5/9                    8 p.m.          Sat, 5/10                    8 p.m.          Sun, 5/11                    3 p.m.          Sun, 5/11                    7 p.m.</p> <p><b>*Opening Night</b>  <b>**Post-show discussion</b></p>	<p><b>Dates:</b> <i>Annapurna</i>          April 17 – May 11, 2014          Previews run April 17 – 22, 2014  <b>Press Opening: Wednesday, April 23, 8 p.m.</b></p> <p><b>Theater:</b> Studio X          1340 S. 13th Street (at Reed St.)          Philadelphia, PA 19147</p> <p><b>Prices:</b> Adults: \$10-\$40; Students: \$10-\$15</p> <p><b>Tickets: Phone:</b> (215) 218-4022 or  <a href="http://www.theatrexile.org">http://www.theatrexile.org</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>Annapurna</b>          By <b>Sharr White</b>          Directed by <b>Joe Canuso</b></p> <p><b>Cast</b> (<i>in alphabetical order</i>)  <b>Pearce Bunting</b>            Ulysses  <b>Catharine Slusar</b>           Emma</p> <p><b>Production Team</b>  <b>Thom Weaver</b>            Set and Lighting Designer  <b>Katherine Fritz</b>            Costume Designer  <b>Daniel Perelstein</b>        Original Music and Sound Designer  <b>Brey Ann Barrett</b>        Assistant Director  <b>Lindsay Galbraith</b>        Stage Manager</p>
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**Press Contact for Interviews, Images and Ticket Requests:**

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