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## **TAFFETY PUNK PREVIEWS NEW PLAY AT PAGE-TO-STAGE ON SEPT 6TH**

**What: Taffety Punk at Page to Stage: *Burn Your Bookes*:  
A sneak preview of a new play by Richard Byrne**

**Where: Kennedy Center's Family Theatre**

**When: Sunday, September 6 at 6 p.m. Admission Free**

**Directed by Taffety Punk Artistic Director Marcus Kyd**

Taffety Punk Theatre Company follows up on a standing-room only performance of their *Bootleg Troilus & Cressida* in late July at the Folger Shakespeare Theatre with a sneak preview of a brand-new work at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Page-to-Stage Festival over Labor Day weekend.

*Burn Your Bookes* – a new play by Washington, D.C. playwright Richard Byrne – explores the sex, drugs and baroque 'n' roll behind notorious alchemist Edward Kelley's pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone. The Page-to-Stage sneak preview will present Act II of the play, which took first prize in the inaugural Prague Post Playwriting Festival in March 2007 as a one-act play.

The cast includes Daniel Flint (Kelley), Paul E. Hope (Syrrus) and Joel Paul Santner (Muller).

In the popular imagination, alchemy is relic of the past – a weave of mystery and swindle. Fantastic tales have grown up around its practitioners. It's an aura that alchemists did their best to create and maintain. Some of their texts remain inscrutable to this day.

*Burn Your Bookes* reexamines primary sources to recast Kelley's story as an earthier tale of sex and drugs (gold elixir), back stabbing and intrigue, poetry and new (for the 16<sup>th</sup> Century) technology. Rulers of that era saw alchemy as a research and development arm of their Renaissance empires. The sums invested were great and expectations of success were high. Failure was not tolerated.

Act II of the play is set in Prague in the Renaissance court of Emperor Rudolph II. Two alchemical pretenders are under sentence of death by starvation. The English alchemist Edward Kelley happens to wander by their cages – or is he there for a reason?

**Taffety Punk Theatre Company** is won the John Aniello Award for Outstanding Emerging Theatre Company at the 2008 Helen Hayes Awards. Taffety Punk's mission of is to establish a dynamic ensemble of actors, dancers and musicians who ignite a public passion for theatre by making the classical and the contemporary exciting, meaningful, and affordable.

**Richard Byrne** is a playwright and journalist. He lives in Washington, D.C.

His first play, *Untangling Ava*, won the 1989 A.E. Hotchner Playwriting Festival at Washington University. It was produced in the Drama Studio at Washington University in April, 1989. A one-act version of *Burn Your Bookes* won first prize in the 2007 *Prague Post* Playwriting Festival. It was produced at the Divadlo Minor in Prague in March 2007.

Byrne's work has appeared in *The Nation*, *The Guardian*, *Time* (online), *Foreign Policy*, *The Washington Post*, *BookForum* and *The American Prospect*. He has also written liner notes for reissues of albums by R.E.M. (*New Adventures in Hi-Fi*) and Uncle Tupelo (*Anodyne*). He is the editor of *UMBC Magazine* – the alumni magazine of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Byrne is also a Taffety Punk. He has directed the company's press relations since September 2008.