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INAUGURAL **PLAYGROUND FILM FEST** TO PREMIERE IN
SAN FRANCISCO, BERKELEY AND SAN RAFAEL
MAY 15-26, 2012
NEW DATES/VENUES ADDED!

SAN FRANCISCO, (May 14, 2012) – PlayGround and partner Dances with Light have announced the full schedule of screenings for the inaugural **PlayGround Film Festival** including additional dates and locations in Berkeley and San Rafael. The Film Festival features five short films adapted from short plays originally developed and premiered at the Best of PlayGround Festival, created by teams of local filmmakers, writers, actors and technicians. In addition to seven public screenings at Thick House (May 15, 8pm – Opening Night; May 16, 22 and 23, 6pm and 8pm), home of the currently running [16th annual Best of PlayGround Festival](#), the PlayGround Film Festival will be screened at the Rialto Cinemas Elmwood in Berkeley (May 24, 7pm and 9pm), 32TEN Studios (formerly the George Lucas Theater) in San Rafael (May 25, 8pm), and the Zaentz Media Center/Fantasy Studios in Berkeley (May 26, 6pm and 8pm). Opening Night is Tuesday, May 15 at 8pm and includes a post-screening discussion and artists reception. For the complete schedule and tickets, visit <http://playground-sf.org/filmfest>.

The featured short films include:

- **The Beginning** (Brian Tolle, filmmaker; Tom Swift, screenwriter and producer, based on the short play by Tom Swift from the 2005 Best of PlayGround Festival)
- **Ecce Homo** (Jonathan Luskin/Mark Leialoha/Flying Moose Pictures, filmmakers; Jonathan Luskin, screenwriter; based on the short play by Jonathan Luskin from the 2011 Best of PlayGround Festival)
- **The Etymology of Zero** (an animated short; Seth Podowitz, filmmaker; Katie May, screenwriter; Katie May and Liz Anderson, co-producers; David Azer, Jan Heiman, Eileen Laitinen, Brendan Oshima, and Rachel Whalon, animators; based on the short play *Rapunzel's Etymology of Zero* by Katie May from the 2011 Best of PlayGround Festival)
- **Reunion** (Gregory Runnels and Mark Runnels, filmmakers; Kenn Rabin, screenwriter; based on the short play by Kenn Rabin from the 2004 Best of PlayGround Festival)
- **Wednesday** (Jennifer Arzt, filmmaker; Daniel Heath, screenwriter; based on the short play by Daniel Heath from the 2009 Best of PlayGround Festival)

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The Beginning, a Monday Night reading Series and Festival favorite, is a simple story that focuses on one moment of profound passion, fear and hope. On a cold dark night two naked strangers struggle to connect. What is the question? And, what is their answer? **Brian Tolle** (filmmaker) has written and directed short films for the past fifteen years, evolving from two person productions like *2:47am* into professional crew and cast for *the lamp*. In addition to directing *The Beginning*, he is currently finishing development on a feature-length romantic comedy, *All the Others Were Practice*. When he's not producing his own films, Brian works as a Visual Effects Artist for Hollywood movies, specializing in computer generated cameras. **Tom Swift and His Amazing Productions, LLC** (producer) was founded by business partners and Financial Avengers, Tom Swift and Arthur McCord. Their most recent production (*My Name Is Yin*, a 2004 Best of PlayGround Festival selection) was one of six winners of the 2011 Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Festival. *The Beginning* is their first film project.

Ecce Homo delighted audiences at the 15th annual Best of PlayGround Festival. Set in 1932, the play is the story of two vaudeville players, Gus and Fanny, as they face the demise of their stage careers brought on by moving pictures. Through the loving conflict of a married couple, *Ecce Homo* illuminates a very contemporary theme: how we struggle to survive the incessant technological change that threatens our livelihoods and our relationships. **Jonathan Luskin** (director, writer, producer) is a veteran of seven PlayGround seasons and has received two Emerging Playwright Awards. He has worked at the Playwrights Lab, received a commission from the Magic Theatre to write *Early Adopter*, and his play, *n of 1*, was selected for the Bay Area Shorts Festival. Jonathan has directed for many Bay Area theater companies, and was recently awarded a Djerassi Artist's Residency, where he developed *Ecce Homo*. He has animated for leading visual-effects companies and is a co-founder along with Mark Leialoha of **Flying Moose Pictures** (producer), a video production company. **Mark Leialoha** (director of photography/producer) has a passion for photography and film that spans over two decades, Mark has travelled throughout Europe, the US and Far East as a principal contributing photographer, his innovative and creative editorial & commercial photography featured in more than 75 magazines in over 25 countries. With extensive production skills, encompassing still & video camera operation, lighting, audio and editing, Mark offers a unique approach and vision to every project. He has served as Director of Photography for the feature-length independent film 'Maladaptive.' Mark's still photography will next appear in Kirk Hammett's *Too Much Horror Business*. **Jessica Heidt** (producer) is an award-winning director, producer & casting director. She has been involved with PlayGround since 2004 and has worked closely with Flying Moose Pictures on many projects. Heidt is the former Artistic Director of Climate Theater and Associate Artistic Director of Magic Theatre. She has worked as a casting director with many Bay Area film and theater companies and currently teaches at Film Acting Bay Area.

The Etymology of Zero is based on the short play *Rapunzel's Etymology of Zero*, written by Katie May for PlayGround's annual "Math Night" presented in collaboration with the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute and featured in the 15th annual Best of PlayGround Festival. In this feminist fairytale, Rapunzel locks herself in a tall tower and concocts a story of an evil stepmother to focus on her blossoming love of mathematics and avoid the attentions of a young prince. **Katie May** (writer, producer, adaptor) is a recipient of the PlayGround Emerging Playwrights Award and Fellowship for 2011. She is a contributing writer to the live radio show, 915 Cayuga, and holds an MFA in Playwriting from Arizona State University. **Seth Podowitz** (filmmaker) is directing, co-adapting and scoring music for the animated film short of *Rapunzel*. Animators include **David Azer, Jan Heiman, Eileen Laitinen, Brendan Oshima, and Rachel Whalon**. **Katie Siller** is animation production manager. **Liz Anderson** is co-producing and performing the role of Rapunzel to **Patrick Russell's** Prince. **Khamara Pettus** is voicing the Narrator.

Ripped from today's headlines, **Reunion** is playwright Kenn Rabin's story of a convicted sex offender, recently released from prison, who finds a new home with Deb, a woman determined to stand up for his rights and live down her own past. The play received its premiere at the 2004 Best of PlayGround Festival. **Kenn Rabin** (writer) has written several full-length and numerous short plays, including *How to Chop Wood*, *Hotel Poststrasse*, and *When the Dead Weep*, as well as *Celadon Box #8*, *Hunters and Gatherers*, and *Reunion*, the latter three of which won PlayGround Emerging Playwrights Awards. Mr. Rabin received a PlayGround Fellowship, a Marin Arts Council Individual Grant, and Marin Theatre Company's first-ever commission for *Found Objects*. His documentary and feature credits include PBS' *Eyes on the Prize* and *Vietnam: A Television History*, Sean Penn's *The Indian Runner*, George Clooney's *Good Night, and Good Luck*, Steven Soderbergh's *The Good German*, and Gus Van Sant's *Milk*. He's a member of the Dramatists Guild. The **Runnels Brothers, Greg and Mark** (filmmakers), have been working together creatively since the early-1990's. They have directed several short films, commercials, music videos and plays. Their feature film *Youthanasia* was acquired by York Entertainment and is available through Netflix. Their animated short film *Breakfast with Bukowski* has been screened at several festivals and recently won the Slamdance Social Shorties. They are now in development on their next feature film *Bukowski: An Animated Life*.

In Daniel Heath's **Wednesday**, a couple decides to liven up their evening one ordinary Wednesday with a question-and-answer drinking game. A few drinks in, Eve asks Robert a question that puts their marriage to the ultimate test. **Jennifer Arzt** (filmmaker) holds a MFA in Film, Television, and Recording Arts where she pursued writing, directing, and producing. Her films have appeared in festivals across the country, winning a few awards, including the Directors Guild of America Student Film Award. Formerly the Program Director of Script Frenzy, she is now freelancing as a writer/director on projects big and small. **Daniel Heath's** (writer) recent productions of full-length plays include *Man of Rock* (New York Musical Theatre Festival 2011, and the Climate Theatre, San Francisco, 2010), *Seven Days* (SF Playhouse, San Francisco, 2010) and *A Merry Forking Christmas* (PianoFight, San Francisco, 2009, 2010, and 2011). He is a three-time recipient of commissions from PlayGround(2009, 2010, and 2012) and a four-time winner of the PlayGround Emerging Playwright Award (2007, 2008, 2009, 2011); he is also currently working on a commission from Just Theater. His award-winning short plays have been performed across the United States and Canada. Featuring in the cast are Brian Herndon and Cindy Goldfield, reprising their roles from the 2009 Best of PlayGround Festival.

Since 1994, **PlayGround** has been a leading incubator for some of the Bay Area's most promising new playwrights, premiering 110 original short plays by 57 Bay Area emerging playwrights from several thousand submissions through its Monday Night PlayGround staged reading series and Best of PlayGround Festival. PlayGround has also commissioned 41 new full-length plays and supports the premiere of many of these works in partnership with Bay Area theatres through its innovative New Play Production Fund. PlayGround alumni include a who's who of the Bay Area's best up-and-coming writers, including Peter Sinn Nachtrieb, Aaron Loeb, Geetha Reddy, Daniel Heath, Ken Slattery, among others, with many having their first professional production through PlayGround.

PlayGround's alumni have gone on to win not only local but also national honors for short and full-length work, including recognition at the Humana Festival, Sundance Festival, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Aurora Theatre Company's Global Age Project, Guthrie Theatre, Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Short Play Festival, and The Drama League's New Directors-New Works series. Works have been premiered at numerous theatres throughout the Bay Area, including: Theatre Rhinoceros, San Jose Stage Company, Just Theater, and SF Playhouse. Of particular note is Aaron Loeb's *Abraham Lincoln's Big Gay Dance Party* which, following its premiere at SF Playhouse in 2008, received a sold-out run at the 2009 New York International Fringe Festival (named "Outstanding Play"), its off-Broadway debut in 2010, and is being produced around the country this season.

Barry Stone, owner of **Dances with Light**, made his first film in 1979. He has professional credits as an actor, composer and director in the theatre, and as a producer, director, writer, composer, actor, cinematographer and editor in film and television. His directorial credits include four episodes of the British hit series *rENFORD rEJECTS*, filmed in London for Nickelodeon and Channel Four, "All Ways Welcome", produced and directed for the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, and numerous commercials, music videos and corporate films. Barry has been the cinematographer on forty-seven episodes of series television, six MOWs, numerous commercials and twenty-one feature films, notably *Lie with me*, *Mouth to Mouth*, *Cherish*, *Triggermen*, *Pale Saints*, *Paris France*, *Rude*, *Dumbarton Bridge*, *The Perfect Son* and *Dream with the Fishes*. Recently Barry produced and directed *SNIFF*, a feature length drama / documentary hybrid with Amanda Plummer, Neil Morrissey (and a lot of great dogs).

For more information, contact PlayGround Artistic Director Jim Kleinmann at jim@playground-sf.org or (415) 992-6677.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

Event: PlayGround Film Festival

Dates: Tuesday, May 15 at 8pm OPENING NIGHT (Thick House, San Francisco)
Wednesday, May 16 at 6pm/8pm (Thick House, San Francisco)
Tuesday, May 22 at 6pm/8pm (Thick House, San Francisco)
Wednesday, May 23 at 6pm/8pm (Thick House, San Francisco)
Thursday, May 24 at 7pm/9pm (Rialto Cinemas Elmwood, Berkeley)
Friday, May 25 at 8pm (32TEN Studios, *formerly George Lucas Theater*, San Rafael)
Saturday, May 26 at 6pm/8pm (Zaentz Media Center/Fantasy Studios, Berkeley)

Locations: Thick House, 1695 18th Street, San Francisco
Rialto Cinemas Elmwood, 2966 College Ave, Berkeley
32TEN Studios, 3210 Kerner Blvd, San Rafael
Zaentz Media Center/Fantasy Studios, 2600 Tenth St, Berkeley

Tickets: \$15 (May 15 Opening: \$25)
For tickets, visit www.PlayGround-sf.org/filmfest or call (415) 992-6677

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