



MEDIA CONTACT: JIM KLEINMANN
415.704.3177
JIM@PLAYGROUND-SF.ORG

PLAYGROUND ANNOUNCES 2008-09 SEASON

15TH ANNUAL MONDAY NIGHT PLAYGROUND SERIES

NEW WRITERS' POOL SELECTED

2009 BEST OF PLAYGROUND FESTIVAL

PODCASTS OF PLAYGROUND SHORTS AT KQED

PLAYGROUND INTENSIVES

FIVE NEW FULL-LENGTH COMMISSIONS!

SAN FRANCISCO, (October 1, 2008) – **PlayGround**, the incubator for the next generation of Bay Area playwrights, has announced its schedule for the 2008-09 season. Kicking off its 15th Season, Monday Night PlayGround began October 20th and will continue through March 2009, with the year's award winners announced in April. The annual Best of PlayGround Festival, expanding to a four-week run in May, will be held at the Thick House in San Francisco. For subscriptions, or for more information, the public can call (415) 704-3177, or go online at www.PlayGround-sf.org.

The monthly **Monday Night PlayGround** series will continue its growing success at Berkeley Repertory Theatre on third Mondays, from October through March (Note: January's performance will take place on the second Monday, January 12). Two Fridays before the designated Monday, a topic is announced to PlayGround's selected pool of local playwrights, who then have until 2pm the following Tuesday to submit a short script (some of last season's topics included "Launch!" "Palimpsest" and "The Ghosts of Departed Quantities"). A panel of judges selects six winners, whose entries are cast by the following weekend and then rehearsed with the area's best professional actors and directors in a whirlwind 90 minutes each before being performed as stage readings.

The source for each month's script submissions comes from PlayGround's own Writers Pool, which has just been selected for the upcoming 2008-09 Season. Out of 78 Bay Area applicants who submitted material for consideration, a pool of 36 playwrights was selected, including new members Nima Aghdam, Erin Bregman, Phoebe Brueckner, Caitlin Myer, and Alex Rosenthal. Returning writers are Crish Barth, Tim Bauer, Andy Black, Cass Brayton, Robyn Brooks, Ron Campbell, Samantha Chanse, Adam Chanzit, Garret Jon Groenveld, Leah Halper, Daniel Heath, Brady Lea, Aaron Loeb, Lisa Ludden, Jonathan Luskin, Doug MacPherson, Ross Peter Nelson, Michelle Ortega, Evelyn Jean Pine, Kenn Rabin, Geetha Reddy, Molly Rhodes, Carolina Rojas, Mark Routhier, Diane Sampson, Ken Slattery, Martha Soukup, Tom Swift, Nick Turner, Lauren Yee, and Ignacio Zulueta.

After the Monday Night Series concludes, a panel will revisit and re-evaluate the 36 scripts produced throughout the season and, at the **PlayGround Benefit & Awards Night** in April 2009, seven scripts will be chosen for the 2009 Emerging Playwright Awards. Also announced at the benefit will be the winners of the annual June Anne Baker prize, which honors a distinguished female playwright, and the winner of this season's PlayGround Fellowship. Emerging Playwright Award winners will receive an honorarium, publication in the annual compilation, and a fully staged version of their scripts as part of *The Best of PlayGround* festival in May, held for the second year at Thick House in San Francisco.

The 2009 Festival will also include staged reading of five full-length plays commissioned and developed by PlayGround as part of the company's ongoing Commissioning Initiative. 2008 Commissions were awarded to Trevor Allen, Daniel Heath, Brady Lea, Evelyn Jean Pine, and Lauren Yee.

PlayGround will continue offering its series of playwriting **Intensives** for emerging professionals, monthly playwriting lectures and master classes led by distinguished PlayGround alumni and leaders in Bay Area theatre. Writers may sign up for individual or multiple classes, as each is intended as a stand-alone program. Classes take place the first Monday night of each month from 7-9pm at A.C.T. Studios.

With the convenience of modern technology, the works of PlayGround writers and company members can now be appreciated almost anywhere and anytime. In 2006, PlayGround began collaborating with **KQED** on the production of short play podcasts through KQED's weekly reading series, **The Writers' Block**, and to date has recorded and released seven short play podcasts. All podcasts were originally featured in past Best of PlayGround festivals. The plays are available via KQED's website at www.kqed.org as streaming audio and audio download, as well as through NPR and iTunes.

PlayGround is happy to welcome new staff member Evan Schnair, who joins PlayGround this season as Education Coordinator.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **PlayGround**, the Bay Area's incubator for the next generation of playwrights, has announced its 2008-09 season. Occurring monthly, October-March, the popular Monday Night PlayGround series presents short works from new and emerging playwrights each month at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, featuring the best of the Bay Area's professional actors and directors in short rehearsed staged readings. The culmination of the year's hard work, **The Best of PlayGround Festival** will occur for four weeks in May, 2009 at Thick House in San Francisco. Now in its 15th season, **PlayGround** is dedicated to supporting the development of new local voices for the theatre.

WHERE/WHEN:

Monday Night PlayGround:

Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison St, Berkeley

October 20, 2008

November 17, 2008

December 15, 2008

January 12, 2009

February 16, 2009

March 16, 2009

PlayGround Intensives: A.C.T. Studios, 30 Grant Ave., 8th Floor, San Francisco

October 6, 2008

November 3, 2008

December 1, 2008

January 5, 2009

February 2, 2009

March 2, 2009

PlayGround Benefit & Awards Night

American Conservatory Theater, 415 Geary Street, San Francisco

April 2009 (date to be announced)

The Best of PlayGround Festival

Thick House, 1695 18th Street, San Francisco

May 7-31, 2009

TICKETS: 6-event Introductory Subscriptions to the Monday Night PlayGround series are just \$45.00 (a 50% savings off general admission) and are available by calling **(415) 704-3177** or visiting www.PlayGround-sf.org.

Single tickets for each Monday Night PlayGround are \$15 and can be purchased online or at the door. A limited number of Pay-What-You-Can tickets will be sold at the door beginning one hour before the performance, subject to availability.

PlayGround Intensives are \$35 per person, per workshop (\$15 for the introductory October 6 class); space is limited. Participants can sign up online in advance, or at the door at least fifteen minutes before the scheduled class, subject to availability.

Ticket information for the PlayGround Benefit & Awards Night and The Best of PlayGround festival will be announced at a later date.

For more information, the public can call **(415) 704-3177** or visit www.PlayGround-sf.org.

--MORE--

MEDIA CONTACT: JIM KLEINMANN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
PLAYGROUND, 268 BUSH ST. #2912, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94104-3503
PHONE 415.704.3177 **FAX** 415.704.3177 **EMAIL:** JIM@PLAYGROUND-SF.ORG

2008 Commissions

June Anne Baker Prize:

Postgrad (or the Odyssey Years) by Lauren Yee

When youngest child Dale moves out of the house, his unemployed twentysomething siblings Liz and Rob resolve to reform and find purpose in their lives, with the help of their would-be empty nester mother and friendly CPA. A play that explores the “Odyssey Years” and ponders whether we really, truly ever grow up.

PlayGround Fellowship:

Accidents by Daniel Heath

Catherine hasn't decided whether or not to tell her boyfriend that she's pregnant, but she doesn't get the chance – he swerves left when he should've swerved right and dies in a head-on collision on the Golden Gate Bridge. *Accidents* follows the stories of Catherine and the other four residents of her boarding house, examining the way catastrophe can change our circumstances in an instant, but not necessarily our selves.

Lolita Roadtrip by Trevor Allen

This darkly comic tale follows Diana (a rebellious Stanford graduate student researching her thesis) and Billy (a hitchhiking teenaged runaway she picks up) as together they retrace novelist and amateur lepidopterist Vladimir Nabokov's actual 1941 roadtrip from New York to Stanford in an old Pontiac. Nabokov's spirit visits them and somewhere between the Grand Canyon and Los Vegas they confront their own pasts and discover what really causes a chrysalis to transform into a butterfly.

Mushroom Boy by Brady Lea

Katherine is pre-middle-aged and mildly depressed, but determined to shake her funk by cooking organic produce from local farmer's markets three times a week. Or is it her unnatural obsession with a steamy young mushroom vendor? She keeps buying produce she never cooks as she develops a fantasy life with this young man. Meanwhile, her uneaten produce is berating her, and her best friend is a turkey sandwich (with avocado and bacon). What happens when fantasy becomes reality? And what if your parsnip really does hate you?

Terror, Astonishment, Love by Evelyn Jean Pine

In 1895 the first motion picture screening terrifies the audience at Paris's Grand Café when a train appears to be barreling down on them. Convinced they face certain death, a pregnant girl, a prostitute, an heir to an armament factory, a petty bureaucrat, and a waiter vow to radically change their lives. Twenty years later, a new war rages, another baby is born, and these friends rewind old conflicts and new betrayals.

--30--