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PLAYGROUND LAUNCHES NEW PLAY PRODUCTION FUND

\$20,000 TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO BAY AREA THEATRES IN 2010

Supporting local production of Bay Area playwrights

BERKELEY, (December 17, 2009) – The holiday season just got a little happier for local theatres and audiences. Following a difficult year for Bay Area theatre, including the reduction or elimination of many new works programs, PlayGround announced today its own economic stimulus package with the launch of the **New Play Production Fund**. Designed to encourage full production of Bay Area playwrights' work, the Fund will distribute \$20,000 in 2010. Guidelines and applications are available online at <http://playground-sf.org/productionfund>.

Since 1994, PlayGround has been a leading incubator for some of the Bay Area's most promising new playwrights, developing more than 500 original short plays by 150 Bay Area emerging playwrights. In the past seven years, PlayGround *itself* has emerged, as one of the leading commissioners of new full-length works by Bay Area writers. Twenty-two full length plays have been developed to date and six new works are currently under commission for presentation in the 2010 Best of PlayGround Festival, taking place at Thick House, May 6-30, 2010, including works by Trevor Allen, Tim Bauer, Erin Bregman, Daniel Heath, Brady Lea and Ken Slattery.

In support of these playwrights and to further encourage the production of new works by Bay Area playwrights in Bay Area theatres, PlayGround has established the New Play Production Fund. The New Play Production Fund will annually distribute two awards in support of professional production of full-length works commissioned and developed by PlayGround that have not yet received their world premiere. PlayGround Artistic Director Jim Kleinmann added, "The New Play Production Fund gives local theatres the financial resources needed to tap into the growing talents of Bay Area playwrights."

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Several plays developed with direct PlayGround support have gone on to have successful productions at theatres throughout the Bay Area and around the country, including, most recently, Aaron Loeb's *Abraham Lincoln's Big Gay Dance Party* which won "Outstanding Performance" at the 2009 New York International Fringe Festival, following its 2008 SF Playhouse premiere. Loeb, a two-time winner of the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award for "Best Original Script" (both for PlayGround commissions), commented: "PlayGround's commissioning program has been a huge part of my own growth and I see the New Play Production Fund as another critical way in which PlayGround can help bring local theatres and playwrights together." Other PlayGround commissioned works that have premiered in the Bay Area in just the past four years include: Garret Jon Groenveld's *Missives* at Theatre Rhinoceros (which also received its New York debut in a PlayGround co-production in 2008 at 59E59 Theaters); Trevor Allen's *Tenders in the Fog* at San Jose Stage; Aaron Loeb's *First Person Shooter* at SF Playhouse (in a PlayGround co-production); and Martha Soukup's *Manumission* at Exit Theatre. In addition, PlayGround writers and commissioned works have been featured in some of the Bay Area's top new play programs, including the Playwrights Foundation's Bay Area Playwrights Festival and Aurora Theatre Company's Global Age Project.

In 2010, PlayGround will distribute one \$15,000 award and one \$5,000 award. The first deadline of the New Play Production Fund is January 22, 2010. Selected theatres and productions will be announced by February 1. Production must take place between March 1, 2010 and July 31, 2011. For complete **guidelines** and **applications**, visit <http://playground-sf.org/productionfund>. For more information, contact PlayGround Artistic Director Jim Kleinmann at jim@playground-sf.org or (415) 704-3177.

The complete schedule of staged readings as part of the 2010 Best of PlayGround Festival is:

Mon 7pm, May 10 – **Truffaldino Says No** by Ken Slattery, directed by Matthew Graham Smith

Sun 2pm, May 16 – **Seven Days** by Daniel Heath, directed by Lee Sankowich

Mon 7pm, May 17 – **Nightmare Play** by Erin Bregman, directed by Mina Morita

Sun 2pm, May 23 – **The Sum of All Parts** by Brady Lea, directed by Jessica Heidt

Mon 7pm, May 24 – **The Secret Rulers of the World Go to Camp** by Tim Bauer, directed by Barbara Oliver

Sun 2pm, May 30 – **Golden Gate Fair** by Trevor Allen, directed by Mark Rucker

For more information, visit <http://playground-sf.org>. For more information on the commissioned works of PlayGround, visit <http://playground-sf.org/commissioning.shtml>.