



THEATRE/ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PLAYGROUND CELEBRATES BAY AREA PLAYWRIGHTS AT 15TH BEST OF PLAYGROUND FESTIVAL

MAY 5-29, 2011

AT THE THICK HOUSE IN SAN FRANCISCO

BENEFIT & AWARDS NIGHT ON APRIL 11

WITH TONY TACCONE, JONATHAN MOSCONE AND PETER SINN NACHTRIEB
& DEADLINE FOR THE 3RD YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS CONTEST (APRIL 18)

SAN FRANCISCO, (March 28, 2011) - **PlayGround**, San Francisco's incubator for the next generation of playwrights, caps off its 2010-11 season with the **Best of PlayGround 15: A Festival of New Writers & New Plays**. The festival presents six 10-minute plays and one 10-minute musical selected from the 36 works developed as part of the season's Monday Night PlayGround staged reading series at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Monday Night PlayGround has engaged and inspired a growing and enthusiastic audience with new plays *and now musicals* inspired by a single topic each month, including "It Gets Better", "Vaudeville", and, as part of a unique annual collaboration with Berkeley's Mathematical Sciences Research Institute, "Kingdom of Number" (drawn from a W.H. Auden poem). Tickets are available through the Box Office at 415-992-6677 or online at www.PlayGround-sf.org.

The six plays and one musical to be presented at this year's festival are:

This is My Body by **Daniel Heath**, directed by Susi Damilano
Calling the Kettle by **Brady Lea**, music by Christopher Winslow, director tba
Ecce Homo by **Jonathan Luskin**, directed by Molly Noble
Rapunzel's Etymology of Zero by **Katie May**, directed by Jim Kleinmann
See. On. Unseen. The. Lost. by **Evelyn Jean Pine**, directed by Raelle Myrick-Hodges
Escapades by **Mandy Hodge Rizvi**, directed by M. Graham Smith
Frigidare by **Arisa White**, directed by Jon Tracy

The 2011 Festival also features staged readings of seven new full-length plays commissioned by PlayGround from writers **Trevor Allen, Cass Brayton, Erin Bregman, Geetha Reddy, Diane Sampson, Tom Swift** and **Malachy Walsh**.

Event: Best of PlayGround 15: *A Festival of New Writers & New Plays*
Date: Thursdays - Sundays, May 5 - 29 (*Friday, May 6th, press night*)
Time: Thurs. - Sat., 8pm; Sun., 7pm
Location: Thick House, 1695 18th Street, San Francisco
Tickets: **Best of PlayGround:** \$25-\$40 (general), discounts available for students, PlayGround subscribers and members, and groups of 10 or more. *Thursdays, May 5, 12, 19, and 26 are Pay-What-You-Can performances; Pay-What-You-Can tickets go on sale one hour before the performance, first-come first-served, subject to availability.*
Staged Readings: \$10 suggested donation at the door
For tickets call (415) 992-6677 or on-line at www.PlayGround-sf.org

Information: Jim Kleinmann, Artistic Director; 415.704.3177;
jim@PlayGround-sf.org; www.PlayGround-sf.org

Performance Schedule

- **Best of PlayGround 15** - All seven short plays are presented at each performance, **Thursdays through Saturdays at 8pm and Sundays at 7pm** (Sunday evenings, May 15, 22, and 29, are followed by post-show discussion with festival playwrights)

- **Staged Readings:**

Sunday, May 8, 2pm: *A Bid to Save the World* by **Erin Bregman**, directed by Jon Tracy

Monday, May 9, 7pm: *Naked* by **Diane Sampson**, directed by Chris Smith

Sunday, May 15, 2pm: *Stiff Competition* by **Cass Brayton**, directed by M. Graham Smith

Monday, May 16, 7pm: *A Marriage* by **Tom Swift**, directed by Lee Sankowich

Sunday, May 22, 2pm: *Book Club! The Musical* by **Geetha Reddy**, directed by Jessica Heidt

Monday, May 23, 7pm: *Cristina Walters* by **Malachy Walsh**, directed by Mina Morita

Sunday, May 29, 2pm: *Valley of Sand* by **Trevor Allen**, directed by Rick Lombardo

PLAYGROUND BENEFIT & AWARDS NIGHT

PlayGround will celebrate this year's Festival playwrights at the annual **PlayGround Benefit & Awards Night** on **Monday, April 11th** at the **Claremont Hotel**, with special guests **Tony Taccone**, **Jonathan Moscone** and **Peter Sinn Nachtrieb**, and special musical guest **Christopher Winslow**. Previously announced guest Sarah Ruhl has withdrawn due to health reasons. The event features a talk with Taccone, Moscone and Nachtrieb, a silent auction, reception, three-course dinner and live entertainment. For more information on the PlayGround Benefit, visit <http://PlayGround-sf.org/benefit.shtml>

YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS PROJECT: SPOTLIGHT ON NEXT GENERATION

PlayGround spotlights the next generation of talent with the Young Playwrights Project. In March, PlayGround launched the project, and announced a contest to write a new 10-minute play inspired by the topic "Vaudeville." The competition is open to Bay Area high school students, who have until **April 18** to submit a script. The best four plays will be read as special "curtain raisers" May 19-22 of the Best of PlayGround Festival. Guidelines: <http://PlayGround-sf.org/ypp.shtml>

ABOUT PLAYGROUND:

PlayGround is the Bay Area's leading playwright incubator. The mission of PlayGround is to support the development of significant new local voices for the theatre. More than just a play development program, PlayGround focuses on the creation of a true theatre community by nurturing the collaborative process between early-career playwrights, and established professional actors and directors. With a particular focus on the ten-minute form and increasingly on new full-length plays through the company's Commissioning Initiative and New Play Production Fund, PlayGround creates a microcosm of the greater theatre scene, allowing for experimentation and risk-taking as well as the honing of style and technique. More information at <http://PlayGround-sf.org>.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS:

Daniel Heath is a four-time Emerging Playwright Award winner (2007, *Seagull*; 2008, *Leo*; 2009, *Wednesday*). His first dramatic full-length play, *Fifty Years Hungry* was completed in 2009 as part of the PlayGround Fellowship. His full-length comedy *Forking* was produced by Pianofight Productions in San Francisco and Los Angeles in 2009, and his short plays have been performed in San Francisco, Toronto, and upstate New York. His second PlayGround commission, *Seven Days*, premiered at SF Playhouse last fall, followed by the premiere of his new musical, *The Man of Rock*, at Climate Theater.

Brady Lea is a playwright, performer and theatre arts educator. She is a four-time PlayGround Emerging Playwright Award winner and the recipient of the 2006 June Anne Baker Prize and two alumni commissions. She is a graduate of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown College and performed for several years with the

vaudeville trio The Kloons. Brady is currently a visiting artist in physical theatre and improvisation at San Francisco School of the Arts. She lives in Bernal Heights with her husband David.

Jonathan Luskin is participating in his seventh season of PlayGround. His play, *Aegis*, was a 2004 Emerging Playwright Award winner. Jonathan is a member of the Playwrights Lab, where he has developed several full-length plays. He received a commission from the Magic Theatre to write *Early Adopter*, and his play, *n of 1*, was selected for the BOA Festival. Jonathan has directed for many Bay Area theater companies, specializing in readings of new works, and he was recently awarded a Djerassi artist's residency. Jonathan has animated for leading visual-effects companies and is co-founder of Flying Moose Pictures, a video production company.

Katie May grew up in Wyoming and Idaho, and graduated from Arizona State University with an MFA in playwriting. Her plays include *Black Sheep Gospel* and *Secrets of Gardenias*, both produced on the ASU main stage, and *A History of Freaks* commissioned by the College Of Idaho. She is a two-time recipient of the Piper Center New Play Development Fellowship, for 2007 and 2008. Miss May has taught playwriting for Arizona State, College of Idaho, and abroad at the National University of Singapore.

Evelyn Jean Pine is a five-time Playground Emerging Playwright Award Winner and the recipient of the 2007 June Anne Baker Award. PlayGround has commissioned two of her full-length plays: *Astonishment*, about the invention of movies and their impact on the imagination, and *The Secrets of the World*, about Queen Isabella. SF Olympians Festival presented a sold-out staged reading of her play, *Hephaestus*, this past summer. Her award-winning short plays have been staged around the country, including New York, San Francisco, Berkeley, Kansas City, Charlottesville, and Bethesda. She has an MFA in Creative Writing San Francisco State where she teaches performance studies.

Mandy Hodge Rizvi is an emerging playmaker but has always been involved in making theatre. Before finding her voice as a playwright, she worked in the theatre as an actor, director, producer, and a teacher. Mandy earned a BFA in acting from the Hartt School of Performing Arts in Connecticut and a Masters in Drama from San Francisco State University. As a playwright, Mandy is interested in the influence of literature and culture on personal storytelling. Her plays include *Literary Biography: Chapter Eleven* and *Burning and Drowning*. Mandy is recipient of the 2011 June Anne Baker Prize.

Arisa White is a Cave Canem fellow and holds an MFA from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Author of two poetry chapbooks, *Disposition for Shininess* (Factory Hollow Press, 2008) and *Post Pardon* (Mouthfeel Press, 2011), she was selected by the San Francisco Guardian for the 2010 Hot Pink List. She has received residencies, fellowships, and/or scholarships from Squaw Valley Community of Writers, Atlantic Center for the Arts, and University of Western Michigan, among others. Nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2005, her poetry has appeared in numerous publications and is featured on WORD with the Jessica Jones Quartet and in the staged production of *Fingernails Across A Chalkboard: Poetry and Prose on HIV/AIDS from the Black Diaspora*.

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