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15TH ANNUAL BEST OF PLAYGROUND FESTIVAL
MAY 5-29, 2011
AT THE THICK HOUSE IN SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO, (April 27, 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**, directed by **Jessica Heidt**

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 will feature a troupe of six actors, Rinabeth Apostol, David Cramer, Brian Herndon, Holli Hornlien, Michael Phillis and Jomar Tagatac.

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); VIP packages available (include priority seating, complimentary glass of wine, and meet-and-greet with playwrights); 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 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

YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS PROJECT: SPOTLIGHT ON THE 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 "Origin Story." The competition is open to Bay Area high school students, who have until April 5th to submit a script. The best four plays will be selected to be read as special "curtain raisers" May 19-22 of the Best of PlayGround Festival.

ABOUT PLAYGROUND:

PlayGround is the Bay Area's leading playwright incubator and largest developer of new short and full-length works by Bay Area writers. Since 1994, PlayGround has fostered the creation of more than 570 original short plays by 170 Bay Area emerging playwrights and has commissioned 35 full-length plays just since 2003. Through PlayGround's New Play Production Fund, the company partners with Bay Area theatres in the production of new plays by Bay Area playwrights. This season, PlayGround will co-produce premieres with SF Playhouse, San Jose Stage Company and Just Theater through the New Play Production Fund. For more information on PlayGround, visit <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 at San Francisco State where she teaches performance studies.

Mandy Hodge Rizvi is an emerging playwright 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.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

- WHAT:** The Best of PlayGround 15: A Festival of New Writers & New Plays presents six 10-minute plays and one 10-minute musical selected from the 36 works developed as part of the 2010-2011 season's Monday Night PlayGround staged reading series at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Occurring monthly, October-March, the Monday Night PlayGround series presents short works from new and emerging playwrights and features the best of the Bay Area's professional actors and directors in short, rehearsed staged readings.
- WHERE:** Thick House
1695 18th Street
San Francisco, CA
- WHEN:** Thursdays – Saturdays (8 pm), Sundays (7 pm), May 5 - 29 (Friday, May 6th, press night)
- TICKETS:** \$25-\$40 (general); VIP packages available (include priority seating, complimentary glass of wine and meet-and-greet with playwrights); 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.

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