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## **PLAYGROUND & DANCES WITH LIGHT LAUNCH INAUGURAL PLAYGROUND FILM FEST COMPETITION**

### **TO SHOWCASE SHORT FILMS BY LOCAL FILMMAKERS & WRITERS ADAPTED FROM 103 BEST OF PLAYGROUND SELECTIONS**

SAN FRANCISCO, (January 9, 2012) – PlayGround... coming to a (movie) theatre near you!

PlayGround announced today the launch of its most innovative program for Bay Area writers yet – the inaugural PlayGround Film Festival, to be produced in association with Dances with Light and local filmmaker Barry Stone. The competition, open to teams of local filmmakers and playwrights, will award \$1,500 in seed funding to each of six finalists to create short films adapted from the 103 ten-minute plays featured in the celebrated Best of PlayGround Festival. The films will be screened as part of the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Best of PlayGround Festival taking place this May. The deadline for completed applications is **February 6, 2012**. Guidelines and copies of the eligible plays are available online at <http://playground-sf.org/filmfest>.

Since 1994, PlayGround has been a leading incubator for some of the Bay Area's most promising new playwrights, premiering 103 original short plays by 51 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.

In support of these writers and the body of work they have generated over the past eighteen years, and to encourage collaboration between local filmmakers, actors, writers and technicians, PlayGround has

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launched the PlayGround Film Festival. Applications by filmmaker-playwright teams will focus on the adaptation of short plays featured in the Best of PlayGround Festival, which recently marked its fifteenth year.

PlayGround Artistic Director Jim Kleinmann commented, “The PlayGround Film Festival will further celebrate the tremendous talent of the Bay Area – not just our best writers, but also local actors, filmmakers and technicians – and is a welcome addition to our array of incubator programs.” Added Film Festival co-producer Barry Stone, “The idea of a film competition where the most important part of the process – creating stories that work for an audience – has already been narrowed down to the best of the best boggles the mind. I can’t wait to see how the Bay Area’s talented filmmakers lift and transform these fabulous plays from the stage to the screen.”

Since its founding in 1994, PlayGround has staged more than 600 original ten-minute plays by 170 early-development writers, contributing towards its status as the leading developer of short stage pieces in the Bay Area. Through The Best of PlayGround Festival alone, PlayGround has premiered 103 original short plays by 51 Bay Area playwrights and has presented staged readings of 34 new full-length plays commissioned by PlayGround. In the process of staging those works, PlayGround has helped to identify some of the most promising new local writers and, at the same time, has engendered a true community of theatre artists by bringing together hundreds of Bay Area actors, directors and playwrights. Most, if not all, of the participating writers receive the first professional staging of their work through PlayGround, thereby formally introducing these new talents to the professional theatre community.

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”) and its off-Broadway debut in 2010.

**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 **guidelines** and a **complete list of eligible plays**, visit <http://playground-sf.org/filmfest>. For more information, contact PlayGround Artistic Director Jim Kleinmann at [jim@playground-sf.org](mailto:jim@playground-sf.org) or (415) 992-6677.

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