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PLAYGROUND PLAYWRIGHTS DEVELOP NEW MUSICALS

JANUARY 24 AT BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE

Six 10-Minute Musicals on the Topic: “I NEVER THOUGHT I’D...”

In collaboration with TheatreWorks’ New Works Initiative,
and composers Christopher Winslow and Richard “Scrubly” Koldewyn

BERKELEY, (January 13, 2011) – *If music be the food of love, play on!* In a special collaboration with **TheatreWorks’ New Works Initiative** and composers **Christopher Winslow** and **Richard “Scrubly” Koldewyn**, PlayGround announced this morning the topic “**I NEVER THOUGHT I’D...**” for the second annual Musical Theatre round of Monday Night Playground, taking place at 8 pm, Monday, January 24 in residence at Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

Winslow – Bay Area composer, visual artist, pianist and vocalist whose new musical comedy, *OMFG!* will premiere at ODC Theater in July – led a workshop with TheatreWorks’ Director of New Works **Meredith McDonough** for the PlayGround pool of writers at A.C.T. Studios on Wednesday evening. The topic was announced at the end of the workshop. Writers have four-and-a-half days to create original plays with one song each, for which they will write the lyrics. Once selections are finalized, Winslow and Koldewyn – an accomplished composer and frequent Bay Area music director who has performed for the Cockettes, Distractions, and Jesters Vocal Trio, among others – will split the scripts and each compose for three plays, which will be rehearsed and then performed live at the January 24 Monday Night PlayGround presentation. PlayGround Artistic Director Jim Kleinmann commented, “We were so pleased with our first musical theatre collaboration last season and knew we needed to bring it back this year. We’re all looking forward to seeing what the writers, Chris and Scrubly come up with this year!”

Founded in 1994, PlayGround is the Bay Area’s leading playwright incubator, having developed more than 550 original short plays by 160+ emerging local playwrights. In the past eight years, PlayGround itself has emerged, as one of the leading commissioners of new full-length works by Bay Area

playwrights, with twenty-eight commissions completed and seven currently in development. 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 Aaron Loeb's *Abraham Lincoln's Big Gay Dance Party* which won "Outstanding Performance" at the 2009 New York International Fringe Festival and received its off-Broadway debut in 2010, following its 2008 SF Playhouse premiere. Other PlayGround commissioned works that have premiered in the Bay Area in just the past five years include: PlayGround co-productions of Daniel Heath's *Seven Days*, Geetha Reddy's *Safe House* and Aaron Loeb's *First Person Shooter* at SF Playhouse; 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); and Trevor Allen's *Tenders in the Fog* at San Jose Stage. Upcoming co-productions include Trevor Allen's *Lolita Roadtrip* at San Jose Stage and Erin Bregman's *Nightmare Play* at Just Theater. 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's Global Age Project. In 2010, PlayGround received the prestigious Paine Knickerbocker Award from the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle for its continuing contributions to Bay Area theatre.

Since its founding in 1970, TheatreWorks has been committed to the creation of new works for the stage. In 2000, this commitment was both strengthened and formalized with the establishment of our *New Works Initiative*, which has now contributed to the development of scores of new plays and musicals, earning national recognition and acclaim for the company and our new works program. The highlight of the *New Works Initiative* is our annual New Works Festival, held in August at the beautiful Lucie Stern Theatre. We also host an annual Writers Retreat, commission new work, and host formative readings and workshops throughout the year.

The 2010/11 Writers Pool is comprised of: Crish Barth, Tim Bauer, Cass Brayton, Erin Bregman, Robyn Brooks, Christopher Chen, Renée Cole Clyde, Emily Esner, Melissa Fall, Garret Jon Groenveld, Leah Halper, Daniel Heath, Lucia Jacobs, Sang Kim, Brady Lea, Jonathan Luskin, Katie May, Rod McFadden, Alex Moggridge, Philana Omorotionmwan, Marisela Treviño Orta, Nick Pappas, Evelyn Jean Pine, Mandy Hodge Rizvi, Maria Rokas, Diane Sampson, Mercedes Segesvary, Ken Slattery, Cleavon Smith, Martha Soukup, Jonathan Spector, Tom Swift, Nick Turner, Malachy Walsh, Arisa White, and Ignacio Zulueta.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: Occurring monthly, October-March, the popular Monday Night PlayGround series presents short works from new and emerging playwrights each month in residence at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, featuring the best of the Bay Area's professional actors and directors in short rehearsed staged readings. The given topic for the January 24 PlayGround evening of Musical Theatre is "***I NEVER THOUGHT I'D...***".

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre
2015 Addison St
Berkeley, CA

WHEN: **Monday, January 24, 2011 at 8pm**

Additional Season Dates:

February 21, 2011 – Collaboration with Mathematical Sciences Research Institute
March 21, 2011

TICKETS: \$15, available online or at the door. Pay-What-You-Can at the door beginning one hour before the performance, subject to availability. For more information about the Monday Night PlayGround series, call **(415) 992-6677** or visit **www.PlayGround-sf.org**.

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