

**The 2018-19 Ruth Easton New Play Series
continues in February with Carlyle Brown's
*The History of Religion***

MINNEAPOLIS (January 18, 2019) — From memoir to myth, from Sugar Hill to the Caribbean, Core Writer **Carlyle Brown's** *The History of Religion* travels in time and space to examine humanity's relationship with faith, bringing us face-to-face with the biggest question of our lives: in a world full of pain, sorrow, and suffering, what makes life worth living? Set against a musical backdrop by multi-instrumentalist **Victor Zupanc** and percussionist **Ahanti Young**, Carlyle Brown calls us into worship, taking the audience on a journey from mystery to revelation and back again. *The History of Religion* is the third play in the Playwrights' Center's 2018-19 Ruth Easton New Play Series, as part of our public season. Core Writers receive 20 hours of workshop time to develop a new play and give theater fans a chance to see free public readings of the plays in progress. Readings of *The History of Religion* will take place on **Monday, February 4 and Tuesday, February 5 at 7 p.m.** at the Playwrights' Center, 2301 E. Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis. Reservations are recommended and can be made at pwcenter.org.

The workshop and readings will be directed by **Noël Raymond**, performed by Carlyle Brown, and accompanied by Victor Zupanc on piano and percussionist Ahanti Young.

"Religious texts are the most extraordinary prose created by the human imagination," says playwright Brown. "And there's the challenge of heightened language and spiritual authority. These are some of the things I wanted to explore in this piece in terms of the legacy of the African Griot."

Jeremy B. Cohen, producing artistic director at the Playwrights' Center says, "we are thrilled to continue Carlyle's tenure here at the Center by launching his new solo piece: *The History of Religion*. His extraordinary new work explores how faith, ritual, and music intersect through the practices of both recitation and improvisation."

Carlyle Brown is an award-winning playwright and solo performer exploring the American experience and the meaning of freedom from an African American perspective. He is the 2018 recipient of the William Inge Award for Distinguished Achievement in the American Theater. His plays include *The African Company Presents Richard III*, *The Little Tommy Parker Celebrated Colored Minstrel Show*, *Buffalo Hair*, *The Beggars' Strike*, *The Negro of Peter the Great*, *Pure Confidence*, *A Big Blue Nail*, *Dartmoor Prison*, and others.

The Ruth Easton New Play Series provides selected Core Writers with 20 hours of workshop time to develop a new play with collaborators of their choice: top local and national actors, directors, designers, and dramaturgs. Each play has two public readings, allowing the playwright to experiment and see the play on its feet in front of two different audiences. The Center brings in visiting artistic leaders to see the readings and connect with the playwrights, and more than half of the plays developed in the series over the past decade have gone on to production.

The 2018-19 Ruth Easton New Play Series continues through April. *Tiny Houses* by Core Writer Stefanie Zdravec on March 4 and 5, and a new play with movement, *The Dance* by Core Writer Kim Euell on April 1 and 2.

All events in the Ruth Easton New Play Series are free and open to the public. Reserve your spots at pwcenter.org/ruth-easton-series or by contacting the Playwrights' Center at (612) 332-7481 or info@pwcenter.org.

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Photos of the playwright and previous Ruth Easton New Play Series readings are available by contacting Gregory Collins at gregoryc@pwcenter.org

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER

The Playwrights' Center champions playwrights and new plays to build upon a living theater that demands new and innovative works.

The Center serves playwrights by sustaining careers, developing new work, and connecting playwrights to theaters. Each year at the Center, fellows and Core Writers receive more than \$315,000 in direct support, 70+ new plays are workshopped, playwrights connect with 100 producing theaters through partnership programs, and 2,000-member playwrights from around the world find resources to achieve their artistic vision.

Since its founding in 1971, the Playwrights' Center has become one of the nation's most generous and well-respected theater organizations, helping launch the careers of numerous nationally recognized artists such as August Wilson, Lee Blessing, Suzan-Lori Parks, Jordan Harrison, Carlyle Brown, Craig Lucas, Jeffrey Hatcher, Melanie Marnich, Kira Obolensky, and Harrison David Rivers. Work developed through Center programs has been seen nationwide on such stages as Yale Rep, Woolly Mammoth, the Guthrie, Goodman, and many others.

Programs and services

The Core Writer program gives 25-30 of the most exciting playwrights from across the country the time and tools to develop new work for the stage. All Core Writers receive play development workshops at the Center, in collaboration with prominent directors, actors, dramaturgs, and designers. Selected work by Core Writers makes up the Center's formal season of public readings: the PlayLabs festival and the Ruth Easton New Play Series. Core Writers are also promoted by the Center and provided opportunities through an extensive network of colleges and universities, cultural institutions, and producing theaters.

Fellowships, made possible by the McKnight and Jerome foundations, provide more than \$315,000 each year for residencies, commissions, and development funds. Beyond the financial stipend, the value of fellowships is more than doubled with the year-long support the Playwrights' Center adds through workshops with professional collaborators and through the connections the Center makes between playwrights and producers of new work. This holistic and customized combination of financial support, access to talent, and professional connections is career-changing for most playwrights. Fellowship programs: Jerome Fellows, Many Voices Fellows, McKnight Fellows in Playwriting, McKnight National Residency and Commission, McKnight Theater Artist Fellows.

Membership is open to all and provides nearly 2,000 playwrights worldwide with tools, resources, and support. Benefits include a database of playwriting opportunities, online and in-person seminars and classes, access to readings with professional actors, dramaturgical services, and more. In addition, the Playwrights' Center's **New Plays on Campus** program serves dozens of colleges and universities nationwide, providing script-matching services, arranging playwright residencies, and offering immersive apprenticeships to student playwrights.

Local and national partnerships elevate the role of living playwrights. Through the Regulars partnership program, the Playwrights' Center partners with 100 theaters around the country to bring their artistic staff to the Center in order to spend time with playwrights and to co-develop new plays with a keen eye towards production. In fact, 60% of these plays have gone on to full production within two years (rather than the average seven-year timeframe for most plays to see production).