

PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER ANNOUNCES 2013-14 SEASON OF PLAYWRIGHTS AND STAGED READINGS

(Minneapolis, MN—September 9, 2013)—The Playwrights' Center today announced the plays and playwrights to be featured in its 2013 PlayLabs Festival and 2013-14 Ruth Easton New Play Series, the public components of the development work at the Center.

The Playwrights' Center's public season elevates the staged reading to an intimate art form all its own, featuring top local and national actors, incorporating design elements and giving adventurous theatergoers the chance to interact with the playwright who created the new work—for free. Previous seasons saw standing-room-only audiences eager to take part in the new play experience.

PlayLabs and the Ruth Easton New Play Series represent the Center's most intensive play development opportunities for playwrights. Both programs allow Playwrights' Center Core Writers to test and improve their scripts with help from teams of professional theater artists and, ultimately, a live audience.

"Twin Cities theatergoers have a real hunger for new work, and take pride in supporting the development of writers and works that will be electrifying stages around the country," said Producing Artistic Director Jeremy B. Cohen. "We're so excited to dig into the development of this season's diverse and creative plays with our collaborators and share them with the public. The playwrights who participate in our public season tell us they get so much out of the experience of seeing how a live audience interacts with their words, and audiences love the thrill of seeing this raw new work. These events also give us the opportunity to bring in major artistic leaders from around the country so they can experience the work of our talented writers firsthand."

PLAYLABS

The Playwrights' Center's 30th Annual PlayLabs Festival, running October 21-27, will offer two readings each of three new plays. Participating playwrights receive a 30-hour workshop in the Playwrights' Center's Lab that includes writing time in between readings for the playwright to incorporate new insights into the play. The Festival will also include a panel discussion on the idea of sustaining epic theater, featuring leading voices in the national theater field; a showcase of the Center's playwriting fellows; and a huge celebration for the artists involved and the theater community. All events are free and open to the public.

The 2013 PlayLabs Festival will feature *Angel Fat* by Trista Baldwin (local writer); *Scapegoat* by Christina Ham (local writer); and *The Royal Society of Antarctica* by Mat Smart.

RUTH EASTON NEW PLAY SERIES

The Ruth Easton New Play Series offers one-night-only readings one Monday a month between December and April. Participating playwrights receive 20-hour workshops in the Lab and often engage in a discussion with the audience following the reading.

The 2013-14 Ruth Easton New Play Series will feature *Finding Fish* by Carlyle Brown (local writer); *The Crackatook* by Playwrights' Center founder Barbara Field (local writer); *Goddess of Mercy* by Jenny Connell Davis; *Terminus* by Gabriel Dean; and *Seed* by Winter Miller.

“This season’s writers and featured plays are quite diverse—for me, they’re united by a sense of urgency and clarion vision,” said Cohen. “They’re examining our changing world in provocative and innovative ways that are sure to spark important conversations. And considering that 73% of the plays featured in PlayLabs over the past decade have gone on to production, chances are good that you’ll be witnessing the creation of work that is sure to be on an American stage soon!”

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THE 30TH ANNUAL PLAYLABS FESTIVAL

Monday, October 21 at 7 p.m. *Angel Fat* by Trista Baldwin
Tuesday, October 22 at 7 p.m. *Scapegoat* by Christina Ham
Wednesday, October 23 at 7 p.m. *The Royal Society of Antarctica* by Mat Smart
Friday, October 25 at 8 p.m. *Angel Fat* by Trista Baldwin
Saturday, October 26 at 1 p.m. Playwriting Fellow Showcase
Saturday, October 26 at 4 p.m. *Scapegoat* by Christina Ham
Saturday, October 26 at 8 p.m. *The Royal Society of Antarctica* by Mat Smart
Saturday, October 26, following 8 p.m. reading Festival Celebration
Sunday, October 27 at 12 p.m. Panel Discussion

ANGEL FAT by Trista Baldwin

Director: Daniella Topol; dramaturg: Wendy Weckwerth; designer: C. Andrew Mayer

As the wife of a hedge fund executive struggles with her fertility, her husband is asked to find a surrogate for his powerful employers. Awakening latent desires, the young woman selected to be the surrogate disrupts the balance of power as her body swells with the would-be heir. What, ultimately, is being bought—and sold?

SCAPEGOAT by Christina Ham

Director: Hayley Finn; dramaturg: Michael Kinghorn; sound designer: Dan Dukich

Scapegoat thunders in two scathing acts set nearly 100 years apart. **Act One:** It's the Red Summer of 1919 on the eve of one of the bloodiest racial conflicts in United States history—the Elaine, Arkansas Massacre of hundreds of innocent African-Americans. A religious outcast is caught in the crossfire of union organizing and the orgy of bloodletting from the race riots that beat down her door. **Act Two:** In-present day Elaine two interracial couples temporarily stranded in the town feel the great divide between black and white as they slowly discover its ugly history.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ANTARCTICA by Mat Smart

Director: Meredith McDonough; dramaturg: Polly Carl; sound designer: Katharine Horowitz

Dee is the only person ever born at McMurdo Station in Antarctica. Shortly after giving birth, Dee's mother mysteriously disappeared. Now, 24 years later, Dee returns to her birthplace to work as a janitor and seek answers about her mother. In the otherworldly brightness at the bottom of the earth, she encounters a motley crew of characters, spends 60 hours a week scrubbing toilets, is crowned Princess of the Royal Society Ball, and discovers something about what it means to disappear.

PLAYWRITING FELLOW SHOWCASE

Get to know the incredible Playwrights' Center's 2013-14 Jerome and McKnight playwriting fellows, who will each share selections from and discuss their latest work.

FESTIVAL CELEBRATION

Join us for a huge party to celebrate the artists and local theater community!

PANEL DISCUSSION ON EPIC THEATER

At a time when theaters are looking to cut costs and cast sizes, how do playwrights sustain the creation of epic theater—plays that are imaginative and large in scope—reaching new and broad audiences?

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THE 2013-14 RUTH EASTON NEW PLAY SERIES

Monday, December 9 at 7 p.m.....*Finding Fish* by Carlyle Brown
Monday, January 6 at 7 p.m. *The Crackatook* by Barbara Field
Monday, February 3 at 7 p.m..... *Goddess of Mercy* by Jenny Connell Davis
Monday, March 3 at 7 p.m. *Terminus* by Gabriel Jason Dean
Monday, April 7 at 7 p.m..... *Seed* by Winter Miller

FINDING FISH by Carlyle Brown

In the future, food is scarce and the oceans have been depleted of fish. But one fisherman on the Maine Coast keeps bringing in the catch. Could his luck have anything to do with his strange new wife? The people in power would do anything to find out, especially “The Committee,” who has sent the fisherman’s brother to reel him—and his secrets—in. Brown, himself a former sea captain, probes tough questions about sustainability through the lens of one family’s struggles.

THE CRACKATOOK by Barbara Field

The Crackatook is a fairy tale for adults of all ages. Siblings Fritz and Marie journey with their godfather Drosselmeier to obtain the rare crackatook nut, which will reverse a spell made long ago. Pulling familiar characters from the stories of E.T.A. Hoffmann, this new tale reinvigorates Hoffman’s creepiness and muscle, while exploring the themes of imagination, rationalism and the end of childhood from a thoroughly modern perspective.

GODDESS OF MERCY by Jenny Connell Davis

Kate and her boyfriend, Mike, struggle to hold it together as he tries to juggle their relationship and a transcontinental commute while she fights the condo board, tries to spice things up in the bedroom, and grows increasingly frustrated with his sister Brianna, just back from the Peace Corps and crashing on their couch. When Brianna finds out Mike’s oil company is sending him to hush up trouble in the same part of Asia she just left, their opposing views about what is right (and what is complicated) provoke an international incident that could bring tragedy down on all involved.

TERMINUS by Gabriel Jason Dean

Eller Freeman and her bi-racial grandson Jaybo live together down by the railroad tracks. When Eller’s health and sanity begin to fade, her tragic and violent past haunts her from the very walls of the old family home. On the verge of discovering love and a place in the world, seventeen-year-old Jaybo struggles to provide what his wily grandmother needs most.

SEED by Winter Miller

The future is bleak. The future is romantic. In this genetically modified oddball comedy set 50 miles north of old Lake SamWalton, Annie and Claret defend their territory, Mic sells seeds on the black market and Mrs. B romances a giant, handsome spider. Meanwhile in Monsanto’s labs, scientists engineer a detoxifying salmon and vegetables that bounce.

PLAYWRIGHT BIOS

TRISTA BALDWIN

Trista Baldwin is the recipient of two Jerome Fellowships, a McKnight Advancement Grant, a Saison Foundation residency and a Performing Arts Japan grant from the Japan Foundation. Plays include *Angel Fat* (The Lark New Play Development Center), *Kill Me Don't Go* (Workhaus), *American Sexy* (The Flea, The Guthrie), *Mesujika Doe* (Morishita Studios, Tokyo, Japan), *Sand* (Women's Project), *D O E* (Santiago a Mil Festival, Chile), *Patty Red Pants* and *Chicks With Dicks*. Currently in development is a new play in continued collaboration with Shirotama Hitsujiya and a commission for the History Theatre about the surprising, and deeply American, history of cheerleading.

CHRISTINA HAM

Christina Ham's plays have been developed both nationally and internationally with the Center Theater Group, Goodman Theater, Guthrie Theater, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Penumbra Theatre, Off-Broadway at the SPF Summer Play Festival, SteppingStone Theatre, and the Tokyo International Arts Festival, among others. Christina is the recipient of a McKnight Advancement Grant and Jerome Fellowship from the Playwrights' Center, the Marianne Murphy Women & Philanthropy Award in Playwriting, and a 2006 MacDowell Residency. She is a two-time nominee for the Cherry Lane Theatre Mentorship Program, a nominee for the L. Arnold Weissberger Award, and was nominated for the Center Theater Group's Richard E. Sherwood Award for Distinguished Emerging Theater Artist. She has received commissions from the Guthrie Theater, Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and Red Eye Theater, among others.

MAT SMART

Mat Smart is a Core Writer at the Playwrights' Center, where he was a McKnight Advancement Grant and two-time Jerome Fellowship recipient. *Samuel J. and K.* premiered at Williamstown Theatre Festival starring Justin Long and Owiso Odera (subsequent productions include Steppenwolf and Passage Theatre). Other plays include: *The Steadfast* (Slant Theatre Project), *The Hopper Collection* (Magic Theatre and Huntington Theatre Company), *The 13th of Paris* (City Theatre, Seattle Public Theatre, Horizon Theatre, Public Theatre of Maine, Warehouse Theatre and LiveWire in Chicago) and *The Bebop Heard in Okinawa* (O'Neill Playwrights' Conference). He has been commissioned by South Coast Rep and Huntington. Co-founder of Slant Theatre Project in NYC. MFA: UCSD.

CARLYLE BROWN

Carlyle Brown is a writer/performer and artistic director of Carlyle Brown & Company based in Minneapolis, which has produced *The Masks of Othello: A Theatrical Essay*, *The Fula From America: An African Journey*, *Talking Masks*, *Are You Now Or Have You Ever Been...* and *Therapy and Resistance*. 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. He has received commissions from Arena Stage, the Houston Grand Opera, the Children's Theatre Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Goodman Theater, Miami University of Ohio and the University of Louisville. He is recipient of playwriting fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, McKnight Foundation, the Minnesota State Arts Board, Jerome Foundation, Theatre Communications Group and the Pew Charitable Trust.

BARBARA FIELD

Barbara Field has had work produced across the United States, Canada and Europe. She served as playwright-in-residence at the distinguished Guthrie Theater from 1974 to 1981, creating a number of pieces. Her translations include *Marriage* (Gogol), *Monsieur de Moliere* (Bulgakov) and *Pantalgleize* (Ghelderode). Adaptations include *Camille*, *Playing With Fire*, *Great Expectations*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Scaramouche*, *Dreams in the Golden Country* and *The Boxcar Children*. Her original work includes *Neutral Countries* (named Best American Play), *Coming of Age*, *Quality Time*, *Boundary Waters* (winner of 1992 DramaLogue Award) and *Off the Ice*. Field's plays are published in *Collected Plays, Volume One* and *New Classics from the Guthrie Theater*. She is a founding member of the Playwrights' Center.

JENNY CONNELL DAVIS

Jenny Connell Davis's plays include *Dragon Play*, *The Scientific Method*, *The Psyche Project* and *A Play on War* (an adaptation of *Mother Courage and Her Children*). Her stage plays have been developed or produced with Ars Nova, NAATCO, Theater Mitu, New York Stage and Film, Shrewd Productions, Stage Left, and The Gift Theatre. Her short films have screened at festivals worldwide, including SXSW and Toronto. She has been a finalist or semi-finalist for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Playwright Conference, Seven Devils, BAPF, the Nicholl, and the Heideman Award. She is a proud member of ScriptWorks (Austin), The Gift Theatre (Chicago) and former member of the Ars Nova Play Group (New York). Jenny trained as an actor at Court and Steppenwolf theaters in Chicago, and in playwriting at University of Texas at Austin.

GABRIEL DEAN

Gabriel Jason Dean's plays have been produced or developed at New York Theatre Workshop, The Lark, New York Stage and Film, Oregon Shakespeare, the Kennedy Center, PlayPenn, ASSITE/International, A Red Orchid Theatre, Theatre Row, Hangar Theatre, Aurora Theatre, Dallas Children's Theater, People's Light & Theatre, Illinois Shakespeare Festival and more. Gabriel has received multiple honors from the Kennedy Center including the Paula Vogel Prize, Ken Ludwig Prize and Theater for Young Audiences Award. Other honors include the James A. Michener Fellowship at University of Texas at Austin and winner of the Samuel French Off Off Broadway Festival.

WINTER MILLER

Winter Miller's plays in development include: *The Arrival* (Sundance Institute, PlayLabs, Hedgebrook and Voice&Vision's Envision), *Paternity* (Cherry Lane Mentor Project, mentored and directed by Craig Lucas), and the musical *Amandine* (Joe's Pub, Orchard Project, New York Theatre Workshop Monday@3, Electric Pear, Theatreworks). Published plays include: *In Darfur*, *The Penetration Play* and *Conspicuous*. Miller is a founding member of the Obie-winning 13Playwrights, a Core Writer with the Playwrights' Center and a New Georges Affiliated Artist. She holds an MFA from Columbia University and graduated cum laude from Smith College.



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

One of the nation's most generous and well-respected theater organizations, the Playwrights' Center focuses on both supporting playwrights and moving new plays toward production at theaters across the country. The Center has helped launch the careers of numerous nationally recognized artists, notably August Wilson, Lee Blessing, Suzan-Lori Parks, Jordan Harrison, Carlyle Brown, Craig Lucas, Jeffrey Hatcher, Melanie Marnich, and Kira Obolensky. 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 Ruth Easton Lab brings the Playwrights' Center Core Writers—25-30 of the most exciting playwrights from across the country—and their collaborators to Minneapolis for play development workshops and a formal season of public readings with prominent directors, actors, dramaturgs, and designers. Core Writers are promoted by the Center and provided opportunities through an extensive network of colleges and universities, cultural institutions, and producing theaters.

Local and national partnerships elevate the role of living playwrights. The Center works with several theaters each year to develop work for their stages. Recent partners have included Tectonic Theater Project, Mixed Blood Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Public Theater (NY), Goodman Theatre (Chicago, IL), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie Theater, Ten Thousand Things Theater Company, Berkeley Rep, Marin Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and others. The Center also collaborates with local cultural institutions as the Walker Art Center and Minnesota History Center to develop theater that deepens their programming.

Fellowships, made possible by the McKnight and Jerome foundations, provide more than \$200,000 each year for residencies, commissions, and development funds. Through these fellowships, the Playwrights' Center functions as a home for:

- Jerome Fellows (three to five emerging American playwrights);
- Many Voices Fellows (two early-career and two beginning playwrights of color);
- McKnight Advancement Grants (two Minnesota-based playwrights whose work demonstrates exceptional artistic merit and potential);
- McKnight National Residency and Commission (one playwright selected annually from an impressive national pool); and
- McKnight Theater Artist Fellows (three Minnesota-based professional theater artists recognized for their outstanding skill and talent).

Membership is open to all for just \$50 per year and provides access to an online hub of information about the field including articles by theater luminaries, a database of playwriting opportunities, and access to dramaturgical services, readings with professional actors, discounted classes, and free seminars. 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 and dramaturgs.