

## The Playwrights' Center announces 2013-14 playwriting fellows and Core Writers

(Minneapolis, MN—May 15, 2013)—The Playwrights' Center is pleased to announce its 2013-14 roster of playwriting fellows and new Core Writers, who together will receive more than \$200,000 in awards and additional development funds. This is the largest amount ever awarded by the 42-year-old Playwrights' Center, an internationally renowned theater laboratory and artist service organization dedicated to promoting playwrights and new play development.

"With nearly all of our fellowship programs hitting their highest application numbers to date, I am emboldened by our efforts to support this current body of American playwrights, and very inspired by the slate of playwrights that were chosen for our 2013-14 season," says Producing Artistic Director Jeremy B. Cohen. "From the launch of the newly-expanded Many Voices program, to supporting the incredible Jerome Fellows whose work is already making an impact across the U.S., to the recognition of such consistent excellence in our McKnight Fellows, we are poised to see a huge explosion of great new work across American stages. As always, we're deeply indebted to both the Jerome and McKnight Foundations for their support of our fellowships, and to the Mellon Foundation for their ongoing visionary support of the Playwrights' Center."

### PLAYWRITING FELLOWSHIPS

#### **Jerome Fellowships—for emerging playwrights (\$16,000 award)**

***Jake Jeppson, Basil Kreimendahl, Sarah Saltwick, Deborah Yarchun***

Jerome Fellows spend a year-long residency in Minnesota. The Playwrights' Center has awarded these fellowships in partnership with the Jerome Foundation since 1976, increasing the number of fellowships from three to four in 2011. The Playwrights' Center's 2013-14 Jerome Fellows are **Jake Jeppson**, whose plays include *Fox Play*, *The Clearing* and *Turtle* and whose work has been produced in New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Estonia and Latvia; **Basil Kreimendahl**, a 2012-13 Playwrights' Center Core Apprentice whose play *Sidewinders* will have its world premiere at The Cutting Ball Theater in San Francisco next season; **Sarah Saltwick**, whose play *She Creatures* was produced by Nouveau 47 in Dallas this season and whose adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* was recently featured on the University of Texas at Austin's mainstage; and **Deborah Yarchun**, whose work has been produced at theaters across the United States and Canada and whose plays include *The Aleph Complex*, *The Man in the Sukkah*, *Portmanteaux* and *FreezeFrame*.

#### **Jerome Many Voices Fellowships—for early-career writers of color (\$10,000 award, plus \$2,500 in living expenses)**

***Janaki Ranpura, Josh Wilder***

This year marks a dramatic expansion of the Many Voices Fellowship; the award amount has been doubled and for the first time one of the fellowships was open to writers residing outside of Minnesota. The Playwrights' Center's 2013-14 Jerome Many Voices Fellows are **Janaki Ranpura** (Minneapolis, MN), a playwright, performer and public artist who unites technology with the traditional tricks of puppet theater and who is a current Many Voices Fellow; and **Josh Wilder** (Philadelphia, PA), a 2012-13 August Wilson Center Fellow and creator of the *I Am the Inner City* movement whose recent solo performances, *Perfection* and *Township Safari*, have premiered in Los Angeles and South Africa.

Two Many Voices Mentorships are also awarded annually to Minnesota-based beginning playwrights of color. These awards include a curated package of writing and development services and a \$1,000 stipend. The 2013-14 Many Voices Mentorship recipients are **Ansa Akyea**, well-known for his acting work and 2011 Playwrights' Center McKnight Theater Artist Fellow; and **Jamil Jude**, co-founder of Colored People's Theatre in Washington, D.C., and currently the National New Play Network Producer in Residence at Mixed Blood Theatre.

**McKnight Advancement Grants—to further the careers of Minnesota-based playwrights (\$25,000 award)**  
**Joe Waechter, Martín Zimmerman**

This year's McKnight Advancement Grants go to **Joe Waechter**, whose work includes the plays *PROFILES*, *Lake Untersee*, *Good Ol' Boys*, *The Hidden People* and *The Strangler*, the "headphone operas" *The Hoot Owl* and *Howard Gap Road*, and an immersive virtual reality piece titled *Antarctica*; and **Martín Zimmerman**, a bilingual playwright whose plays include *White Tie Ball*, *The Making of a Modern Folk Hero*, *Seven Spots on the Sun* and *The Solid Sand Below*. Both Waechter and Zimmerman are 2012-13 Jerome Fellows with the Playwrights' Center.

**McKnight National Residency and Commission—for the creation and development of new works by nationally recognized playwrights (\$12,500 commission)**  
**Sibyl Kempson**

The 2013-14 McKnight National Residency and Commission has been awarded to experimental playwright Sibyl Kempson. Kempson's recent projects include *Restless Eye*, a collaboration with David Neumann/Advanced Beginner Group, and Big Dance Theater's production of her play *Ich, Kürbisgeist*. Upcoming projects include commissioned new works to premiere at the 2014 Fusebox Festival and at Abrons Arts Center, and a collaboration with Elevator Repair Service called *Fondly, Collette Richland* which will premiere in New York City in 2015 and can be seen in preview at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis May 16-18, 2013.

**CORE WRITERS—25 to 30 playwrights from across the country whose work is supported by the Playwrights' Center over a three-year term. In addition to the roster of 21 current Core Writers, the new writers for next season are:**

**Jenny Connell Davis, Gabriel Jason Dean, Idris Goodwin, Aditi Brennan Kapil, Lauren Yee**

The Playwrights' Center received more applications this year for the Core Writer program than ever before, and the new Core Writers represent a wide swath of writing styles and career levels. **Jenny Connell Davis'** plays include *Dragon Play*, *The Scientific Method*, *The Psyche Project* and *A Play on War*, and her short films have been screened at festivals worldwide. **Gabriel Jason Dean** is a New York/Austin based theater-maker whose plays include *Bacha Bazi (Boy Play)*, *The Transition of Doodle Pequeño*, *Qualities of Starlight*, *D'Angelico* and *For Closure*. **Idris Goodwin** is a playwright, spoken word performer and essayist whose play *How We Got On*

premiered at the 2012 Humana Festival and who is currently developing work with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Denver Center Theatre, Steppenwolf, StageOne and New Harmony Project. **Aditi Brennan Kapil** is a former Many Voices Fellow whose work includes *Love Person*, *Agnes Under the Big Top*, and her new “Displaced Hindu Gods Trilogy,” slated to premiere at Mixed Blood Theatre in fall 2013. **Lauren Yee** is a former Playwrights’ Center Core Apprentice whose plays include *Ching Chong Chinaman*; *Crevise*; *Hookman*; *in a word*; *A Man, his Wife, and his Hat*; *The Tiger Among Us* and *Samsara*, which will be workshopped at the O’Neill Conference this summer.

The Core Apprentice program, which pairs student playwrights with a mentor and offers play development support, welcomes 2013-14 apprentices **Emma Goidel**, **Hansol Jung**, **Tori Keenan-Zelt** and **Katharine Sherman**.

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## PLAYWRIGHT BIOS

### 2013-14 Jerome Fellows

#### JAKE JEPPSON

Jake Jeppson’s plays include *Fox Play*, *The Clearing* and *Turtle*. They have been developed and produced in New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and recently Estonia and Latvia. Jake is a member of the Play Group at Ars Nova and a contributing artist in the XS collaborative. He graduated from the M.F.A. Playwriting Program at the Yale School of Drama, where he won the ASCAP Cole Porter Prize. He has taught playwriting at Wesleyan University, Yale, NTI and the Orchard Project, where he co-founded the apprentice program. In addition to his plays, Jake contributes writing to the National Geographic Channel. He grew up in Washington, D.C.

#### BASIL KREIMENDAHL

Basil Kreimendahl’s play *Sidewinders* will have its world premiere at The Cutting Ball Theater in San Francisco as part of their 2013-14 season. *Orange Julius* was developed at the 2012 O’Neill National Playwrights Conference and included in La Jolla Playhouse’s DNA New Work Series. Basil’s plays have also been developed by New York Theatre Workshop, About Face Theatre, Inkwell, WordBRIDGE, Courier 12 Collective in Chicago, Stageworks in Florida, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Basil was a Core Apprentice at the Playwright’s Center 2012-13 and a recipient of an Arts Meets Activism grant from the Kentucky Foundation for Women for theater work with the trans community in Louisville. B.F.A., University of Tampa; M.F.A., University of Iowa, 2013.

#### SARAH SALTWICK

Sarah Saltwick writes new love stories between people, places and things. In 2012-13, her adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* was featured on University of Texas at Austin’s mainstage, her play *She Creatures* was produced by Nouveau 47 in Dallas, TX, and she developed *We Are StarStuff*, a theatrical experiment about the cosmos, for the Cohen New Works Festival presented by the University Co-op. Her work has been presented, developed or produced by the University of Texas at Austin, Nouveau 47, Westmont College, Paper Chairs, Theatre Masters, ScriptWorks, WordBRIDGE, Bristol Riverside Theatre, Shrewd Productions and Last Frontier Theatre Conference.

#### DEBORAH YARCHUN

Deborah Yarchun’s plays include *The Aleph Complex*, *The Man in the Sukkah*, *Portmanteaux*, *FreezeFrame*, *Painted Desert* and *Spinal Alignment*. They have been developed at The New Harmony Project (upcoming), Jewish Plays Project OPEN Residency (upcoming), The Great Plains Theatre Conference, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater,

Sanctuary: Playwrights Theatre and WordBRIDGE and produced at Theater Masters' National MFA Playwrights Festival, Estrogenius Festival, The Samuel French Off Off Broadway Short Play Festival, Playwrights Horizons, the Philadelphia Fringe Festival and more. Deborah's honors include the Kennedy Center's Jean Kennedy Smith Playwriting Award, University of Iowa's Richard Maibaum Playwriting Award and The Iowa Arts Fellowship. MFA, University of Iowa, 2013.

### **2013-14 Jerome Many Voices Fellows**

#### **JANAKI RANPURA**

Janaki Ranpura is a playwright, performer and public artist developing the interactions between human bodies and the spaces and objects that surround them. This manifests in large-scale civic spectacle, platforms for public dreaming and participatory work for the stage. Janaki unites technology with the traditional tricks of puppet theater. She has designed and led parades in Taiwan, South Korea and the United States. She is developing work this year as a Macdowell Colony Fellow. She has received awards from organizations including the Playwrights' Center (2011-13 Many Voices Fellow), Forecast Public Art (for *The Movable City*), the Henson Foundation (for *The God Box*), and the international puppetry organization UNIMA (for *Lovesick Sea Play*).

#### **JOSH WILDER**

Josh Wilder is a proud Philadelphia native and recent grad of the Carnegie Mellon School of Drama. He is a playwright, actor, theater maker and teaching artist. An advocate for arts education, Josh created and established an after school theater program at the Philadelphia High School for Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) called MyVision Theatre Ensemble, for which he won the Yoshiyama Award for Exemplary Service to the Community. Josh teaches at CAPA, Freedom Theatre, and the Philadelphia Young Playwrights Festival. His recent solo performances, *Perfection* and *Township Safari*, have premiered in Los Angeles and South Africa. Find him at [www.iamtheinnercity.com](http://www.iamtheinnercity.com) or on twitter @MrWildah.

### **2013-14 Jerome Many Voices Mentees**

#### **ANSA AKYEA**

A budding and growing writer, artist and actor, Ansa Akyea is graduate of the University of Iowa's M.F.A. Acting program. Ansa has performed on stages nationally. His range and ability has been seen on stage locally at the Guthrie Theater, Children's Theatre Company, Penumbra Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, and many other Twin Cities theaters. He is a recipient of the Playwright Center's 2011 McKnight Theater Artist Fellowship for his acting work.

#### **JAMIL JUDE**

Jamil Jude currently serves as the National New Play Network Producer in Residence at Mixed Blood Theatre. Before joining the staff at Mixed Blood, Jamil served as a New Play Producing Fellow at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. As a theater artist, Jamil sees himself as an in-room collaborator. He has served as a director, dramaturg and playwright. His interest in social justice and theater continues to drive his work, including co-founding a culturally relevant theater company, Colored People's Theatre, in Washington, D.C.

## **2013-14 McKnight Advancement Grants**

### **JOE WAECHTER**

Joe Waechter's plays include *PROFILES*, *Lake Untersee*, *Good Ol' Boys*, *The Hidden People*, and *The Strangler*. His work has been developed or produced by Playwrights Horizons, Ars Nova, American Repertory Theater, McCarter Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, The Kennedy Center, The Amoralists, The Hangar Theatre, Red Eye, The Inkwell, Clubbed Thumb, Perishable Theatre, Pavement Group, and The 25¢ Opera of San Francisco. Awards two Jerome Fellowships at the Playwrights' Center, a Lucille Lortel Playwriting Fellowship, the Weston Award in Playwriting, a Jerome Emerging Artist Residency at Tofte Lake Center, and the Clauder Competition Gold Prize. M.F.A. Playwriting, Brown University. [www.joewaechter.com](http://www.joewaechter.com).

### **MARTÍN ZIMMERMAN**

Martín Zimmerman is a multi-ethnic, bilingual playwright whose work spans a wide variety of styles, but always aspires to a seamless unity of aesthetic and story. His plays include *White Tie Ball*, *The Making Of A Modern Folk Hero*, *Seven Spots On The Sun*, and *The Solid Sand Below*, and have been produced or developed across the country including at The Kennedy Center, Goodman Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, the Playwrights' Center, Alliance Theatre, and A.C.T. (Seattle), with upcoming projects at Marin Theatre Company, Chicago Dramatists, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Playwrights Conference, Teatro Vista and Cincinnati Playhouse In The Park. M.F.A. in Playwriting: The University of Texas at Austin.

## **2013-14 McKnight National Residency and Commission**

### **SIBYL KEMPSON**

Sibyl Kempson lives and makes theater plays in NYC and the Pocono Mountains. Her plays have been presented at Dixon Place, Soho Rep, Performance Space 122, Little Theatre, Brick Theater, the Fusebox Festival, the Great Plains Theatre Conference, the Walker Art Center, and Theater Bonn in Germany. She is a 2010 MacDowell Colony Fellow, a member of New Dramatists, and holds an M.F.A. in Playwriting from Brooklyn College. She is a founding member of the Joyce Cho Initiative, an affinity of playwrights dedicated to the staging of problem plays, and of Machiqq Women's Auxiliary playwriting group. Her collaboration with Elevator Repair Service called *Fondly, Collette Richland* will premiere in NYC in 2015 and can be seen in preview at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis May 16-18, 2013.

## **2013-14 Core Writers**

### **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 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 JASON 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. [www.gabrieljasondean.net](http://www.gabrieljasondean.net).

#### IDRIS GOODWIN

Idris Goodwin is a playwright, spoken word performer and essayist. His play *How We Got On*, developed at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, premiered at the 2012 Humana Festival of New Plays. *How We Got On* (Playscripts, 2013) is being remounted by theaters across the country and was nominated for an ATCA Steinberg New Play award. He is currently developing work with Berkeley Rep, Denver Center Theatre, Steppenwolf, StageOne and New Harmony Project. *These Are The Breaks* (Write Bloody, 2011), his debut collection of essays and poetry, was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He's performed on HBO, The Discovery Channel, Sesame Street and National Public Radio. He teaches performance writing and hip hop aesthetics at Colorado College.

#### ADITI BRENNAN KAPIL

Aditi Brennan Kapil is a playwright, actress and director of Bulgarian and Indian descent, raised in Sweden and currently residing in Minneapolis, MN. She is a graduate of Macalester College with a B.A. in English and Dramatic Arts. Her plays *Love Person* (a four-part love story in Sanskrit, ASL and English) and *Agnes Under the Big Top* have been produced to critical acclaim around the country. Aditi's new "Displaced Hindu Gods Trilogy," consisting of the plays *The Chronicles of Kalki*, *Shiv*, and *Brahman/i*, a one-hijra stand-up comedy show, is slated to premiere in repertory at Mixed Blood Theatre in fall 2013. She is currently working on commissions for Yale Repertory Theatre and La Jolla Playhouse.

#### LAUREN YEE

Lauren Yee's plays include *Ching Chong Chinaman*; *Crevice*; *Hookman*; *in a word*; *A Man, his Wife, and his Hat*; *Samsara*; and *The Tiger Among Us*. Her full-length work has been produced at AlterTheater, Artists at Play, City Lights Theater Company, Company One, fu-GEN, the HUB Theatre, Impact Theatre, Moxie Theatre, Mu Performing Arts, Pan Asian Rep, SIS Productions, and others. Lauren is a Time Warner Fellow at the Women's Project Playwrights Lab, a member of the Ma-Yi Theater Writers Lab, the Shank playwright-in-residence at Second Stage Theatre, and the Page One resident playwright at Playwrights Realm. She is currently under commission from Lincoln Center Theater/LCT3 and Encore Theater Company (with support from the Gerbode Foundation). B.A.: Yale. M.F.A.: UCSD. [www.laurenyee.com](http://www.laurenyee.com)

The logo for The Playwrights' Center, featuring the text "THE PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER" in a serif font, with "THE" in a smaller size above "PLAYWRIGHTS'". The text is white and set against a dark, textured background that resembles a torn piece of paper or a rough-edged square.

## THE PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER

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

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One of the nation's most generous and well-respected theater organizations, the Playwrights' Center focuses on both supporting playwrights and promoting new plays to 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 the Yale Rep, Woolly Mammoth, 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.