

Playwrights' Center announces 2016-17 McKnight Fellows and new Core Writers

(Minneapolis, MN—May 10, 2016)—Following last month's announcement of the incoming Jerome and Many Voices Fellows, the Playwrights' Center is pleased to introduce the 2016-17 McKnight National Residency and Commission recipient, two 2016-17 McKnight Fellows in Playwriting, six new Core Writers and three 2016-17 Core Apprentices. McKnight Theater Artist Fellows will be announced in June.

"I'm so proud that writers at all points in their journey—whether they are just out of school or have years of productions under their belts—find an artistic home and individualized support at the Playwrights' Center," says Jeremy B. Cohen, the Center's Producing Artistic Director. "We're grateful to the McKnight Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their pivotal contributions to advance the careers of these deserving artists."

Fellows, Core Writers and Core Apprentices are selected by independent panels.

2016-17 MCKNIGHT NATIONAL RESIDENCY AND COMMISSION RECIPIENT

Francine Volpe

The McKnight National Residency and Commission funds the creation and development of new works and comes with a \$14,000 commission, \$5,750 in workshop funds, and travel and housing stipends. Recent recipients include Erik Ehn ("Queen"), Karen Hartman ("Roz and Ray"), Sibyl Kempson ("The Securely Conferred, Vouchsafed Keepsakes of Maery S.") and Betty Shamieh ("Veritas"). The 2016-17 recipient is **Francine Volpe**, whose plays include "The Good Mother," "The Given" and "Late Fragment." For her commission, Volpe will be working on a new play about lies, manipulation and online dating.

2016-17 MCKNIGHT FELLOWS IN PLAYWRITING

Andrew Rosendorf, Rhiana Yazzie

The McKnight Fellowship in Playwriting awards two Minnesota-based playwrights a \$25,000 stipend, \$2,500 to support play development and other professional expenses, and \$1,400 in travel funds. Recent recipients include Aditi Brennan Kapil, Basil Kreimendahl, Carson Kreitzer, Harrison David Rivers and Joe Waechter. The 2016-17 McKnight Fellows in Playwriting are:

- **Andrew Rosendorf**, a 2015-16 Jerome Fellow at the Playwrights' Center whose plays include "Cane," "Brilliant Corners" and "Tranquil," which will have its world premiere with Luna Stage in April 2017.

- **Rhiana Yazzie**, a two-time Jerome Fellow and previous Playwrights' Center Core Writer who is under commission by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Public Theater for "American Revolutions: the United States History Cycle." Yazzie created New Native Theatre in 2009, where she serves as Artistic Director.

NEW CORE WRITERS

Larissa FastHorse, Martyna Majok, Jason Gray Platt, Gabrielle Reisman, Harrison David Rivers, Mat Smart

The Core Writer Program at the Playwrights' Center provides play development workshops and professional support to 25 to 30 playwrights from across the country over a three-year term. Work by Core Writers composes the Center's public season (the PlayLabs new play festival in October and the Ruth Easton New Play Series December through April). Playwrights who have benefited from the Core Writer program include Christina Anderson, Marcus Gardley, Samuel D. Hunter, Melanie Marnich, Winter Miller and Lauren Yee. Joining the 23 continuing Core Writers are these six playwrights, whose Core Writer terms will run through June 2019:

- **Larissa FastHorse** (Santa Monica, Calif.), whose plays include "Urban Rez," "What Would Crazy Horse Do?" and "Cherokee Family Reunion." FastHorse is developing "Fancy Dancer" under a commission from Children's Theatre Company and is the Guthrie Theater's 2015-16 Joe Dowling Annaghmakerrig Fellowship Award recipient.
- **Martyna Majok** (New York, N.Y.), whose work includes "Ironbound" (Round House Theatre, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater) and "Cost of Living" (premiering this summer at Williamstown Theatre Festival), and who is the current PoNY Fellow at the Lark Play Development Center.
- **Jason Gray Platt** (New York, N.Y.), who wrote the text for Woodshed Collective's recent experiential "Empire Travel Agency" and whose work has been seen at Source Festival, Round House Theatre, American Repertory Theater and others.
- **Gabrielle Reisman** (New Orleans, La. and New York, N.Y.), a founding member of Underbelly theater collaborative whose work includes "Catch the Wall," "70 Secrets of Marmalade Kittens" and "Storm, Still."
- **Harrison David Rivers** (St. Paul, Minn.), a 2015-16 McKnight Fellow in Playwriting and 2014-15 Many Voices Fellow whose plays include "And She Would Stand Like This" and "When Last We Flew." Rivers is the 2016 Playwright-in-Residence at the Williamstown Theatre Festival.
- **Mat Smart** (New York, N.Y.), a previous Core Writer, McKnight Fellow in Playwriting, and two-time Jerome Fellow whose play "The Royal Society of Antarctica" (developed at the Playwrights' Center's PlayLabs festival) received the 2015 Equity Jeff Award for Best New Work in Chicago.

Continuing Core Writers are Lee Blessing, Carlyle Brown, Philip Dawkins, Barbara Field, Sarah Gubbins, Christina Ham, Jeffrey Hatcher, Rachel Jendrzejewski, Aditi Brennan Kapil, Sherry Kramer, Marion McClinton, Meg Miroshnik, Qui Nguyen, Kira Obolensky, John Olive, Jen Silverman, Susan Soon He Stanton, Kate Tarker, Alice Tuan, Ken Urban, Joe Waechter, Kathryn Walat and Ken Weitzman.

CORE APPRENTICES

Sarah Galante, Sam Lahne, Savannah Reich

The Core Apprentice program at the Playwrights' Center pairs student playwrights with professional mentors and offers full play development workshops at the Center. Playwrights who have gone through the Core Apprentice program include George Brant, Ike Holter, Hansol Jung, Kimber Lee, Andrew Saito, Jen Silverman, Lauren Yee and Martín Zimmerman. The 2016-17 Core Apprentices are **Sarah Galante** (University of the Arts), **Sam Lahne** (University of Iowa) and **Savannah Reich** (Carnegie Mellon University).

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PLAYWRIGHT BIOS

Photos of the playwrights are available at pwcenter.org/media-room

2016-17 McKnight National Residency and Commission recipient

FRANCINE VOLPE

Francine Volpe was born and lives in Brooklyn. Her plays include “The Good Mother” (dir: Scott Elliot with Gretchen Mol), “The Given” (dir: Michael Imperioli) and “Late Fragment” (dir: Michael Imperioli). She has had work produced and/or developed at Arena Stage, ACT, Rattlestick, SoHo Rep and The New Company in London. Francine was the inaugural winner of the Lanford Wilson Prize in Playwriting. She twice received grants from the Lecomte du Nouy Foundation for playwriting and was twice a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Francine received her B.F.A. from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. She was a Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwriting Fellow at The Juilliard School where she studied with Marsha Norman and Christopher Durang. She was the winner of the Agnes Ranjo Capps scholarship at the Missoula Playwrights Colony. She teaches at NYU, Sarah Lawrence College, The Missoula Colony and The New Group. She is currently commissioned by The New Group and is a member of New Dramatists.

2016-17 McKnight Fellows in Playwriting

ANDREW ROSENDORF

Andrew Rosendorf’s work has been produced or developed at La Jolla, MCC, the National New Play Network, American Theater Company, City Theatre, Geva Theatre, Luna Stage, Actor’s Express, Palm Beach Dramaworks, UglyRhino and Tofte Lake Center. Andrew is an alum of terraNOVA Collective’s Groundbreakers Playwrights Group and NNPN’s Playwright-in-Residence program, and has been a VCCA and MacDowell Colony Fellow. He is currently a 2015-2016 Jerome Fellow at the Playwrights’ Center. M.F.A.: The New School for Drama, Playwriting. www.andrewrosendorf.com

RHIANA YAZZIE

Rhiana Yazzie is a Navajo playwright, producer, director and actor based in Minnesota. She is a two-time Playwrights’ Center Jerome Fellow (2010-11 and 2006-07) and was a Playwrights’ Center Core Writer for three years. She was a playwright in residence at the William Inge Center in Independence, Kansas, Fall 2014. She’s been co-commissioned by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Public Theater for “American Revolutions: the United States History Cycle.” Notable TYA plays include “Chile Pod” (La Jolla Playhouse) and “Wild Horses” (Bonderman National Theatre for Youth Symposium and the Kennedy Center’s New Visions/New Voices). She created New Native Theatre in 2009, a company based in the Twin Cities with a new way of looking at, thinking about and staging Native American stories (newnativetheatre.org). She holds a Masters of Professional Writing from the University of Southern California where she produced lectures and concerts by Madeleine Albright, Herbie Hancock, Spaulding Grey and Stephen Hawking among others.

BIOS CONTINUE →

2016-19 Core Writers

LARISSA FASTHORSE

Larissa FastHorse is an award winning playwright, director and choreographer. She was awarded the NEA Distinguished New Play Development Grant, Joe Dowling Annamaghkerrig Fellowship, AATE Distinguished Play Award, Inge Residency, Sundance/Ford Foundation Fellowship, Aurand Harris Fellowship and numerous Ford and NEA Grants. Larissa's produced plays include "Urban Rez," "Landless," "Average Family," "Teaching Disco Squaredancing to Our Elders: a Class Presentation" and "Cherokee Family Reunion." She has written commissions for Cornerstone Theatre Company, Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, AlterTheater, Kennedy Center TYA, Native Voices at the Autry, Artist's Rep and Mountainside Theatre. She developed plays with Kansas City Rep, Artist's Rep in Portland, Arizona Theater Company, the Center Theatre Group Writer's Workshop and Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor.

MARTYNA MAJOK

Martyna Majok was born in Bytom, Poland, and aged in Jersey and Chicago. She has worked with Actors Theatre of Louisville, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre/Women's Project Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival and Ensemble Studio Theatre, among others. Awards include David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize, New York Theatre Workshop's 2050 Fellowship, the Kennedy Center's Jean Kennedy Smith Award, and NNPN/Smith Prize for Political Playwriting. Commissions from Marin Theatre Company, South Coast Rep, Manhattan Theatre Club and The Geffen Playhouse. B.A.: University of Chicago; M.F.A.: Yale School of Drama, Juilliard. Martyna is the 2015-2016 PoNY Fellow at the Lark Play Development Center. www.martynamajok.com

JASON GRAY PLATT

Jason Gray Platt's work has been produced and developed around the country by the American Repertory Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Denver Center Theatre Company, The Flea, Round House Theatre, TheatreWorks, The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, The Playwrights Realm, Prelude NYC, Page 73, and Red Bull Theater, and through residencies at MacDowell and Yaddo. He received a Helen Hayes Nomination for The Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play in 2013. Originally from Arizona, Jason now lives in New York. Member of Woodshed Collective. B.A.: Vassar; M.F.A.: Columbia.

GABRIELLE REISMAN

Gabrielle Reisman is a playwright and director based in New York and New Orleans. She's a founding member of Underbelly, a theatre collaborative that stages immersive journey plays in forgotten spaces, and the director of Brooklyn Yard. Gabrielle was an NNPN Playwright-in-Residence at Southern Rep and a writer in residence with the NOLA Project. She's an alum of Sundance Theatre Lab, Interstate 73 Writer's Group, and the MacDowell Colony. Gabrielle's plays have been produced in backyards and warehouses across the country and have been developed with Clubbed Thumb/Playwright Horizons, the Orchard Project, and Page 73, among others. M.F.A.: University of Texas at Austin. <http://gabriellereisman.com>

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HARRISON DAVID RIVERS

Harrison David Rivers is the winner of a GLAAD Media Award, a McKnight Fellowship in Playwriting, a Many Voices Jerome Fellowship, a Van Lier Fellowship, an Emerging Artist of Color Fellowship and the New York Stage & Film's Founders Award. He is the 2016 Playwright-in-Residence at the Williamstown Theatre Festival. His plays include "Sweet" (National Black Theatre), "And She Would Stand Like This" (The Movement Theatre Company), "Where Storms are Born" (Williamstown) and "When Last We Flew" (Sundance). Harrison is an alumnus of the Emerging Writers' Group at the Public Theater. M.F.A.: Columbia University. <http://harrisondavidrivers.com>

MAT SMART

Mat Smart received the 2015 Equity Jeff Award for Best New Work in Chicago for "The Royal Society of Antarctica" (Gift Theatre), which was developed at the Playwrights' Center in PlayLabs 2013. Other plays include: "Naperville" (Slant Theatre Project, upcoming at Theatre Wit), "Tinker to Evers to Chance" (Geva, Merrimack Rep), "Samuel J. and K." (Williamstown Theatre Festival, Steppenwolf) and "The Hopper Collection" (Magic Theatre, Huntington). Mat is a former Jerome Fellow and McKnight Fellow in Playwriting. An avid baseball fan and traveler, he has been to all 30 of the current MLB stadiums, all 50 states and all of the continents.

2016-17 Core Apprentices

SARAH GALANTE

Sarah Galante is a recent graduate of the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, where she received her B.F.A. in Theater Arts with a concentration in Playwriting and received the Excellence in Playwriting award. Throughout her time in Philadelphia, Sarah has collaborated with Philadelphia Young Playwrights, The Foundry: An Emerging Playwrights Lab, PlayPenn, The Berserker Residents, Simpatico Theater Company and award-winning writers Heather Raffo and César Alvarez. Her plays, "Hear Me War," "I Know the Way Home," "The Youngest We'll Ever Be," "The Salt and Pepper Stories," and "Private Injuries" have all been performed throughout Philadelphia.

SAM LAHNE

Sam Lahne's plays include "Doxxed" (University of Iowa New Play Festival), "#julys" (Bay Area Playwrights Festival; Open Festival of New Jewish Theater), "Water Bound" (Barter Theatre AFPP), "I Meant to Build a House" (Studio Trintab/U. of Cincinnati) and "Magicicada" (Endstation Theatre Co). His short play "The Giant Man" was a winner of the Red Bull Short Play Competition and will be published in a forthcoming anthology. Sam received his B.A. from Vassar College and his M.F.A. from the University of Iowa.

SAVANNAH REICH

Savannah Reich is a playwright and screenwriter based in Chicago. Her screenplay "Beebe and Barton" was the winner of the Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize in 2015. Her plays have been twice recommended for The Kilroys List, and she is currently under commission from Walking Shadow Theater Company to write a new play about Carry Nation. She holds an M.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon University, where she studied with Rob Handel. www.savannahreich.com

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER

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 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. Through these fellowships, the Playwrights' Center functions as a home for:

- Jerome Fellows (four emerging American playwrights);
- Many Voices Fellows (two early-career playwrights of color, one Minnesota-based) and Many Voices Mentees (two Minnesota-based beginning playwrights of color);
- McKnight Fellows in Playwriting (two accomplished Minnesota-based playwrights);
- McKnight National Residency and Commission (one playwright selected annually from a national pool); and
- McKnight Theater Artist Fellows (three exceptional Minnesota-based theater artists, other than playwrights).

Membership is open to all and provides more than 1,500 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. The Center works with several theaters each year to develop work for their stages. Recent collaborations include partnerships with Denver Center on Idris Goodwin's *Victory Jones and the Incredible One Woman Band*, Marin Theatre Company on Carson Kreitzer's *Lasso of Truth*, Mixed Blood on Aditi Kapil's *Brahman(i)* and *Shiv*, Pillsbury House Theatre on Tracey Scott Wilson's *Buzzer*, and The Walker Art Center and Elevator Repair Service on Sibyl Kempson's *Fondly, Collette Richland*. The Center also flies in 10-15 artistic leaders each year to meet writers and hear their work. The newly-launched Regulars program brings together a group of nearly 100 producing theaters in the United States who seek the support of the Center in order to meet new writers, develop their work, and move them into production.