



PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER
IMAGINING THEATER FORWARD SINCE 1971

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Jen Silverman's "Wink" launches 2016-17 Ruth Easton New Play Series at the Playwrights' Center

(Minneapolis, MN—November 16, 2016)—The popular Ruth Easton New Play Series features free public readings of new plays by Playwrights' Center Core Writers. The series features one play a month from December through April and will kick off **Monday, December 5 and Tuesday, December 6** at 7 p.m. with "Wink" by Jen Silverman, directed by Producing Artistic Director Jeremy B. Cohen. Readings take place at the Playwrights' Center, 2301 E. Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis. Reserve tickets at pwcenter.org.

The readings of "Wink" are great opportunities to experience work by a truly original playwright in the midst of a break-out year. Silverman's plays are seeing productions on stages around the country, from Yale Repertory Theatre to Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company to Off-Broadway's Playwrights Realm. "Wink" earned a spot on the 2016 Kilroys List as one of the 32 most recommended unproduced new plays by female and trans* playwrights.

About "Wink": Sofie (Sara Richardson*) is an unhappy housewife. Gregor (Peter Christian Hansen*) is her bread-winning husband. Dr. Frans (Mark Benninghofen*) is their psychiatrist. Wink (Billy Mullaney) is the cat. And Gregor has just skinned the cat. A dark comedy about the complicated and dangerous territory of the human heart. (*Member of Actors' Equity)

"I'm fascinated by human relationships," says Silverman, "and I'm always trying to find new lenses to see us through, new ways of understanding our complexities. 'Wink' is a dark comedy with absurdist tendencies, but it seeks to cut to the heart of something authentic and true in how we long for and lose each other, how we recover and rebuild."

"I have been a huge fan of Jen's work for the past five years," says Playwrights' Center Producing Artistic Director Jeremy B. Cohen. "I'm so excited for Twin Cities audiences to get to know her voice, which often embraces an absurdist aesthetic and form to get at something deeper within humanity. Supporting Jen's incisive and deeply funny work also gives us the opportunity to break down the historically male-dominated genre of absurdism."

Jen Silverman's work has been produced in New York by Clubbed Thumb ("Phoebe in Winter") and the Playwrights Realm ("Crane Story"), and regionally at Actors Theatre of Louisville ("The Roommate," Humana 2015; "Wondrous Strange," Humana 2016), Yale Rep ("The Moors"), InterAct Theatre in Philadelphia ("The Dangerous House of Pretty Mbane," Barrymore Award, Steinberg Award citation). She has productions this season at Woolly Mammoth (World Premiere of "Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Boops"), The Playwrights Realm @ The Duke (New York premiere of "The Moors"), South Coast Repertory Theatre, and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park (World Premiere of "All the Roads Home"),

among others. She is the 2016-2017 Playwrights of New York (PoNY) Fellow at the Lark.
www.jensilverman.com

The Ruth Easton New Play Series at the Playwrights' Center, now in its 12th year, provides selected Core Writers with 20 hours of workshop time to develop a new play in collaboration with top-notch actors and other theater artists. Plays receive two public readings, giving audience members a unique and immediate way to experience new work and a chance to be part of the creative process. Plays recently seen in the Ruth Easton New Play Series that have full productions this theater season include George Brant's "Marie and Rosetta" Off-Broadway at Atlantic Theater and Carlyle Brown's "Finding Fish" at the Illusion Theater in Minneapolis.

The 2016-17 Ruth Easton New Play Series will also feature "queens" by Martyna Majok, "Eden Prairie, 1971" by Mat Smart, "The Sea & The Stars" by local playwright Harrison David Rivers, and "Minneapolis/St. Paul" by Lee Blessing. Details at pwcenter.org/ruth-easton-series.

All events in the Ruth Easton New Play Series are free and open to the public. Reservations are recommended; reserve your spots at pwcenter.org 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 at pwcenter.org/media-room or by contacting Jessica Franken at jessicaf@pwcenter.org

THE 2016-17 RUTH EASTON NEW PLAY SERIES

December 5 & 6 at 7 p.m. "Wink" by Jen Silverman
January 9 & 10 at 7 p.m. "queens" by Martyna Majok
February 6 & 7 at 7 p.m. "Eden Prairie, 1971" by Mat Smart
March 6 & 7 at 7 p.m. "The Sea & The Stars" by Harrison David Rivers
April 3 & 4 at 7 p.m. "Minneapolis/St. Paul" by Lee Blessing

"Wink" by Jen Silverman

Sofie is an unhappy housewife. Gregor is her bread-winning husband. Dr. Frans is their psychiatrist. Wink is the cat. And Gregor has just skinned the cat. A dark comedy about the complicated and dangerous territory of the human heart.

"queens" by Martyna Majok

The lives of two generations of immigrant women in Queens collide in a series of small apartments. When you are working so hard to move forward in America, what cannot—and should not—be left behind?

"Eden Prairie, 1971" by Mat Smart

On the night *Apollo 15* lands on the moon, a draft dodger steals home to Eden Prairie, Minnesota from Canada. He risks arrest to deliver a message to a young woman from his high school class. This beautifully etched play challenges notions of our own bravery and the true cost of freedom.

"The Sea & The Stars" by Harrison David Rivers

Simon is a lifeguard. Finn is terrified of water. Both are adrift, with broken hearts, returning to the tiny beach town of Jupiter and to families who need them. A play about love, karaoke, and the sea.

"Minneapolis/St. Paul" by Lee Blessing

A celebrated crime novelist leads two different lives, one as Randall, the middle-aged husband and father, and the other as Mandy, the newly-wedded wife and stepmother. In a play that is both poignant and biting funny, Mandy/Randall struggles with the complexities and repercussions of an identity too vast to fit within binaries.

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 an impressive 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 1,650 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.