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Playwrights' Center welcomes new board members

(Minneapolis, MN—November 26, 2013)— The Playwrights' Center welcomes six new board members: Carlyle Brown, playwright and artistic director, Carlyle Brown & Company; Christian Fitchett, senior marketing manager at General Mills; Chelle Gonzo, managing director of wealth planning at Wells Fargo; Carson Kreitzer, playwright; Nathan A. Perez, vice president of research at KeyStone Search; and Joe Waechter, playwright.

ABOUT THE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Carlyle Brown is a writer, performer and the artistic director of Minneapolis-based Carlyle Brown & Company. 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* and others. He is a Core Writer of the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis and an alumnus of New Dramatists in New York. In addition to serving on the Playwrights' Center board of directors, he has served on the board of directors of Theatre Communications Group and is a member of the board of the Jerome Foundation. He has worked as a museum exhibit writer and story consultant for the Charles Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit and is a member of the Charleston Jazz Initiative Circle at the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture in Charleston, South Carolina, where his works and papers are archived. He is the 2006 recipient of The Black Theatre Network's Winona Lee Fletcher Award for outstanding achievement and artistic excellence, was a 2008 Guggenheim Fellow and a 2010 USA Fellow. His new play with Carlyle Brown & Company, *Abe Lincoln and Uncle Tom in the White House*, will be produced in the Dowling Studio at the Guthrie Theater March 21-April 6, 2014.

Christian Fitchett is a Senior Marketing Manager at General Mills. Before he had a driver's license, he was involved in theater on Cape Cod, where he grew up. He went on to study Theater, as well as Economics and Mathematics, at Oberlin College. At Oberlin he performed in plays such as *The Children's Hour*, as well as managed the Warner Center for Dance as the student Technical Director. He also holds an MBA in Marketing and Entrepreneurship from Columbia. In his spare time, he enjoys helping entrepreneurs build companies to make Minneapolis a more interesting place to live. He lives with his wife Layla, and their 3 year son, Kian, in Minneapolis.

Chelle Gonzo is Director of Business Strategy, National Sales, Wells Fargo Wealth Management at Wells Fargo, responsible for ensuring that clients have an opportunity to develop a customized financial roadmap with their advisor. In this role, she leads strategy, client experience, marketing, learning and development, technology, and policy initiatives. Prior to joining Wells Fargo in 2007, Chelle was Marketing Director for U.S. Bancorp's asset management subsidiary, leading initiatives to grow institutional and mutual fund assets. She has more than 20 years of experience in financial services, working for firms including Piper Jaffray (now UBS), American Express Financial Advisors (now Ameriprise), and Minnesota Mutual Life in marketing, strategy, communications, and management roles. Chelle earned a B.A. in Journalism from the University of Minnesota and an MBA in Marketing from the Carlson School of Management. She volunteers with COMPAS and the YWCA and supports organizations that drive a flourishing arts community. Chelle lives in Apple Valley, Minnesota with her husband and three sons.

Carson Kreitzer's plays include *The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer*, *Self Defense*, *The Slow Drag* (New York and London), *1:23*, *Freakshow*, *Slither*, *Flesh and the Desert*(Workhaus Collective), and *Behind The Eye*, coming to Park Square Theater next Spring. Grants: NYFA, NYSCA, the NEA, TCG, the Jerome and McKnight foundations, and the first Playwrights Of New York (PONY) fellowship at the Lark Play Development Center. Affiliations: Workhaus Collective, the Playwrights' Center, the Dramatists Guild, and New Dramatists. She and

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composer Matt Gould are currently under commission from Yale Rep and New Dramatists for their new musical *Lempicka*. More information at www.carsonkreitzer.com.

Nathan A. Perez is Vice President of Research at KeyStone Search. Responsible for the first step in the executive search process, Nathan builds the research strategy of “where and how to find” candidates. Before bringing his networking skills to the executive search industry and serving as a key research member in two national firms, Nathan spent two decades in the arts. A formally trained actor and writer, his performance credits include legit Off Broadway stage, star and guest-star turns in film, and national daytime and prime time television. He is the co-author of the career book, *The 20-Minute Networking Meeting*. Nathan is a member of the Actors' Equity Association, Screen Actors Guild, and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA). In his off time he continues to write long-form fiction and edit the screen and stage plays of his former writing colleagues in Hollywood and New York. He also serves on the Board of Directors at The Loft Literary Center.

Joe Waechter has been working in theater as a playwright, director and performer since 1997. His plays have been seen at various venues across the country, including the Kennedy Center, McCarter Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, PlayPenn and American Repertory Theatre. He has been honored with several awards and fellowships, including two Jerome Fellowships and a McKnight Advancement Grant from the Playwrights' Center, the Clauder Competition Gold Prize, the AracaWorks Graduate Playwriting Prize and a Lucille Lortel Playwriting Fellowship. Joe also worked for five years as a producer at Deutsch Inc., a New York City advertising firm. There, he worked on a variety of accounts that include Ikea, Revlon, Starwood Hotels, Monster, Snapple, Pier 1 Imports and Tylenol. He has also provided bookkeeping advice and services to small business and independent artists working in creative industries. As an educator, Joe has taught at high school, university and professional levels at Brown University, University of Minnesota, University of Rhode Island, the Playwrights' Center, The Saint Paul Conservatory for the Arts, The National High School Institute and University of North Carolina - Greensboro. He graduated from Brown University with an MFA in Playwriting and from University of North Carolina - Greensboro with a B.A. in Drama (magna cum laude).

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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 our 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 \$225,000 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 Fellows (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 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 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 community organizations such as Jazz88 KBEM and Veterans for the Arts to develop theater that enriches their programming.