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PLAYGROUND ANNOUNCES 2011-2012 SEASON

2011-12 MONDAY NIGHT PLAYGROUND SERIES

THREE CO-PRODUCTIONS WITH BAY AREA THEATERS

16TH ANNUAL BEST OF PLAYGROUND FESTIVAL

SEVEN NEW FULL-LENGTH COMMISSIONS

PLAYWRITING INTENSIVES

SAN FRANCISCO, (September 28, 2011) – **PlayGround**, the incubator for the next generation of Bay Area playwrights, has announced its schedule for the 2011-2012 season. Kicking off its 18th Season, Monday Night PlayGround begins October 17th and will continue through March 2012, with the year’s award winners announced in April. The 16th annual Best of PlayGround Festival will run May 3-27, 2012 in San Francisco. PlayGround will also co-produce three full-length world premieres in partnership with Bay Area theatres. For subscriptions or for more information, the public can call **(415) 992-6677**, or go online at www.PlayGround-sf.org.

The monthly **Monday Night PlayGround** series will continue its growing success at Berkeley Repertory Theatre on third Mondays, from October through March. Two Fridays before the designated Monday, a topic is announced to PlayGround’s selected pool of local playwrights, who then have until 2pm the following Tuesday to submit a short script (some of last season’s topics included “It Gets Better,” a quote from Eugene O’Neill’s *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*, and “Kingdom of Number” presented in partnership with the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute). A panel of judges selects six winners, whose entries are cast by the following weekend and then rehearsed with the area’s best professional actors and directors in a whirlwind 90 minutes each before being performed as stage readings.

After the Monday Night Series concludes, a panel will revisit and re-evaluate the 36 scripts produced throughout the season and, at the **PlayGround Benefit & Awards Night** on April 2, 2012, seven scripts will be chosen for the 2012 Emerging Playwright Awards. Also announced at the benefit will be the winners of the annual June Anne Baker prize, which honors a distinguished female playwright, and the winner of this season's PlayGround Fellowship. Emerging Playwright Award winners will receive an honorarium, publication in the annual compilation, and a fully staged version of their scripts as part of *The Best of PlayGround Festival* in May, celebrating its 16th year in 2012 and once again being held at Thick House in San Francisco.

This year's pool of playwrights for the 2011-2012 has just been chosen. Out of 123 Bay Area applicants who submitted material for consideration — the largest number of applicants yet — a pool of 36 playwrights was selected. Among the 36 are new members Victoria Chong Der, Ruben Grijalva, Genevieve Jessee, Robin Rodriguez, Kirk Shimano, Frannie Ucciferri, Rachel Yong, and Maury Zeff. Returning writers are Crish Barth, Cass Brayton, Erin Bregman, Robyn Brooks, Christopher Chen, Emily Esner, Garret Groenveld, Leah Halper, Daniel Heath, Lucia Jacobs, Sang Kim, Brady Lea, Jonathan Luskin, Katie May, Alex Moggridge, Evelyn Jean Pine, Mandy Hodge Rizvi, Diane Sampson, Mercedes Segesvary, Ken Slattery, Cleavon Smith, Martha Soukup, Jonathan Spector, Tom Swift, Nick Turner, Malachy Walsh, Arisa White, and Ignacio Zulueta.

Three PlayGround alumni are going to have their work produced on Bay Area stages this year in co-productions supported by PlayGround's **New Play Production Fund**. First up is Kenn Rabin's *Reunion*, co-produced with SF Playhouse and playing at SF Playhouse's Second Stage from February 29 to March 24. Originally commissioned and developed by PlayGround (and inspired by the 2004 Best of PlayGround Festival short of the same name), *Reunion* is a haunting dramatic work about the reunion of high school classmates and the teacher who betrayed them and was himself betrayed. Next up is *Crevice* by Lauren Yee, a comedic exploration of the quarterlife crisis in the 21st century, playing at Impact Theatre/La Val's Subterranean May 3-June 9, 2012. And finally, *Truffaldino Says No* by Ken Slattery will receive its world premiere in a Shotgun Players-PlayGround co-production at Ashby Stage, June 29-July 22, 2012. Adapted from the 2009 Festival short of the same name, this play follows the travails of comic servant Truffaldino, who rejects his prescribed role and sets off for the "New World" of Sunny California and his own American dream.

Seven new **full-length play commissions** have been announced for this year. They include *Drive Thru-Open Till Midnite or Later* by Mandy Hodge Rizvi (2011 June Anne Baker Prize Winner), *Ecce Homo* by Jonathan Luskin, based on the 2011 festival short, and *Manic Pixie Dream Girl or The Lily Chronicles Issue #1* by Katie May (2011 PlayGround Fellowship winners), *Four Eyes* by Daniel Heath, *Altair* by Evelyn Jean Pine, *The Shakespeare Bug* by Ken Slattery, and *Valley of Sand* by Trevor Allen, a co-commission with San Jose Rep. Each commission will receive a public staged reading as part of the Best of PlayGround Festival next May. In just the past eight years, PlayGround has developed thirty-four new full-length plays by PlayGround alumni and is today the largest commissioner of new plays by Bay Area playwrights.

PlayGround will continue offering its series of playwriting **Intensives** for emerging professionals, monthly playwriting lectures and master classes led by distinguished PlayGround alumni and leaders in Bay Area theatre. Highlights of this year's faculty include internationally-renown playwright Philip Kan Gotanda, PlayGround alumnus Aaron Loeb (whose play *Abraham Lincoln's Big Gay Dance Party* debuted off-Broadway last season), and Steinberg Award winner Peter Sinn Nachtrieb. Writers may sign up for individual or multiple classes, as each is intended as a stand-alone program. Classes take place the first Monday night of each month, October through March, from 7-9 pm at A.C.T. Studios.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **PlayGround**, the Bay Area's incubator for the next generation of playwrights, has announced its 2011-2012 season. Occurring monthly, October-March, the popular Monday Night PlayGround series presents short works from new and emerging playwrights each month at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, featuring the best of the Bay Area's professional actors and directors in short rehearsed staged readings. The culmination of the year's hard work, **The Best of PlayGround Festival** will occur for four weeks in May, 2012 at Thick House in San Francisco. Now in its 18th season, **PlayGround** is dedicated to supporting the development of new local voices for the theatre.

WHERE/WHEN:

Monday Night PlayGround

Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison Street, Berkeley

October 17, 2011

November 21, 2011

December 19, 2011

January 16, 2012

February 20, 2012

March 19, 2012

PlayGround Intensives

A.C.T. Studios, 30 Grant Avenue, 8th Floor, San Francisco

October 3, 2011

November 7, 2011

December 5, 2011

January 2, 2012

February 6, 2012

March 5, 2012

PlayGround Co-Productions

***Reunion* by Daniel Heath**

SF Playhouse Second Stage, 533 Sutter Avenue, San Francisco

February 29-March 24, 2012

***Crevice* by Lauren Yee**

Impact Theatre/La Val's Subterranean, 1834 Euclid, Berkeley

May 3-June 9, 2012

***Truffaldino Says No* by Ken Slattery**

Shotgun Players/Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave, Berkeley

June 29-July 22, 2012

PlayGround Benefit & Awards Night

Location TBD

April 2, 2012

16th annual Best of PlayGround Festival

Thick House, 1695 18th Street, San Francisco

May 3-27, 2012

TICKETS: 6-event Introductory Subscriptions to the Monday Night PlayGround series are just \$45.00 (a 50% savings off general admission) and are available by calling **(415) 992-6677** or visiting www.PlayGround-sf.org.

Single tickets for each Monday Night PlayGround are \$15 and can be purchased online or at the door. A limited number of Pay-What-You-Can tickets will be sold at the door beginning one hour before the performance, subject to availability.

PlayGround Intensives are \$35 per person, per workshop (\$15 for the introductory October 3 class); \$100 for six-class subscriptions; space is limited. Participants can sign up online in advance, or at the door at least fifteen minutes before the scheduled class, subject to availability.

Flex-passes for the PlayGround co-productions and Best of PlayGround Festival are \$20 each (\$75 for a four-admission flex-pass).

Benefit ticket information will be announced at a later date.

For more information, the public can call **(415) 992-6677** or visit

www.PlayGround-sf.org

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