

THE 2017 PLAYGROUND FILM FESTIVAL

NOTE: Film Synopses of 2017 Film Festival Shorts follow release

PlayGround: <http://playground-sf.org/filmfest>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: David Hyry (415) 441-1992 daldenh@aol.com

PlayGround & Dances With Light Present THE 2017 PLAYGROUND FILM FESTIVAL

**9 Programs Of 22 Short & Feature-length Films Adapted From Stage To Screen
December 15 Opening To Feature 5 New Short Films From Best Of PlayGround Short Plays
By Playwrights Ron Burch, Ruben Grijalva, Katie May, Malachy Walsh & Ken Prestininzi
December 15-17, 2017**

Friday-Sunday

POTRERO STAGE

1695 18th Street, San Francisco, CA

SAN FRANCISCO, (November 29, 2017) – *“If you want to make a living as a screenwriter, stop what you’re doing... and start writing plays!”* –Greg DePaul. The PlayGround Film Festival, a unique showcase of Bay Area films adapted from stage to screen, returns December 15-17 with nine programs and twenty-two different films over three days, at PlayGround’s state-of-the-art Potrero Hill theatre, [Potrero Stage](#). **The festival opens on Friday, December 15, 8pm, with a special program of five brand-new short films, each adapted from Best of PlayGround short plays.** The opening program features the new short films: *Meeting Matt Damon* by Ron Burch (Best of PlayGround-LA 2015), *Value Over Replacement* by Ruben Grijalva (Best of PlayGround 2013), *Rapunzel’s Etymology of Zero* (final animated cut) by Katie May (Best of PlayGround 2011), *Iowa* (animated short) by Malachy Walsh (Best of PlayGround 2001) and *Reading in Bed* by Ken Prestininzi (Best of PlayGround 1998).

“Playwright Halley Feiffer got one of her first TV writing jobs on an as-of-yet unreleased show co-created by filmmaker Alejandro G. Iñárritu called “The One Percent” after one of the show’s other creators found a 10-minute play she had written on the bar at a theater festival.”

LA Times 11/17/17

On **Saturday evening, December 16**, PlayGround will rescreen the best short films from the first two PlayGround Film Festivals, originally shown in 2012 and 2013, respectively. Rounding out the festival are six feature-length films, including: two family-friendly screenings, *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992) and San Francisco Ballet’s *Nutcracker* (2007); Amy Glazer’s *Seducing Charlie Barker* (2010), adapted from Theresa Rebeck’s play, *The Scene*; Josh Kornbluth’s *Love & Taxes* (2015), Sam Shepard’s *Fool for Love* (1985); and Roger Grunwald’s solo performance hit, *The Obligation*, filmed live at Potrero Stage earlier this Fall. Films will be followed by recorded or live interviews with the originating writers.

All screenings will take place at Potrero Stage and are free, with the exception of the Opening Night program on December 15 (\$15-\$30), and open to the public. Capacity is limited and advance reservations are recommended. For tickets and more information, visit <http://playground-sf.org/filmfest>.

December 15, 2017, Friday

8:00pm - OPENING NIGHT, featuring five premiere shorts adapted from Best of PlayGround short plays. The Opening Night program includes: *Meeting Matt Damon* by Ron Burch and Frieda de Lackner; *Value Over Replacement* by Ruben Grijalva; *Rapunzel's Etymology of Zero* (final animated cut) by Katie May, Seth Podowitz, Eileen Laitinen, and Liz Anderson; *Iowa* (animated short) by Malachy Walsh and Alex Vietti; and *Reading in Bed* by Ken Prestininzi and Sandor Weiner.

December 16, 2017, Saturday

12:00pm - *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992), adapted from the novella by Charles Dickens.

2:00pm - *Fool for Love* (1985) by Sam Shepard.

4:30pm - *Seducing Charlie Barker* (2010) by Amy Glazer and Theresa Rebeck, based on Theresa Rebeck's stage play, *The Scene*.

7:00pm - 2012 Shorts, featuring *The Beginning* by Tom Swift and Brian Tolle, *Ecce Homo* by Jonathan Luskin and Mark Leialoha, *The Etymology of Zero* (animated rough cut) by Katie May, Seth Podowitz, Eileen Laitinen, and Liz Anderson, *Reunion* by Kenn Rabin, Gregory Runnels and Mark Runnels, and *Wednesday* by Daniel Heath and Jennifer Arzt.

8:30pm - 2013 Shorts, featuring *Aegis* by Jonathan Luskin and Mark Leialoha, *The Secret Life of a Hotel Room* by Garret Jon Groenveld, Gregory Runnels and Mark Runnels, *Climax* by Sean Owens and Jeremy Solterbeck, *Miss Finknagle Succumbs to Chaos* by Kirk Shimano and Amy Harrison, *Obit* by Geetha Reddy and Brian Tolle, and *Undone* by Diane Sampson and Bruce Coughran.

December 17, 2017, Sunday

12:00pm - *Nutcracker* (2007), a filmed version of San Francisco Ballet's all-new production.

2:00pm - *The Obligation* (2017) by Roger Grunwald, filmed by Barry Stone/Dances With Light.

4:00pm - *Love & Taxes* (2015) by Josh Kornbluth and Jacob Kornbluth.

6:00pm - CLOSING NIGHT/2017 Shorts Reprise, including *Meeting Matt Damon* by Ron Burch and Frieda de Lackner; *Value Over Replacement* by Ruben Grijalva; *Rapunzel's Etymology of Zero* (final animated cut) by Katie May, Seth Podowitz, Eileen Laitinen, and Liz Anderson; *Iowa* (animated short) by Malachy Walsh and Alex Vietti; and *Reading in Bed* by Ken Prestininzi and Sandor Weiner.

About PlayGround

PlayGround, the Bay Area's leading playwright incubator, provides unique development opportunities for the Bay Area's best new playwrights, including the monthly Monday Night PlayGround staged reading series, annual Best of PlayGround Festival, full-length play commissions and support for the production of new plays by local playwrights through the New Play Production Fund, and the PlayGround Film Festival. PlayGround operates the theatre community hub and state-of-the-art performance space, Potrero Stage, serving as home to some of the Bay Area's leading new play developers and producers, including PlayGround, Crowded Fire, Golden Thread, and Playwrights Foundation. To date, PlayGround has supported more than 200 local playwrights in the development and staging of over 850 original short plays and 73 new full-length plays, including 25 that have since premiered in the Bay Area and around the country. PlayGround alumni have gone on to win local, national and international honors for their short and full-length work, including recognition at the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, Humana Festival, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, and New York International Fringe Festival, among others. More information at <http://PlayGround-sf.org>.

About Dances with Light

Over the last thirty-five years Barry has worked in all aspects of theatre, film and television. He has professional credits as an actor, composer and director in the theatre, and as a producer, director, writer, composer, actor, cinematographer and editor in film and television. His directorial credits include four episodes of the British hit series *rENFORD rEJECTS*, filmed in London for Nickelodeon and Channel Four, *All Ways Welcome*, which he produced and directed for the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, and numerous commercials, short films, music videos and corporate films. Barry has played the lead role in a half-hour film, has written and scored music for both theatre and film, and has been the cinematographer on forty-seven episodes of series television, six MOWs, numerous commercials and twenty two feature films, notably *Lie With Me*, *Mouth to Mouth*, *Cherish*, *Hollywood North*, *Triggermen*, *Pale Saints*, and *Dream with the Fishes*. Through his Canadian Company, Stone Film Inc, he was the associate producer of a feature film, several half hours for television, as well as numerous commercials and corporate films. He has created music promos for such artists as Murray McLaughlan, The Barenaked Ladies, The Tragically Hip and Laurie Lewis. Recently, Barry directed, shot and edited *SNIFF*, a feature length drama/documentary hybrid with Amanda Plummer, Neil Morrissey (and a lot of great dogs). He is also the co-creator and co-producer of the Bay Area's own PlayGround Film Festival, now in its fourth year of production.

**2017 PLAYGROUND FILM FESTIVAL
Schedule of Screenings**

What: A unique showcase of Bay Area films adapted from stage to screen!

Where/When:

Potrero Stage, 1695 18th Street, San Francisco

Friday, December 15, 8:00pm – Opening Night/2017 Shorts

Saturday, December 16, 12:00pm – The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992)**

Saturday, December 16, 2:00pm – Fool for Love (1985)

Saturday, December 16, 4:30pm – Seducing Charlie Barker (2010)

Saturday, December 16, 7:00pm – 2012 Shorts

Saturday, December 16, 8:30pm – 2013 Shorts

Sunday, December 17, 12:00pm – Nutcracker/San Francisco Ballet (2007)**

Sunday, December 17, 2:00pm – The Obligation (2017)

Sunday, December 17, 4:00pm – Love & Taxes (2015)

Sunday, December 17, 6:00pm – Closing Night/2017 Shorts Reprise

**** Family-friendly**

Prices: Opening Night (\$15-\$30; includes post-screening reception with the artists);
All other films are free and open to the public (adv. reservations suggested but not required);

Online: <http://playground-sf.org/filmfest>

For more information, call (415) 992-6677 or email info@playground-sf.org.

Film Synopses

2017 Film Festival Shorts

Meeting Matt Damon by Ron Burch (Best of PlayGround-LA 2015) and Frieda de Lackner, filmmaker. Hilary's dream to have coffee with Matt Damon comes true, sort of.

Value Over Replacement by Ruben Grijalva (Best of PlayGround 2013), playwright/filmmaker. When light-hitting shortstop turned drive-time sports radio host Edward "Chip" Fuller learns his name will appear on a list of players linked to performance enhancing drugs, he is forced to explain his choice to colleagues, his listeners, and his family.

Rapunzel's Etymology of Zero (final animated cut) by Katie May (Best of PlayGround 2011), Seth Podowitz, Eileen Laitinen, and Liz Anderson. In this feminist fairytale, Rapunzel locks herself in a tall tower and concocts a story of an evil stepmother to focus on her blossoming love of mathematics and avoid the attentions of a young prince.

Iowa (animated short) by Malachy Walsh (Best of PlayGround 2001) and Alex Vietti, co-director. Are relationships based on what you remember? Or what you forget?

Reading in Bed by Ken Prestininzi (Best of PlayGround 1998) and Sandor Weiner, filmmaker. A surreal comedy that explores the relationship between friends (and sometimes lovers) who try to gain power over one another through the possession of a self-help book called 'Power without Pain.'

2012 Film Festival Shorts

The Beginning by Tom Swift (Best of PlayGround 2005), directed by Brian Tolle. A simple story that focuses on one moment of profound passion, fear and hope. On a cold dark night two naked strangers struggle to connect. What is the question? And, what is their answer?

Ecce Homo by Jonathan Luskin (Best of PlayGround 2011), playwright/filmmaker, Flying Moose Pictures (producer), and Mark Leialoha (director of photography/producer). Set in 1932, the play is the story of two vaudeville players, Gus and Fanny, as they face the demise of their stage careers brought on by moving pictures. Through the loving conflict of a married couple, *Ecce Homo* illuminates a very contemporary theme: how we struggle to survive the incessant technological change that threatens our livelihoods and our relationships.

Rapunzel's Etymology of Zero (animated short) by Katie May (Best of PlayGround 2011), Seth Podowitz (director/producer), Eileen Laitinen (animation director/co-producer), and Liz Anderson (producer). In this feminist fairytale, Rapunzel locks herself in a tall tower and concocts a story of an evil stepmother to focus on her blossoming love of mathematics and avoid the attentions of a young prince.

Reunion by Kenn Rabin (Best of PlayGround 2004), co-directed by Mark Runnels and Gregory Runnels. Pulled from the headlines, *Reunion* is a story of a convicted sex offender, recently released from prison, who finds a new home with Deb, a woman determined to stand up for his rights and live down her own past.

Wednesday by Daniel Heath (Best of PlayGround 2009), directed by Jennifer Arzt (filmmaker). A couple decides to liven up their evening one ordinary Wednesday with a question-and-answer drinking game. A few drinks in, Eve asks Robert a question that puts their marriage to the ultimate test.

2013 Film Festival Shorts

Aegis by Jonathan Luskin (Best of PlayGround 2004), writer/director, with Flying Moose Pictures (producer), and Mark Leialoha (director of photography, producer). *Aegis* follows the employees of a marketing firm as they compete to create the name for an enormous, wasteful, yet “green” sport utility vehicle. Under the direction of an abusive boss, they use modified acting exercises, or “Applied Marketing Dramatics”, to complete the task at hand.

The Secret Life of a Hotel Room by Garret Jon Groenveld (Best of PlayGround 2008), co-directed by Mark Runnels and Gregory Runnels (filmmakers). *If walls could talk*. Three parallel stories unfold in one hotel room, including that of a businessman and recovering addict looking for redemption, a middle-aged couple trying to get away, and a honeymoon couple barely coming up for air.

Climax by Sean Owens (Best of PlayGround 1999), directed by Jeremy Solterbeck (filmmaker). *Climax* tells the story of Beryl and Mason, a Noel Coward-esque couple, dressing for a party they’re destined never to attend.

Miss Finknagle Succumbs to Chaos by Kirk Shimano (Best of PlayGround 2012), directed by Amy Harrison (filmmaker). One lonely librarian's impossible probabilities bring together four unlikely school friends.

Obit by Geetha Reddy (Best of PlayGround 2005), directed by Brian Tolle (filmmaker). The story of an aging man and his daughter as they cope with his decline.

Undone by Diane Sampson (Best of PlayGround 2010), directed by Bruce Coughran (filmmaker). *Undone* explores the conflict between parents trying to cope, through acceptance and denial, with the possibly untreatable mental illness of their daughter.

Features

The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) by Brian Henson (director) and Jerry Juhl (screenwriter), based on the novella by Charles Dickens. The Muppet characters tell their version of the classic tale of an old and bitter miser's redemption on Christmas Eve.

Fool for Love (1985) by Sam Shepard (play/screenplay), directed by Robert Altman. May is waiting for her boyfriend in a run-down American motel, when an old flame turns up and threatens to undermine her efforts and drag her back into the life that she was running away from. The situation soon turns complicated.

Seducing Charlie Barker (2010) by Theresa Rebeck, based on Rebeck’s play, *The Scene*, and directed by Amy Glazer (filmmaker). Dark satire of the Manhattan entertainment industry in which a gifted actor (Charlie Barker) begins his fall from grace as he encounters a chameleon-like social climber.

Love & Taxes (2015) is a riveting comic tale of seven years of tax avoidance. Following the possibly real-life exploits of Josh Kornbluth, an autobiographical monologist, *Love & Taxes* is a comedy that blends solo performance and scripted scenes to bring the subjective reality of the storyteller hilariously to life. A tale of procrastination, making movies and growing up, *Love & Taxes* is a middle-aged coming-of-age story that is also, quite possibly, the first ever pro-tax romantic comedy. Written by Josh Kornbluth. Directed by Jacob Kornbluth.

Nutcracker/San Francisco Ballet (2007). From the first American company to present this now-timeless holiday classic, San Francisco Ballet presents this visually brilliant, film of their all-new Nutcracker, based on the story by E.T.A. Hoffmann, choreographed by San Francisco Ballet Artistic Director Helgi Tomasson, and set at the time of the 1915 World’s Fair in San Francisco with stunning designs by Michael Yeargan. “...one of the most beautiful ‘Nutcrackers’ on the planet.” – San Francisco Chronicle.

The Obligation (2017) is a filmed performance of the solo play, *The Obligation*, written and performed by Roger Grunwald and which recently closed a successful four-week run at Potrero Stage. It's the story of a Jewish-American comedian, an Auschwitz survivor, a half-Jewish German soldier and an SS General, exploring the dark history of their world. Through drama and humor, *The Obligation* explores little-known aspects of The Holocaust and the post-war survivor experience and asks: Who decides what culture, race and ethnicity mean? What is identity? Why do we demonize "the other"? Written and performed by Roger Grunwald. Filmed/edited by Barry Stone/Dances With Light.