

PlayLabs starts October 20 at the Playwrights' Center

(Minneapolis, MN—October 2, 2014)—The 31st annual PlayLabs new play festival runs Monday, October 20 through Sunday, October 26 at the Playwrights' Center. Audiences are invited to readings of new plays by Playwrights' Center Core Writers, brought to life by top actors and incorporating design elements—elevating the staged reading to an intimate art form all its own.

PlayLabs is one of the nation's most intensive play development programs, giving playwrights 30 hours of vital workshop time with a team of collaborators and two public readings with time for rewrites in between. Over 75% of the plays featured in PlayLabs over the past decade have gone on to production.

The 2014 PlayLabs festival lineup is as follows:

“Cocked” by Sarah Gubbins

The politics of gun control become personal.

Monday, October 20 at 7 p.m.

Friday, October 24 at 7 p.m.

Taylor and her girlfriend, Izzie, have always been staunchly opposed to gun ownership, especially as they see the effects of gun violence on their city. When Taylor's brother, Frank, comes crashing into their lives unannounced, he disrupts their well-ordered home and exposes their unspoken anxieties and betrayals. An existing conflict escalates to dangerous heights, and the three find themselves testing the definition of self-defense.

Director: Jeremy B. Cohen

Cast: Tasha Lawrence*, Austene Van*, John Riedlinger*

* *Member of Actors' Equity Association*

“The Absence of Weather” by Ken Urban

A Cold War tragedy launches a new era of American paranoia.

Tuesday, October 21 at 7 p.m.

Saturday, October 25 at 1 p.m.

United States Secretary of Defense James Forrestal enjoyed a meteoric rise to power during World War II. By 1949, he has been forced out of office and committed to Bethesda Naval Hospital, convinced that Soviets are infiltrating the U.S. government. As the hospital staff struggle both to treat and protect their patient, Forrestal worries that he has betrayed those he loves in pursuit of ghosts. An American tragedy about the wages of fear.

Director: Lee Sunday Evans

Cast: Allen Hamilton* as James Forrestal, Jefferson Slinkard*, Laura Esping*, Torsten Johnson

* Member of Actors' Equity Association

“Le Switch” by Philip Dawkins

Marriage equality brings wedding fever and big-hearted romance.

Wednesday, October 22 at 7 p.m.

Saturday, October 25 at 7 p.m.

Marriage equality finally reaches New York, and commitment-shy David finds himself unsure how to react. Nervous in the face of “wedding fever,” he retreats to his home full of unopened books and his grieving activist roommate. When his best friend’s bachelor party takes him to Montreal, he is unexpectedly swept off his feet by a beautiful young florist. In the months that follow, David and his non-traditional family have to decide for themselves what it really means to be committed, what it means to be married, and what it means to be queer.

Director: Stephen Brackett

Cast: Sasha Andreev*, Michael Wieser*, Patrick Bailey*, Emily Gunyou-Halaas*, Grant Sorenson

* Member of Actors' Equity Association

Festival celebration

A party to celebrate the local theater community, featuring pop-up playwright appearances

Saturday, October 25 following 7 p.m. reading of “Le Switch”

Playwriting Fellows Showcase

Scenes from new plays by 2014-15 Playwrights' Center Jerome and McKnight playwriting fellows

Sunday, October 26 at 12 p.m.

All PlayLabs events are free and open to the public. For tickets, see www.pwcenter.org or contact the Playwrights' Center at (612) 332-7481 or info@pwcenter.org.

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PLAYWRIGHT BIOS

SARAH GUBBINS

Sarah Gubbins' plays include "Fair Use," "In Loco Parentis," "The Drinking Problem," "The Kid Thing" (Jeff Award and Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award), "fml: how Carson McCullers saved my life," "I am Bradley Manning," "A Sense of Things," and "Cocked." Her plays have been produced at the Steppenwolf Theatre, Actor's Express, Next Theatre, About Face Theatre, and Chicago Dramatists among others. Her plays have been developed at the Public Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, The Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, the Playwrights' Center, Center Theatre Group, and the O'Neill Theater Center among others. She has been a Carl J. Djerassi Fellow and Jerome Fellow and was named Best Playwright of 2012 by *Chicago Magazine*. She is a member of the Center Theatre Group 2013-14 Writers' Workshop and the Playwrights' Union. M.F.A., Northwestern University.

KEN URBAN

Ken Urban is a playwright and screenwriter. His plays have been produced and developed at Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, 59E59, SpeakEasy Stage Company, Summer Play Festival at The Public, Donmar Warehouse, Epic Theatre Ensemble, Studio 42, Theatre @ Boston Court, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Playwrights Horizons, Primary Stages, and Huntington Theatre Company. Awards include the Weissberger Playwriting Award, Huntington Playwriting Fellowship, Djerassi Artist Residency, Dramatist Guild Fellowship, and MacDowell Colony Fellowships. The feature film adaptation of his play "The Happy Sad," with a screenplay by the author, screened at over 25 film festivals both in the U.S. and internationally, with theatrical releases in New York and Los Angeles, and is available on Netflix and iTunes. He plays in the band Occurrence and their releases are available from Insound and Bandcamp.

PHILIP DAWKINS

Philip Dawkins' work includes "Miss Marx: or the Involuntary Side Effect of Living," "The Homosexuals," and "Failure: A Love Story," all of which were nominated for Joseph Jefferson Awards after their world premieres with Strawdog Theatre Company (2014), About Face Theatre (2011), and Victory Gardens Theater (2012) respectively. His plays for young folks are published through Playscripts, Inc. Dawkins is an Artistic Associate of About Face Theatre, an Ensemble Playwright at Victory Gardens, and a founding member of Chicago Opera Vanguard. Dawkins teaches playwriting at Northwestern University, Loyola University Chicago, and through the Victory Gardens ACCESS Program.