

Playwrights' Center announces 2015-16 season of new play readings

(Minneapolis, MN—September 3, 2015)—The Playwrights' Center has announced the plays and Core Writer playwrights to be featured in its 2015-16 season of free public readings, comprising the 2015 PlayLabs new play festival and the 2015-16 Ruth Easton New Play Series. The plays and playwrights:

PLAYLABS:

- "Small Town Values" by Kathryn Walat
- "Halftime with Don" by Ken Weitzman
- "The Hidden People" by Joe Waechter

RUTH EASTON NEW PLAY SERIES:

- "Scientific Method" by Jenny Connell Davis
- "ENCYCLOPEDIA" by Rachel Jendrzewski
- "Seek" by Susan Soon He Stanton
- "California Love" by Alice Tuan
- "A Guide for the Homesick" by Ken Urban

These events are the public components of the play development work at the 44-year-old Playwrights' Center, where 60+ plays in total are workshopped each year. PlayLabs and the Ruth Easton New Play Series represent the Center's most intensive play development opportunities for playwrights, allowing Core Writers time to hone their scripts with collaborators and see their new work on its feet in front of two different audiences. The readings feature top local and national actors and incorporate design elements, elevating the staged reading to an intimate art form all its own.

"These are brave plays by truly original writers," says Playwrights' Center Producing Artistic Director Jeremy B. Cohen. "There's a real diversity of form and genre this year, from more lyrical and experimental pieces, to comic adventures, to family dramas and beyond. But each play carries at its heart moments of intimacy and great revelation. I'm so excited to share these stories with Twin Cities new play fans and visiting artists from around the country."

PLAYLABS, October 12-18

For more than 30 years, the PlayLabs festival has been one of the nation's most in-depth play development programs, providing Playwrights' Center Core Writers 30 hours of workshop time and two readings. For audiences, it's an exciting opportunity to experience the future of American theater, as

over 75% of the plays featured in PlayLabs over the past decade have gone on to production. Two plays from last year's festival already have world premieres slated this theater season: Philip Dawkins' "Le Switch" at About Face Theatre and Sarah Gubbins' "Cocked" at Victory Gardens Theater.

PlayLabs 2015 runs October 12-18 at the Playwrights' Center. In addition to the three featured plays, audiences are invited to a showcase of work by the Center's playwriting fellows, a panel discussion, and a Saturday night party. All events are free and open to the public.

The 2015 PlayLabs festival will feature "**Small Town Values**" by **Kathryn Walat** on October 12 and 16 at 7 p.m.; "**Halftime with Don**" by **Ken Weitzman** on October 13 at 7 p.m. and October 17 at 1 p.m.; and "**The Hidden People**" by **Joe Waechter** on October 14 and 17 at 7 p.m. The Playwriting Fellows Showcase is October 18 at noon, and the panel discussion October 18 at 2:30 p.m.

Details and reservations at pwcenter.org/playlabs.

RUTH EASTON NEW PLAY SERIES, December–April

Now in its 11th year, the Ruth Easton New Play Series gives selected Core Writers 20 hours in workshop and two public readings.

Plays recently seen in the Ruth Easton New Play Series that have productions upcoming this theater season include Gabriel Jason Dean's "Terminus" (The Vortex), Mona Mansour's "The Way West" (Labyrinth Theater Company), Samuel D. Hunter's "The Few" (CoHo Productions, Steep Theatre), and Idris Goodwin's "The REALNESS: A Break Beat Play" (Merrimack Repertory Theatre).

The 2015-16 Ruth Easton New Play Series will feature "**Scientific Method**" by **Jenny Connell Davis**, "**ENCYCLOPEDIA**" by **Rachel Jendrzewski**, "**Seek**" by **Susan Soon He Stanton**, "**California Love**" by **Alice Tuan**, and "**A Guide for the Homesick**" by **Ken Urban**.

Details at pwcenter.org/ruth-easton-series.

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Photos of the playwrights are available at pwcenter.org/media-room or by contacting Jessica Franken at jessicaf@pwcenter.org

THE 2015 PLAYLABS FESTIVAL

Monday, Oct. 12 at 7 p.m.	<i>Small Town Values</i> by Kathryn Walat
Tuesday, Oct. 13 at 7 p.m.	<i>Halftime with Don</i> by Ken Weitzman
Wednesday, Oct. 14 at 7 p.m.	<i>The Hidden People</i> by Joe Waechter
Friday, Oct. 16 at 7 p.m.	<i>Small Town Values</i> by Kathryn Walat
Saturday, Oct. 17 at 1 p.m.	<i>Halftime with Don</i> by Ken Weitzman
Saturday, Oct. 17 at 7 p.m.	<i>The Hidden People</i> by Joe Waechter
Saturday, Oct. 17, around 9:30 p.m.	Party
Sunday, Oct. 18 at 12 p.m.	Playwriting Fellows Showcase
Sunday, Oct. 18 at 2:30 p.m.	Panel Discussion

SMALL TOWN VALUES by Kathryn Walat

John and Jane were high school sweethearts. Jane and Maryjane are best friends. Emma is back in the town where she grew up, where nothing ever changes—until suddenly nothing will ever be the same. An unexpected love story about the strange passage of time and what happens when you let go of all the old rules.

HALFTIME WITH DON by Ken Weitzman

Retired NFL player Don Devers has had over 30 surgeries, experiences violent outbursts, and relies on a blizzard of yellow Post-It notes to offset his ravaged memory. When a longtime fan appears at his doorstep, Don seeks to salvage his life with a single act of heroic self-sacrifice.

THE HIDDEN PEOPLE by Joe Waechter

Life isn't easy for the world's first family and their 47 children. When eldest twins Fred and Frieda run away in search of "a more super awesome life," all hell breaks loose. In this dark, hysterical, and magical saga, Waechter mashes-up creation myths to forge a new story about family, the origin of the world, and the darkness that lurks within us all.

PARTY

Join us for our annual bash to celebrate the PlayLabs artists and local theater community.

PLAYWRITING FELLOW SHOWCASE

Readings of scenes from plays by: Jerome Fellows **Ryan Campbell, Kristin Idaszak, Andrew Rosendorf,** and **Keliher Walsh**; Many Voices Fellows **Cristina Castro** and **James Anthony Tyler**; McKnight Fellows in Playwriting **Carson Kreitzer** and **Harrison David Rivers**; and McKnight National Residency and Commission Recipient **Erik Ehn**.

PANEL DISCUSSION

A big-picture discussion with theater leaders, topic to be announced.

THE 2015-16 RUTH EASTON NEW PLAY SERIES

December 7 and 8 at 7 p.m. *Scientific Method* by Jenny Connell Davis
January 11 and 12 at 7 p.m. *ENCYCLOPEDIA* by Rachel Jendrzejewski
February 1 and 2 at 7 p.m. *Seek* by Susan Soon He Stanton
March 7 and 8 at 7 p.m. *California Love* by Alice Tuan
April 4 and 5 at 7 p.m. *A Guide for the Homesick* by Ken Urban

SCIENTIFIC METHOD by Jenny Connell Davis

Amy's on the cutting edge of cancer research...and the edge of a nervous breakdown. When the ghost of Rosalind Franklin shows up on the same day that a handsome new colleague starts asking questions, Amy discovers that she's the one under the microscope. A serio-comedy about sex, science, and survival of the fittest.

ENCYCLOPEDIA by Rachel Jendrzejewski

A new moon rises over a remote farm. Dal spirals, mourns, and plants words like seeds while Lua cooks, cleans, and attempts to categorize her world. Dream logic and live music fuel this investigation of grief and the limits of language.

SEEK by Susan Soon He Stanton

In 1926, British mystery writer Agatha Christie disappeared in England, returning 11 days later and claiming amnesia. In a fictional retelling of this real life disappearance, *Seek* imagines Agatha in the rough and unforgiving landscape of Puna on the Big Island of Hawaii. Burdened by a secret and chased halfway around the world, Agatha's life begins to resemble the dark stories she imagined.

CALIFORNIA LOVE by Alice Tuan

The ocean, its rhythm, its sound and light, a refuge away from land and its chatter. Cali, a mature surfer lady who is super-attached to her beige Toyota Corolla, encounters a cool but mysterious surfer fellow. Theirs is an elliptical pleasure as they commune in waters, tread tides, dodge pollution, and catch organic contradictions. Enter Nio, a land creature who hates to be wet, resists stick-shift, and faces his fears as he follows Cali into the ocean. A meditation on surfing existence and living from one's center.

A GUIDE FOR THE HOMESICK by Ken Urban

On his way home after a year in East Africa, a young aid worker goes back to a shabby Amsterdam hotel room with a fellow American. The two strangers replay their pasts and confess their shared fear that they betrayed the people who needed them most.

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 \$225,000 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 1,500 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 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.