

Playwrights' Center announces new Core Writers and 2015-16 Many Voices Fellows

(Minneapolis, MN—May 21, 2015)—The Playwrights' Center is thrilled to introduce eight new Core Writers, as well as the 2015-16 Many Voices Fellows, Many Voices Mentees, and Core Apprentices. These writers will join the continuing Core Writers and the previously announced 2015-16 Jerome Fellows, McKnight Fellows in Playwriting, and McKnight National Residency and Commission recipient as the Center's season of playwrights. McKnight Theater Artist Fellows will be announced in June.

"I'm honored to be providing an artistic home to these deserving writers," says Jeremy B. Cohen, Producing Artistic Director of the Playwrights' Center. "Thanks to the Jerome Foundation, the Ruth Easton Fund, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and others, these playwrights will have the resources, time, and support to write the stories they want to write."

The Playwrights' Center, founded in 1971, champions playwrights and new plays through writer-focused play development services, bold theater partnerships, and online and onsite resources serving 1,500 member playwrights. The Center's public season of readings runs October through April.

NEW CORE WRITERS

Carlyle Brown, Christina Ham, Rachel Jendrzejewski, Sherry Kramer, Meg Miroshnik, Jen Silverman, Kate Tarker, Alice Tuan

The Core Writer program provides play development workshops and additional support to 25 to 30 playwrights from across the country over a three-year term. Work by Core Writers is featured in PlayLabs and the Ruth Easton New Play Series. Joining the 18 continuing Core Writers are eight new Core Writers who will receive professional and artistic support from the Center through June 2018.

- **Carlyle Brown** (Minneapolis, MN) is a previous Core Writer, Jerome Fellow, and McKnight Fellow in Playwriting with the Playwrights' Center; his plays include "Abe Lincoln and Uncle Tom in the White House" (Guthrie) and "The African Company Presents Richard III."
- **Christina Ham** (Minneapolis, MN) is also a previous Core Writer, Jerome Fellow, and McKnight Fellow in Playwriting; her plays include "Four Little Girls" (Kennedy Center) and the commissioned "Nina Simone: Four Women," premiering at Park Square Theatre in March 2016.
- **Rachel Jendrzejewski** (Minneapolis, MN) is an experimental playwright and former Jerome Fellow whose work "In Which _____ and Others Discover the End" recently premiered at Public Functionary.
- **Sherry Kramer** (Dorset, VT) is a former Core Writer and McKnight Fellow in Playwriting; her plays include "David's RedHaired Death," "The Wall of Water," and "Partial Objects."

- **Meg Miroshnik** (Los Angeles, CA) has received commissions from South Coast Rep, Steppenwolf, and Yale Rep; her plays include “The Fairytale Lives of Russian Girls” (Yale Rep), “The Tall Girls” (Alliance), and “The Droll.”
- **Jen Silverman** (New York, NY) is a former Playwrights’ Center Core Apprentice who recently won the 2015 Otis Guernsey New Voices Award at the William Inge Theatre Festival, and saw the world premieres of her plays “The Roommate” (Humana Festival 2015) and “The Dangerous House of Pretty Mbane” (InterAct).
- **Kate Tarker** (Minneapolis, MN) is a 2014-15 Jerome Fellow whose plays include “An Almanac for Farmers and Lovers in Mexico” and “Laura and the Sea” and whose ensemble-generated “Good Job Horses (A Majestic Comedy)” is currently running with Theatre Forever.
- **Alice Tuan’s** (Los Angeles, CA) “Hit” premiered May 2014 at the Los Angeles Theatre Center; other plays include “Private Rivals,” “Ajax (por nobody),” “Batch” (Humana Festival), and “Last of the Suns” (Berkeley Rep, Ma-Yi Theater).

MANY VOICES FELLOWS

Cristina Castro, James Tyler

The Many Voices Fellowship, funded by the Jerome Foundation, awards \$10,000 (plus \$2,500 in living expenses and \$1,500 in development funds) to two early-career writers of color, one of whom must live in Minnesota. The Playwrights’ Center’s 2015-16 Many Voices Fellows:

- **Cristina Castro** (Minneapolis, MN) is a playwright/performer who recently won the Silver Award in Playwriting from the National YoungArts Foundation and is a member of the Unit Collective.
- **James Tyler’s** (New York, NY) plays include “Some Old Black Man,” “The Drop Off,” and “You’re Sitting in the Dark” (semi-finalist for the O’Neill Playwrights Conference).

MANY VOICES MENTEES

Two Many Voices Mentorships are also awarded annually to Minnesota-based beginning playwrights of color. These awards include a curated package of writing and development services and a \$1,000 stipend. The 2015-16 Many Voices Mentees are **brianne a. hill**, a performer/playwright whose one-person show “White Skin, Black Masks (part i)” was recently performed at Pillsbury House Theatre’s Late Nite Series; and **B Billy Xiong**, a playwright, B-boy, and actor whose play “Ntov Ntoo” was featured in Pillsbury House Theatre’s 2014 Naked Stages.

CORE APPRENTICES

The Core Apprentice program, which pairs student playwrights with a mentor and offers a full play development workshop at the Center, welcomes 2015-16 apprentices **Raquel Almazan** (Columbia University), **Abbey Fenbert** (Boston University), and **Sean-Patrick O’Brien** (Bennington College).

###

BIOS →

PLAYWRIGHT BIOS

Photos of the playwrights are available at pwcenter.org/media-room

2015-18 Core Writers

CARLYLE BROWN

Carlyle Brown is a writer/performer and artistic director of Carlyle Brown & Company, based in Minneapolis, which has produced "Are You Now or Have You Ever Been...", "The Masks of Othello," "The Fula From America," "Talking Masks," and "Therapy and Resistance." 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 "American Family." He has received commissions from Arena Stage, the Houston Grand Opera, the Children's Theatre Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and the Goodman Theatre; and playwriting fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, McKnight Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, Jerome Foundation, Theatre Communications Group, and the Pew Charitable Trust.

www.carlylebrowncandcompany.org

CHRISTINA HAM

Christina Ham's plays have been presented at the Kennedy Center and the Guthrie Theater among others. She is the recipient of the Marianne Murphy Playwriting Award, two McKnight Fellowships for Playwrights, and a Jerome Fellowship from the Playwrights' Center. She has received commissions from the Guthrie Theater and Park Square Theatre among others. She is a graduate of the University of Southern California and holds an M.F.A. in Playwriting from the UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television. She is a member playwright of the Workhaus Collective and the Dramatists Guild of America. www.christinaham.com

RACHEL JENDRZEJEWSKI

Rachel Jendrzejewski is a playwright and interdisciplinary artist who moved to Minneapolis as a Playwrights' Center Jerome Fellow in 2011. She is interested in how expansive approaches to language, in full collaboration with the other elements of performance, can exercise the collective imagination and open up new ways of thinking, experiencing, and being in community. Her work has been developed and produced across the U.S. and internationally, including by the Walker Art Center, Red Eye Theater, Padua Playwrights, Wild Project, Playwrights Horizons, Trinity Rep, and Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston. She holds an M.F.A. in Playwriting from Brown University.

www.rachelka.com

SHERRY KRAMER

Sherry Kramer's recent work is about the American Dream and how we are failing it. She has written about our role in destabilizing the Middle East ("When Something Wonderful Ends"), anti-Semitism in the heartland ("Ivanhoe, America"), the power of the press to distort the shape of a nation's soul ("The Ruling Passion"), and two plays about America's relationship with money and philanthropy ("How Water Behaves" and "The Bay of Fundy, An Adaptation of One Line From the Mayor of Casterbridge"). These

plays invite their audience to find new ways to understand who we are as a nation, and how we might find our way back to being the generous, fair, openhearted people we believe we are.

MEG MIROSHNIK

Meg Miroshnik's plays include "The Fairytale Lives of Russian Girls," "The Droll," "The Tall Girls," "Lady Tattoo," and an adaptation of the libretto for Shostakovich's "Moscow, Cheryomushki." Her work has been produced and developed by Yale Rep, Alliance Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, Center Theatre Group, South Coast Rep, McCarter Theatre Center, the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center Directors' Lab, Lark New Play Development Center, Chicago Opera Theater, WET, and others. Awards: Whiting Award, Susan Smith Blackburn finalist, Alliance/Keneda Graduate Playwriting Award. Commissions: South Coast Rep, Steppenwolf, and Yale Rep. MFA: Yale School of Drama under Paula Vogel. Meg grew up in Minneapolis and currently lives in Los Angeles where she is a founding member of The Kilroys. www.thekilroys.org and www.megmiroshnik.com.

JEN SILVERMAN

Jen Silverman's work has been produced off-Broadway by Playwrights Realm ("Crane Story"), at Actors Theatre of Louisville ("The Roommate," Humana 2015), off-off Broadway by Clubbed Thumb ("Phoebe in Winter"), and regionally at InterAct Theatre ("The Dangerous House of Pretty Mbane"). "The Moors" is upcoming at Yale Rep. She is an affiliated artist with Youngblood/EST, New Georges, Ars Nova, Playwrights Realm, and has developed work at the O'Neill, PlayPenn, and NYTW among other places. "The Hunters" was selected for the Cherry Lane Mentor Project (mentor Lynn Nottage) and "Still" won the Yale Drama Series Award and was published by Yale University Press. Education: Brown, Iowa Playwrights Workshop, Juilliard. www.jensilverman.com

KATE TARKER

Kate Tarker's plays include "THUNDERBODIES," "An Almanac for Farmers and Lovers in Mexico," and "Laura and the Sea." Ensemble generated work includes "Good Job Horses (A Majestic Comedy)" with Theatre Forever, and "The Most Beautiful Thing in the World" at the Yale Cabaret. Her work has been produced or developed by Primary Stages/ESPA at 59E59 Theaters, the Playwrights' Center, The Southern Theater in Minneapolis, LOCAL lab in Boulder, Theater Masters in Aspen/NYC, Nautilus Music-Theater, and the National New Play Network at the Kennedy Center. She is the recipient of a Jerome fellowship, a MacDowell Colony Fellowship, and the Kennedy Center's National Science Playwriting Award. B.A., Reed College; M.F.A., Yale School of Drama.

ALICE TUAN

Alice Tuan's "Hit" premiered May 2014. "Private Rivals," an updated extension of Coward, is a commission of Yale Rep/Binger Center for New Theater. Tuan is best known for "Ajax (por nobody)," written about in "The Shelf Life of Shock" (Drama Review, F'13). Other plays include "Batch" (Humana Festival), "Last of the Suns" (Berkeley Rep, Ma-Yi Theater), "Roaring Girle" (Foundry), "Ikebana" (East West/Taper, Too, Dramalogue Award), and "Coastline" (Serious Play!, Edinburgh Fringe). Her blog "Alice in Shanghailand" is featured in "Love of Sun," an online installation where four Chinese artists look at California and four California artists look at China (www.loveofsun.org).

2015-16 Many Voices Fellows

CRISTINA CASTRO

Cristina Castro is a playwright/performer from San Antonio, Texas. Recent honors include the Silver Award in Playwriting from the National YoungArts Foundation. As an actress she's performed with such Twin Cities theaters as Mixed Blood, Park Square, History Theatre, Teatro del Pueblo, the Playwrights' Center, Theater Coup d'Etat, and Little Lifeboats among others. Cristina is a member playwright of The Unit Collective, a diverse group of theater professionals from under-represented communities who nurture, develop, advocate, and produce new work(s) and a 2011 graduate of the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program.

JAMES TYLER

James Tyler has an M.F.A. in Film from Howard University and an M.F.A. in Dramatic Writing from New York University where his concentration was Playwriting. Selected honors include the Paul Robeson Award and John Golden Award for Excellence in Playwriting. Recently, his plays have been developed at LaMaMa ("Some Old Black Man") and The Classical Theatre of Harlem's Playwrights Playground and their Future Classics Series ("The Drop Off"). His play "You're Sitting in the Dark" was a semi-finalist for the 2014 O'Neill Playwrights Conference. He's a proud member of Harlem's Emerging Black Playwrights Group and a 2014-2015 Dramatists Guild Fellow.

2015-16 Many Voices Mentees

BRIANNE A. HILL

brianne a. hill is a performer/playwright from Detroit, Michigan who has been based in the Midwest most her life. As a playwright, her one-person show "White Skin, Black Masks (part i)" was recently performed at Pillsbury House Theatre as part of their Late Nite Series. As a performer, her selected credits include Frank Theatre ("Love and Information"), Intermedia Arts ("The Blacker the Berry"), and ArtsWest Playhouse ("The Mountaintop"). Her television credits include Peter Berg's "Trauma" on NBC and "True Blue" on ABC. She is an alumna of Michigan State University, Wayne State University, and the University of Washington.

B BILLY XIONG

B Billy Xiong is an award-winning artist of many mediums: a B-boy, playwright, and performer. In 2014, Xiong made his playwriting debut with his one-man show "Ntov Ntoo" that weaves poetic monologues and dance sequences while sharing intimate moments from his journey to adulthood. As a performer his selected credits include Mu Performing Arts ("F.O.B.") and the Center for Hmong Arts and Talent ("W.T.F."). As a choreographer his work has been featured at the Minnesota History Center and the Asian Heritage Festival among many others. Recent honors include a Naked Stages fellowship from the Jerome Foundation with Pillsbury House Theatre.

2015-16 Core Apprentices

RAQUEL ALMAZAN

Raquel Almazan is a working actor, writer, and director for theater/film/television productions. Her eclectic career as artist-activist spans original multimedia solo performances, playwriting, new work development, and dramaturgy. She is a practitioner of Butoh Dance and creator/teacher of arts programs for youth/adults. Her work has been featured in New York City (including Off-Broadway); throughout the United States; and internationally in Greece, Italy, Colombia, Guatemala, and Sweden, including several of her plays within her lifelong project: writing bilingual plays in dedication to each Latin American country ("Latin is America" play cycle). M.F.A. in Playwriting from Columbia University.

ABBEY FENBERT

Abbey Fenbert just completed her M.F.A. in playwriting at Boston University. Her original plays have been produced by the Boston Playwrights' Theatre (@Play Festival of New Work), the Gallatin Arts Festival, the Boston Theatre Marathon, the Know Theatre, and the theater department of Indiana University. Her comedy "Intentions" won the 2013 KCACTF Mark Twain Prize. Additional works are slated for publication in anthologies by Smith & Kraus. Fenbert is a Dramatists Guild member, NYU alumna, and Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Ukraine 2008-11).

SEAN-PATRICK O'BRIEN

Sean-Patrick O'Brien is a playwright, actor, and recent graduate of Bennington College, where he studied playwriting under Sherry Kramer. More recently Sean-Patrick has taken an ESPA playwriting class with Deborah Zoe Laufer at Primary Stages, where he's also an Artistic Intern. His one act, "In a State," was recently a recipient of Horizon Theatre's New South Young Playwrights Contest & Festival. Hailing from the smallest state in the country, Sean-Patrick currently lives in Ridgewood, Queens.

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 (three to five emerging American playwrights);
- Many Voices Fellows (two early-career and two beginning playwrights of color);
- McKnight Fellows in Playwriting (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.