

Playwrights' Center presents "The REALNESS" by Idris Goodwin

(Minneapolis, MN—February 10, 2015)—The Ruth Easton New Play Series at the Playwrights' Center continues in March with readings of the new play "**The REALNESS: the second break beat play**" by **Core Writer Idris Goodwin**. The play will have two public readings: **Monday, March 2 and Tuesday, March 3 at 7 p.m. at the Playwrights' Center**, 2301 E. Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis. The readings are free, but tickets go fast. Reserve yours now at pwcenter.org.

In "The REALNESS," Thomas has escaped the 'burbs and come to the city to savor authentic hip hop culture. He falls madly in love with Prima, a super-dope MC, and he is willing to lie, cheat, and scheme to win her well-guarded heart. But is he after real love or fulfilling a middle class rap fantasy? A meditation on authenticity and class collision, "The REALNESS" follows a young man's journey for his heart and true identity.

Prima will be played by well-known Twin Cities hip hop artist **Maria Isa**, making her first appearance at the Playwrights' Center. **Shá Cage** will also be featured, with the rest of the cast announced soon. **Wendy Goldberg** of The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center is directing, and **Joshua Horvath** is creating the beats.

"The play takes place in '96, right when hip hop was questioning its own authenticity," says playwright Idris Goodwin. "I like to think it's when hip hop went to college. Artists like Puff Daddy were bringing hip hop further into the mainstream as many artists like De La Soul and KRS-One were trying to preserve an essence they felt was true or real. The dichotomy between rap and hip hop, underground and commercial becomes a popular theme in the culture."

Playwrights' Center Producing Artistic Director Jeremy B. Cohen says, "Idris is a fierce artist challenging the ideas of authenticity in ways that will resonate with artists and art lovers in any field. He has such a unique, lyrical voice as a writer, and I can't wait to share his work with the Twin Cities community."

Idris Goodwin is a Core Writer at the Playwrights' Center, and an award-winning playwright, essayist, and spoken word artist. His play "How We Got On," developed at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, premiered at the 2012 Humana Festival of New Plays. Nominated for an ATCA Steinberg New Play Award, critically acclaimed, and published by Playscripts, "How We Got On," is being widely remounted across the country. Recent plays include: "This is Modern Art" (co-written with Kevin Coval), "And In This Corner...Cassius Clay," and "Bars and Measures." "The REALNESS" was featured in The Araca Group's New Play Reading Series with American Theatre Company. He is the recipient of InterAct

Theater's 20/20 Commission Award. Goodwin has been a writer in residence at Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor Program, The Kennedy Center, and New Harmony Project. An accomplished poet and essayist, his book "These are the Breaks" was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He's performed on HBO, Discovery, and Sesame Street.

The Ruth Easton New Play Series provides Playwrights' Center Core Writers with 24 hours of workshop time to develop a new play in collaboration with top-notch actors and other theater artists. The workshops culminate in public readings, giving audience members a uniquely intimate and accessible way to experience the thrill of raw new work and be part of the creative process. This year the series expands from one reading of each play to two.

All events in the Ruth Easton New Play Series are free and open to the public. Reservations are recommended; reserve your spots at pwcenter.org or by contacting the Playwrights' Center at (612) 332-7481 or info@pwcenter.org.

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THE 2014-15 RUTH EASTON NEW PLAY SERIES

December 8 and 9 at 7 p.m.*Forget Me Not When Far Away* by Kira Obolensky
January 12 and 13 at 7 p.m.*Dust* by Qui Nguyen
February 2 and 3 at 7 p.m.*Marie and Rosetta* by George Brant
March 2 and 3 at 7 p.m.*The REALNESS: the second break beat play* by Idris Goodwin
April 6 and 7 at 7 p.m.....*Romeo & Naomi Ramirez* by Kathryn Walat

FORGET ME NOT WHEN FAR AWAY by Kira Obolensky

John Ploughman returns from war to find his hometown very much changed. After ten years thriving without men, the town has little place for an aging Don Juan—much less one who has been counted on the list of the dead. In order to regain his place among the living and find his lost love, he is forced to confront both the mistakes of his past and the unromantic reality of his present. A tragic comedy about shifting gender politics and the ways we learn to adapt.

DUST by Qui Nguyen

Sixteen-year-old Thuy dreams of joining her GI father's American family and escaping her life in post-war Vietnam. The problem is, most of her new family doesn't know she exists. Her arrival in their small Arkansas town causes a rift in the household and brings up years of buried secrets. Always in search of a place to belong, Thuy discovers that she isn't the only one searching.

MARIE AND ROSETTA by George Brant

Bringing fierce guitar playing and swing to gospel music, Sister Rosetta Tharpe was a legend in her time and a huge influence on Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, and Ray Charles. *Marie and Rosetta* chronicles her first rehearsal with a young protégée, Marie Knight, as they prepare to embark on a tour that would establish them as one of the great duos in musical history.

THE REALNESS: THE SECOND BREAK BEAT PLAY by Idris Goodwin

Thomas has escaped the 'burbs and come to the city to savor authentic hip hop culture. He falls madly in love with Prima, a super-dope MC, and he is willing to lie, cheat, and scheme to win her well-guarded heart. But is he after real love or fulfilling a middle class rap fantasy? A meditation on authenticity and class collision, *The REALNESS* follows a young man's journey for his heart and true identity.

ROMEO & NAOMI RAMIREZ by Kathryn Walat

She's a rookie cop on her first undercover narcotics assignment. He's an Honors English student trying to live up to his Shakespearean name. And this is Florida, with some of the toughest drug laws in the nation. So is it a love story...or a tragedy? Whose version are you going to believe?