

## NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Playwrights Foundation Partners with National and Local New Play Producers for Reading Series: In The Rough

## *Building a Network of Support for Rising Playwrights*

### Playwrights

Marisela Treviño Orta  
James Price  
Brian Thorstenson  
Katori Hall  
Julia Jarcho  
Kenneth Lin  
Carson Kreitzer  
Trevor Allen and  
Leibe Wetzel

### Host Theatres

SF Playhouse  
Shotgun Players  
ACT @ Zeum  
Brava Theater Center  
Magic Theatre  
Berkeley Rep Theatre  
Aurora Theatre  
Host TBA

March 25, 2008 – SAN FRANCISCO. **Playwrights Foundation** will partner with **The Lark Play Development Center in New York**, the **National Center for New Plays at Stanford University**, and prominent local theatres to present **In The Rough (I.T.R.)**, a reading series of first draft plays by eight rising playwrights. As a national and local community building event, each of the readings will be presented by a host theater in the Bay Area. During that time members of **PF's Resident Playwrights Initiative** and **The Lark Playwright's**

**Workshop** participants will meet and become familiar with each other's work, and network with literary managers, artistic directors and other members of the Bay Area theater community. "It's more than a reading series," says **Amy Mueller**, Artistic Director of Playwrights Foundation, "it is a new model of architectural support for the development of a new play community – with built in, well-planned activities to engender a community spirit surrounding the work of a young, exceptional writer."

Eight rising playwrights, four chosen from among PF's current roster of writers and four **from The Lark's Playwrights Workshop**, will receive readings of very new plays in the first draft phase of development, hosted by well known theatres all across The Bay, such as the **Magic Theatre** and the **Berkeley Repertory Theatre**. Additionally, each play will be presented once each week at **Stanford University**. Each of the readings in the Bay Area are free of charge and open to the public. Readings taking place at **Stanford University** are by suggested donation of \$20. By networking with local theater companies, the work of these eight extraordinary writers will be disseminated widely, and ultimately create a web of support for their work. Introducing the playwrights to local producers, while simultaneously introducing writers to each other, will sow the seeds of long-standing relationships that hopefully will result in increasingly strong local productions of new plays.

The four visiting playwrights from New York (**James Price**, **Katori Hall**, **Kenneth Lin**, and PONY Award Winner **Carson Kreitzer**) will also be paired with a **PF Resident Playwright** who will personally introduce them to the sights, sounds, and theatres of the Bay Area, extending the ties of the Bay Area's playwright's community to the East Coast. **Amy Muller** explains the reasoning

behind this personal touch, “We feel it’s important for playwrights, especially those pushing the boundaries of new theatre, to meet each other and feed off the synergy that ensues.”

This unique partnership originated in a meeting between **Amy Mueller** and the artistic leadership of **The Lark New Play Development Center**, **John Eisner** and **Daniella Topol** some two years ago. “We were both interested in expanding the scope of opportunity for regional playwrights who were ready to venture out, but had little support to do so. Plus, our organizations share very similar goals and passions for the importance of new play development,” says **Ms. Mueller**, “and while we work with different writers, we also are aesthetically in sync, and it only made sense to try to work together on something.” The two organizations agreed to a playwright exchange, whereby playwrights selected by each organization would participate in one of the other organization’s festivals, thereby gaining exposure and building a network that would be quite difficult to develop independently. Playwrights Foundation hopes that this cross-continental cooperation will engender a new synergy that will benefit the vitality of American Theatre.

In **The Rough Reading Series (ITR)** is a spring series of developmental readings for playwrights to hear first drafts of new work, and a fall series geared toward fine tuning nearly finished plays approaching a production or commission deadline, and to make connections with producers. It originated as part of **Playwrights Foundations** efforts to offer services to playwrights at various stages of development, so that they might have support during the entire process. Started in 2006, this is our third season of **In The Rough** readings. Past participants have included **Jason Grote**, **Geetha Reddy**, **Marcus Gardley**, **Sheila Callaghan**, **Tanya Shaffer**, **Nastaran Ahmadi**, **Rachel Axler**, **Peter Nachtrieb**, **Anton Dudley**, **Stephanie Fleischmann**, **Anne Galjour**, **Rajiv Joseph**, **Brighde Mullins**, **Saviana Stanescu**, **Brian Thorstenson**, and **Tracey Scott Wilson**.

It is from these initial readings that many plays move into PF’s other programs, such as the Incubator Program, and/or are picked up by local producers for world premieres. For example, in September 2008 **Crowded Fire Theater** and **Playwrights Foundation** will premiere **Stephanie Fleischmann’s** *Vera Cupido*, which appeared in its first draft form on the 2007 ITR Series, directed by **Octavio Solis**; **Tanya Shaffer** showcased the initial draft of *Sid Arthur*, also on the 2007 ITR series; it was recently a part of PF’s Incubator Program to advance the musical through collaboration with a composer.

**Playwrights Foundation**, now in its 31st year, is dedicated to discovering and supporting emerging local and national American playwrights in the inception and development of new plays that speak to and from an increasingly diverse society. Founded on a deeply held belief that the relevance and vitality of American theater depends upon a continual infusion of new work, **Playwrights Foundation** sustains a commitment to the playwright who we regard as the creative wellspring of theater. Through its programs the Foundation actively fosters the creative process and the dissemination of new works to national theater producers.

**The Lark** is a laboratory for new voices and new ideas, the **Lark Play Development Center** provides American and international playwrights with indispensable resources to develop their work, nurturing artists at all stages in their careers, and inviting them to freely express themselves in a supportive and rigorous environment. By reaching across international boundaries, the **Lark** seeks out and embraces new and diverse perspectives from writers in all corners of the world. With the aim to integrate audiences into the creative process from its initial stages, the **Lark** brings together actors, directors and playwrights to allow writers to learn about their own work by seeing it—and by receiving feedback from a dedicated and supportive community.

## EVENT SCHEDULE

- What:** **In The Rough**, a developmental reading series produced by Playwrights Foundation in collaboration with Lark Play Development Center (NYC) and the National New Play Center at Stanford. Staged readings of eight new plays in eight weeks. For more information: [www.playwrightsfoundation.org](http://www.playwrightsfoundation.org)
- Where:** Each reading is guest-hosted by a different Bay Area Theater and Stanford University
- Tickets:** Free, but seating is limited and reservations are strongly encouraged. Reservations can be made by phone at (415) 626-0453 x 105 or [rsvp@playwrightsfoundation.org](mailto:rsvp@playwrightsfoundation.org)
- Mon 3/31, 7:00pm  
Tue 4/1, 7:30pm  
**Hosted by SF Playhouse**, 536 Sutter Street, San Francisco, 94102  
**Stanford Campus**, 100B CERAS Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
**WOMAN ON FIRE**, by Marisela Treviño Orta, directed by Nakissa Etemad  
Torn between the law of man and a higher law, Juanita must decide whether to put her husband's military career at risk by giving a ghost a proper burial.
- Mon 4/7, 7:30pm  
Tue 4/8, 7:00pm  
**Stanford Campus**, 100B CERAS Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
**Hosted by Shotgun Players**, 1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley, CA 94703  
**COLLISION COURSE**, by James Price, directed by Kaitlin Hopkins  
Benny's a Fed-Ex driver who's parents order home delivery of things they don't need. Angel dates a rock star but lusts for a nerd. On a fateful night, worlds collide.
- Mon 4/14, 7:30pm  
Tue 4/15, 7:00pm  
**Stanford Campus**, 100B CERAS Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
**Hosted by ACT @ Zeum**, 221 4<sup>th</sup> St., San Francisco, CA 94103  
**IN THE DEEP, NOT SO DEEP** by Brian Thorstenson, director TBA  
Janice is a travel writer who thinks people shouldn't travel. With best friend Darren, a numerologist and intuitive consultant, she attempts to navigate the deep currents of the new century.
- Mon 4/21, 7:30pm  
Tue 4/22, 7:00pm  
**Stanford Campus**, 100B CERAS Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
**Hosted by Brava Theater**, 2781 24<sup>th</sup> St., San Francisco, CA 94110  
**THE MOUNTAINTOP**, by Katori Hall, directed by Benny Sato Ambush  
April 3, 1968. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. retires to room 306 in the Lorraine Motel. When a mysterious young hotel maid comes to visit him during the night, King is forced to confront his mortality and the future of his people.
- Mon 4/28, 7:30pm  
Tue 4/29, 7:00pm  
**Stanford Campus**, 100B CERAS Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
**Hosted by the Magic Theatre**, 204 Bay Street, San Francisco, CA 94133  
**THE WHOLE TREE ELECTRIC**, by Julia Jarcho, directed by Jonathan Spector  
Electra knows her brother is coming back; all she has to do is wait. But what would happen if everyone knew? Does fate have room for us all?
- Mon 5/5, 7:30pm  
Tue 5/6, 7:00pm  
**Stanford Campus**, 100B CERAS Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
**Hosted by Berkeley Rep**, 2025 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA 94704  
**DOVETAIL**, by Kenneth Lin, directed by Kent Nicholson  
Gottfried Leibniz and Isaac Newton, two giants of The Enlightenment who independently and spontaneously invented calculus, meet at the end of their lives.

Mon 5/11, 7:30pm  
Tue 5/13, 7:00pm

**Stanford Campus, 100B CERAS Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**  
**Hosted by Aurora Theatre, 2081 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA 94704**  
**ENCHANTMENT**, by Carson Kreitzer, directed by Amy Mueller  
*ENCHANTMENT* explores the reverberations between these two extraordinary lives - Bruno Bettelheim the Freudian psychiatrist and concentration camp survivor who put forth (and then disavowed) the theory that autism was caused by bad mothering, and Temple Grandin the high-functioning autistic woman who designs more humane slaughterhouses.

Mon 5/19, 7:30pm  
Tue 5/20, 7:00pm

**Stanford Campus, 100B CERAS Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**  
**Host TBA**  
**EINSTEIN'S BRAIN**, by Trevor Allen and Leibe Wetzal, director TBA  
A collaboration between playwright Trevor Allen and puppeteer Leibe Wetzal, exploring the mysteries of Einstein's universe using Lunatique Fantastique's signature work of creating puppets of found objects.

Poet and playwright **Marisela Treviño Orta** graduated from Southwestern University in Georgetown and received an MFA in Writing from the University of San Francisco. While studying poetry at USF she began collaborating as a Resident Poet with El Teatro Jornalero!, a theatre company comprised of Latino immigrants. Her first play, *Braided Sorrow*, was included in the 2005 Bay Area Playwrights Festival, the Ford Amphitheatre's 2006 Summer Reading Series, and won UC Irvine's 2006 Chicano/Latino Literary Prize in drama. Currently, Ms. Orta is Marin Theatre Company's Resident Playwright. She is also one of the founding editors of Switchback, the official literary journal of the University of San Francisco's MFA in Writing program. Ms. Orta's poetry has appeared in *BorderSenses*, *Double Room*, *26: A Journal of Poetry and Poetics* and *Traverse*.

**Jim Price** has worked for the past twenty years as a professional actor and musician, including on Broadway in *The Civil War* and *Ring of Fire*, internationally with *Les Miserables*, and off-Broadway as an original cast member of *Batboy: the Musical* and *bare: a pop opera*. He was a contributing composer to the musical *Fishwrap!*, produced at the Adirondack Theatre Festival in 2002, and his play *Collision Course* has had informal readings at the Actor's Studio (P/D workshop) and at Williamstown. In 2004, he produced and wrote all the songs for award-winning actress Kaitlin Hopkins' debut CD, *Make Me Sweat*, available at [cdbaby.com](http://cdbaby.com). James, who is a trained classical guitarist, has a degree in economics from the University of Michigan and later studied for two years at the American Conservatory Theatre in the advanced training program. Current projects include a new play, *Colony Collapse* and a collaboration on a new musical with playwright James Hindman (*Pete 'n Keely*) called *Cold Feet*. He is a member of the Actor's Studio Playwright's and Director's Workshop and the Dramatists Guild.

**Brian Thorstenson's** plays include: *Shadow Crossing* (Central Works Theater Ensemble), *DROP* (Alternative Theater Ensemble), *Tuesday* (with Stephen Pelton Dance Theater), *Summerland* (Alternative Theater Ensemble, 2000 Bay Area Playwrights Festival, 2000 Z Space Festival of New Performance, Wings Theatre Co., NYC, published in the anthology *Plays and Playwrights 2002*), and *Over The Mountain* (2003 Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Z Magic Monday, Tournesol Residency, The Global Age Project). His radio adaptation of Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here* broadcasted nationally on the Pacifica Radio Network. His new play *Wakefield; or Hello Sophia* opened in February 08 at Central Works and his work will be part of Stephen Pelton Dance Theater's 15th Anniversary season in June 08. He is a lecturer at San Francisco State University and Santa Clara University. He received a B.A. in Theater from Willamette University, and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. He lives in San Francisco.

**Katori Hall** has been published as a book reviewer, journalist, and essayist in publications such as *The Boston Globe*, *Essence*, and *Newsweek*. She is a 2007 winner of the Fellowship of Southern Writers Bryan Family Award in Drama, 2006 recipient of the New York Foundation of the Arts Fellowship in Playwriting and Screenwriting, 2005 winner of the Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award, and a 2006 participant of the Royal Court Theatre NYC Residency. In October 2007, her play *Hoodoo Love* will be have its world premiere at the Cherry Lane Theatre, where it was developed under Lynn Nottage as part of the theatre's 2006 Mentor Project. *Hoodoo Love* received three 2006 AUDELCO nominations (Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress, August Wilson Playwright Award), the play winning for Best Supporting Actress. She is currently writing commissions for Fluid Motion Theater & Film and the Irish Repertory Theatre. Hall is a proud member of the Women's Project Playwrights' Lab in New York City.

**Julia Jarcho** is a writer, director, and performer who has worked in New York and Berlin. Her plays include *All I Do Is Dream Of You* (Sophiensaele, 2006), *Delmar* (Prenzlkasper, 2005), *The Highwayman* (DUMBO Stable, 2004), and *Nursery* (Young Playwrights Festival/Cherry Lane, 2001). She was a writer-in-residence at the 2002 Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference and won a Berrilla Kerr award the same year. *A Small Hole*, her adaptation of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, was presented by Performance Lab 115 in 2006.

**Kenneth Lin's** plays *said Saïd*, *Agency\**, *Po Boy Tango*, *Dovetail*, *Intelligence-Slave* and *The Lynching of a White Man in Rural, CA* have been produced, developed and/or commissioned by the Alliance Theatre, South Coast Rep, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the Wilma Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, P73 Productions, NY Stage & Film and Arena Stage. He is the winner of the Princess Grace Award, the L. Arnold Weissberger Award and the Keneda Graduate Playwriting Competition. Lin is an alumnus of Cornell University, the U.S. Fulbright Scholarship Program and the Yale School of Drama, where he was

awarded the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Scholarship, the Truman Capote Prize and the ASCAP Cole Porter Prize for Excellence in Playwriting.

**Carson Kreitzer's** *The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer* won the Lois and Richard Rosenthal New Play Prize, the American Theatre Critics' Steinberg Citation, the Barrie Stavis Award, and is published in Smith and Kraus' New Playwrights: Best Plays of 2004 by Dramatic Publishing. *SELF DEFENSE or death of some salesmen* has been produced in Providence, Minneapolis, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, and is published by Playscripts and in Smith and Kraus' Women Playwrights: Best Plays of 2002. Ms. Kreitzer has received grants from NYFA, NYSCA, the NEA, TCG, two Jerome Fellowships and a McKnight Advancement Grant, as well as a BA from Yale University and an MFA from the Michener Center for Writers, UT Austin. She is a resident playwright at New Dramatists, an associated artist with Clubbed Thumb, New Georges, and the Fire Department, and a member of The Workhaus Collective, The Playwrights' Center and the Dramatists Guild. She is currently under commission from The Guthrie Theater, Chicago's Next Theatre, and the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.

**Trevor Allen** is a recipient of a 2006 San Francisco Arts Commission Individual Artist commission for a new play entitled *Zoo Logic*, which had a staged reading at The Magic Theatre in Feb. 2008. Recent productions include: *Tenders in the Fog* at San Jose Stage Company (recipient of the 2005 Dean Goodman Choice Award for Original Script), *Working for the Mouse!* with Impact, The EXIT and Bus Barn Stage Company, *49 Miles* co-produced with Crowded Fire, *Chain Reactions* with The Cutting Ball and Combined Art Form Entertainment. In 2002, *Chain Reactions* was presented at the Edward Albee, Last Frontier Play Festival in Alaska. His work has also received staged readings, workshops or productions from: Abydos, A.C.T., Bay Area Playwrights Festival, City Lights, Eastenders, FoolsFury, The Magic Theatre, The Marsh, One Act Wonders, Parched Camel, Theatre Rhinoceros, Three Wise Monkeys, Unconditional and Unidentified theatre companies.

**Liebe Wetzel** is the Artistic Director of Lunatique Fantastique with whom she has created and performed in several acclaimed productions, including *Reframing the Hourglass*, *Snake in the Basement: The Prosecution of Rev. Bill Pruitt*, *The Wrapping Paper Caper*, a holiday-themed show for children and adults, *Brace Yourself!*, and *My Dinner With Lunatique Fantastique*. Her innovative work has won many awards including the S.F. Bay Guardian Goldie Award for best new theater talent, as well as Best of Fringe and Top Box Office Hit in the 2001 S.F. Fringe Festival and 2004 S. F. Fringe Festival. The Company performed for the San Francisco Opera in 2005 in *Pique Dame*. The company toured the U.K. with 3 different shows to rave reviews. She has taught her unique puppetry style to teens in a residency program at Zeum, at The Clown Conservatory, and to teen acting students at Cal Shakes' summer program. In addition, she has taught devising theatre using object puppetry at Sonoma State University.

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