

NEWS RELEASE



For photos, interviews, etc.. contact:
Cristóbal McKinney, Marketing Associate
cristobal@playwrightsfoundation.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Playwrights Foundation Launches Ambitious Pilot Programs to Support Bay Area Playwrights

Thirteen prominent playwrights benefit from ground-breaking new programs

Playwrights & Projects

Resident Playwrights Initiative

Eugenie Chan
Garret Jon Groenveld
Julia Jarcho
Peter Sinn Nachtrieb
Brian Thorstenson
Marisela Treviño Orta

New Play Incubator

Groucho
by Tina D'Elia
Sid Arthur
by Tanya Shaffer
Einstein's Brain
by Liebe Wetzels & Trevor Allen
Kepler's Ghost
by Nina Wise & Ralph Abraham
Burnt Umber
by Erik Ehn
Vera Cupido
by Stephanie Fleischman

January 21, 2008 – SAN FRANCISCO. In 2008, Playwrights Foundation launches two ambitious pilot programs to support rising professional playwrights – the **New Play Incubator** and **Resident Playwrights Initiative**. “Most of the work we do with playwrights tends to be in short, intensive bursts,” says **Jonathan Spector**, the Literary Manager of PF who took the reins for both programs, “We wanted to find a way to offer more long-term support for writers and establish deeper relationships.”

Both programs are part of the **Wellspring Project**, an array of programs designed to offer support to writers at all stages of development, “What we’re really doing is creating an artistic home for exceptional playwrights,” says **Amy Mueller**, Artistic Director of PF for the last seven years, “for people who are beginning to get productions and commissions, but are yet to have a fully established career. We wanted to create a safe place where they can feel encouraged and supported, and where they can create and grow as artists.”

Though similar in goal, the two programs differ significantly in their scope and intensity. The **New Play Incubator** focuses the developmental needs of the individual project. The

Resident Playwrights Initiative aims to provide a community of playwrights with an artistic home, giving them access to vital resources such as regular workshops with actors, dramaturgical support, and practical career advice from experienced Bay Area theatre professionals.

Resident Playwrights Initiative (RPI). The goals of the **RPI** are to provide an artistic home for rising playwrights, increase the visibility of Bay Area artists, and foster a community of professional writers. The pilot phase spans from January to June 2008, and the program is envisioned to have writers in residence for between one and three years. The six playwrights invited to participate were chosen from previous Bay Area Playwrights Festival selections and finalists. The core of the program is the writer’s workshop, bi-monthly meetings where the playwrights bring in work to be read aloud by actors and discussed by the group. This will provide writers with opportunities to experiment with new material, or focus on specific work in advance of a production or reading.

These playwrights will also be given access to an impressive array of critical resources including but not limited to a rehearsal space with actors, dramaturgical support, table readings of plays, career advice from established theatre professionals, letters of support, and more specific resources tailored to the wants and needs of the playwright.

Playwrights selected for this January to June pilot are as follows: **Eugenie Chan** (recently inducted into New Dramatists), **Garret Jon Groenveld** (whose *Missives* will be produced at 59E59 in New York this Spring), **Peter Sinn Nachtrieb** (*Boom*, seen the 07 ITR series, will premiere in April at Ars Nova in New York and be produced this at Woolly Mammoth Theatre in Washington, DC) **Julia Jarcho** (Member of the Obie-winning playwright collective 13p), **Marisela Treviño Orta** (*American Triage* workshop at Marin Theater Company in February), and **Brian Thorstensen** (*Wakefield* will premiere at CentralWorks in Berkeley this February).

The New Play Incubator (NPI), is a monthly series of one to two week intensive, closed-door workshops, that will provide playwrights with an environment free from the pressures of producers and public scrutiny. These projects range from plays approaching a premiere production to more exploratory development of new work. The services provided are tailored to the needs of each project, but will include rehearsal space as well as actors, directors, dramaturgical support, a specialized artistic element (such as composer, musician, choreographer, designers) and travel/housing for non-local artists. Depending of the needs of the playwright, works in the NPI may or may not culminate in a public presentation.

Playwrights Foundation has lined up an series of talented theatre artists for NPI starting in February with *Sid Arthur* by **Tanya Shaffer**, a work that was first performed in Playwrights Foundation's **2007 ITR Reading Series**. March will see the development of *Einstein's Brain* (or *One Stone*) a collaboration between **Leibe Wetzel** and **Trevor Allen**, which will have a public presentation at this year's **ITR Reading Series**. In April, **Nina Wise** and **Ralph Abraham** will work on a play was first commissioned by Playwrights Foundation and presented in the **2006 BAPF**, *Kepler's Ghost* (previously titled *The Kepler Project*). **Erik Ehn** will work on *Burnt Umber* in May with Director Rebecca Novick, and **Stephanie Fleischman** will round out the list with *Vera Cupido* in June. *Vera Cupido* will premiere as a PF co-production with Crowded Fire Theatre Company in Fall 2008, where it will be directed by **Octavio Solis**.

The two new programs are part of Playwrights Foundation's **Wellspring Project**, which aims to support playwrights at every stage of their career development. For over thirty years, the Playwrights Foundation has been known for the annual **Bay Area Playwrights Festival (BAPF)**, which has grown to be a nationally recognized source of vital new plays. In the last eight years, under the expansive vision of **Amy Mueller**, Playwrights Foundation has grown from a summer festival to a year-round new play development center. The **Wellspring Project** offers an impressive array of programs that support every phase in the developmental life of a play, from its **In The Rough (ITR)**, which focuses on early drafts of new plays to its **Producing Partnership Initiative/Commissioning Program (PPI/CP)** which is a ground-breaking new model for shepherding exceptional plays from development to production in the Bay Area, offering material support to small and mid-size Bay Area producers in the development of world premiere productions. In addition, Playwrights Foundations fosters partnerships and exchanges with the Lark New Play Development Center in New York City, Stanford University, and the National New Play Network.

The latest additions to the **Wellspring Project**, the **Resident Playwrights Initiative**, and **New Play Incubator**, grew directly out of interviews that took place last fall with over 30 local playwrights at multiple stages in their career. “It was very important for us to hear from playwrights what they felt their needs were,” says **Amy Mueller**, “and as we spoke to more and more people we found we were hearing many of the same things – they wanted time in the room with actors, they wanted support and advice as their careers develop, and they wanted to feel like they were part of a community.”

“For a long time there has been a conversation in this community about the attrition of talented actors, but it’s equally important to all of us that the Bay Area remain a vital center for the creation of new work in the American Theatre,” says **Amy Mueller** “and by providing these valuable resources to playwrights whose careers are on the rise, we hope not just to support the work of the writers who are here, but to give them a reason to stay.”

2008 New Play Incubator Projects

+February

Groucho, A Queer Loca by Tina D'Elia

Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 5th and 6th 7pm, at **Theatre Rhino** on 16th (open to the public)

Theatre Rhinoceros, 2926 16th Street (@ South Van Ness)

\$10.00 at the door

First of the New Play Incubator Projects

SID ARTHUR by Tanya Shaffer

Tuesday, Feb. 18th 7pm, at Exit Theatre on Taylor (by invitation only)

A reading of Sid Arthur was presented in the 2007 ITR series

+March

ONE STONE; or EINSTEIN'S BRAIN by Liebe Wetzel and Trevor Allen.

(closed to the public)

One Stone will have a public presentation in the 2008 ITR series

+April

KEPLER'S GHOST by Nina Wise and Raplh Abraham

Sunday, April 13th, 7pm (by invitation only)

Kepler's Ghost (previously titled The Kepler Project) was commissioned for the 2006 Bay Area Playwrights Festival.

+May

BURNT UMBER by Erik Ehn

(closed to the public)

+June

VERA CUPIDO by Stephanie Fleischman

(closed to the public)

Vera Cupido was presented in the 2006 ITR series, and will premiere as a co-production with Crowded Fire Theater Company, in fall 2008 and be directed by Octavio Solis.

2008 Resident Playwright's Bios:

Eugenie Chan's plays include KITCHEN TABLE; DAPHNE DOES DIM SUM; RANCHO GRANDE; EMIL, A CHINESE PLAY; BONE TO PICK; NOVELL-AAH!; PILGRIM; CONSENT; a radio play, TOUR SINO; and the original story and libretto for SNAKEWOMAN, an opera. Her work has been produced or developed on the East Coast at the Public Theatre, Ma-Yi Theatre, Pan Asian Rep, Perishable Theatre, Centenary Stage, Duke and Columbia Universities; in the Midwest at PlayLabs; in Seattle at the Northwest Asian American Theatre, the Group Theatre; Los Angeles at East West Players; and in San Francisco at the Magic Theatre, Cutting Ball, Thick Description, San Francisco Mime Troupe, Brava! For Women in the Arts, Opera Piccola/StageBridge, and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. DAPHNE will be produced this February at Centenary Stage. BONE TO PICK will be part of Cutting Ball's 2008 Avant-Garde-a-Rama. Current commissions: the Magic Theatre/Sloan Science Initiative, Cutting Ball/Z Space/Magic Theatre New Plays Initiative. Education: B.A., Yale in Literature. M.F.A., NYU in Dramatic Writing. She is a Resident Playwright at the Playwrights Foundation, New Dramatists, and an Associate Artist at Cutting Ball Theatre in San Francisco.

Garret Jon Groenveld's is a San Francisco based poet and playwright. The author of many plays, his work has appeared in the BAPF 1999 (THE BLOOD OF WINTER – now called, THE ABSENCE OF BIRDS) and 2004 (MISSIVES). MISSIVES premiered at Theatre Rhino in 2005 and will receive its New York premiere in March 2008 by Animated Theatreworks at 59E59, in no small part to his participation in the Sister Cities Project through the Playwrights Foundation. MISSIVES was originally commissioned by PlayGround, which also commissioned the full lengths, THE GRAND DIVORCE and his current play, THE SERVING CLASS. He has an MA in Poetry and an MFA in Playwriting from San Francisco State University and has with Edward Albee in his advanced workshop at the University of Houston.

Julia Jarcho is a playwright, director, and performer. Productions include TAKE ME AWAY (II faut brûler pour briller festival, Paris, 2007), A SMALL HOLE (Performance Lab 115, FringeNYC, 2006), ALL I DO IS DREAM OF YOU (Sophiensaele and English Theatre Berlin, 2006), DELMAR (Berlin, 2005), THE HIGHWAYMAN (NTUSA performance space, Brooklyn, 2004), and NURSERY (Young Playwrights Festival, Cherry Lane Theater, New York, 2001). She was a writer-in-residence at the 2002 Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference and won a Berrilla Kerr award the same year. She is board member of Young Playwrights Inc., a participant in Just Theater's New Play Lab, and a founding member of the New York-based playwrights' collective 13P.

Peter Sinn Nachtrieb is a San Francisco-based playwright whose works include HUNTER GATHERERS, BOOM, COLORADO, MEANINGLESS, MULTIPLE and The AMORPHOUS BLOB. HUNTER GATHERERS received the 2007 Steinberg/ American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award for best new play to premiere outside of New York and the 2007 Will Glickman Prize for best new play in the Bay Area. His work has been seen across the country at venues like Ars Nova and SPF in New York, Bailiwick in Chicago, W.H.A.T. in New England, and Impact Theatre, Magic Theatre and Kililng My Lobster in the Bay Area. He is currently under commission from Encore Theatre Company and South Coast Rep. Peter holds a degree in Theater and Biology from Brown and an MFA in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. He likes to promote himself online at www.peternachtrieb.com

Brian Thorstenson's plays include: SHADOW CROSSING (Central Works Theater Ensemble),

DROP (Alternative Theater Ensemble), TUESDAY (a collaboration 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* was broadcast nationally on the Pacifica Radio Network. His new play WAKEFIELD; OR HELLO SOPHIA will open 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.

Marisela Trevino Orta received an MFA in Writing from the University of San Francisco. Her first play BRAIDED SORROW was read at the 2005 Bay Area Playwrights Festival, the 2006 [Inside] the Ford Summer Reading Series and won the 2006 Chicano/Latino Literary Prize in Drama. Currently Marisela is working on AMERICAN TRIAGE, a play commissioned by Marin Theatre Company; GHOST LIMB, a new play in development with Just Theater's '08 Play Lab; and WOMAN ON FIRE, a play commissioned by the Latino Playwrights Initiative. Her poetry has appeared in BorderSenses, Double room, 26: A Journal of Poetry and Poetics and Traverse.