



The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts presents

NEW VISIONS/NEW VOICES 2010

**Biennial festival examining new plays for young audiences
will present works from
Milwaukee, WI; Minneapolis, MN; Philadelphia, PA;
Princeton, NJ; Seattle, WA;
Johannesburg, South Africa; and Melbourne, Australia
May 21-23, 2010 at the Kennedy Center**

(WASHINGTON, DC) – The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announces its 11th **New Visions/New Voices** festival to be held May 21 - May 23, 2010 at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. A biennial workshop and festival dedicated to developing new plays and musicals written for young people and their families, **New Visions/New Voices** will feature companies from Milwaukee, WI; Minneapolis, MN; Philadelphia, PA; Princeton, NJ; Seattle, WA; Johannesburg, South Africa; and Melbourne, Australia.

While at the Kennedy Center, selected playwrights, directors, music directors, composers, and actors work collaboratively in a weeklong intensive to develop new works. After revisions, rewrites, and rehearsals of the new plays and musicals, the works are presented as rehearsed readings during the three-day national conference for theater professionals, educators, and others interested in the field. **New Visions/New Voices** concludes with discussions open to festival participants led by Todd London, Artistic Director of New Dramatists in New York.

The Center provides housing, transportation, stage managers, dramaturgs, and casting, selected from a pool of local Equity actors, for each show. The 2010 festival features dramaturgical support by Sally Richardson of Perth, Australia, and Faedra Chatard Carpenter of College Park, MD.

This year, for the first time, **New Visions/New Voices** will host international playwright observers. The playwright observers will participate in a playwright slam, observe the process of one of the artistic teams, converse with a dramaturg, and share their work with each other. The 2010 **New Visions/New Voices** playwright observers will be Hope Azeda from Kigali, Rwanda; Ashish Kumar

Ghosh from New Delhi, India; Vicky Ireland from London, UK; Amaranta Leyva from Mexico City, Mexico; and Natalia Skorokhod from St. Petersburg, Russia.

Since its inception in 1991, **New Visions/New Voices** has assisted in the development of 73 new plays, musicals, and operas from 67 playwrights and 31 composers working with 47 US and five international theater companies. The festival has been honored twice for distinguished service to the field of theater for young and family audiences. The American Association for Theater and Education first honored it in 1998. A second honor by the Children's Theater Foundation of America, was presented in 2000.

This season's festival will highlight readings of the following new works, listed alphabetically by theater:

- ***The Flea and the Professor*** is a play with music adapted from a Hans Christian Andersen story by Jordan Harrison and composer Richard Gray, presented by Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia, PA, and directed by Anne Kauffman. Magic tricks, hot-air balloons, fussy cannibals, and a talented flea are all part of a witty, whimsical, wistful and wise tale of a life-long friendship.
- ***The Scarecrow and His Servant*** is adapted from a Philip Pullman novel by Jeffrey Hatcher for The Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, MN. Directed by Peter C. Brosius, this picaresque story echoes Cervantes and Commedia through the ridiculous yet tender relationship between the Scarecrow and the hapless Jack. Filled with glorious language, wit, and adventures both dangerous and silly.
- ***Don't Tell Me I Can't Fly*** is inspired by the life and work of multi-media collage artist Della Wells and written by Y York for the First Stage Children's Theater in Milwaukee, WI. Directed by Mark Lutwak, the play revolves around Tonia, a nine-year-old African-American girl living in the 1960s who struggles to balance her parents' survival strategy of keeping a low profile with her own artistic soul. When conformity fails, Tonia gives creativity a chance, allowing her family, her friends, and the world to appreciate her uniqueness.
- ***Promised Land of Balalatladi*** comes from the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa, and is written by Omphile Molusi and directed by Monageng 'Vice' Motshabi. Based on traditional folklore, the play tells the story of six survivors of a village devastated by man-eating ogres. When they elect a leader in the aftermath, will his newfound power and mysterious magic get the better of him, destroying them all, or will he bring harmony as promised?
- ***The Epic of Sunjata***, written and directed by Christopher T. Parks from the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, NJ. Sunjata is the story of a boy born lame, but destined to become the greatest king of the medieval Mali Empire. This epic tale of sorcery has been passed down through centuries of oral tradition and will be presented as a completely interactive production for young audiences.

- ***The Very True and Unusual Life of Chook***, from Real TV in Melbourne, Australia, is written by Angela Betzien and directed by Leticia Cáceres. Freely adapted from Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *The Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* and set in a mythical desert landscape, two down-on-their-luck travelers read stories from the penny chapbooks they sell to children and become engrossed in the story of Chook, the strange half-bird, half-human creature that falls from the sky and becomes stranded in a foreign land never to return home.
- ***The Edge of Peace*** reunites playwright Suzan Zeder, director Linda Hartzell, and ASL Master/Actor Billy Seago for the final play in *The Ware Trilogy*, commissioned by the Seattle Children’s Theatre in Seattle, WA. Set in a small mid-western town during the last days of World War II, we see the impact on a community of a soldier missing in action and his little brother refusing to believe the inevitable. This expansive play charts a journey of hope through a landscape of loss.

Three additional projects have been named as alternates, should one of the other artistic teams be unable to attend. These are ***The Fool on the Hill*** by Kevin Dyer from Action Transport Theatre in Cheshire, UK; ***Mirandy and Brother Wind***, by Michael Bobbitt and John L. Cornelius from Adventure Theatre in Glen Echo, MD; ***Field Music*** by Laura Schellhardt, from Northlight Theatre in Skokie, IL.

THE KENNEDY CENTER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

For more than 35 years, the Kennedy Center Education Department has provided quality arts experiences for students, teachers, families, and the general public throughout the United States. In the past year, the Center’s education programs have directly impacted more than 11 million people. The mission of the Education Department is to foster understanding of and participation in the performing arts through exemplary programs and performances for diverse populations of all ages that represent the unique cultural life and heritage of the United States.

FUNDING CREDITS

Theater at the Kennedy Center is presented with the generous support of Stephen and Christine Schwarzman.

The **New Visions/New Voices** program is made possible by generous funding from The U.S. Department of Education and The National Committee for the Performing Arts.

For more information about the Kennedy Center, please visit www.kennedy-center.org.

#

PRESS CONTACT*:

Stephanie O’Neill
 (202) 416-8446
sroneill@kennedy-center.org

**Please do not publish this information.*

INFORMATION & REGISTRATION:

New Visions Hotline (202) 416-8830
kctya@kennedy-center.org