



Press Release

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THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP ANNOUNCES 2009 RECIPIENTS OF THE NEA/TCG CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR DIRECTORS AND DESIGNERS

New York, September 2009 — Twelve early-career directors and designers have been selected for the 2009 NEA/TCG Career Development Programs for Theatre Directors and Designers. The recipients were chosen by an independent, national selection panel composed of theatre professionals. These programs are administered by TCG, in association with the National Endowment for the Arts, with major support from The Ford Foundation.

In response to the announcement of the 2009 Career Development Program recipients, TCG's executive director Teresa Eyring remarked, "TCG believes that fostering these talented early career artists is a privilege which reflects our ongoing commitment to the growth of individual artists and the vitality of the American not-for-profit theatre. We are proud to join with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Ford Foundation in supporting this year's recipients of the NEA/TCG Career Development Program awards."

Through support from the Endowment, \$25,000 is awarded to each of the six exceptionally talented theatre directors and six theatre designers who seek careers in America's not-for-profit professional theatre. Through the support of The Ford Foundation, each recipient will receive an additional \$2,000 to provide for individual, ongoing life needs such as health insurance, child care and parental care.

Carol Lanoux Lee, Acting Director of Theater and Musical Theater at the National Endowment for the Arts, added, "These programs provide exceptionally skilled young directors and designers with mentorship and guidance, bringing their talents to the attention of the national theater, and providing entry points into the field of working theater professionals. The Endowment is pleased to continue its collaboration with TCG and The Ford Foundation in nurturing gifted artists who will make fundamental contributions to American theater.

These programs offer recipients an opportunity to spend six months, over a two-year period, developing their skills and expanding their knowledge of the field. Each program is hand-tailored, matching the needs and goals of the recipient with appropriate and challenging assignments. Program activities may include assistantships, observation, research and travel.

Roberta Uno, Senior Program Officer for Arts and Culture at The Ford Foundation, stated, "We are pleased to support the NEA/TCG Career Development Programs, which are innovative models of support to individual artists. The programs enable exemplary artists to make a career in the American

theater. In supporting their work and connecting them to leading theaters across the country, the arts in America are also strengthened."

Following are the recipients of the 2009 NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Theatre Directors:

Gisela Cardenas is a director based in New York City interested in working with classics and adaptations from a contemporary perspective. He has an M.A in Performance Studies (NYU) and an M.F.A in Directing (Columbia University). Past credits: Shakespeare's "Macbeth" (Riverside Church Theater), Garcia Lorca's "Don Perlimplin" (Repertorio Espanol); Aeschylus "Agamemnon" (Drama Desk Nomination 2006/Directing); "Antigone" adapted by Jose Watanabe ("Sibiu International Theater Festival—Romania), New York Revival of Kander & Ebb's "Kiss of The Spider Woman" (Vortex Theater Company). Part 1 of "An Oresteia" (Classic Stage Company). Awards: Princes Grace Theater Fellowship (2007), 2008 Phil Killian Directing Fellow (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), 2008-10 Women's Project Director's Lab and recipient of the 2008 Josephine Abady Award (League of Professional Theatre Women).

Lear deBessonnet is a New York based director whose recent work includes a re-imagination of the musical *OLIVER!* at NYU's Experimental Theatre Wing, a country-blues adaptation of Brecht's *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* at PS122, and *transfigures*, produced Off-Broadway by Women's Project. Most recently, her site-specific *Quixote* premiered in Philadelphia and she directed Lucy Thurber's *Monstrosity* for 13P. Ms. deBessonnet has worked in Kazakhstan and Serbia, and assisted Martha Clarke, Anne Bogart, and Bartlett Sher. She was named one of *Time Out New York's* 25 People to Watch, and received the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Presidential Award for Artistic Excellence.

Nelson T. Eusebio III is the artistic director and co-founder of Creative Destruction, a theatre company dedicated to the creation of political, diverse drama. Recent directing credits: *Obama Drama: A Political Theatrical Spectacular!* (Creative Destruction), *God, Sex and Blue Water* (Living Image Arts), *365 Days/365 Plays* (Ma-Yi/The Public Theatre), *Finding Ways...* (Pan Asian Rep). Nelson was a resident director at Ensemble Studio Theatre, is a member of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab and the Rhodopi International Theatre Collective. He has a B.A. in Drama from UC Irvine and an M.F.A. in Directing from the Yale School of Drama.

Michael Goldfried is a New York City-based director whose work includes *Novel* and *Gardening Leave* (SPF); *Shangri La* (Queens Theater in the Park); Charles Ludlam's *Stage Blood* (KGB); and recent work with the Drama League including *Kahn and Kant* (DirectorFest), *Mama's Boy* (New Directors/New Works) and *365 Plays*. He has adapted and directed numerous comedies including *Twelfth Night*, *Tartuffe*, *The Imaginary Invalid* and *The Rover*. New play development at The Public; *Youngblood* and *Ars Nova*. Alum of the Drama League Director's Project & Lincoln Center Director's Lab. Directing faculty at SVA. Assisted: Oskar Eustis, Les Waters, Jerry Zaks, Peter DuBois. MFA: Brown University/Trinity Rep Consortium.

Laura Kepley is a Resident Director and served as Artistic Associate for four seasons at Trinity Repertory Company directing *The Clean House*, Laura Schellhardt's *Shapeshifter* and co-creating (with Deborah Salem Smith) and directing the docudramas *Boots on the Ground* and *Some Things Are Private*. Other work includes George Brant's *shop talk* (Drama League's DIRECTORFEST) *The K of D* (Kennedy Center and USF/Orlando Shakespeare Festival), *Falling Up* (Perishable Theatre), and *Elephant's Graveyard* (The University of Texas—Austin). Ms. Kepley received her MFA from the Brown University/Trinity Rep Consortium. She is a Drama League Fellow and a member of WordBRIDGE Playwright's Lab Company.

José Zayas is originally from Puerto Rico. He holds a B.A. from Harvard University and an M.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon University. Zayas is Co-founder and Artistic Director of The Immediate Theater Company. Projects include: "The House of the Spirits" by Caridad Svich (Repertorio Espanol, 7 HOLA awards), "Okay" by Taylor Mac (Ensemble Studio Theatre), "Nowhere on the Border" by Carlos Lacamara (5 ACE awards), "Madre: El Drama Padre" by Enrique Jardiel Poncela (2 ACE Awards), "Southern Promises" (PS122) and "Strom Thurmond is Not a Racist/Cleansed" (Brick Theater) by Thomas Bradshaw. Drama League Fellow, Lincoln Center Director's Lab, Soho Rep Writer/Director's Lab, Mellon Foundation Residency.

Director recipients were chosen by a national independent selection panel that included Ilesa Duncan, director, youth and community programs, Chicago Dramatists; Cynthia Levin, producing artistic director, Unicorn Theatre; Terrence Nolen, producing artistic director, Arden Theatre Company, Jay Scheib, director, Jose Luis Valenzuela, artistic director, The New LATC; and Moya Vazquez, Trustee, Intiman Theatre.

Preliminary panelists included Cynthia Levin, producing artistic director, Unicorn Theatre, Jeremy Cohen, associate artistic director, Hartford Stage; Rajendra R. Maharaj, director; and Tina Packer, artistic director, Shakespeare and Company.

Following are the recipients of the 2009 NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Theatre Designers:

Jeff Becker is a New Orleans-based set designer/sculptor who specializes in original site specific performances featuring innovative transforming sets, interactive environments, film and machines. Jeff has worked with theater companies such as The Cuttingball Theater, Mondo Bizzaro, Pan Pan Theatre from Ireland and Dah Teatar from Serbia. He is the recipient of several awards and grants including a NEA RAP Grant, Theater Bay Area Grant, SURDNA Professional Development Grant and a Louisiana Division of the Arts Fellowship. He is a core ensemble member of ArtSpot Productions and is on the faculty of New Orleans Center for Creative Arts.

Oana Botez-Ban (Costume Designer), a native of Romania, has designed for major theater and dance companies including The National Theater of Bucharest and was involved in different international theater festivals such as the Quadrennial Scenography Show in Prague. Oana is part of the first Romanian theater design catalogue, Scenografica. Since 1999, her New York costume collaborations in theater and dance include Robert Woodruff, Richard Foreman, Maya Beiser, Richard Schechner, Blanka Zizka, Brian Kulick, Zeldia Fichlander, Karin Coonrod, Jay Scheib, Eduardo Machado, Gus Solomon Jr. & Paradigm, Carmen de Lavallade, Dusan Tynek, Gisela Cardenas, Pavol Liska, Matthew Neenan, Molissa Fenley, Zishan Ugurlu, Erin Mee, Judith Ren-Lay, Michael Sexton, Pig Iron Company, Play Company, Charles Moulton, Loy Arcenas, Ripe Time. MFA in Design from NYU/Tisch School of the Arts. Princess Grace Recipient.

Brendan Connelly makes all the sound and music for The Theater of a Two-headed Calf, which he co-founded, along with director Brooke O'Harra, in New Orleans in 1999. The Two-headed Calf has been a resident company at La MaMa, E.T.C. in New York where they created *Tumor Brainiowicz*, *The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*, *The Mother*, *Major Barbara* and two seasons of *Room for Cream*. They have also created work at the HERE Arts Center, PS 122, The Perishable Theater and Soho Rep. The Company received an Obie Grant in 2008. Brendan's other theater work includes numerous collaborations with director Ian Belton. His non-theater compositions have been performed by the SEM Ensemble, Timetable Percussion, Hunter-Gatherer, Yarn/Wire and Wet Ink.

William Cusick is a video and projections designer based in NYC, whose work has recently been seen in productions at the BAM Harvey, Lincoln Center Theater, New York Theater Workshop, PS122, Culture Project, Ontological-Hysteric Theater, The Chocolate Factory, as well as various theaters in Europe and Canada. Cusick is the recipient of the 2007 Henry Hewes Design Award for Projections for his work on Tom Stoppard's *The Coast of Utopia* at Lincoln Center Theater. Cusick has designed four original productions for the experimental theater company, Temporary Distortion, including the upcoming *Americana Kamikaze* at PS122.

Dave Malloy is a composer/sound designer/musical director/pianist/performer working in NYC and the Bay Area. He has been a member of Brooklyn's Banana Bag & Bodice since 2002; recent BB&B works include the Glickman Award winning *Beowulf - A Thousand Years of Baggage*, an original SongPlay featuring dueling trombones and 40's vocal jazz harmonies, *The Sewers*, an apocalyptic Victorian farce with an extensively integrated electronic score, and *Space//Space*, a claustrophobic sci-fi study in 7.1 surround. Other highlights include *Clown Bible* and *(The 99-cent) Miss Saigon* with Oakland's Ten Red Hen. He is a recipient of the 2009 Jonathan Larson Grant and a Bay Area Critic's Circle Award for Sound Design. www.davemalloy.com

Jeanette Oi-Suk Yew is a NY based lighting designer and puppetry artist. Recent designs include *Kaspar Hauser* and *Dawn* at The Flea Theater, *Oph3lia* and *Frankenstein (Mortal Toys)* at HERE Arts Center, *Ocean/Flight* at Highways Performance Space (LA), *Invisible Glass* at REDCAT (LA), *Conni's Avant Garde Restaurant* at Ohio Theatre, and *No Where Can be Here Now* at The Chocolate Factory. As a puppetry artist, her toy theater production, *The Butcher Men*, was invited to the 2006 Prague Quadrennial and *MILK* was part of the Labapalooza 2007 at St. Ann's Warehouse. She received her MFA from California Institute of the Arts.

Designer recipients were chosen by a national independent selection panel that included Carol Bailey, designer; Clay Benning, resident sound designer, Alliance Theatre; Marsha Ginsberg, designer; Tyler Micoleau, designer; Joel Sass, artistic director, Jungle Theater; Angel Ysaguirre, director of global community investing, the Boeing Company.

Preliminary panelists included Carol Bailey, designer; Clay Benning, resident sound designer, Alliance Theatre; Marsha Ginsberg, designer; and Tyler Micoleau, designer.

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The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) The National Endowment for the Arts is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established; bringing the arts to all Americans; and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Endowment is the nation's largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases.

The Ford Foundation is an independent, nonprofit grant-making organization. For more than half a century it has been a resource for innovative people and institutions worldwide, guided by its goals of strengthening democratic values, reducing poverty and injustice, promoting international cooperation and advancing human achievement. With headquarters in New York, the foundation has offices in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Russia.

Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, exists to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre. Founded in 1961, TCG's constituency has grown from a handful of groundbreaking theatres to nearly 700 member theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 12,000 individuals nationwide. TCG offers its members networking and knowledge-building opportunities through our conferences, events, research and communications; grants approximately \$2 million per year to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level and serves as the US Center of the International Theatre Institute, connecting its constituents to the global theatre community. TCG is the nation's largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 10 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on our booklist; it also publishes the award-winning AMERICAN THEATRE magazine and ARTSEARCH®, the essential source for a career in the arts. In all of its endeavors, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its member theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field and promote a larger public understanding of, and appreciation for, the theatre.

In 2005, TCG received the Tony Honors for Excellence in Theatre in recognition of its impact on the national field. TCG and its member theatres are major contributors to the American theatre sector, which employs more than 131,000 people, produces over 202,000 performances each year and contributes \$1.9 billion to the US economy annually. A 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, TCG is led by executive director Teresa Eyring and governed by a national board of directors representing the theatre field. www.tcg.org.