



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 19, 2012

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Theatre Communications Group Announces Recipients of Inaugural Leadership U[niversity] Program

New York, NY – The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Theatre Communications Group (TCG) announce the inaugural round of recipients for the Leadership U[niversity] program. Six early-career theatre leaders will receive **One-on-One** grants for professional development via mentorships at TCG Member Theatres. Eight mid-career and veteran theatre professionals at TCG Member Theatres will receive **Continuing Ed** grants for learning opportunities to advance their leadership skills. The overall intent of this program is to strengthen the field by developing the individuals who are the core and the future of theatre.

“Our long-standing partnership with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation allows us to create the leadership development opportunities for theatre practitioners that are essential to the growth of our field,” said Teresa Eyring, executive director of TCG. “This inaugural round matches talented early-career leaders with established leaders for hands-on mentorships, and empowers mid-career and veteran practitioners to step outside of their routines to deepen and expand their leadership skills.”

Leadership U[niversity] awards grants in two initiatives: **One-on-One** for early-career leaders and **Continuing Ed** for mid-career and veteran professionals.

- **One-on-One** grants of \$75,000 have been awarded to six exceptionally talented early-career leaders for professional development via mentorships at TCG Member Theatres, with an additional \$5,000 honorarium for each of their mentors. Up to an additional \$14,500 in supplemental funds may be used for student loan repayment, professional development or life needs (i.e. health care, child or elder care, or other medical expenses).
- **Continuing Ed** grants of up to \$6,000 have been awarded to eight mid-career to veteran professionals at TCG Member Theatres for learning opportunities to advance their leadership skills. Grants have been awarded to the applicants’ home theatres on behalf of the theatre practitioners.

One-on-One Grant Recipients:

Diana Buirski will be mentored by **Denver Center Theatre Company’s** (Denver, CO) managing director, **Charles Varin**. Buirski will hone her skills in fundraising, budgeting and season planning, and will focus on the implementation of audience development strategies and new programming to increase community engagement.

Amanda Delheimer Dimond will be mentored by **Lookingglass Theatre Company’s** (Chicago, IL) executive director, **Rachel Kraft**. Dimond’s mentorship will encompass the areas of executive and artistic direction, exploring the ethos and ecology of an ensemble-based theatre that creates new work.

Seema Sueko will be mentored by **Arena Stage’s** (Washington, DC) artistic director **Molly Smith**. The mentorship will focus on artistic direction and will help Sueko develop the leadership, artistic and fundraising skills needed for artistic direction at the LORT level.

Matt O’Hare will be mentored by **The Builders Association’s** (New York, NY) artistic director **Marianne Weems** and sound designer **Daniel Dobson**. O’Hare’s mentorship will focus on interactive sound and video design for theatre via observation and participation in the developmental processes of the company.

Quentin Talley will be mentored by **Penumbra Theatre's** (St. Paul, MN) founder and artistic director **Lou Bellamy**. The mentorship will cover programming, education and directing. The experience will provide Talley the tools to become a more efficient and impactful artistic leader of his own company, On Q Performing Arts.

Maureen Towey will be mentored by **Berkeley Repertory Theater's** (Berkeley, CA) artistic director **Tony Taccone**. Towey's mentorship will focus on interactive technologies and community engagement while working alongside Taccone to learn the craft and business of running a large theatre organization.

Continuing Ed Grant Recipients:

Chicago Dramatists' (Chicago, IL) associate artistic director, **Meghan Beals McCarthy**, will connect with playwright development centers around the country to interview and observe organizational leadership and artists to learn varying new-play development methodologies and techniques.

Dallas Theater Center's (Dallas, TX) stage operations manager, **Travis Ross**, will explore safety practices and procedures and expand his knowledge of constructing and operating complex and large-scale productions.

Dell'Arte International's (Blue Lake, CA), executive director, **Stephanie Thompson**, will seek perspectives from leaders in the theatre field and her local community to investigate the nature of the action "to thrive" as it relates to the development of a sustainable business model.

Seattle Repertory Theatre's (Seattle, WA) associate artistic director, **Braden Abraham**, will visit organizations with successful playwright residency programs and writers groups to learn from their models of providing meaningful long-term support to playwrights.

Tennessee Women's Theater Project's (Nashville, TN) founder and artistic director, **Maryanna Clarke**, will travel to Nightwood Theatre in Toronto, Ontario to investigate elements of their success and longevity including artistic process, audience development, marketing and education.

The Civilians' (Brooklyn, NY) artistic director, **Steve Cosson**, will research models of investigative and verbatim theatre organizations, and artistic directors that translate their missions into a breadth of programming.

The Old Globe's (San Diego, CA) Technical Director, **Benjamin Thoron**, will explore project management methods in both theatrical and industrial settings, interviewing production staff at theatres in the UK and working longitudinally with a local shipyard's production department.

Theatre of Yugen's (San Francisco, CA) artistic director, **Jubilith Moore**, will travel to Japan to participate in Theatre Nohgaku's Noh Costuming Workshop.

The **Leadership U[niversity] One-on-One** preliminary panel included Emily Morse, Director of Artistic Development, New Dramatists; Josh Friedman, Production Manager, Alley Theatre; Patricia Garza, Senior Manager for Education and Community Partnerships, Center Theatre Group; Chris Widdess, Managing Director, Penumbra Theatre; and Ron Himes, Artistic Director, The Black Rep. The **Leadership U[niversity] One-on-One** and **Continuing Ed** final panel included Emily Morse, Director of Artistic Development, New Dramatists; Anthem Salgado, Founder, Art Of Hustle; Anthony Runfola, Production Manager, Childsplay; Susan Trapnell, Senior Consultant, Arts Consulting Group; and Geoffrey Sherman, Producing Artistic Director, Alabama Shakespeare Festival.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is a private philanthropic institution that makes grants on a selective basis in five core program areas: higher education and scholarship; scholarly communications and information technology; museums and art conservation; conservation and the environment; and performing arts. The Foundation's Performing Arts program focuses on achieving long-term results by providing multi-year grants to leading organizations in the disciplines of music, theater, and dance. Annual giving in the area of the performing arts has averaged approximately \$30 million per year since 2005. In 2004 The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation was awarded a National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the United States government. www.mellon.org

For over 50 years, **Theatre Communications Group** (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, has existed to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre. 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 conferences, events, research and communications; awards grants, approximately \$2 million per year, to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level; and serves as the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute, connecting its constituents to the global theatre community. TCG is North America's largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 11 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on the TCG 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. For more information visit www.tcg.org

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