

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PLAYWRIGHTS FOUNDATION PRESENTS THE 6TH ANNUAL *IN THE ROUGH*
READING SERIES: 8 Weeks, 8 Plays, 8 Different Theaters

Nation's Top Emerging Playwrights and Directors Convene in the Bay Area for Playwrights Foundation's **ROUGH Reading Series 2009**

Presenting the newest work of **Thomas Bradshaw, George Brant, Erin Bregman, Yusef El Guindi, Samuel D. Hunter, Lisa Kron, Deirdre O'Connor and Deborah Stein**

San Francisco, Calif., March 5, 2009—Playwrights Foundation (PF) welcomes an unprecedented group of national and regional playwrights and directors for the development of new works as part of the **In The Rough Reading Series 2009, or ROUGH**. This year's selections include: *Meat* by **Samuel D. Hunter**, directed by **Mark Rucker**; *Language Rooms* by **Yusef El Guindi**, directed by **Mark Routhier**; *Job* by **Thomas Bradshaw**, directed by **Jonathan Spector**; *Defiant* by **George Brant**, directed by **Marissa Wolf**; *This Is Not a Torture or an Engine* by **Erin Bregman**, directed by **Molly Aaronson-Gelb**; *Assisted Living* by **Deirdre O'Connor**, directed by **Jon Tracy**; *Natasha and the Coat* by **Deborah Stein**, directed by **Sean Daniels**; and *The Verizon Play* by **Lisa Kron**, directed by **Amy Mueller**. Readings will take place from **Mar. 30 – May 19**, every **Monday and Tuesday**. A unique aspect of the ROUGH Reading Series is the partnership with local venues. Local theaters are hosting each reading, so the benefits of this partnership is two-fold: helping to foster relationships between producers and writers, and enabling Playwrights Foundation to continue the series during a difficult economic climate. Theater partners include Shotgun Players, SF Playhouse, Aurora Theatre, Magic Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Cutting Ball Theater @ Exit on Taylor, and one still TBA. Each play will also be presented at Stanford University.

"We are thrilled to welcome such an exceptional group of rising playwrights to work with us on plays that are still in the earliest stages of development. There are very few opportunities for writers to hear a work as it is being created," says **PF Artistic Director Amy Mueller**, "writers, more often than not, need to present completely finished scripts to producers in order to gain access to artistic resources. The ROUGH series invites playwrights to bring unfinished works into the studio, matches them

with exceptional directors who are deeply sensitive to the playwrights' specific needs, and brings that work to a theater that has the potential to form a relationship with the writer."

Started in 2004, Playwrights Foundation's ROUGH series has launched many plays from their very first readings to world premiere productions. In fact, the series has had unprecedented success as a launch pad for the newest work by rising playwrights. Most recently ROUGH alumni **Shelia Callaghan** and **Tracy Scott Wilson** were featured in the March 1st Sunday edition of the *New York Times* for their respective world premieres of plays first completed and showcased on the ROUGH series. Callaghan's *That Pretty Pretty, Or The Rape Play* premiered at Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre in New York, and Wilson's *The Good Negro* will premiere at the Public Theatre next week. ROUGH alumnus **Rajiv Joseph's** *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* recently won the NEA Outstanding New American Play award, and will premiere at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles in May. "We're very gratified to see ROUGH accomplish what it was designed to do: launch exceptional playwrights from promising first drafts to premiere productions," says Mueller. A few others that have gone on to world premiere productions include '84 by Michael Gene Sullivan, which was directed by Tim Robbins at Actors' Gang in LA, and will soon be made into a motion picture; ...and *Jesus moonwalks the Mississippi* by Marcus Gardley, which will have a world premiere at Cutting Ball Theatre in March 2010; and *Waxing West* by Saviana Stanescu, which premiered in New York at La Mama & Co.

The 2009 **ROUGH Reading Series** presents script-in-hand readings of the newest plays by rising national playwrights, and offers an opportunity for audiences and new play producers to hear work in early development. Audiences witness theater in the making by vanguard American playwrights and have the opportunity to interact and respond with theater makers after each reading. **ROUGH Reading Series** is a partnership with the **National Center for New Plays at Stanford University** and **The Lark Play Development Center in New York**. Nationally acclaimed directors **Mark Rucker** and **Sean Daniels** will head a team of top-notch local directors **Marissa Wolf**, **Molly Aaronson-Gelb**, **Mark Routhier**, **Jon Tracy**, **Jonathan Spector** and **Amy Mueller**.

ABOUT THIS YEAR'S PLAYS AND PLAYWRIGHTS:

Meat by **Samuel D. Hunter**

Directed by **Mark Rucker** (A.C.T.'s *The Rainmaker*; Cal Shakes' *12th Night*)

Monday, **March 30 at 7 p.m. at Cutting Ball Theater at EXIT on Taylor** (Admission: free; donation suggested)

Tuesday, **March 31 at 7:30 p.m. at Stanford** (Admission: \$20)

A violent image of his brother's beheading on the Internet sends Bib to the Precious Moments Chapel in Carthage, Missouri for answers.

About Samuel D. Hunter

Samuel D. Hunter is from Moscow, Idaho. He is currently a playwright-in-residence at the Juilliard School. Sam is a two-time recipient of Lincoln Center's Le Compte du Nuoy Award, a current member of Playgroup at Ars Nova, and most recently was awarded the 2008-2009 Playwrights of New York (PONY) Fellowship from The Lark Play Development Center, where he is a member of the Lark Playwrights Workshop. His plays include: *I am Montana* (produced at Montana Repertory Theater, developed at the Flea Theater, 2008 Ojai Playwrights Conference, 2008 Juilliard New Play Festival, 2007 Bay Area Playwrights Festival and the 2007 Seven Devils Playwrights Conference), *Idaho/Dead Idaho* (developed at Ars Nova, Juilliard, The Lark, and the Rattlestick Playwrights Theater), *Norman Rockwell Killed My Father* (developed at the 2005 O'Neill Playwrights Conference), *Abraham (A Shot in the Head)* (produced at Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theater), and his newest plays, *Hells Canyon*, which recently had its first reading at Juilliard, and *Meat*, which is currently being developed at the Lark New Play Development Center and at Playwrights Foundation. Sam has taught at the University of Iowa, Fordham University, and in the Palestinian Territories at Ashtar Theater (Ramallah) and Ayyam al-Masrah (Hebron). At Ashtar, he was co-writer on *The Era of Whales*, which was produced in the West Bank and at the Istanbul International Theater Festival in Turkey. He received his BFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU in 2004, an MFA from the Iowa Playwrights Workshop in 2007,

***Language Rooms* by Yussef El Guindi**

Directed by **Mark Routhier** (*Jihad Jones* at Golden Thread Productions and Climate Theater's *Skin*)

Monday, **April 6 at 7:30 p.m. at Stanford** (Admission: \$20)

Tuesday, **April 7 at 7 p.m. at SF Playhouse** (Admission: free; donation suggested)

In this dark comedy, two Arab-American investigators find their loyalty called into question at a CIA "black site."

About Yussef El Guindi

Yussef El Guindi's most recent productions include *Jihad Jones* and *The Kalashnikov Babes* (Golden Thread Productions) and *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat* (Silk Road Theatre Project). His plays, *Back of the Throat*, as well as *Such a Beautiful Voice* is Sayeda's and Karima's City, have been published by Dramatists Play Service. The latter one-acts have also been included in *The Best American Short Plays: 2004-2005* to be published by Applause Books in 2008. His play *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith* is to be included in *Salaam/Peace: an Anthology of Middle-Eastern American Playwrights*, to be published by TCG in 2009.

***Job* by Thomas Bradshaw**

Directed by PF Associate Artistic Director **Jonathan Spector** (also Artistic Director of Just Theatre, Anne Washburn's *I Have Loved Strangers* a "Top Ten Show of 2007")

Monday, **April 13 at 7:30 p.m. at Stanford** (Admission: \$20)

Tuesday, **April 14 at 7 p.m. at Berkeley Rep** (Admission: free; donation suggested)

An adaptation of the book of Job featuring God, Satan, Jesus, and Dionysus

About Thomas Bradshaw

According to the *New York Times*, playwright **Thomas Bradshaws'** work is "likely to leave you speechless." A professor of playwriting at Brooklyn College, Bradshaw has also been named one of the top ten playwrights to watch by *Time Out New York* and Best Provocative Playwright in 2007 by the *Village Voice*. He is the author of *Southern Promises*, which premiered at P. S. 122 in September. Other work includes *Purity*, *Strom Thurmond Is Not A Racist* and *Cleansed*, all published by Samuel French, Inc. He was a Fellow at New York Theater Workshop in 06-07 and is now a Usual Suspect. *Strom Thurmond Is Not A Racist* was produced in Los Angeles in June 2008 and *Dawn* received a workshop with New York Theater Workshop at Dartmouth College in August. *Dawn* has been translated into German and was presented at Theater Bielefeld in Germany in October 2008. *Job* was commissioned by Soho Rep, where Bradshaw is a 2008-2009 Streslin Fellow.

***Defiant* by George Brant**

Directed by **Marissa Wolf** (Artistic Director, Crowded Fire Theater Company; *Gone* by Chuck Mee)

Monday, **April 20, 7:30 p.m. at Stanford** (Admission: \$20)

Tuesday, **April 21, 7 p.m. at Aurora Theatre** (Admission free; donation suggested)

A woman incurs the wrath of a grieving country when she refuses to allow her husband's name to be honored following a national tragedy.

About George Brant

George Brant's plays have been produced by Trinity Repertory Company, the Kennedy Center, Capitol Hill Arts Center, the Playwrights' Center, WordBRIDGE Playwright's Lab, ATHE, Trustus Theatre, the Drama League, the Disney Channel, Circle Theatre, Factory Theatre, StreetSigns Theatre Company, Prop Thtr, Atlantis Playmakers, SourceWorks, Hyde Park Theatre, Boomer Productions and zeppo theater company. Most recently, his play *Elephant's Graveyard* was awarded the David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award from the Kennedy Center, a citation of "Best New Play" from the Austin Critics' Table, and the Keene Prize for Literature. He received an MFA in Writing from the Michener Center for Writers at UT-Austin in May 2008.

***This Is Not a Torture or an Engine* by Erin Bregman**

Directed by **Molly Aaronson-Gelb** (Co-Artistic Director, Just Theater)

Monday, **Apr. 27 at 7:30 p.m. at Stanford** (Admission: \$20)

Tuesday, **Apr. 28 at 7 p.m. at Ashby Stage** (Admission: free; donation suggested)

In a rhythmic redux of intersecting Greek myths about Pandora and Prometheus, mortals and immortals alike are given the proverbial bureaucratic run around in a nightmare about fire.

About Erin Bregman

Erin Bregman studied literature and playwriting at the College of Creative Studies at UCSB where she was a recipient of the Dilling Yang Fellowship in Dramatic Arts, and Corwin Award. She received a Magic Theater/Sloan Commission in 2006, and has had work performed or developed at the Playwrights Foundation, Just Theater, UCSB New Plays Festival, and UCSB Summer Theater Lab. Erin was selected for BASH! (Bay Area SHorts) portion of the 2008 Bay Area Playwrights Festival. She was a finalist this year for the Princess Grace Awards and Jerome Fellowship, is a member of PlayGround, and is currently working on a commission for Just Theater.

***Assisted Living* by Deirdre O'Connor**

Directed by **Jon Tracy** (*First Person Shooter* by Aaron Loeb; Marin Theatre Company's *Blood/Money*)

Monday, **May 4 at 7:30 p.m. at Stanford** (Admission: \$20)

Tuesday, **May 5 at 7 p.m. at Magic Theatre** (Admission: free; donation suggested)

When a family crisis brings home old anxieties and new surprises, Jane begins to see the upside of not always being the grown up.

About Deirdre O'Connor

Deirdre O'Connor's plays include *Jailbait* (Cherry Lane Theatre, NY), *Hero* (Naked Angels, NY), *The Death of May McAllister* (Northeastern University), *Penicillin* (Naked Angels), *White Jesus* (Naked Angels), *The Attic* (St Ann's Warehouse, Labapalooza), and *Wednesday* (Naked Angels). Deirdre was a 2008 Cherry Lane Mentor Project Fellow mentored by Michael Weller. Her play *Jailbait* will be produced by The Cherry Lane Theatre in 2009. She is a 2008-09 Lark Play Development Center Playwrights Workshop Fellow. Deirdre is a graduate of Hampshire College and Columbia University's MFA Playwriting program where she received the John Golden Playwriting Award.

***Natasha and the Coat* by Deborah Stein**

Directed by **Sean Daniels** (Associate Artistic Director, Actor's Theater of Louisville, formerly AAD of Cal Shakes)

Monday, **May 11 at 7:30 p.m. at Stanford** (Admission: \$20)

Tuesday, **May 12 at 7 p.m. at Berkeley Rep** (Admission: free; donation suggested)

Coffee, a priceless fur coat, the dry cleaner and Hasidic Jews all play a part in this comic take on fashion, mysticism, and religious tradition.

About Deborah Stein

Deborah Stein's plays have been produced and developed nationally at Seattle Rep, the Guthrie, Women's Project, Stages Rep, the Wilma, Live Girls, Dance Theatre Workshop, and Theatre Artaud; and internationally in Poland, Ireland, Edinburgh (the Traverse) and Prague. Between 2000 and 2006, she collaborated with Pig Iron on six new works, for which she was twice nominated for the Barrymore for Best New Play. Her writing is published in *Theatre Forum*, *Play: A Journal of Plays*, and *The Best American Poetry* of 1996. Current commissions include Children's Theatre Company and Actors Theatre of Louisville. Deborah received her MFA from Brown University,

two Jerome Fellowships at the Playwrights' Center, and is a member of New Dramatists.

***The Verizon Play* by Lisa Kron**

Directed by **Amy Mueller** (PF Artistic Director)

Monday, **May 18 at 7:30 p.m. at Stanford** (Admission: \$20)

Tuesday, **May 19 at Brava** (Admission free; donation suggested)

A woman, driven crazy by Verizon customer service endeavors to take revenge in this comic thriller drawn from actual events that may even have happened to YOU!

About Lisa Kron

Lisa Kron has been writing and performing theater since coming to New York from Michigan in 1984. Her play *Well* opened to critical acclaim on Broadway in March of 2006 and received two Tony nominations. It previously premiered at the Public Theater in Spring 2004 and was listed among the year's best, followed by an acclaimed run at San Francisco's A.C.T. in 2005. It is included in the anthology, "Best Plays of 2004-2005." Her play, *2.5 Minute Ride* premiered at La Jolla Playhouse in 1996 and then in New York at the Public Theater in 1999. It has also been presented by theaters including the London Barbican, Japan's Rinkogun Company, Baltimore Center Stage, A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle, American Repertory Theatre, Hartford Stage, and Trinity Repertory Company/Perishable Theater. *2.5 Minute Ride* received an OBIE Award, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations, an L.A. Drama-Logue Award, and the GLAAD Media Award for best play on or Off Broadway and was named the best autobiographical show of 1999 by New York Press. Kron's other plays include *101 Humiliating Stories* (Drama Desk nomination), *Charity* and *Montecore*, two short plays included in the anthology "Neon Mirage" and presented at the 2006 Humana Festival and the New York Fringe, *43/13*, produced by Dad's Garage Theatre in Atlanta, and *Martha*, which she co-wrote with and for choreographer/performer Richard Move. Kron is also a founding member of the OBIE and Bessie Award-winning theater company The Five Lesbian Brothers, whose plays, *Oedipus at Palm Springs*, *Brave Smiles*, *Brides of the Moon* and *The Secretaries* have all been produced by their theatrical home, New York Theater Workshop, and have been performed widely throughout the country both by the Brothers and by other companies. Lisa is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Cal Arts/Alpert Award, an NEA/TCG playwriting fellowship and grants from the Creative Capital Foundation and New York Foundation for the Arts. She teaches playwriting at the Yale School of Drama.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS FOUNDATION

Founded by Robert Woodruff in 1976, the Playwrights Foundation is a New Play Development Center dedicated to discovering and supporting local and national American playwrights across a broad spectrum of artistic and career positions, 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. PF alumni have gone on to win every major award in the theater world, including the Obie, the Tony, the Steinberg and the Pulitzer Prize.

CALENDAR EDITORS, please note:

To RSVP for Berkeley and San Francisco readings, call 415-626-0453 ext. 105 or email rsvp@playwrightsfoundation.org

To attend Stanford readings, email davidg1@stanford.edu

For more information visit www.playwrightsfoundation.org or call 415-626-0453, ext 105.

***Meat* by Samuel D. Hunter; Directed by Mark Rucker**

Monday, March 30 at 7 p.m.

Cutting Ball Theater, EXIT on Taylor, 277 Taylor St., San Francisco

Admission: free (donation suggested)

Tuesday, March 31 at 7:30 p.m.

Stanford University: 100B Ceras Hall, Palo Alto

Admission: \$20

***Language Rooms* by Yusef El Guindi; Directed by Mark Routhier**

Monday, April 6 at 7:30 p.m.

Stanford University: 100B Ceras Hall, Palo Alto

Admission: \$20

Tuesday, April 7 at 7 p.m.

SF Playhouse, 533 Sutter St., San Francisco

Admission: free; donation suggested

***Job* by Thomas Bradshaw; Directed by Jonathan Spector**

Monday, April 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Stanford University: 100B Ceras Hall, Palo Alto

Admission: \$20

Tuesday, April 14 at 7 p.m.

Berkeley Rep: 2025 Addison St., Berkeley

Admission: free; donation suggested

***Defiant* by George Brant; Directed by Marissa Wolf**

Monday, April 20, 7:30 p.m.

Stanford University: 100B Ceras Hall, Palo Alto

Admission: \$20

Tuesday, April 21, 7 p.m.

Aurora Theater: 2081 Addison St., Berkeley

Admission free; donation suggested

***This Is Not a Torture or an Engine* by Erin Bregman; Directed by Molly Aaronson-Gelb**

Monday, Apr. 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Stanford University: 100B Ceras Hall, Palo Alto

Admission: \$20

Tuesday, Apr. 28 at 7 p.m.

Ashby Stage: 1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley

Admission: free; donation suggested

***Assisted Living* by Deirdre O'Connor; Directed by Jon Tracy**

Monday, May 4 at 7:30 p.m.

Stanford University: 100B Ceras Hall, Palo Alto

Admission: \$20

Tuesday, May 5 at 7 p.m.

Magic Theatre: Fort Mason Building D, San Francisco

Admission: free; donation suggested

***Natasha and the Coat* by Deborah Stein; Directed by Sean Daniels**

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Stanford University: 100B Ceras Hall, Palo Alto

Admission: \$20

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Berkeley Rep: 2025 Addison St., Berkeley

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***The Verizon Play* by Lisa Kron; Directed by Amy Mueller**

Monday, May 18 at 7:30 p.m.

Stanford University: 100B Ceras Hall, Palo Alto

Admission: \$20

Tuesday, May 19 at 7 p.m.

BRAVA: 2781 24th st., San Francisco

Admission free; donation suggested

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