

CENTER STAGE PRESS

Center Stage Sets Playwright Showcases

Baltimore—February 18, 2016. Center Stage will host showcases of new writing by five members of the theater's Playwrights Collective on Feb. 29 and March 21 in Baltimore.

Playwrights, directors and actors will workshop works-in-progress all day and then present free public readings in the evening from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at Center Stage's temporary rehearsal space at 830 Guilford Ave. in Baltimore (the former Hott Spott Lounge). No RSVP is required.

During the Feb. 29 workshop and showcase, local playwrights **Alvin Eng**, **Craig S. Richie** and **Rachael Knoblauch** will work with actors and two directors, Center Stage Associate Artistic Director **Hana S. Sharif** and Rep Stage Co-Producing Artistic Director **Joseph Ritsch**.

The March 21 showcase will feature area playwrights **Jennifer Barclay** and **Liz Maestri** with direction by **Logan Vaughn** and **Elissa Goetschius**.

The Playwrights Collective is a program that allows a rotating group of writers to develop work, foster collaborative connections and share professional mentorship within the framework of a resident regional theater. Starting in spring 2015, a group of invited writers was asked to explore ways of working in shared support, while being offered a range of association and engagement with Center Stage. The Playwrights Collective is one of several artistic initiatives in support of new writing at Center Stage. Other programs include:

Play Labs: Center Stage offers two weeklong workshops a year for playwrights to develop new work, culminating in staged readings by professional actors during which audience members are invited to give their feedback. The spring Play Lab is *Shadowboxer*, with readings May 13-15.

Hot Desk Playwright Residencies: Selected playwrights are given a space to work, time to dedicate to writing, insight into the production process, and dramaturgical and developmental resources. This year's Hot Desk Playwright is Rachael Knoblauch.

Wright-Right-Now: At performances, at food trucks, and at other local spots, area playwrights write on-the-spot plays from simple prompts from passersby or patrons, which are printed or emailed to the passerby or patron.

BIOS

Jennifer Barclay is a Baltimore/DC-based playwright and actor, and is assistant professor of playwriting and performance at the University of Maryland. Her plays have been produced and developed by Steppenwolf, La Jolla Playhouse, The Old Globe, RedCat, The Kennedy Center, The International Theatre of Vienna, and The Edinburgh Fringe, among others. Awards include: Samuel Goldwyn Writing Award, Kennedy Center National Science Playwriting Award, Pinter Review, Princess Grace Finalist, and Heideman Award finalist. Fellowships include: The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, The Hawthornden International Writers Retreat in Scotland. Chicago-bred, Jennifer is a graduate of Northwestern University and UC San Diego (MFA under the mentorship of Naomi Iizuka), and she spent a year as the Shank Playwright in Residence at South Coast Repertory. www.BarclayStudios.com.

Alvin Eng is a native NYC playwright, performer and professor of theatre at Goucher College, where he will direct Lanford Wilson's "The Hot L Baltimore" in April. Currently, he is writing "Portrait Plays," a cycle of historical dramas about artists, as well as a memoir, *Our Laundry, Our Town*. The first "Portrait Play," *Three Trees*, about Parisian artist Alberto Giacometti and Japanese philosopher Isaku Yanaihara, was presented Off-Broadway with Pan Asian Rep and also performed at The Sorbonne in Paris. The second, *33 & 1/3 Cornelia Street*, dramatizes the fateful legacy axis of proto-Beat poet Joe Gould,



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New Yorker journalist Joseph Mitchell and iconic painter Alice Neel. 33 & 1/3 Cornelia Street will be performed at the 2016 HOWL! Festival and has been presented at NYU Fales Library and City Lore Gallery featuring such performers as Bob Holman, Martha Wilson, Paul Zimet and Kathleen Chalfant. As a Fulbright Specialist scholar in U.S. Studies/Theatre, Eng was artist-in-residence at Hong Kong City University. The U.S. Consulate Guangzhou invited him to perform his memoir monologue, *The Last Emperor of Flushing*, at XiaoZhou People's Hall in his family's ancestral Guangdong Province. He is honored to be a member of Center Stage's Playwrights Collective! www.alvineng.com

Rachael Knoblauch (Hot Desk Playwright) is enjoying her break into the world of playwriting as Center Stage's 15/16 Hot Desk Writer. Aside from playwriting, Rachael works as a professional designer in the DC/Baltimore area. Recent credits include: *They Don't Pay? We Won't Pay!* (Scenery, Ambassador Theatre), *Legally Blonde the Musical, Jr.* (costumes, Adventure Theatre MTC), *Henri IV Pt. 1 and 2* (scenery, Brave Spirits Theatre), and *Julius Caesar* (costumes, Gallaudet University). Rachael is a 2015 graduate of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where she studied theatrical design as a Linehan Artist Scholar. www.rachaelknoblauch.com

Liz Maestri's full-length plays include *Inheritance Canyon*, *Sinner-Man*, *House Beautiful*, *Fallbeil*, *Condo Condo Condoland*, *Somersaulting*, and *Owl Moon* (Original Works Publishing). Her work has been commissioned, produced, and developed at Center Stage, E.M.P. Collective, Field Trip Theatre, Great Plains Theatre Conference, INTERSECTIONS Festival, The Kennedy Center's Page-to-Stage Festival, Primary Stages/ESPA, Sewanee Writers' Conference, Taffety Punk, Theater Alliance, and Theater J, among others. Liz was awarded a DCCAH Artist Fellowship, Tennessee Williams Scholarship, Weissberg Foundation Award, and the DCCAH Young Artist Program Award. She has been a finalist for the Larry Neal Writer's Award, The Inkwell, and the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. Liz studied playwriting with the 24 With 5 Collective at New Dramatists, received a BA in Theatre from the University of Maryland, and is currently an MFA candidate at the Catholic University of America. Member: The Dramatists Guild of America, Center Stage's Playwrights Collective, and Playwrights' Arena at Arena Stage. www.lizmaestri.com.

Craig S. Richie is a Philly-born, Baltimore-based playwright, director, and producer. As a student at Goucher College, he had more than ten writing and directing credits, crowned by his thesis, a multi-genre exploration of human sexuality, *A Guide to Masturbation*. He started his relationship with Baltimore's playwriting in the most recent One Minute Play Festival, host by the EMP Collective. He then began working with Center Stage as their first Wright-Right-Now playwright. In addition to his work with Center Stage's Playwrights Collective, he is currently producing shows out of his house and studio, Shell Home in Old Goucher.

