

JEROME FOUNDATION FY 2008 Grants Awarded in Theater

The Cherry Lane Alternative Theatre

CHERRY LANE THEATRE, New York City, received a grant of \$30,000 in continued support of the Mentor Project. Cherry Lane Theatre serves established and emerging playwrights through mainstage productions and developmental activities. The Mentor Project aims to develop the careers of three nascent playwrights each year, who've been identified through a highly selective process. Mentors, noted American playwrights, guide the emerging playwrights through an intensive six-phase developmental process, culminating in showcase productions. Cherry Lane transfers one play each season from the Mentor Project to the mainstage series for its world premiere.

The Civilians

THE CIVILIANS, New York City, received \$11,000 in support of the development and production of new work during the 2007-08 Season. The Civilians is an artist-run company that works to strengthen the connections between theater and contemporary society. It creates original projects from investigations into real life. Using methods that combine documentary and artistic practices, the process encourages a deep, inquisitive engagement between the artists and their subject matter. In the 2007-08 season, The Civilians produced *Paris Commune*, an original play by Steven Cossen and Michael Friedman with music adapted from period songs by various French songwriters. *Paris Commune* revisited the radical cabaret of 19th century Paris to tell the story of a popular uprising of working-class Parisians in 1871. A second new work, *This Beautiful City*, is a play with music, created from interviews, which explores evangelical Christianity in its unofficial U.S. capital: Colorado Springs, Colorado. *This Beautiful City* premiered in 2008.

Clubbed Thumb

CLUBBED THUMB, New York City received \$15,000 in support of the production of new works by emerging New York City-based playwrights. Clubbed Thumb commissions, develops and produces funny, strange and provocative new plays by emerging writers. Since 1996, it has presented readings and workshops of over 100 plays and over 60 productions. Its works range in form and content. While it supports all emerging artists, it is particularly committed to providing opportunities for women. Support for emerging playwrights includes commissions, development and full productions.

The Ensemble Studio Theatre

ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATRE, New York City, received a two-year grant of \$36,000 in support of developmental programs for emerging playwrights. EST is dedicated to the development of new American plays and serves the theater community as a creative haven in which artists may initiate and develop new work. It provides artists with an artistic home where they can expand, develop and improve their craft through various levels of production. Its multifaceted development program includes Youngblood, a collective of writers under 30 who meet to develop new work, critique each other's writing and present public readings and new workshop performances. It also includes new work in the Thicker Than Water Festival; Octoberfest; Going to the River, a celebration of African-American women playwrights; and the mainstage season.

The Foundry Theatre

Jerome Foundation Directors authorized a grant of \$24,000 to THE FOUNDRY THEATRE, New York City, in support of the creation and production of new works by emerging artists. Created in 1994, The Foundry Theatre is a cross between a producing theatre and an artists' think tank. It commissions, develops, premieres and tours theatre works in tandem with dialogue events that bring artists together with public thinkers to investigate issues of contemporary resonance. Jerome subsidy is directed to the creation, development and production of works created by emerging artists. The Foundry's investment in works and artists outside of the theatrical mainstream; its commitment to emerging artists; its attentive, long-term developmental strategies and the breadth of its curatorial vision distinguish its work.

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre

IN THE HEART OF THE BEAST PUPPET AND MASK THEATRE, Minneapolis, Minnesota, received a two-year grant of \$34,000 in support of the MayDay Mentor Program for emerging artists. Founded in 1973, In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre explores and celebrates human experience and the wonders of the world's natural and cultural riches through performance, ceremony and teaching. For 33 years, it has produced an annual MayDay Parade and Festival. The MayDay Mentor Program immerses emerging protégé artists in the process of planning and creating ceremonial productions. Protégés receive information about the context, history and process of MayDay; study examples of other creative community-building projects; and receive specialized training in puppetry techniques for large, public outdoor events. They develop leadership skills through coaching as they engage volunteers in MayDay workshop activities. Master mentor and Artistic Director Sandy Spieler oversees the program, pairs mentors and protégés, leads group training sessions and serves as a resource.

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The Lark Play Development Center

The LARK PLAY DEVELOPMENT CENTER, New York City, received a two-year grant of \$24,000 to support developmental programs serving emerging playwrights. A laboratory for new voices and new ideas, Lark provides playwrights with resources to develop their work, nurtures writers at all stages of their careers, and invites playwrights to express themselves freely in a supportive and rigorous environment. The Lark's strength lies in its ability to identify the particular needs of each writer and tailor the process to support each play. Its repertoire of programs includes a Literary Department that reviews and responds to script submissions, Barebones productions, the Playwrights Workshop, studio retreats, roundtables, a Playwrights Week festival of workshop productions, international exchange residencies and an alumni playwright program.

Young Jean Lee's Theater Company

The Field / Performance Zone

THE FIELD, New York City, acting as fiscal sponsor for YOUNG JEAN LEE'S THEATER COMPANY, received \$12,000 in support of the creation and production of a new work, *The Shipment*, which is designed to be a hip-hop African-American identity-politics show written and directed by a Korean-American, Young Jean Lee. The work is an uneasy exploration of ethnic appropriation. It will have the feel of a show trying to destroy itself from within, offering up aesthetic maneuvers and narrative turns and ideas that are called into question and disrupted the moment everyone starts feeling sure of themselves. Her intent is to take apart the issues of appropriation and the realities and myths of representations of race.

Mabou Mines

MABOU MINES, New York City, received a two-year grant of \$60,000 in support of the *Suite* Resident Artist Program. Mabou Mines, founded in 1970, is a collective of artists who believe that life is performance and that the study and practice of one is the study and practice of the other. It has a distinguished production history and has won numerous awards for its groundbreaking theater works. In 1991, Mabou Mines established the *Suite* Resident Artist Program to meet the needs of emerging artists in search of a nurturing place to develop work. The members of Mabou Mines believe that the opportunity to experience process-focused development can be pivotal in an artist's career. Company members see it as their privilege and responsibility to offer emerging artists assistance in that formidable journey. The program is open to individual artists as well as partnerships and small ensembles. Artists from all fields may apply. *Suite* is a laboratory for artists to experiment with performance ideas; it is not a showcase or production program.

Mixed Blood Theatre Company

MIXED BLOOD THEATRE, Minneapolis, Minnesota, received two grants totaling \$60,000 in support of the commissioning, development and production of new works by emerging playwrights for its mainstage. Founded in 1976, Mixed Blood Theatre Company is a professional, multiracial theatre promoting cultural pluralism and individual equality through artistic excellence. It uses theater as a vehicle for artistry, entertainment, education and social change. Jerome support is directed to the New Plays Initiative in the 2007-08 and 2008-09 seasons. Mixed Blood used this support to commission and develop new works.

Mu Performing Arts

MU PERFORMING ARTS, Minneapolis, Minnesota, received two grants totaling \$60,000 in support of the New Performance Program. Mu Performing Arts is a Pan-Asian entity that creates theater and Taiko from the heart of the Asian American experience. It blends Asian and Western theatrical forms in telling Asian American stories. The New Performance Program commissioned new works from seven emerging artists, developed those works, and produced a select number in the mainstage season. Attention focused on experimental and interdisciplinary theatrical performance, encompassing spoken word and nontraditional performance. The Program unfolded in several phases.

Mu Performing Arts

The Foundation approved a grant of \$8,000 to MU PERFORMING ARTS, Minneapolis, Minnesota, in support of the 2008 National Asian American Theater Conference: Shaping Our Voice and Vision. Asian American theater company representatives and artists from around the country participated in shaping the voice and vision of Asian American culture as expressed through theatrical performance. Participants worked together to imagine the future of Asian American theater based upon discussion, sharing of insights and ideas, and formulating strategies to support sustainable growth and expansion. Jerome support subsidized three staged readings of new works by emerging playwrights from New York City and Minnesota, and provided some support for general conference operations.

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New Dramatists

NEW DRAMATISTS, New York City, received a two-year grant of \$80,000 in support of the New Works Process and the Composer-Librettist Studio. Founded in 1949, New Dramatists is dedicated to the playwright. Its mission is to find gifted playwrights and give them the time, space and tools to develop their craft so that they may fulfill their potential and make lasting contributions to the theatre. New Dramatists offers playwrights an artistic home and self-guided laboratory for seven years in the company of their peers. The New Works Process consists of the Playwrights Lab, a writer-driven readings and workshop series, and Playwright Services, which include symposia, craft discussions, international playwright exchanges, retreats, fellowships, grants, script duplication, writing facilities, a script library, advocacy and other efforts.

New York Theatre Workshop

NEW YORK THEATRE WORKSHOP, New York City, received a two-year grant of \$38,000 in support of its Artist Development Activities. New York Theatre Workshop is a contemporary theater company committed to the development of innovative theatre by supporting theatre artists at all stages of their careers. It is dedicated to exploring and presenting theatrical experiences that reflect, respond to, and invigorate the world in which we live and work. The Artist Development Activities at New York Theatre Workshop include a wide range of creative learning opportunities such as fellowships, artist residencies, readings, small-scale studio productions and a cultural exchange program. The Workshop maintains a core commitment to the Usual Suspects, a community of more than 400 theatre artists who are at the heart of its developmental activities.

Penumbra Theatre Company

PENUMBRA THEATRE COMPANY, St. Paul, Minnesota, received a grant of \$25,000 in support of the Readings Plus and the New Playground/Gym strands within Okra: African Diaspora Theatre Development process, a five-year project that provides a rigorous, yet nurturing, culturally-specific environment for the development of new works by artists. Penumbra's mission is to create professional productions that are artistically excellent, thought provoking, relevant and illuminate the human condition through the prism of the African American experience. Readings Plus brought New York City emerging playwrights to the Twin Cities for six days of development, culminating in public readings of their works. The New Playground/Gym focused on Minnesota artists and served as a testing ground and collaborative space for developing new works. Okra operates under the direction of Associate Artistic Director Dominic Taylor.

Pillsbury United Communities / Pillsbury House Theatre

PILLSBURY HOUSE THEATRE, Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a professional arts institution committed to the Settlement House tradition of creating art in collaboration with community. Housed within an inner city community center, Pillsbury House Theatre is a diverse company of artists working in partnership with diverse audiences to create transformational arts experiences. The Theatre received a two-year grant of \$19,000 in support of the development and production of new works by emerging playwrights on the mainstage and an annual reading series of new works by emerging playwrights. One reading in each series generally includes an extended workshop with actors and a director

The Playwrights' Center

A supplementary grant of \$10,000 was awarded to THE PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER, Minneapolis, Minnesota, to raise the annual fellowship level in the Jerome Fellowship Program. The Playwrights' Center fuels the theater by providing services that support playwright and playwriting. Five emerging playwrights each year are chosen from open call submissions by an independent panel to be fellows in residence in Minnesota for a year and receive support and services at the Center.

Playwrights Horizons

PLAYWRIGHTS HORIZONS, New York City, received a two-year grant of \$46,000 in support of its American Voice artistic development activities for emerging writers and productions of new works in the Peter Jay Sharp Theater. The mission of Playwrights Horizons is to support and develop the work of contemporary American playwrights, composers and lyricists, and to produce their new plays and musicals. Throughout its history, it has served as a launching pad for emerging writers as well as a home where established writers may bring new work. Its American Voice activities include evaluation of script submissions, readings of new work, developmental musical theater workshops, and playwright commissions. It welcomes submissions from writers and conducts up to 20 play readings each season. Some Jerome support finds its way to Peter Jay Sharp Theater productions of plays by emerging writers.

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13 Playwrights

13P/THIRTEEN PLAYWRIGHTS, Brooklyn, New York, received \$8,000 in support of the production of two new works in the 2007-08 season: ***Have You Seen Steve Steven*** by Ann Marie Healy and ***Crawl, Fade to White*** by Sheila Callaghan. 13P was formed in 2003 by 13 playwrights ready to take matters into their own hands by producing their work on their terms. The plan is to produce one play by each of the playwrights and then disband. 13P is committed to the understanding that there is no substitute for the commitment a company makes to a playwright by giving his or her play the chance to live and be seen in full production. Many of the plays scheduled for production have been incubated by other theater companies but have not yet received the productions envisioned by the authors.

Voice & Vision

VOICE & VISION, New York City, was founded in 1990 to develop and produce vibrant theater works with women artists at the core. It offers emerging female theater artists from all cultures, disciplines and backgrounds opportunities to develop their voices and visions in a professional theater context. A two-year grant of \$20,500 supports the ENVISION Retreat and Lab. Through a competitive submission process, six to eight projects are selected each year for the summer Retreat. After that concludes, the structure and content of the ENVISION Lab are determined, and plans for future development of the works are discussed. The Lab may involve readings, workshops and research.