



## The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage Philadelphia Theatre Initiative

### 2010 Grant Recipients

#### **1812 Productions**

*Grant Awarded: \$83,000*

1812 Productions will produce two shows in repertory, a first for the all-comedy theater company: the world premiere of *Our Show of Shows*, which celebrates television legend Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca's 1950s TV variety show, *Your Show of Shows*; and a production of *Laughter on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Floor*, written by one of the program's scriptwriters, Neil Simon. The new play will be directed by 1812 Artistic Director Jennifer Childs. Simon will contribute to the development of the script by providing his firsthand account of his experience on the original television show.

#### **Act II Playhouse**

*Grant Awarded: \$60,000*

Act II Playhouse will produce the regional premiere of Irish playwright Sebastian Barry's *The Pride of Parnell Street*, winner of the Critics' Circle Award for Best New Play, the Ireland/America Literary Prize, and recipient of multiple nominations for the Man Booker Prize. Barry, whose work remains largely unknown to local audiences, will travel to Philadelphia to work directly with Act II Playhouse and give readings of his written work at Barnes & Noble and the Free Library. Act II Playhouse will also collaborate with the Women's Center of Montgomery County to raise consciousness about domestic abuse and violence against women, issues that are directly and viscerally addressed in *The Pride of Parnell Street*.

#### **Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

*Grant Awarded: \$75,000*

The Annenberg Center, which has presented major Irish theater companies such as the Abbey Theatre and the Gate Theatre, will bring Ireland's Druid Theatre of Galway to Philadelphia for a week-long engagement of its production of OBIE Award and Academy Award winner Martin McDonagh's *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. The play will be directed by Garry Hines, Druid's founding Artistic Director, who originally discovered McDonagh. Druid Theatre, founded in 1979, is committed to presenting new work, especially that of Irish playwrights. The company will perform in Philadelphia for the first time in May 2011.

#### **Arden Theatre Company**

*Grant Awarded: \$110,000*

The Arden Theatre will commission its first world premiere for its 12-year-old children's series. *The Flea and the Professor* will be a musical written by Guggenheim Fellow Jordan Harrison with composer Richard Gray, who will bring their exceptional talents to Arden Children's Theatre for the first time. Based on children's author Hans Christian Andersen's final story, the play chronicles the adventures of a shipwrecked professor and a flea, and embellishes the original fable with a pop music score. The Arden Theatre will produce weekday matinee performances for student field trips and will distribute over 2,200 free tickets to low-income students and underserved audiences in the area.

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### **Brat Productions**

*Grant Awarded: \$50,000*

Influential '80s punk/New Wave band Devo, has granted the rights to their 30-year catalogue for the first time to local theater company Brat Productions for the creation of *Are We Not Men? The Devo Musical*. Brat plans to interpret Devo's musical repertoire as a science-fiction infused commentary on current social and political issues. The production will involve a team of theater artists, including OBIE Award-winning director Alex Timbers and choreographer Danny Mefford, who recently worked together on the rock musical *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* at New York City's Public Theater.

### **Inis Nua Theatre Company**

*Grant Awarded: \$14,500\**

Inis Nua will produce the American premiere of *Dublin by Lamplight* by Michael West, a play that incorporates a combination of performance techniques, including masks of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italian art form *commedia dell'arte*, the dramatic movement and makeup of Japanese Kabuki theater, and traditional mime. *Dublin by Lamplight* takes place during a single day in 1904, as a poor Irish theater company prepares to produce a pro-Irish play on the day that the King of England makes a royal visit to the city. The play has toured Ireland, England, and Australia since its Dublin premiere in 2004 and won the Stage Award for Best Ensemble at the 2005 Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

### **New Paradise Laboratories**

*Grant Awarded: \$52,000*

New Paradise Laboratories will enhance and challenge the conventions of the live, theatrical experience with a production that uses new modes of social networking and virtual communication. *Extremely Public Displays of Privacy* will be performed and filmed at public sites around the city, and audiences will be able to view the production in "Web-isode" video clips online and track the lives of the show's characters through Twitter feeds, Facebook profiles, and Google calendars. Audiences will also have the opportunity to visit specific filming sites around the city, where they can access video clips via cell phone and mobile devices. The project will culminate in a live performance in the fall of 2011. Key artists include OBIE Award winner Whit MacLaughlin as director and Barrymore Award winner Jorge Cousineau as media designer.

### **People's Light & Theatre Company**

*Grant Awarded: \$110,000*

People's Light & Theatre Company will produce the regional premiere of *Dividing the Estate* by the late Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Horton Foote. Foote received an Academy Award in 1963 for his screen adaptation of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and again in 1984, for his screenplay *Tender Mercies*. In *Dividing the Estate*, a once wealthy family, living in late-'80s Texas, grapples with the personal impact of the modern economy on its traditional way of life. As the play unfolds, humorous exchanges between the family's eccentric, multigenerational members belie a sad, unspoken irony: They are flat broke. Foote's script, made up of a cast of 13, is a perfect match for People's Light, which has a significant history of ensemble acting and a dedicated group of actors who have worked closely together for decades.

### **Philadelphia Live Arts Festival & Philly Fringe**

*Grant Awarded: \$110,000*

The Philadelphia Live Arts Festival regularly brings high-profile artists and innovative arts organizations from around the world to share their work with local audiences. The 2011 festival will feature the U.S. premiere of *The Devil and Mister Punch*, which takes its inspiration from *Punch and Judy*, an iconic puppet show well-known for its violent yet comic tone, and the villainous, mischievous personality of its main character, Punch. *The Devil and Mister Punch* promises to appeal to a range of audiences, including teenagers and students. This newly commissioned work will be directed by OBIE Award winner Julian Crouch, who has worked with major opera companies such as the Metropolitan Opera and the English National Opera, and who works as the co-artistic director of Improbable Theatre, an innovator in puppetry and improvisation.

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### **Philadelphia Theatre Company**

*Grant Awarded: \$110,000*

The Philadelphia premiere of Lynn Nottage's 2009 Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Ruined*, will be the centerpiece of the Philadelphia Theatre Company's (PTC) 35<sup>th</sup>-anniversary season. The play marks a continuation of PTC's ongoing commitment to presenting the work of contemporary American writers. Nottage, a Brooklyn-born playwright and the recipient of a 2007 MacArthur "Genius Award," will participate in a free public discussion in Philadelphia regarding her body of work and *Ruined*, which takes place in the Democratic Republic of Congo and explores sexual violence against women during a time of war and political strife. PTC will reach out to students in the Philadelphia area through workshops and discussions about human rights violations in the Congo and other third-world nations.

### **Theatre Exile**

*Grant Awarded: \$60,000*

Theatre Exile has garnered regional praise for its gritty, visceral theater productions that take artistic risks and result in challenging, unconventional performances. The theater will produce the Philadelphia premiere of Martin McDonagh's *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, a darkly comic and violent play that follows members of an Irish Republican Army splinter group and pushes the traditional boundaries of the theatrical experience with graphic special effects. Theatre Exile will work with seasoned professionals in fight choreography and pyrotechnics for this undertaking. Theatre Exile will market the production with a 24-week campaign of teaser postcards and posters in local bars and restaurants.

### **The Wilma Theater**

*Grant Awarded: \$110,000*

The Wilma Theater will produce *Macbeth*, the first production of Shakespeare in the theater's 37-year history. Wilma artistic director Blanka Zizka will explore its thematic relevance to the current political climate. The production will incorporate strong percussion and choreography to underscore the menacing and dark momentum of the play as it moves toward its final tragic ending. Brian Sanders, the artistic director of Philadelphia's JUNK, Inc., will provide choreography that highlights his acrobatic and technical skill, and percussionist/composer Pavel Fajt, a leading figure in Czech rock and alternative music for nearly 20 years, will provide a dramatic score.

### **Thaddeus Phillips**

*Grant Awarded: \$20,000*

Philadelphia theater performance artist and Pew Fellow in the Arts Thaddeus Phillips will develop and direct *Whale Optics*, an original full-scale theater and musical work, for a premiere at the 2011 Philadelphia Live Arts Festival. The storyline of *Whale Optics* is inspired by the structure of *Moby Dick* and follows a marine biologist on an obsessive mission to hunt down and record a humpback whale song. *Whale Optics* will address the theme of communication, comparing our interconnected global network to the mysterious and communicative nature of whale songs.

\* First-time PTL grantee

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## 2010 Philadelphia Theatre Initiative Peer-Review Panelists

**Bruce Allardice**

Managing Director, Ping Chong and Company (New York City)

**John Dias**

Founder and Producer, Affinity Collaborative Theatre (New York City)

**Paige Evans**

Director, LCT3 at Lincoln Center Theater (New York City)

**Jeffrey Horowitz**

Artistic Director, Theatre for a New Audience (New York City)

**Mara Isaacs (Panel Chair)**

Producing Director, McCarter Theatre (Princeton, New Jersey)

**Susana Tubert**

Co-Founder and Executive Director, Latino International Theater Festival of New York, Inc. and Executive Producer, TeatroStageFest (New York City)

**Harold Wolpert**

Managing Director, Roundabout Theatre Company (New York City)