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## **Philadelphia Young Playwrights Launches Paula Vogel Mentors Project**

*Living Honor Extends Legacy of Mentorship to Next Generation of Playwrights*

**PHILADELPHIA (June 5, 2013)** — Philadelphia Young Playwrights has kicked off its 25th anniversary celebration by announcing the launch of the **Paula Vogel Mentors Project**, a living award honoring the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and teacher and extending her mentorship legacy. The three-year pilot program will bring together five acclaimed professional playwrights as mentors for five promising young playwright fellows, who will embark on yearlong playwriting journeys.

Mentors in the inaugural year of the program are **Christina Anderson, Marcus Gardley, Aaron Jafferries, Lucy Thurber** and project curator **Quiara Alegría Hudes**, a Young Playwrights alumna and the first Latina and only Philadelphia public school student to have been awarded the Pulitzer Prize (2012, *Water by the Spoonful*). The final selection process for the fellows is currently underway as Hudes and Young Playwrights' Resident Director **David O'Connor** work together to make this year's five mentorship pairings, to be announced later in this month.

"The power of this multi-generational dialogue and interaction in stimulating and stewarding creativity is undeniable," says Hudes. "As I find time and again, the authenticity, innovation and fresh perspectives of student playwrights have much to teach us. It is we the 'senior artists' who are professionally enriched and greatly inspired by our interactions with the younger artists."

In January 2011, Vogel led a playwriting "boot camp," conceived by Philadelphia Young Playwrights Executive Producing Director **Glen Knapp**, in which Vogel and Hudes worked alongside high school and university students as well as Young Playwrights teaching artists and theater-makers such as **1812 Productions' Jen Childs, The Wilma Theater's Blanka Zizka** and acclaimed Philadelphia actor and playwright **James Ijames**. This boot camp experience leveled the playing field between professional artists and students, turning each participant into a learner, teacher and artist.

"Young Playwrights is exceptionally proud to be working with Pulitzer winners Paula Vogel and Quiara Hudes and our other distinguished Project Mentors," says Knapp. "We are very fortunate to leverage Quiara's fantastic commitment to Philadelphia Young Playwrights to model and extend Paula's unparalleled legacy as mentor to so many of today's most exceptional theater writers."

The Paula Vogel Mentors Project is made possible with support from the Independence Foundation New Theatre Works Initiative and the Nessa Forman Family Fund at The Philadelphia Foundation.

## **Artist Biography**

**Paula Vogel** first came to national prominence with her AIDS-related seriocomedy *The Baltimore Waltz*, which won the Obie award for Best Play in 1992. She is best known for her Pulitzer Prize-winning play *How I Learned To Drive* (1997), which examines the impact and echoes of child sexual abuse and incest. Other notable plays include *Desdemona, A Play About A Handkerchief* (1979); *The Oldest Profession* (1981); *And Baby Makes Seven* (1984); *Hot 'N Throbbing* (1994); *The Mineola Twins* (1996); and *The Long Christmas Ride Home* (2006). During her two decades leading the graduate playwriting program and new play festival and Brown University, Vogel helped develop a nationally recognized center for educational theatre, culminating in the creation of the Brown/ Trinity Repertory Company Consortium with Oskar Eustis, then Trinity's artistic director, in 2002. She left Brown in 2008 to assume her current posts as adjunct professor and the Chair of the playwriting department at Yale School of Drama, and the Playwright-in-Residence at Yale Repertory Theatre.

## **Professional Mentor Biographies**

**Quiara Alegria Hudes** – Project Curating Playwright – is the author of *Water by the Spoonful*, winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. *Water by the Spoonful* is the second in a trilogy of plays. The first, *Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue*, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2007. The third and final installment, *the Happiest Song Plays Last*, opened at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago in April 2013. Hudes wrote the book for the Broadway musical *In the Heights*, which received the 2008 Tony Award for Best Musical, a Tony nomination for Best Book of a Musical, and was a 2009 Pulitzer Prize finalist. Hudes' honors include the United States Artists Fontanals Fellowship, the Joyce Fellowship at the Goodman Theatre, the Aetna New Voices Fellowship at Hartford Stage, the Roe Green Award at the Cleveland Playhouse, and fellowships at Sundance Theater Institute and the O'Neill Theater Center. She is an alumna of Philadelphia Young Playwrights and New Dramatists and has been honored with a Resolution by the City of Philadelphia.

**Christiana Anderson's** work has appeared at A.C.T., Penumbra Theater, About Face Theater, Playwrights Horizons, Crowded Fire, Arts Nova and other theaters all over the country. Awards and honors include Schwarzman Legacy Scholarship awarded by Paula Vogel, Susan Smith Blackburn nomination, Lorraine Hansberry Award (American College Theater Festival), Van Lier Playwriting Fellowship (New Dramatists), Wasserstein Prize nomination (Dramatists Guild), Lucille Lortel Fellowship (Brown University). American Theatre Magazine selected Anderson as one of fifteen up-and-coming artists "whose work will be transforming American's stages for decades to come." She obtained her B.A. from Brown University and M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama. Her plays include: *Hollow Roots*, *Good Goods*, *Inked Baby* and *Man in Love*.

**Marcus Gardley** is a poet-playwright whose latest play, *every tongue confess*, was nominated for the Steinberg New Play Award. It premiered at the Arena Stage, starring Phylicia Rashad and directed by Kenny Leon. Other works include *On The Levee*, *And Jesus moonwalks on the Mississippi*, *This World in a Woman's*, *dance of the holy ghost*, *(L)imitations of Live* and *Love is a Dream House in Lorin*. His work has been presented at Lincoln Center, the Cutting Ball Theater, Yale Repertory Theatre, the Empty Space and the National Black Theatre Festival. A native of West Oakland, he received a B.A. from San Francisco State University and an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama.

**Aaron Jafferis'** musicals *Kingdom* (Richard Rodgers Award, NYMF Most Promising New Musical), *Stuck Elevator* (Creative Capital Award, NEFA National Theatre Pilot, Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award), *How to Break* (Barbour Playwright's Award), *Blood Magic*, *Shakespeare: The Remix* and *No Lie* have been produced, presented, or developed by The Old Globe, Public Theater, Sundance Theatre Lab, Atlantic Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and many others. A Former Open Rap Slam champion at the National Poetry Slam Championships, Aaron teaches poetry and hip-hop theatre in schools and health centers in his hometown of New Haven. B.A. from UC Berkeley, M.F.A. from NYU GMTWP.

**Lucy Thurber** is the author of twelve plays: *Where We're Born*, *Ashville*, *Scarcity*, *Killers and Other Family*, *Stay*, *Bottom of the World*, *Monstrosity*, *Dillingham City*, *The Locus*, *The Insurgents*, *Perry Street* and *The Unfinished*. The Atlantic Theater Company has produced *Bottom of the World* and *Scarcity*. She has had readings and workshops at Manhattan Theatre Club, The New Group, Primary Stages, MCC Theater, PlayPenn, New River Dramatists, Tribeca Theater Festival, Eugene O'Neill, The Public Theater and Soho Rep. Lucy is a member of MCC Playwrights Coalition and Labyrinth Theater Company. She is an alumna of New Dramatists and 13P. She is a recipient of the Manhattan Theatre Club Playwriting Fellowship, The Gary Bonasorte Memorial Prize for Playwriting and a LILLY Award. She currently teaches playwriting at NYU.

## **About Philadelphia Young Playwrights | [www.phillyyoungplaywrights.org](http://www.phillyyoungplaywrights.org)**

Founded in 1987 by Adele Magner, and led today by Executive Producing Director **Glen Knapp**, Philadelphia Young Playwrights is an award-winning program that taps the potential of youth and inspires learning through playwriting in more than 50 public and private K-12 schools each year. A leader in the region's educational programs for youth for 25 years and built upon its primary belief that all students have something important and valuable to say, Young Playwrights has enriched the Greater Philadelphia community, touching the lives of thousands of students, teachers and parents for the past twenty years. Since 1987, approximately 60 professional playwrights have led workshops, and nearly all of Philadelphia's professional theater companies have participated by performing, producing, or directing student works. More than 60,000 young people have participated directly as playwrights and audience members, seeing their work produced in class or by professionals. Young Playwrights' Literary Committee includes more than 60 educators, writers, parents, and former Young Playwrights students who read and critique each student script.

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