



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ***Writers Ages 11-18 See their Plays Come to Life at The Old Globe***

**Who:** Playwrights Project

**What:** ***Plays by Young Writers***, a festival of winning scripts from the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual ***California Young Playwrights Contest***

**When:** January 18 - January 27, 2018 (See schedule below)

**Where:** The Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre  
in the Conrad Prebys Theatre Center at The Old Globe

**Tickets:** Individuals \$25  
Seniors, Students, Military \$20  
School Groups of 10 or more \$10  
Other Groups of 10 or more \$15  
Opening night (includes reception) \$60

**How:** Playwrights Project (858) 384-2970 or [write@playwrightsproject.org](mailto:write@playwrightsproject.org)  
For more information and reservations

**San Diego** – Playwrights Project will produce its 33rd annual festival of *Plays by Young Writers*, sponsored by the Sheila and Jeffrey Lipinsky Family Fund, at The Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre in the Conrad Prebys Theatre Center at The Old Globe on January 18 - January 27, 2018. The festival will feature winning scripts from its *California Young Playwrights Contest* for ages 18 and under.

Contest winners were selected from 432 plays submitted by students from across the state. Four scripts will receive full professional productions, and two scripts will receive staged readings in this highly regarded festival of new voices.

All 432 contest submissions were evaluated blindly by Rachael VanWormer (Contest Coordinator) and a pool of theatre professionals who volunteered their time and expertise. The top 50 scripts were reviewed by Cecelia Kouma (Executive Producer), who worked with the Contest Coordinator to choose 11 finalists whose plays were evaluated by Final Judges. Final Judges in the selection process included Delicia Turner Sonnenberg (Founding Artistic Director, MOXIE Theater), Danielle Mages Amato (Literary Manager at The Old Globe Theatre), Jacole Kitchen (Casting Director at San Diego Repertory Theatre), Stephen Metcalfe (celebrated

playwright, film director and screenwriter), Deborah Salzer (Playwrights Project founder), and Ruff Yeager (prominent local actor/director/playwright/ producer and adjunct instructor at Southwestern College). Yeager (who is also serving as Festival Artistic Director), Kouma and VanWormer chose the final plays for the season based on the judges' feedback and interviews of top finalists.

The selection criteria focused on creative ideas, intriguing and authentic characters, fresh use of language, a story that is revealed through dialogue and action, and a script that would benefit from further development in the production process. All contest participants who requested feedback received individualized written critiques.

The Festival is divided into Program A (appropriate for ages 11+) and Program B (for ages 16+). Each program includes one staged reading and two full productions. Two acting ensembles will present the two different programs, with actors playing multiple roles.

**Program A** for ages 11 and up (Directed by Ruff Yeager)

Full Productions

*Sina and the Eel*  
*Some-Body*

Playwrights

Kiegan Lee, age 17, Aptos  
Tan'yeasia Brewster, age 17, Moreno Valley

Staged Reading

*Alone by the Playground*

Playwright

Aisling Archdeacon, age 11, Carlsbad

In *Sina and the Eel*, angsty teens faced with the responsibilities of leadership struggle to solve their island's famine. Selfish gods resurface long-held secrets in this modernized retelling of a Samoan myth. The play was written by Kiegan Lee, at age 17, while attending Aptos High School; Kiegan currently attends The University of Southern California. Ruff Yeager will also dramaturg this imaginative play.

When three preteens happen upon a dead body, what should they do?! The fanciful *Some-Body* explores questions of mortality through the lens of youthful naivety. The play was written by 17 year old Tan'yeasia Brewster who attends Nuvview Bridge Early College High School. Tina Brown will dramaturg.

In *Alone by the Playground*, Rock helps Paper and Scissors return to their rightful home in the classroom and a new friendship is unearthed. Playwright Aisling Archdeacon, age 11, composed her winning script in a playwriting residency in Mrs. Henderson's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class at St. Patrick's Catholic School in Carlsbad led by Playwrights Project Teaching Artist Steve Smith. Playwrights Project Teaching Artist Aleta Barthell will serve as the dramaturg/writing mentor.

**Program B** for ages 11 and up (Directed by George Ye)

Full Productions

*Fire Hazard*

*Idiot, I'm Great*

Playwrights

Cassandra Hsiao, age 17, Walnut

Savannah Spatafora, age 16, Burbank

Staged Reading

*A Life or Death Situation*

Playwright

Sofia Miller, age 14, San Diego

*Fire Hazard* unites a star student and rebel in the principal's office, of all places. Issues of privilege and perspective are explored through deft dialogue and compelling characters. Playwright Cassandra Hsiao now attends Yale after graduating from the Orange County School of the Arts, and this is Cassandra's second play to win the contest; her play *Supermarket of Lost* was presented during last season's Program A.

*Idiot, I'm Great* introduces intriguing off-the-grid characters, as bright and funny Agnes relentlessly pursues her indifferent soulmate William. Comedy combines with serious issues of emotional wellbeing as these quirky teenagers cope with coming of age. Savannah Spatafora, who penned the play, lives in Burbank where she attends John Burroughs High School. *Idiot, I'm Great* will be dramaturged by Contest Coordinator and *Plays by Young Writers* alumna Rachael Van Wormer.

*A Life or Death Situation* by Sofia Miller unites the forces of Life and Death. Sofia wrote her winning script in a playwriting program at Black Mountain Middle School, which was taught by Playwrights Project Teaching Artist Wendy Waddell in Ms. Gapusan's Language Arts class. Her writing mentor will be Thelma deCastro, playwright and Playwrights Project's Community Program Coordinator.

## ***Plays by Young Writers***

### **Schedule**

#### **Public Performances**

Saturday, January 20 – 7:30 PM – Opening Night (four full productions/no readings)

Friday, January 26 – 7:30 PM - Program B

Saturday, January 27 – 2:00 PM - Program B

Saturday, January 27 – 7:30 PM - Program A

#### **School Matinees** (available to press; not available to the general public)

Thursday, January 18 – 10:00 AM - Program A

Friday, January 19 – 10:00 AM - Program B

Tuesday, January 23 – 10:00 AM – Program A

Wednesday, January 24 – 10:00 AM - Program A

Thursday, January 25 – 10:00 AM - Program B

Friday, January 26 – 10:00 AM - Program A

### **Production Team**

Executive Producer

Cecelia Kouma

Festival Artistic Director

Ruff Yeager

Producer & Production Stage Manager

Charmaine Reed

Director - Program A Full Productions

Ruff Yeager

Director - Program B Full Productions

George Yé

Director - Program Staged Readings

Erika Beth Phillips

Dramaturg – *Sina and the Eel*

Ruff Yeager

Dramaturg – *Some-Body*

Tina Brown

Dramaturg – *Alone by the Playground*

Aleta Barthell

Dramaturg – *Fire Hazard*

George Yé

Dramaturg – *Idiot, I'm Great*

Rachael VanWormer

Dramaturg – *A Life or Death Situation*

Thelma deCastro

Costume Design

Jordyn Smiley

Sound Design

Justin Livengood

Scenic & Properties Design

Mike Buckley

Lighting Design

Nate Parde

Technical Director

Andrew Young

Box Office & Marketing Manager

Emily Fleet

**About Playwrights Project:**

Playwrights Project advances literacy, creativity and communication by empowering individuals to voice their stories through playwriting programs and theatre productions.

**Playwrights Project gratefully acknowledges support from:**

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