



PRESS RELEASE – Photos Available

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23rd Annual *Plays by Young Writers* Range from Gritty Realism to Farce

Who: Playwrights Project

**What: *Plays by Young Writers*, a festival of winning scripts from the
23rd annual *California Young Playwrights Contest***

**When: January 31– February 10, 2008 (See schedule below)
Media Opening, Saturday, February 2, 7:30, Features all four full productions**

Where: The Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza, San Diego

Tickets:	Individual	\$20
	Seniors, students, military	\$15
	School Groups of 10 or more	\$9
	Other Groups of 10 or more	\$12
	Opening Night (includes reception)	\$50

How: Contact Playwrights Project (619) 239-8222:

- Weekday matinees
- Opening Night: Saturday, Feb. 2
- General information

Call Lyceum Theatre Box Office (619) 544-1000:

- Evening performances
- Weekend matinees

Website: www.playwrightsproject.org

San Diego – Theatrical styles range from gritty realism to farce in the 23rd season of *Plays by Young Writers*, winning scripts from the California Young Playwrights Contest, produced by Playwrights

Project at the Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza, January 31-February 10, 2008. Selected from 289 submissions by teenagers statewide, 4 works will receive full professional productions and 3 will receive readings in this highly regarded festival of new voices. Contest submissions were evaluated by theatre professionals who volunteered their time and expertise. The final readers, who selected scripts for full production, were Martin Benson, Judith Dolan, and Patti Saraniero. All contest participants who requested feedback received individualized written critiques. Ruth McKee supervised the evaluation process, which focused on a sense of truth, imagination, fresh use of language, and grasp of dramatic structure.

Full Productions	Playwright	Director
<i>Find You in the Forest</i>	William Alden, 18, Santa Monica	George Yé
<i>Mister Wade Is Dead</i>	Niv Brook, 17, Newport Coast	Liz Shipman
<i>Hawaii</i>	Justin Kuritzkes, 17, Beverly Hills	Christian Lebano
<i>Step by Step</i>	James Monroe, 17, Escondido	Esther Emery

Find You in the Forest is the third script by William Alden, a sophomore at Yale College, to be staged in *Plays by Young Writers*. Unlike his earlier comedies, *Under the Hood* (2004) and *This Girl Is a Bird* (2005), the new script is a lyrical drama. Drawing on his experience with his grandmother, Alden, age 18, writes about a daughter who tries to reconnect with her mother, shrouded in dementia. Director George Yé brings similar family experiences to the script.

Mister Wade Is Dead, the first play written by Niv Brook, age 17, falls, literally, at the opposite end of the stylistic spectrum. *Mister Wade* is a farce about a married couple who stage an ersatz death to get their hands on insurance money. Wade is a bumbling, but talented, painter who can't sell his work. The playwright, a freshman at Chapman College, has fun satirizing the art world. Liz Shipman directs.

Justin Kuritzkes, age 17, wrote *Hawaii* for the playwriting festival at the Harvard-Westlake School in Los Angeles, where he is a senior. *Hawaii* reveals the conflicting emotions felt by Rob and Nicole, high school students thrown together for the wedding of his mother to her father. Kuritzkes

lets his characters delve into questions facing many adolescents. Christian Lebano directs this relevant two-hander.

Step by Step shows life from the perspective of a foster teen. Written by James Monroe, 17, a senior at San Pasqual Academy, the story follows a youth so determined to find his birth mother that he considers going AWOL from his group home. Monroe participated in three intensive residencies at school, taught by Playwrights Project, before gaining the confidence to enter his work in the California Young Playwrights Contest. Esther Emery directs *Step by Step*.

Readings

Festival performances will begin with readings of scripts by writers age 14 or younger, directed by Mike Sears.

Readings

King of the Couch

The Case of the Missing Pencil Tips

Little Flower

Playwright

Rory Gallagher, age 14, Carlsbad

Devyn Krevat, age 11, San Diego

Jessica Mersten, age 13, Solana Beach

Rory Gallagher wrote his play about an outdoors cat who yearns for the comfort of indoors, during a playwriting residency in his 8th grade English class at Calavera Hills School. In a similar program also led by Playwrights Project, Devyn Krevat at Solana Pacific School created her noire detective story about a pair of scissors who solves a classroom mystery. Jessica Mersten was inspired to write *Little Flower*, about a judgmental granddaughter, after seeing her older sister perform in last year's *Plays by Young Writers*.

Sponsors for *Plays by Young Writers* include the Mandell Weiss Charitable Trust, Helen K. and James S. Copley Foundation, Target Stores, Horton Plaza Theatre Foundation. Additional support comes from the Community Service Association (CSA) of San Diego Unified School District; County of San Diego, Community Enhancement Program, District 4; The Gold Diggers; Kiwanis Club of La Jolla; San Diego County Employees' Charitable Organization; California Arts Council; City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture; and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Plays by Young Writers
Public Performance Schedule

*** Saturday, Feb. 2 - (Opening Night)- All Four Productions Presented**

7:30 PM **Step by Step, Find You in the Forest, Mister Wade Is Dead, and Hawaii+**

Friday, Feb. 8

7:30 PM Little Flower, Case of the Missing Pencil Tips, **Mister Wade Is Dead, Hawaii+**

Saturday, Feb. 9

2:00 PM The Case of the Missing Pencil Tips, **Mister Wade Is Dead Hawaii+**

7:30 PM King of the Couch, **Step by Step, Find You in the Forest**

Sunday, Feb. 10

2:00 PM King of the Couch, Little Flower, **Step by Step, Find You in the Forest**

*Opening Night includes a performance and reception. Proceeds help support Playwrights Project.

+Recommended for ages 15 and older; other plays for ages 11 and older.

Reviewers who are unable to attend the above performances should contact Playwrights Project to attend a school performance, Jan 31-Feb. 10.

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