

Portland Center Stage at

THE **ARMORY**

PRESS CONTACT:

Claudie Fisher

503.445.3765

claudief@pcs.org

M E D I A R E L E A S E

JAW: A PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL ANNOUNCED

The 2017 JAW festival features new plays by Kate Attwell,

Briandaniel Oglesby, Mfoniso Udofia and Stefanie Zdravec

Free public readings will be held during the JAW Big Weekend, July 28-30



May 31, 2017 — PORTLAND, OR. Portland Center Stage at

The Armory has selected the four playwrights who develop

new plays in Portland during the 19th annual JAW: A

Playwrights Festival. **Kate Attwell's** play *Testmatch*

examines women's sports, mangos, and the ever-present

legacy of colonialism; *Small Steps* by **Briandaniel Oglesby** is

a comedy that traverses 50 million miles and a million years; **Mfoniso Udofia's** *In Old Age* explores the true nature of love and forgiveness and is part of Udofia's Ufot Family Cycle, a nine-play epic about Nigerian immigrants and their American-born children; and *Tiny Houses*, **Stefanie Zdravec's** comic riff on Pandora's Box that follows the ripple effect on several women who suddenly realize they can disrupt the status quo.

After two weeks of intense workshopping — with the support of directors, dramaturgs, actors and stage managers — the JAW festival culminates with the **JAW Big Weekend**, offering FREE public readings of these plays while they are still in development. To add to the excitement, JAW's **Press Play** series will host a slew of performances by local artists that will animate the building around the readings. The Big Weekend will kick off with readings of short plays written by the JAW Promising Playwrights — local high school students selected from The Armory's Visions & Voices playwriting program. **The JAW Big Weekend is July 28-30. Readings will be presented at 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 29,**

and Sunday, July 30. The JAW Kickoff Event will be held on Friday, July 28, at 8:00pm. As always, JAW is FREE and open to the public. No reservations necessary. A full schedule will be released closer to the Big Weekend. For more information visit www.pcs.org/jaw.



TESTMATCH

BY KATE ATTWELL

Present day: A rained out women's cricket match between India and England leaves tensions bare and, as the rainy day drones relentlessly on, no one can play nice anymore. Then: The British East India Company rules in 18th century West Bengal, as two members of the Royal Cricket Team, ardent players of the game, debate the rules of engagement, the problem of the women, the trouble with mosquitoes, all against the backdrop of a country that they are destroying through famine. And before that? ... *Testmatch* is a new play about women's sports, mangos, cricket, and the ever-present legacy of colonialism, written for an all-female cast.

KATE ATTWELL is a member of Ars Nova's PlayGroup 2017-2018, and was a 2016 member of Page 73's Writers Group and a finalist for the 2016 Page 73 playwriting fellowship. Attwell is a Mabou Mines Resident Artist, and a member of the Public Theater's Devised Theater Working Group. She co-founded and creates work with the interdisciplinary performance group, I AM A BOYS CHOIR. Recently her work has been seen at: REDCAT (LA), Under the Radar Festival (The Public Theater), JACK, La MaMa, Dixon Place, BRIC, BAM (Everybooty), The Bushwick Starr (Reading Series), Prelude Festival (CUNY), Segal Center (Film Festival on Theatre and Performance) and The Wassaic Project. B.A., performance and film, The University of Bristol, UK.



SMALL STEPS

BY BRIANDANIEL OGLESBY

Finally fed up with the bot-and-disappointment-filled world of online gay dating, Skip Powers volunteers to go to Mars. And NASA says ... "you'll do." This is a comedy that traverses 50 million miles and a million years.

BRIANDANIEL OGLESBY is a queer, (half) Latino emerging playwright and California ex-pat now living in Texas. He writes plays for teens and plays very much not for teens. His play *Halfway, Nebraska* was developed at Playwrights' Week at The Lark a few years ago, and went on to win the award for Outstanding Playwriting from The New York International Fringe Festival. His play *She Gets Naked in the End* won The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Latinidad Playwriting Award, and may or may not premiere somewhere in northern California in the next year. He is a three-time national finalist in The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. Regarding his theatre-for-teens: His adaptation of *The Jungle Book* was commissioned by Big Idea Theatre and published by Steele Spring Stage Rights. He recently wrote and directed a gay adaptation of *[a different] Romeo & Juliet* for middle schoolers. For 10 years, he spent his summers breathing barn dust on a farm as literary manager for The Barnyard Theatre, a company he co-founded housed in an old barn. He has an M.F.A. from The University of Texas at Austin. He now splits his time between Austin and Sacramento. www.briandanieloglesby.com



IN OLD AGE

BY MFONISO UDOFIA

Isolated within the walls of her derelict New England home and suffering the residual pain of years of abuse, an ancient woman, Abasiama Ufot, makes an unlikely spiritual connection with an elder stranger, Azell Abernarthy. Just as life takes a new turn, Abasiama and Azell learn the true nature of love and forgiveness.

MFONISO UDOFIA, a first-generation Nigerian-American storyteller and educator, attended Wellesley College and obtained her M.F.A. in acting from the American Conservatory Theater. Two of Mfoniso's Ufot Family Cycle plays, *Sojourners* and *Her Portmanteau*, recently opened at New York Theatre Workshop. In winter 2016, The Playwrights Realm produced the Off-Broadway world premiere of *Sojourners*. In spring 2016, Magic Theatre in San Francisco produced the West Coast premiere of *Sojourners* and the world premiere of the third installation in the Ufot Family Cycle, *runboyrun*. Mfoniso's currently working on Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Play On! Commission, translating Shakespeare's *Othello*. She's also the artistic director of the NOW AFRICA: Playwrights Festival and a proud member of New Dramatists' class of 2023. Mfoniso's plays have been developed, presented

and/or produced by Seattle Repertory Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, The Playwrights Realm, Magic Theatre, Dr. Barbara Ann Teer's National Black Theatre, Hedgebrook, Sundance Theatre Lab, SPACE on Ryder Farm, NNPN New Play Showcase, The Makehouse, Soul Productions, terraNOVA, I73, The New Black Fest, Rising Circle's INKTank, At Hand Theatre Company, The Standard Collective, American Slavery Project, Liberation Theatre Company and more. www.mfonisoudofia.com.



TINY HOUSES

BY STEFANIE ZADRAVEC

On July 17, 2014, Malaysian Flight MH-17 rained down upon a tiny, war-torn Eastern Ukraine village after being targeted by a surface-to-air missile launched by pro-Russian Separatists. Bodies and objects alike become fodder for those trying to escape the circumstances in which they were born. *Tiny Houses* is a comic riff on Pandora's Box that explores the ripple effect on several women who suddenly realize they can disrupt the status quo.

STEFANIE ZADRAVEC is a resident playwright at New Dramatists, a playwright-in-residence at Women's Project Theater and a member of the 2017 Keen Playwrights Lab. Plays includes: *Colony Collapse* (The Kilroys' List, The Theatre @ Boston Court); *The Electric Baby* (Two River Theater, Quantum Theatre); *Honey Brown Eyes* (Theater J, Working Theater); *The Boat* (Working Theater commission). Honors include a 2015 Helen Merrill Award, Francesca Primus Prize, Helen Hayes Award, Sustainable Arts Foundation Award, WAMCo Award; as well as fellowships from The Lark, New York Foundation for the Arts, The Playwrights Realm, Edgerton Foundation and Dramatists Guild; commissions/production support from NYSCA, Ford Foundation, NEA, Mellon Foundation, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PlayPenn, Women's Project Theater, The Lark, New York Stage and Film, and New Dramatists. Her plays are published by Dramatists Play Service, Inc. and featured in *The Best Women's Stage Monologues* (Smith & Kraus) and *97 Scenes From The Kilroys' List* (TCG). www.szadavec.com

ABOUT JAW: A PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL

Since launching in 1999, JAW: A Playwrights Festival has created a space for playwrights to have complete creative control and the resources to work on whatever they want to develop in their scripts.

Each year, playwrights are chosen from nearly 200 submissions nationwide to collaborate with directors, dramaturgs, actors and other theater professionals from across the United States. Of the 76 plays that have received workshops at the festival, 68% have gone on to receive world premiere productions at regional theaters, including New York Theater Workshop, Steppenwolf Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Portland's own Third Rail Repertory Theater. Thirteen JAW plays have received fully staged productions at Portland Center Stage at The Armory, giving Portland a strong national reputation for not only incubating new work, but helping to see that work to successful fruition.

THE JAW COMPANY

Portland Center Stage at The Armory's Associate Artistic Director Rose Riordan is the JAW Festival Director. Joining her on the JAW team are JAW Festival Co-Producers Kelsey Tyler and Brandon Woolley; JAW Literary Manager Benjamin Fainstein; JAW Festival Company Manager Will Cotter; Education and Community Programs Associate Clara-Liis Hillier; Education and Community Programs Coordinator Eric Werner; and the hardworking staff and volunteers of Portland Center Stage at The Armory who bring their talents and energies to JAW each year.

LOCATION: All JAW events happen at [The Armory](#), 128 NW Eleventh Ave., Portland, Ore., 97209

ACCESSIBILITY: Portland Center Stage at The Armory is committed to making its performances and facilities accessible to all patrons. Learn more at <http://www.pcs.org/access/>.

AGE RECOMMENDATION: Most JAW events are recommended for high school age and up.

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE AT THE ARMORY

[Portland Center Stage at The Armory](#) is the largest theater company in Portland and among the top 20 regional theaters in the country. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the company became independent in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since 2000. Around 150,000 visitors attend The Armory annually to enjoy a mix of classical, contemporary and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high quality education and community programs. 11 productions are offered each season, in addition to roughly 400 community events created — in partnership with 170+ local organizations and individuals — to serve the diverse

populations in the city. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 23 world premieres and presents an annual new works festival, JAW: A Playwrights Festival. Home to two theaters, The Armory was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

[JAW: A PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL](#) is supported in part by The Kinsman Foundation, the Oregon Cultural Trust, National Endowment for the Arts, Don and Mary Blair and Ronnie S. Lacroute. Additional support is provided by the Regional Arts & Culture Council and the Oregon Arts Commission. Portland Center Stage at The Armory's [2016-2017 season](#) is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle, and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank. Further support comes from Season Sponsors: Regional Arts and Culture Council, The Wallace Foundation and Oregon Arts Commission, a state agency funded by the state of Oregon and the National Endowment for the Arts. Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner. Portland Center Stage at The Armory was selected as a participant of the Wallace Foundation's [Building Audiences for Sustainability Initiative](#), a four-year effort with a nationwide cohort of 26 performing arts organizations.

###