



PRESS CONTACT: Claudie Jean Fisher
503.445.3765
claudief@pcs.org

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

JAW: A PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL 2016 Line Up Announced:

Three Featured Playwrights Bring New Scripts to Portland for Development; Two Workshops for PCS's Upcoming World Premiere Productions

Free public readings will be held July 29-31, 2016



JUNE 1, 2016 – PORTLAND, ORE. Three scripts have been selected from more than 175 submissions to be featured in Portland Center Stage's 18th annual festival for new work development, JAW: A Playwrights Festival. Playwright **Kevin Artigue** will develop *The Forcings*, a magic realism-infused play that stares unflinchingly at a family in crisis and a civilization barreling toward extinction; **Mia Chung** will develop *Catch as Catch Can*, a story exploring the shifting roles we play in the presence of family; and **Nathan Dame** will develop *The Saints*,

a funny and poignant journey of a young woman making her way back to hope. To add to the excitement of this year's JAW festivities, PCS will also workshop two of the world premiere productions that are slated for its 2016-2017 season: *Wild and Reckless*, a new musical event from Blitzen Trapper; and *Lauren Weedman Doesn't Live Here Anymore* by Lauren Weedman (*The People's Republic of Portland*, 2013 and 2015).

The playwrights will gather at PCS for two weeks of script development with directors, actors and dramaturgs, concluding with public readings of their scripts. **Free JAW public readings will be**

presented on Saturday, July 30 (12:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.) and Sunday, July 31 (4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.). A JAW Kickoff event will be held on Friday, July 29 at 8:00pm, featuring staged readings from Promising Playwrights, the six Portland-area high school students selected from PCS's Visions and Voices playwriting program. Throughout the festival, **Press Play** performance pieces will be presented before and after the readings, along with a selection of **Community Artists Labs**. A full schedule will be announced at a later date. All of the staged readings are free, no reservations necessary. Attendance for the labs is limited and determined by lottery. Find more information at www.pcs.org/jaw.

ABOUT JAW: A PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL

Since launching in 1999, JAW (short for Just Add Water) 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 60+ plays that have received workshops at the festival, more than 50% have received world premiere productions at a regional theater, ranging from the NY Theater Workshop to Steppenwolf Theatre, to Berkeley Repertory Theatre to Portland's own Third Rail Repertory Theater. Fourteen JAW plays have received fully staged productions at PCS, giving Portland a strong national reputation for not only incubating new work, but helping to see that work to successful fruition.

JAW COMPANY

The JAW Festival Director is PCS Associate Artistic Director Rose Riordan, and her JAW team at PCS includes: JAW Festival Co-Producer Kelsey Tyler; JAW Festival Co-Producer Brandon Woolley; JAW Festival Company Manager Don Kenneth Mason; JAW Literary Manager Benjamin Fainstein; JAW Literary Associate Mary Blair; and countless hardworking PCS staff and volunteers that bring their talents and energies to JAW each year.

➤ **Next Page: JAW FEATURED PLAYWRIGHTS**

2016 JAW FEATURED PLAYWRIGHTS

THE FORCINGS

BY KEVIN ARTIGUE

Nobody knows what happened to “The 17,” a group of environmental activists whose disappearance from an anti-Exxon protest site in Mexico sparked international outrage. Ernie Ledezma, the public face of Exxon’s operations, navigated the corporation through the scandal, and now, on the eve of his retirement, his loved ones have gathered to celebrate. But the ghosts that haunt his achievements cast a shadow over the festivities, and the appearance of a mysterious stranger triggers a deluge of secrets to slip through his fingers. Rife with magic realism, *The Forcings* is a dynamic new play that stares unflinchingly at a family in crisis and a civilization barreling toward extinction.

KEVIN ARTIGUE is a playwright and filmmaker born and raised in Southern California and based in New York City. He’s currently a member of the 2016 Interstate 73 Writers Group, and formerly part of The Public Theater’s 2014-2015 Emerging Writers Group. His play *The Most Dangerous Highway in the World* premiered in San Francisco in May, produced by Golden Thread and directed by Evren Odcikin. His plays have been presented and developed with The Public Theater, National New Play Network, New York Theater Workshop, Theatre of NOTE, Playwrights Foundation, Great Plains Theatre Conference, Yale Cabaret, Iowa New Play Festival, Golden Thread and the Playwrights’ Center in Minneapolis. A graduate of the Iowa Playwrights Workshop, Kevin was awarded a Provost’s Visiting Writer Fellowship at the University of Iowa, where he taught creative writing.

CATCH AS CATCH CAN

BY MIA CHUNG

The Phelans and the Lavecchias grew up in each other’s homes, sharing the good times and the bad in their tight-knit middle class community. But when Tim Phelan moves back home with unexpected news, the members of this extended family find their bonds and very identities put to the test. *Catch as Catch Can* makes unconventional use of theatrical conventions to explore the shifting roles we play in the presence of family.

MIA CHUNG is the author of *You for Me for You*, *This Exquisite Corpse* and *Skin in the Game*. *You for Me for You* had its UK premiere at The Royal Court Theatre in London (December, 2015) and is published by Bloomsbury Methuen Drama. The play premiered at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company (Washington, D.C., in association with Ma-Yi Theater Company and supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, 2012) and has also been produced by Company One Theatre, Portland Playhouse and Mu Performing Arts/Guthrie Theater. Mia's work has been supported by awards, fellowships, and workshops, including the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor, Civilians' R&D Group, Hedgebrook Women Playwrights Festival, Icicle Creek Theatre Festival, Inkwell Theatre, LAByrinth, Playwrights Realm, RISCA, Southern Rep Theatre, Stella Adler Studio and TCG. She is a member of New Dramatists, a Huntington Playwright Fellow, and an emeritus member of the Ma-Yi Writers Lab.

THE SAINTS

BY NATHAN DAME

As a child, Madison always felt adrift. She was shuffled around from foster home to foster home, and things haven't gone much more smoothly in adulthood. Just when her struggle for stability threatens to consume her, a chance encounter with a pair of young missionaries challenges Madison to put her past to rest and determine who she wants to become. Over the course of one gritty January in New York, *The Saints* chronicles the stingingly funny and poignant journey of a young woman making her way back to hope.

NATHAN DAME has had original plays and musicals developed by Roundabout Theatre Company, The New Group, Barrow Street Theatre, Woodshed Collective, In Absentia Productions and New York Theatre Experiment. He was a writer on The New Ensemble's *Experiment America*, produced by the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston and A.R.T. He was also a writer on Woodshed Collective's *The Office Project*. He is represented by Ross Weiner at ICM Partners.

➤ **Next Page: WORLD PREMIERE WORKSHOPS**

WORLD PREMIERE WORKSHOPS

WILD AND RECKLESS:

A NEW MUSICAL EVENT FROM BLITZEN TRAPPER

Portland folk rockers Blitzen Trapper refuse to be pinned down and boxed in. The acclaimed band has mixed genre after genre into their musical arsenal over the fifteen years of playing together. Now they're unleashing their sound — and knack for lyrical storytelling — on the PCS stage. They've mined their Oregonian roots to create a show that asks: What's the sound of a life falling through the cracks? Fusing the energy of a rock concert with the imaginative possibility of the theater, Blitzen Trapper and PCS join forces in this new project, tracing the unforgettable stories of ordinary Americans caught in an extraordinary struggle to not get left behind. **The world premiere production of *Wild and Reckless* will run March 16 through April 30, 2017, on Portland Center Stage's U.S. Bank Main Stage.**

LAUREN WEEDMAN DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE

BY LAUREN WEEDMAN

Lauren's current obsessions: love and heartbreak; big hair and tight jeans; Loretta Lynn and John Prine — or songs she thinks make her look skinny and appropriately tragic. The hilarious and versatile Lauren Weedman (*Bust*, *The People's Republic of Portland*) knows a thing or two about love gone wrong, and she's ready to sing her heart out about it (Yes! Lauren sings!) and tell you a few tall tales, too. Lauren will be joined by a band of fine musicians; and we're pretty sure her hair will be bigger than ever. **The world premiere production of *Lauren Weedman Doesn't Live Here Anymore* will run March 17 through April 30, 2017, on Portland Center Stage's U.S. Bank Main Stage.**

LOCATION: All JAW events happen at Portland Center Stage's home, the [Gerding Theater at the Armory](#), 128 NW Eleventh Ave., Portland, Ore., 97209

ACCESSIBILITY: PCS is committed to making our performances and facilities accessible to all of our patrons. Learn more at <http://www.pcs.org/access/>.

AGE RECOMMENDATION: Recommended for high school age and up. Children under 6 are not permitted.

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

[JAW: A Playwrights Festival](#) is supported in part by The Kinsman Foundation, Don and Mary Blair, Ronni Lacroute, WillaKenzie Estate, and a grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust: Oregonians sustaining, developing and participating in our arts, heritage and humanities. Additional support is provided by the Regional Arts & Culture Council/Work for Art and the Oregon Arts Commission. Portland Center Stage's 2015-2016 season is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank; Supporting Season Sponsors the Regional Arts and Culture Council, The Wallace Foundation, Work for Art and KINK FM. The official hotel partner for PCS is the Mark Spencer Hotel. PCS is a participant in the Wallace Foundation's Building Audiences for Sustainability Initiative, a four-year effort with a nationwide cohort of 26 performing arts organizations.

[Portland Center Stage](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PCS became an independent theater in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May 2000. The company presents a blend of classic, contemporary and original productions in a conscious effort to appeal to the eclectic palate of theatergoers in Portland. PCS also offers a variety of education and outreach programs for curious minds from six to 106, including discussions, classes, workshops and partnerships with organizations throughout the Portland metro area.

[The Gerding Theater at the Armory](#) houses the 590-seat U.S. Main Stage and the 190-seat black box Ellyn Bye Studio. It was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on Oct. 1, 2006. The capital campaign to fund the renovation of this hub for community artistic activity continues.

###