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

JAW: A Playwrights Festival Line Up Announced:

Portland Center Stage's annual festival for new works features four playwrights making their PCS debuts: Boo Killebrew, James Presson, Jen Silverman and Adam Szymkowicz

Free staged readings of JAW scripts will be held July 23-25, 2015



JUNE 10, 2015 – PORTLAND, ORE. Four scripts have been selected among over 200 submissions to be featured in Portland Center Stage's annual JAW: A Playwrights Festival. This year, all four playwrights make their PCS debuts, bringing fresh scripts that will be developed and presented in staged readings for Portland audiences: Boo Killebrew's *Miller, Mississippi*, James

Presson's *Long Division*, Jen Silverman's *Wink* and Adam Szymkowicz's *Colchester*. The playwrights will arrive in Portland for two weeks of script development with actors, directors and dramaturgs; concluding with free public staged readings. Readings will be presented on July 24 and 25 at 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on the U.S. Bank Main Stage in the Gerding Theater at the Armory. No reservations are required. A full schedule will be announced at a later date.

A JAW kickoff event on Thursday, July 23 at 8:30 p.m. will feature staged readings from six Promising Playwrights; Portland-area high school playwrights whose work will be performed in the Ellyn Bye Studio. To add to the excitement of JAW, Press Play brings dynamic performance pieces to engage audience members before and after the staged readings on July 24 and 25. Community Artist Labs will also be held

during the festival, featuring artists from across the nation conducting labs for the local community. Attendance for these labs is limited and determined by lottery. Find more information online: www.pcs.org/jaw.

ABOUT JAW

Since launching in 1999, JAW (short for Just Add Water) has created a space for playwrights to have complete creative control and the recourse to work on whatever they want. Each summer, four 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 later 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: Kelsey Tyler, JAW Festival Producer; Brandon Woolley, JAW Festival Assistant Director; Don Kenneth Mason, JAW Festival Company Manager; and Paul J. Susi, Education & Community Outreach Coordinator. By the Big Weekend, countless numbers of PCS staff and volunteers have brought their talents and energies to the final readings.

JAW SELECTION PROCESS

Scripts for consideration at JAW are submitted from literary managers, dramaturgs, playwrights' centers, and directly from playwrights. The selection process is "blind," meaning that the reading committee – made up of PCS staff members and Portland-based theater artists – reads each script without the knowledge of the title or playwright. Only when the final plays are selected by the committee do they learn who the author is and the actual title of the play.

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2015 JAW FESTIVAL LINE UP

Miller, Mississippi

By Boo Killebrew

A lurid family drama set against the backdrop of Civil Rights era Mississippi. As volatile racial progress barrels forward, we witness one family's downward spiral.

Boo Killebrew is a playwright, actress and co-founder of CollaborationTown Theatre Company. Killebrew is a Lila Acheson Playwriting Fellow at The Juilliard School, a member of the Primary Stages Writers Group, an alumnus of the 2013 Emerging Writers Group at The Public, a recipient of the 2013 NYFA Fellowship, an alumnus of TerraNova's Groundbreakers, and an Affiliated Artist and Kitchen Cabinet Member with New Georges. Killebrew is a writer for *Longmire* (A&E, Netflix) and in December of 2014, she sold a television pilot, *Aim High*, to Sundance Channel. Her plays include *Miller, Mississippi* (recipient of the 2015 Leah Ryan Prize); *Romance Novels for Dummies*, *Days Like Diamonds*, *The Play About My Dad* and *The Momentum* (NYC Fringe Festival Excellence Award for Overall Production of a Play; GLAAD Media Award Nominee). Her work has been presented at The Roundabout Theatre, The Public Theater, Williamstown Theater Festival, The Atlantic, New York Theater Workshop, New Georges, Clubbed Thumb, The Huntington Theatre Company, 59E59 Theaters, The New Ohio, The Labyrinth and Boston Playwright's Theatre. She was an Edward F. Albee Foundation Fellow, an Artist in Residence at NYFA, Robert Wilson's Watermill Center, The New York Theater Workshop, The MacDowell Colony, Williamstown Theater Festival, and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Killebrew has received two New York Innovative Theater Awards for acting and has been nominated multiple times for both playwriting and acting. She is the recipient of two Fringe Excellence Awards and The Bette Davis Foundation Award. She is a teaching artist with Roundabout Theatre Company.

Long Division

By James Presson

For Meryl, the bubble is finally bursting: she's stuck in a loveless marriage, there are street-level protests raging day and night, and Dad's dying upstairs from an incurable, unpronounceable disease. What's to be

done but drink the worries away? *Long Division* is a disaster-comedy depicting the cruel demise of the .0001%

James Presson's work has been performed at Goodspeed Opera House, La MaMa, Walkerspace, The Wild Project, Green-Wood Cemetery, The June Havoc, Orlando Rep, The Kraine, Under St. Marks, Penn State University and Fordham University, among others. He collaborated on *Voices in Conflict*, which ran at The Vineyard and Fairfield Theatre Company with additional performances at The Public Theater, Culture Project and Provincetown Playhouse; a film version aired on PBS and was awarded two Regional Emmy Awards. As a director, he was given a FringeNYC Excellence Award for his Shakespearean adaptation, *Richard 3*. He serves as the co-artistic director of Less Than Rent Theatre, a position he has held since the company's founding; in 2013 the company was recognized as one of *Indie Theater Now's* "People of the Year."

Wink

By Jen Silverman

Sofie is an unhappy housewife, Gregor is her bread-winning husband, Dr. Franz is their psychiatrist ... and Wink is the cat. Violent desires, domestic terrorism and feline vengeance at any cost make *Wink* a dark comedy about the thin, thin line between savagery and civilization.

Jen Silverman's work has been produced Off-Broadway by the Playwrights Realm (*Crane Story*), Off-Off Broadway by Clubbed Thumb (*Phoebe in Winter*), regionally at Actor's Theatre of Louisville (*The Roommate*, Humana 2016) and InterAct Theatre (*The Dangerous House of Pretty Mbane*). *The Moors* is upcoming at Yale Repertory Theatre (15-16 season). She is an affiliated artist with New Georges, Ars Nova, The Lark and Youngblood at EST, and has developed work with Playwrights Horizons, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Williamstown, Playpenn, the O'Neill, Seven Devils, New York Theatre Workshop and The New Harmony Project. She's a two-time MacDowell fellow, recipient of the Kennedy Center's Paula Vogel Playwriting Award for *Pretty Mbane*, and a New York Foundation for the Arts grant. *The Moors* has won a Leah Ryan/Lilly Award, and an Otis Guernsey New Voices Award from the Inge Center. *The Hunters* was selected for the Cherry Lane Mentor Project (mentor Lynn Nottage) and *Still* won the Yale Drama Series Award and was published by Yale University Press. Education: Brown, Iowa Playwrights Workshop, Juilliard.

Colchester

By Adam Szymkowicz

Welcome to Colchester, a town of dashed dreams and fervent hope, history and longing. And there's a hardware store too.

Adam Szymkowicz's plays have been produced throughout the United States and in Canada, England, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Germany and Lithuania. His work has been presented or developed at such places as MCC Theater, Ars Nova, South Coast Repertory, Playwrights Horizons, LCT3, Labyrinth Theater Company, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Primary Stages and The New Group, among others. Plays include *Deflowering Waldo*, *Pretty Theft*, *Food For Fish*, *Hearts Like Fists*, *My Base and Scurvy Heart*, *Herbie*, *Incendiary*, *Clown Bar*, *Fat Cat Killers*, *The Why Overhead*, *Adventures of Super Margaret*, *Elsewhere*, *Where You Can't Follow*, *A Thing of Beauty*, *UBU*, *Mercy*, *Rare Birds*, *Violent Bones*, *Sarah Sarah Sarah*, *Good Morning Good Night*, *Colchester* and *Nerve*. Szymkowicz received a Playwright's Diploma from The Juilliard School's Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program and an M.F.A. from Columbia University where he was the Dean's Fellow. He is a two-time Lecomte du Nouy Prize winner, a member of the Dramatists Guild, Writer's Guild of America, Primary Stages' Dorothy Strelsin New American Writers Group, and was a member of the MCC Playwright's Coalition and the first Ars Nova Play Group. He was the premiere Resident Playwright at Chance Theater in Anaheim, CA and the first playwright to participate in Bloomington Playwrights Projects' Square One Series. He has been to The Orchard Project, served twice as Playwright in Residence at the William Inge Center, received a grant from the CT Commission on Culture & Tourism, and was commissioned by South Coast Repertory, Rising Phoenix Repertory and Flux Theater Ensemble. His plays are published by Dramatists Play Service, Samuel French, Playscripts, Original Works Publishing, Indie Theater Now and featured in *New York Theatre Review* 2007 and 2009, NYTE's Cino Nights, Geek Theater, and numerous Smith and Kraus books. He has written articles for Howlround, *New York Theatre Magazine* and *The Brooklyn Rail* and has interviewed over 700 playwrights on his blog. He also has a web series called *Compulsive Love* (NYTVF).

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#pcs_JAW, #WePlayRough

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.

[JAW: A Playwrights Festival](#) is made possible in part by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, Kinsman Foundation, Don and Mary Blair, and Ronni Lacroute/Willakenzie Estate. Additional support is provided by the Oregon Arts Commission and Regional Arts and Culture Council. is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank; Season Sponsors the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Regional Arts and Culture Council, Work for Art, and Season Supporting Sponsor KINK FM. The Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for Portland Center Stage. Portland Center Stage is a participant in the Audience (R)Evolution Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the professional not-for-profit American theater.

[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.

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