

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES AT BROWN UNIVERSITY
IS PROUD TO PRESENT

WRITING IS LIVE

*A festival of new work by graduate playwrights
at Brown TAPS, and undergraduate writers at Brown TAPS and Rites and Reason*

FEBRUARY 3-13, 2012

www.writingislive.com

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Brown University proudly announces the third annual *Writing is Live* festival, a presentation of new works featuring six plays by writers in Brown's graduate and undergraduate theatre programs. *Writing is Live* celebrates the diversity and strength of new theatrical voices while simultaneously exploring the meaning of text in performance. Performance writing may take forms complete and incomplete, narrative and imagistic, compact or durational, so the festival stresses and plays with the idea of the *Live*, allowing the development and evolution of new work in conversation with the writer, directors, actors, designers, and audience. All are collaborators in the exciting life of the new performance script.

The festival (formerly the *New Plays Festival*) is made possible through support from an endowed fund for the Adele Kellenberg Seaver '49 Professorship in Literary Arts. This year, the festival presents readings and workshops of new plays by four graduate theatre artists from Brown, including Victor I. Cazares, , Margaret Namulyanga, Laura Colella, and Casey Llewellyn, as well as the workshop production of a new play by Jenna Spencer at Brown's Rites and Reason Theatre, and a play by undergraduate TAPS concentrator Samuel Barasch. The plays are acted and directed by students in the Brown/Trinity M.F.A. program, Brown University's undergraduate programs and the community at large.

A chief and storied site for the formation of playwrights, Brown's graduate playwriting program grants its students broad inventive license while offering close mentorship and profound resources in the department, the university, and the greater local to international communities. Run by playwright Erik Ehn, the program cultivates writers dedicated to the athletic development of their craft, the deep interrogation of the forms and purposes of their art (and of the place of art in the larger world), and a leaning into faithful transformation of society through theatrical action. Alumni of the program include Nilo Cruz (*Anna in the Tropics*, Pulitzer Prize), Sarah Ruhl (*The Clean House*, *In the Next Room*, Pulitzer Nominee, MacArthur Genius Grantee), and Quiara Alegría Hudes (*In the Heights*, *Elliot: A Soldier's Fugue*, Pulitzer and Tony Nominee).

With any questions or to schedule an interview with any of the festival's participants, including the graduating M.F.A. playwrights, please contact us at writingislive@gmail.com

Tickets for all of the festival's performances are free and available on a first-come, first-served basis. For ticket reservations, directions, and additional information including the full schedule, please visit <http://www.writingislive.com/>

NEW PLAY READINGS: FEBRUARY 3-5

LIQUORLAND

Written and directed by Laura Colella

**Fri. 2/3 @7:30pm-Sat. 2/4 @2pm
Leeds Theatre, 77 Waterman Street**

Liquorland, based on the epic novel *The Republic of Wine* by Mo Yan, is an edgy and often comical drama that hinges on a fantasy and on a nightmare. The fantasy is of the world's most staggeringly exquisite liquors, which have mind-blowing effects. The nightmare is of a human hierarchy whose bottom dwellers are subject to the ultimate form of dehumanization. Combining interrelated stories that take place in the U.S., South America and China, *Liquorland* plunges into a world of excessive appetites, surrealist fantasies, and an unquenchable thirst for intoxication and escape.

Laura Colella is in post-production for her third narrative feature film as Writer/Director/Editor, entitled *Breakfast With Curtis*. With her second feature *Stay Until Tomorrow*, Laura was a Sundance Institute Directing and Screenwriting Fellow. Laura has also made several shorts, and her films have cumulatively screened at over 100 festivals and venues, winning 20 awards. She is represented by Julien Thuan at United Talent Agency and her first two features are distributed by Passion River Films. Laura has been awarded numerous fellowships and grants, and was one of Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent Film. She collaborates on multimedia productions with Everett Dance Theatre, freelances as a screenwriter, cinematographer, camera assistant and editor, and teaches Directing and 16MM Film Production at the Rhode Island School of Design.

OUR TOWN

by Casey Llewellyn, directed by Taibi Magar

**Sat. 2/4 @7:30pm- Sun. 2/5 @2pm
Leeds Theatre, 77 Waterman Street**

Our Town is a dream of a rural town in the United States by Casey Llewellyn. In the dream, a revolutionary political prisoner has just been murdered by lethal injection, a stranger arrives, and the people of the town reckon with the future.

Casey Llewellyn is a theater artist whose work interrogates identity, collectivity, and form. Her work has been shown in her apartment, at Collect Pond, Brown University, Pratt Institute, Haverford and Pomona Colleges, and at Dixon Place in New York City as part of the 2011 HOT! Festival of Queer Performance, Puppet BloK, and Little Theatre. Works include *The Quiet Way* and *I Love Dick*, an adaptation for theater of the book by Chris Kraus. Current collaborations include *Existing Conditions* with Claudia Rankine and "Bothness and a Play": a *google doc* with Jess Barbagallo. Honors include a Lucille Lortel Playwriting Fellowship and a residency at Millay Colony of the Arts. Casey is currently studying writing for performance at Brown University with Erik Ehn and is the Assistant Editor of PLAY A JOURNAL OF PLAYS.

MORE

M.F.A. 2 WORKSHOP PRODUCTIONS: FEBRUARY 9-13

HE IS HERE HE SAYS I SAY

written by Margaret Namulyanga, directed by Heidi Handelsman

Thu. 2/9 @ 7:30pm – Sat. 2/11 @ 7:30pm
Leeds Theatre, 77 Waterman St.

Ruth is a young woman who throughout her life has listened to the advice of others to guide her in her role as a woman. After all, in different Ugandan cultures, there are norms that clearly state what a good woman should be like! Marriage, pleasing men and being subservient to men top the list. In this poetic meditation, Ruth decides to do what is not expected of a woman. She counters the orders of others with a candid personal voice and her belief that the time is right for women to stop following societal norms blindly. *He is Here He Says I Say* asks us to answer honestly: what is “a good woman”?

MARGARET NAMULYANGA is from Uganda. She is an MFA Playwriting student at Brown University. Before joining Brown, Margaret worked as the Development officer for Communication for Development Foundation Uganda (CDFU) as the Lead script writer and Editor for a radio Serial Drama, Rock Point 256 from June 2009 to July 2010. The radio drama is a Centre piece for the Young Empowered and Healthy Campaign aimed at reducing HIV prevalence among young people in Uganda. She first worked a script writer and language consultant for CDFU for three years, 2006 to 2008. She also worked as a drama consultant for Straighttalk Foundation Uganda in 2005. Margaret also worked as a Freelance field journalist for Radio Masindi and Star FM from 2003 to 2006. She holds a degree in Drama from Makerere University, Uganda.

RELIGIONES GRINGAS

by Victor I. Cazares, directed by Shana Gozansky

Fri. 2/10 @ 7:30pm –Sun. 2/12 @ 2pm
Leeds Theatre, 77 Waterman St.

All Güe-güe wanted to do was eulogize her grandmother; instead, she attacked the Seventh Day Adventist pastor that dared to evangelize at Grandma Yeya’s grave hole. Now she has to deal with the pastor’s wife (her still devout sister), a gringo who wants his social security card back, and the new cemetery she planted in her backyard. Victor I. Cazares’s borderland eschatology continues with *Religiones Gringas*, a play about how the Canales sisters bury their matriarchs, national boundaries, and the Second Great Awakening.

VICTOR I. CAZARES is a native of the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez border region. With new theater house, he was an artist-in-residence at Amherst College where nth presented his new work, *The Whale Play*. Other plays include *The Dead Women of J-Town & Smiley*, (workshops: Yale School of Drama and Oregon Shakespeare Festival) and *American (tele)Visions* (readings: Red Fern Theatre Company and the Yale Playwrights Festival). He holds a B.A. in Art History from Yale University and is a Playwriting MFA candidate at Brown University.

MORE

rites and Reason PRODUCTION: FEBRUARY 10-12

JUNE'S BLOOD

by Jenna Spencer, directed by Constance Crawford

Fri. 2/10 @ 5pm – Sat. 2/11 @ 2pm – Sun. 2/12 @ 7pm
Rites & Reason, 155 Angell St.

June's Blood is about three generations of African American women in Macon County, Alabama, living with the effects of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiments on their family life, convictions, and sense of self and place. A story about the generational inheritance of inequality, *June's Blood* seeks to identify the ways in which historical injustices have a way of leaving their mark and thus shaping contemporary realities.

Jenna Spencer is a sophomore at Brown University from Cambridge, MA. This past semester she took Professor Elmo Terry-Morgan's RPM playwriting course, which resulted in the writing of *June's Blood*, a play that builds upon her long-standing interest and commitment to social justice. In 2010 she was awarded the Princeton Prize in Race Relations. While she has been performing as an actress since the age of six, it was in high school that her interest for playwriting was sparked. During this time she wrote a ten-minute play chosen to be performed at the Massachusetts Young Playwrights Festival.

PRODUCTION WORKSHOP PRODUCTION: FEBRUARY 10-13

TRIGGER HAND

by Samuel Barasch, directed by Leandro Zaneti

Fri. 2/10 @ 8pm – Sat. 2/11 @ 8pm – Sun. 2/12 @ 2pm & 8pm- Mon. 2/13 @ 8pm
PW Downspace, 7 Young Orchard Avenue

Western culture is beginning to realize what a mess it's made with conceptions of drug abuse and addiction. In Vancouver in 2007, a slice of both privileged and passed-over catch themselves in civil battle with a momentum of dislocation that drives through family, community and government. If dependency doesn't belong to individuals, then whose is it? And if it's a part of us all, then do we fight it? Will the myth of starting clean consume us?

Samuel Barasch is from New York City and he will be finished with undergraduate study in May.

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