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## Newsletter Week 3

April 13, 2015

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### Meetings of the Week

#### Advisory Committee Meeting

Wed, Apr. 15 @ 4 pm  
GH 144

#### Undergrad Meeting

Wed, Apr. 15 @ 4:30pm  
GH 155

#### Production Meeting: New Directions

Thu, Apr. 16 @ 9 am  
GH 144

### Department News

### Opening this Week



The 2015 Wagner New Play Festival at UC San Diego features world premiere productions by our talented MFA playwrights, and directed, acted, stage-managed and designed by our nationally-acclaimed MFA companies.

This year's plays travel as far as Kenya and the Arctic Wilderness, while featuring everything from pro wrestling to radical plastic surgery, from timeless ghost stories to a salient critique of corporate America. With their sharp eyes and unique visions, these writers tackle subjects as familiar and universal as the relationship between mothers and daughters and what happens when you outgrow the people who know you best.



Opens Tuesday, April 14th at 7:30pm

[For tickets and performance dates, click here!](#)

When a cryptic but ominous letter arrives from her brother on the oil fields, thirteen-year-old Cozbi sets off for Valdez, Alaska to find him. Armed with a book by Donald Trump and an axe, Cozbi battles her way through an Arctic wilderness in pursuit of her missing brother, squaring off against a host of monstrous Ass-Hats on each rung of the corporate ladder. Part mythic journey, part workplace satire, *Borealis* is a darkly comic adventure about family obligation, career aspiration, and what we leave behind to make our way to the top.



Opens Wednesday, April 15th at 7:30pm

[For tickets and performance dates, click here!](#)

Three women sit in four chairs trying to reconnect. They were once inseparable, but now they've drifted apart. Life is not what it was, and not what they thought it would be. Maybe a weekend away will reignite their intimacy. *Three Women in Four Chairs* explores how small choices grow important over time, what we hold on to when life feels out of our control, and how our buried desires transform us in unexpected ways.



Opens Thursday, April 16th at 7:30pm

[For tickets and performance dates, click here!](#)

Jonas is home alone. His drug addict father has disappeared. Hattie, a former professional wrestler who has fallen on hard times, shows up out of the blue. Stuck together in a home in the middle in the New Mexico desert, Jonas and Hattie wrestle with the truth of who they are and the lies they tell to get by. When the Exterminator arrives, Jonas and Hattie soon realize that the only allies they have may be each other. *Widower* explores what happens when villains turn into heroes, enemies turn into allies, and loss is transformed into something approximating redemption.



Opens Friday, April 17th at 7:30pm

[For tickets and performance dates, click here!](#)

When Quinn discovers her estranged mother is dying, she returns to a home she fled long ago. As she cares for her mother, Quinn wrestles with disturbing childhood memories. What is her mother's secret? What do the bedtime stories of Selkies her mother once told her really mean? Told in three interconnected monologues, *Second Skin* investigates the fraught relationship between mothers and daughters, and how one mistake can change a lifetime.



Opens Friday, April 17th at 7:30pm

[For tickets and performance dates, click here!](#)

An American engineer moves to Kenya to build a road, and befriends her charismatic African driver. When a dispute over a local election lands her driver in jail, she questions the integrity of their alliance and wonders how well she knows the man she thought was her friend. *Death of a Driver* is a bracing examination of "doing good" abroad, the limits of understanding another person, and what happens when personal and political obligations collide.

## News for Faculty & Staff

### Kanopy Video Streaming at Geisel Library

The UC San Diego Library is providing a two-year trial access to over 26,000 videos available through Kanopy.

The videos come from leading producers such as HBO, BBC, Criterion Collection, First Run Features, Kino Lorber, PBS, etc. Many are from independent and specialty producers, with a focus on documentary films.

Examples of content: 62 films from the American Dance Festival, 94 videos from the DEFA Film Library's East Germany Collection, 35 interviews with experimental performance artists from the Kiss of Art series.

Use is limited to currently enrolled UCSD students (but not alums), faculty, staff, affiliated researchers, distance learners, and visiting scholars.

Faculty may screen these films for classroom use.  
To access, click here <http://ucsd.kanopystreaming.com/>

Send feedback to Robert Melton at [rmelton@ucsd.edu](mailto:rmelton@ucsd.edu)

## Special Newsletter Interviews

### UpClose Interviews with MFA Playwrights Kristin Idaszak, Will Snider, & Emily Feldman



### What is your hometown?

**Idaszak:** Chicago, IL



**Snider:** College Park, MD

**Feldman:** Philadelphia, or Baltimore, or Pittsburgh

**What is your astrological sign?**

**Idaszak:** Aries

**Snider:** Pisces

**Feldman:** Very much a Cancer

**How did you come to start writing plays?**

**Idaszak:** I've loved writing since I could hold a pencil and starting doing theatre when I was a kid, so in some ways it seems inevitable. I became a playwright instead of any other kind of writer because I love community, and I thrive on the collaborative process. In college, when I first started writing plays, one impulse to write came from frustration at not seeing female characters that reflected the women I knew, and not seeing characters that weren't on a gender binary.

**Snider:** When I was in middle school I wanted to be a film director and spent school breaks shooting backyard zombie films with friends. They were fun, but I had trouble filming other kinds of stories - it takes a lot of effort to write, direct, shoot and edit something on your family's digital camera and not have it look super unprofessional. This works well with zombie flicks but not much else, so my backyard auteur career kind of stalled. But I was acting in school plays, so I knew about theater, and it hit me one day that there was this amazing storytelling shortcut. With plays there was no distance between conception and execution - you write something, put it up and move on.

**Feldman:** Accidentally. I was in the English department in college and all of my friends were in Theater. I wanted to be where they were in the evenings, but I had quit acting for good in eighth grade after my pinnacle performance in an all-female production of Guys and Dolls. So I took the only playwriting class offered and I met a mentor who encouraged me to write plays and I kept doing it.

**What are you most looking forward to about WNPf 2015?**

**Idaszak:** I love the diversity of plays in the festival. It's exciting every year to see such different styles exist in one festival. This year I'm especially excited to see the wrestling moves in Widower, the many-armed monster in Borealis, the intervals in Three Women, and the last scene of Death of a Driver (which I won't give away here).

**What has been your favorite moment in this process so far?**

**Feldman:** Watching Sean McIntyre play 3 characters at the same time everyday has been a true joy.

**What kind of theatre excites you?**

**Idaszak:** I love theatre that's transformative.

**Snider:** I want surprise!

**Feldman:** Strange new plays done in simple, straightforward ways.  
Or familiar plays done by strange actors in new and exciting ways.

### Alumni News

#### Drama League Fellowship Awarded to Sarah Wansley



The 2015 directing fellowship recipients are Paul Bedard, Estefanía Fadul, Aneesha Kudtarkar, Emily Lyon, Brad Raimondo, Austin Regan, Daniel Rogers, Annie Tippe, **2015 MFA Directing Alum Sarah Wansley**, and Brandon Woolf.

The fellowships will begin on May 11 with Drama League Professionals Week, where the fellows will meet industry luminaries, attend Broadway and off-Broadway productions, and start their developmental training.

The 11 recipients, who will spend the next year as part of the award-winning program, have been accepted into the New York Directing Program, the Hangar Directing Program (a partnership with the Hangar Theatre in Ithaca, New York), and the Classical Directing Program (a partnership with the Old Globe of San Diego; the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival of Garrison, New York; and Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Massachusetts).

#### PlayPenn Announces 6 Playwrights for July Conference

JT Rogers, Eric Pfeffinger, Ellen Struve and **2015 MFA Playwriting Alum David J. Jacobi** will join Philadelphia-based playwrights Genne Murphy and James Ijames at summer new-play gathering.



The chosen playwrights will bring their works-in-progress to Philadelphia for in-depth work with a professional director of their choice, dramaturgical and design assistance and collaboration with professional actors from the Philadelphia theatre

community. Prior to the three-week rehearsal period, PlayPenn hosts a three-day retreat for conference playwrights, directors and dramaturgs. A complete schedule of the free readings will be released in May at [www.playpenn.org](http://www.playpenn.org), and reservations will open to the general public on July 1.

The following plays and playwrights were finalists in PlayPenn's selection process: Good Men Wanted by Kevin Armento, Stutter by Philip Dawkins, The Arsonists by Jacqueline Goldfinger, Queen by Maadhuri Shekar, Good Day by Diana Small, The Great Barrier by **MFA Playwrighting Alum Mat Smart**, Colony Collapse by Stefanie Zdravec, and Let Me Count the Ways by Martín Zimmerman.

[For more information, click here!](#)

### **O'Neill, NNPN, Kennedy Center and SDC Name 5 National Directing Fellows**

Five emerging directors from across the United States were selected from more than 350 applicants to participate in the first-ever National Directors Fellowship, including **2013 MFA Directing Alum Larissa Lury**.



"The makeup of this group is impressive, incredibly diverse and representative of those working in the industry today," said Wendy C. Goldberg, the program director and artistic director of the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, in a statement. "This type of program has been a dream of mine, and we're truly excited to help nurture and support the next generation of new play directors."

Planned to run over five years, the program will provide a total of 25 early-career directors with 18 months of professional development opportunities and hands-on experience each, culminating in a potential directing opportunity at an NNPN theatre.

[For more information, click here!](#)

### **Fiddler on the Roof Returns to Broadway! Casting Announced!**

The title of the opening number in Fiddler on the Roof is "Tradition," and it's becoming a Broadway tradition that every decade gets a revival of the classic musical.

Lead producers Jeffrey Richards, Jerry Frankel and Jam Theatricals on Thursday announced that the beloved show will return in a new production in fall 2015, starring five-time Tony Award nominee and **MFA Acting Alum Danny Burstein** as Tevye, the Russian-Jewish father of five daughters, struggling to keep hold of his family and faith during a time of persecution.





Directing the latest revival will be Bartlett Sher, who won a Tony in 2008 for his revival of *South Pacific* and will be represented this season on Broadway with *The King and I*, opening on April 16 in a production starring Kelli O'Hara and Ken Watanabe.

Burstein is currently appearing in *Cabaret* in the role of Herr Schultz, which earned him a Tony nomination earlier this year. He was previously nominated for *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Follies* and for Sher's productions of *South Pacific* and *Golden Boy*.

*Have news to share?* Send it to us at [TandDNews@ucsd.edu](mailto:TandDNews@ucsd.edu) and we'll pass it along for you. Photos are encouraged. Please be sure to let us know what year you graduated, if you're an alum. If you've changed your name, be sure to tell us what it was when you attended UC. Miss a back edition? Visit the [Newsletter Archives](#).

Sincerely,

[UCSD Department of Theatre and Dance](#)