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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Baltimore Center Stage Announces Honorees for 31st Annual Young Playwrights Festival

Baltimore—April 17, 2017. Baltimore Center Stage is pleased to announce the honorees for the 31st Annual Young Playwrights Festival, a yearly competition that invites students in kindergarten through 12th grade in Maryland to submit original writing. The winning playwrights will be honored with workshops and in-school performances. A selection of plays will be staged at the Annual Young Playwrights Festival, which will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 1, at Baltimore Center Stage, 700 North Calvert St., Baltimore, Md. 21202.

“The Young Playwrights Festival gets students fired up about writing and builds their confidence,” said Baltimore Center Stage Education Director Michael Wiggins. “This year’s submissions run the gamut from wonderfully absurd comedy, to heartbreaking tragedy, and everything in between. We are delighted to produce performances in the honored students’ schools and to host the festival once again in our newly renovated home on Calvert Street.”

This year’s honorees include students in schools from across the state of Maryland, including Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Frederick County, Harford County, Howard County and Montgomery County.

The Young Playwrights Festival on May 1 will include an awards ceremony and staged readings of plays by Alia Zerhouni, Zoe San Luis, Adriyona Reese, Joshua Salazar Alvarado, Zeke Hickman, Ruth Dawit, Jaya Connor, Dominick Anderson, Kate Jacob, Brian Jaegar, Eva Hauf, Seydou Tounkara, Julianna Gross and Miguel Fernandez. The event is free and open to the public; however, a \$5 donation is suggested. Please call the Baltimore Center Stage Box Office at 410.332.0033 to reserve tickets.

Honorees receiving in-school readings of their work include Sophie Marano, Dean Gedansky, Antonio Erdas, Gabriela Rivera, Hannah Ezell, Rory Cahill, Patrick Karaska, Hannah Ellison, Khloe Quill and Jason Fontelieu.

The Young Playwrights Festival is made possible through the generous support of Baltimore Center Stage’s many community partners, including T. Rowe Price Foundation,

Hearst Foundation, Transamerica, BGE, McCormick, The Kennedy Center VSA and Classic Catering.

2017 Young Playwrights Festival Honorees

Staged Honorees

Alia Zahra Colón Zerhouni

The Little Kiwi

Grade 2, Bryn Mawr School, Howard County

It's never easy to move to a new place, especially if you're a Little Kiwi. With grouchy neighbors and funny new smells, nothing feels like home. But with a little courage, and a lot of love, Little Kiwi might just find a way to fit in.

Zoe San Luis, Zeke Hickman, Adriyona Reese, and Joshua Salazar Alvarado

In the Village

Grade 4, Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School, Baltimore City

In a small, quiet village, the people fear their invading neighbors, the Raiders. In the meantime, their greedy King hatches a plan that seems certain to endanger the people. With only each other to rely on, the villagers band together to protect their homes, their families and their lives.

Jaya Connor, Dominick Anderson, Eva Hauf, Brian Jaegar, Kate Jacob, Seydou Tounkara

When Pigs Fly

Grade 6, Chevy Chase Elementary School, Montgomery County

Four-year-old Josiah has one dream in his young life: to ride a pig. His spoiled sister also dreams of a pig, that she can turn into a pigskin coat. When she takes Josiah to a pig race, he realizes that his dream can only come true at the expense of his sister's. Along the way, they both learn lessons from two zany competitors in the race, down-on-their-luck drifters with dreams of their own.

Ruth Dawit

Broke

Grade 7, City Neighbors Public Charter School, Baltimore City

Carter and May feel lost and alone after the death of their father. Maureen, their mother, struggles to care for her kids or herself, numbing her pain with alcohol. Although everything seems broken, each of them dreams of feeling loved and accepted; and with courage and hope, maybe this shattered family can begin to put the pieces back together again.

Miguel Fernandez

Pasta Night

Grade 12, Centennial High School, Howard County

After a rough day, at the end of a tough week, Noah wants to treat his young wife Emily to a special Pasta Night. But there is more lurking behind this simple meal than either of them realizes, or lets on; and as we watch their day unfold in reverse, we realize how much each moment can be filled with all the little moments that precede, and follow, it—and sometimes what is unspoken says more than words.

Julianna Gross

Maya

Grade 10, Sherwood High School, Montgomery County

Jimmy dreads coming to class, where every day he gets bullied by Biff and Billy. Only Maya, his bold and mischievous classmate, comforts Jimmy, telling tales of her adventures and encouraging him with her poetry. With her help, Jimmy might just stand up to the bullies and be as brave as Maya.

In-School Honorees

Dean Gedansky

Digital Escape

Grade 5, Roland Park Elementary Middle School, Baltimore City

In a futuristic world where virtual realities have merged with real life, Max lives immersed in technology. It all seems more fun than ever, until Max's friends start to go missing. Will he discover where they've gone before it's too late?

Sophie Marano

The Bad Llamas

Grade 5, St. Paul's School for Girls, Baltimore City

At the Bad Llama School, everyone is excited about the 50-millionth-anniversary party of Headmaster Chris. Everyone, that is, but Bob the Llama, who's waited millions of years to be headmaster. With the help of his llama friend Larry, Bob plots to expose the Headmaster and finally assume his rightful place as head of school.

Antonio Erdas

The Coolest Glasses

Grade 5, Roland Park Elementary Middle School, Baltimore City

Mr. Avocado dreams of being cooler and cooler. So when the newest, coolest sunglasses are advertised in the paper at army headquarters, he plots to steal them. But just when he thinks his plan will work, Mr. Avocado gets a big surprise.

Patrick Karaska

Did You Hear?

Grade 7, City Neighbors Public Charter School, Baltimore City

Trevor Wolf is having a bad day, and he's not sure why. After all, Trevor hates all the evil in the world, and tries to live a kindly life: greeting his neighborhood barista, helping a lost elderly woman, and comforting his sad bank teller. So why don't things seem to be going right for Trevor? It only gets worse when he finds out that there's a man on the run for murder....

Rory Cahill

Half-Animals: Animal Spirit

Grade 7, The Auburn School, Baltimore County

In a parallel universe, on a planet very similar to our own, children will, on rare occasions, fuse with their animal soulmates to become half-human, half-animal. But the tenuous balance of peace and harmony is threatened by the power-hungry General Ursus, who is jealous of the ability to morph from human to animal and back again. Seven extraordinary children from all over the world band together to save nature and civilization from the General's hateful regime.

Gabriela Rivera

Back to Reality

Grade 7, Sisters Academy, Baltimore County

It's the year 3094, and President Carl has brainwashed all of the citizens of Lavania to forget what freedom and equality are. Maya and her friends—sick of only being allowed to work as babysitters and cleaners because they are girls—do a bit of snooping as they clean President Carl's office. When they stumble upon artifacts from the past, they team up with other determined allies to bring the country back to reality.

Hannah Ezell

The Real Housewives of Colonial America

Grade 8, Harford Day School, Harford County

In a comic fusion of reality television and colonial America, Martha—"the only relatively normal person here"—does all she can to provide for her family in the challenging conditions of the American colonies. It is hard enough to put food on the table as a single parent while her husband is off fighting the British; Martha also has to contend with rich, devious housewives hungry for power and deliriously shallow.

Hannah Ellison

Present in Absentia

Grade 9, The SEED School of Maryland, Baltimore City

In the 50 years since they said "I do," James and Ethel have built a life together filled with love and contentment. In this haunting and poetic story of the inevitable grief we all face, we see that even in their absence, our loved ones never completely leave us.

Khloe Quill

The Devil in the Library

Grade 12, Governor Thomas Johnson High School, Frederick County

A small town in the 1940s American South has a big secret. Young Charlotte the librarian finds her suspicions growing when an apartment complex in an African-American neighborhood burns to the ground. Race, power, and violence converge with small-town relationships and politics as the secrets hidden within the library's walls come to light.

Jason Fontelieu

Worker B

Grade 12, Dulaney High School, Baltimore County

Brianna works hard as the assistant to a high profile and highly demanding, but highly secretive, boss. While Brianna keeps busy day and night, she's hiding her dreams of being a singer and trying to navigate her secret crush on a close friend. All of these secrets finally to come to a head, with a rousing song and dance number sure to get everybody up and grooving.

About Baltimore Center Stage

Baltimore Center Stage is a professional, nonprofit institution committed to entertaining, engaging and enriching audiences through bold, innovative and thought-provoking classical and contemporary theater.

Named the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage has steadily grown as a leader in the national regional theater scene. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kwame Kwei-Armah OBE and Managing Director Michael Ross, Baltimore Center Stage is committed to creating and presenting a diverse array of world premieres and exhilarating interpretations of established works.

Baltimore Center Stage believes in access for all—creating a welcoming environment for everyone who enters its theater doors and, at the same time, striving to meet audiences where they are. In addition to its Mainstage, Off Center and Family Series productions in the historic Mount Vernon neighborhood, Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations among a global audience through digital initiatives, which explore how technology and the arts intersect. The theater also nurtures the next generation of artists and theatergoers through the Young Playwrights Festival, Student Matinee Series and many other educational programs for students, families and professionals.

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