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25 THEATER JOURNALISTS CHOSEN FOR NEA INSTITUTE
AT USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION

Los Angeles, December 8 – USC Annenberg School for Communication announces that 25 arts journalists have been chosen from 22 states to participate as fellows in the first National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater. Through the generous support of the NEA, the Institute will be overseen by USC Annenberg’s School of Journalism from February 21 to March 4, 2005.

The groundbreaking program is part of a $1 million NEA initiative to offer intensive training for theater critics and their editors who work outside the country’s top three major theater centers.

Participants in USC Annenberg’s 2005 NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater are:

- Mary Barber
  Arts & entertainment reporter, Jackson Citizen Patriot, Michigan
- Christopher Blank
  Performing arts writer & critic, The Commercial Appeal, Memphis
- Jeffrey Bruner
  Film & theater critic, Des Moines Register
- Kerry Clawson
  Theater critic, Akron Beacon Journal
- Bob Fischbach
  Film & theater writer, Omaha World-Herald
- Trey Graham
  Contributing writer & copy editor, Washington City Paper, D.C.
- Brent Hallenbeck
  Arts & entertainment writer, Burlington Free Press, Vermont
- Donna Hartman
  Performing arts & features writer, Bradenton Herald, Florida
- Curt Holman
  Theater critic & columnist, Creative Loafing, Atlanta
- Jessie Royce Hill
Cape Cod-based freelancer
- Carl Hoover
  *Entertainment editor, Waco Herald-Tribune*
- Robert Keyes
  *Arts writer, Portland Press Herald, Maine*
- Pam Kragen
  *Arts & entertainment editor, North County Times, Vista, California*
- John Lamb
  *Reporter, The Forum, Fargo, North Dakota*
- Lisa Marie Millegan
  *Staff reporter, Modesto Bee, California*
- Sarah Miller
  *Entertainment reporter & reviewer, Press & Sun-Bulletin, Binghamton, New York*
- Tim Miller
  *Entertainment editor & film critic, Cape Cod Times*
- Jason Nix
  *Features editor & columnist, Opelika-Auburn News, Alabama*
- Robert Nott
  *Staff writer, The New Mexican, Santa Fe*
- Brett Oppegaard
  *Staff arts writer, The Columbian, Vancouver, Washington*
- Christopher Page
  *Theater critic & editor, East Valley Tribune, Phoenix*
- Lee Roberts
  *Feature writer, Racine Journal Times*
- Steffen Silvis
  *Associate arts & culture editor, Willamette Week*
- Tom Sime
  *Staff critic, Dallas Morning News*
- Anne Wilson
  *Arts & Entertainment Editor, Salt Lake Tribune*

These 25 fellows will be immersed in a rigorous 10-day program that aims to improve theater coverage through writing workshops, history lectures, acting and directing classes, observation of rehearsals, encounters with theater professionals, and performances of plays and musicals by Lynn Ahrens, Edward Albee, Euripides, Arthur Miller, Moliere and Shakespeare.

Among the guest faculty is master teacher Robert Brustein, founding director and creative consultant of American Repertory Theater and, since 1959, theater critic for *The New Republic*. Other nationally respected instructors include...
playwright Luis Alfaro; Misha Berson, chief theater critic for the Seattle Times; Ben Cameron, executive director of Theatre Communications Group; Gordon Davidson, artistic director of Center Theatre Group; Sylvie Drake, former theater critic of the Los Angeles Times; Velina Hasu Houston, director of dramatic writing at USC’s School of Theater; Barbara Isenberg, arts journalist and author of “Making it Big: The Diary of a Broadway Musical”; Thomas Leabhart, theater professor at Pomona College; Judith Lewis, features editor of the L.A. Weekly; Steven Leigh Morris, theater editor of the L.A. Weekly; Mark Murphy, executive director of REDCAT theater; Bill Rauch, artistic director of Cornerstone Theater; Judith Rousuck, chief theater critic of the Baltimore Sun; Leslie Tamaribuchi, co-producer at the CalArts School of Theater; and Jack Viertel, creative director of Broadway’s Jujamcyn Theaters and former dramaturg at the Mark Taper Forum.

Sasha Anawalt, author, critic and founding director of the USC Annenberg/Getty Arts Journalism Program, will direct the NEA Institute in Theater and Musical Theater. “We received 69 applications from 32 states, which alone demonstrated stunning interest in the advancement of arts journalism,” she said. “The NEA Institute recognizes that American theater deserves to be well written about and that if thoughtful attention is paid to the current generation of critics who are curious to learn more, the rewards will be great.”

The Theater and Musical Theater Institute at USC Annenberg is part of the NEA’s Journalism Institute triumvirate, along with the Institute for Music and Opera at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, and for dance at the American Dance Festival in Durham, NC.

“The arts depend enormously on lively and knowledgeable criticism,” said NEA Chairman Dana Gioia. “Providing access to the arts for all Americans in many ways begins with informed public coverage. Our new program at USC Annenberg will undoubtedly add more and experienced voices to guide those conversations.”