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25 Top Journalists Awarded Fellowships to USC Annenberg's NEA Arts Institute

December 20, 2007 – Twenty-five arts journalists have been chosen from 18 states to participate as fellows in the fourth **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater** at USC Annenberg. Through the generous support of the NEA, the Institute will be conducted by USC Annenberg's School of Journalism in Los Angeles from February 5 –15, 2008.

Participants in USC Annenberg's 2008 NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater include theater critics and editors, features writers and arts and entertainment editors from newspapers, radio and/or television stations. The 25 NEA Fellows are:

- **Thomas Cashman Avila** , affiliated freelancer, *Metro Weekly*, Washington, D.C.
- **Jeffrey Bahr** , features editor, *Aberdeen American News*, Aberdeen, S.D.
- **Alexandra Bonifield** , affiliated freelancer, *Black White Read*, and Pegasusnews.com, Dallas, Texas.
- **Sarah Boslaugh** , freelance writer, KDHX-FM and Talkinbroadway.com, St. Louis, Mo.
- **Michael Bowen** , arts and culture editor, *The Pacific Northwest Inlander*, Spokane, Wash.
- **Skylar Browning** , arts editor, *Missoula Independent*, Missoula, Mont.
- **Karen Cotton** , features and entertainment reporter, *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*, Cheyenne, Wyo.
- **Mario Echevarria** , staff writer, *San Francisco Tribune*, San Francisco, Calif.
- **Celeste Fraser Delgado** , contributing editor, MOLI.com, Miami, Fla.
- **Missy Frederick** , affiliated freelancer, DCist.com, Washington, D.C.
- **Philip L. Graitcer** , freelance radio producer, WABE-FM, Atlanta, Ga.
- **Daniel Hartill** , staff writer, *Sun Journal*, Lewiston, Maine.
- **Sherry Hughes** , arts editor, *The Keene Sentinel*, Keene, N.H.
- **Brendan Kiley** , theater editor, *The Stranger*, Seattle, Wash.
- **Jeffrey Korbelik** , arts and entertainment reporter, *Lincoln Journal Star*, Lincoln, Neb.
- **Paul Kosidowski** , affiliated freelancer, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, *Milwaukee Magazine*, and WUWM Milwaukee Public Radio, Milwaukee, Wis.
- **Beverly Lindsay-Johnson** , field producer and director, WHUT-TV, Washington, D.C.
- **Ashley Lindstrom** , associate editor, *The San Antonio Current*, San Antonio, Texas
- **Francis Ma** , assistant arts editor, *Community Newspaper Company*, Needham, Mass.
- **Heidi Masek** , staff writer, *The Hippo*, Manchester, N.H.
- **Frankie Moran** , affiliated freelancer, Sandiego.com, San Diego, Calif.
- **Annie Nelson** , features reporter, *Columbia Daily Tribune*, Columbia, Mo.
- **Wendy Rosenfield** , affiliated freelancer, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, Pa.
- **Emily Smith** , staff writer, *NOISE*, Lansing, Mich.
- **Amy Stumpfl** , affiliated freelancer, *The City Paper*, Nashville, Tenn.

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“This exceptional group of journalists represents the new model for arts journalism,” says **Ernest J. Wilson III**, dean of the USC Annenberg School for Communication. “Many of them are working across multimedia platforms, reporting in print, broadcast and online. It is a transformational, dynamic and exciting time for journalism and this group reflects that.”

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 major media markets.

“The vitality of the arts depends on lively and informed criticism, especially local reviews and coverage from their own communities,” said NEA Chairman **Dana Gioia**. “Outside our major cities, journalists who cover the arts often are over-extended with multiple beats and assignments that allow few opportunities to concentrate on various artistic disciplines. USC Annenberg has created an exemplary program of professional development for arts journalists.”

The 25 fellows will participate in a rigorous 10-day program that includes writing workshops, history lectures, acting and directing classes, observation of rehearsals, conversations with theater professionals, and performances of plays and musicals, including those by Athol Fugard, Marsha Norman, Austin Pendleton, The Wooster Group, Alex Timbers, and Joan Rivers.

Sasha Anawalt, author, critic and founding director of the USC Annenberg/Getty Arts Journalism Program, will again direct the USC Annenberg NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater.

Among the guest faculty are **Ben Cameron**, program director for the arts, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; **Gil Cates**, producing director, Geffen Playhouse; **Thomas Leabhart**, theater professor, Pomona College; **Steven Leigh Morris**, theater editor, *L.A. Weekly*; **Dominic Papatola**, theater critic, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*; **Misha Berson**, chief theater critic, *Seattle Times*; **Charles McNulty**, chief theater critic, *Los Angeles Times*; and **Jack Viertel**, artistic director of *City Center Encores!*. **Carey Perloff**, artistic director of San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater, will give the keynote address.

The Theater and Musical Theater Institute at USC Annenberg is one of three NEA Arts Journalism Institutes, along with the Institute for Music and Opera at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York and the Institute for Dance at the American Dance Festival in Durham, North Carolina.

Nearly 50 applications were received from theater writers, editors and critics from 28 states and from a variety of media. Each newspaper, radio and television station represented in the 2008 fellowship is new to the NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater.

For more information about the NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater, visit <http://annenberg.usc.edu/nea>.