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USC Annenberg announces fifth NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater

December 19, 2008 – The **USC Annenberg School for Communication** and the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** announced today that applications are now being accepted for the fifth annual Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater. The institute, which will take place April 14-24, 2009, is an 11-day intensive workshop in theater and musical theater for writers, editors, and broadcast and online producers from the 50 states and Puerto Rico.

Institute applications are due January 23, 2009.

“In good times and bad, theater is an art form that has always been important to Americans,” said **Geneva Overholser**, director of USC Annenberg’s School of Journalism. “For journalists, theater provides a view of people’s social, political, economic, and psychological concerns that can sometimes be more truthful and illuminating than real stories and hard news. Arts journalism is vital to the whole picture.”

“Arts journalists are facing challenging times as are newspapers nationwide,” said NEA Chairman **Dana Gioia**. “Our theater journalism institute offers these writers a chance to step away from their newsrooms and busy freelancing lives to focus on the reasons they originally became arts journalists. That is, a love for writing and a passionate commitment to the arts.”

Based in Los Angeles, the fellowship provides a total immersion experience that includes attending as many as ten performances or rehearsals. Participants will meet theater professionals ranging from directors and administrators of L.A.’s primary theater companies to critics of national stature, who will engage them individually for writing instruction and exercises. Professional sessions addressing changes in the media industry will be offered and special attention will be paid to building digital media skills. No specialized knowledge of theater is required. Staff journalists and freelancers who work in print, radio, TV or online media are welcome to apply.

Sasha Anawalt, director of USC Annenberg School for Communication’s M.A. degree program in Specialized Journalism (The Arts), will direct the NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater.

“One hundred journalists from 45 states have participated in this program over the past four years,” said Anawalt. “Through them the institute has affected many different arts communities,

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Page 2 of 2

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because they return awakened to new ideas and ways of seeing. The 2009 institute will ask some big questions about theater criticism and reporting, such as: Are they still relevant practices? Why? Can one make a living at them? How? Do traditional arts journalism values still hold? When? And, what are they? Our emphasis will be on entrepreneurial skill building and digital media fluency.”

The Theater and Musical Theater Institute at USC Annenberg School for Communication 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 Criticism](#) at the American Dance Festival in Durham, N.C. Funded by a multimillion-dollar NEA initiative, the institutes offer intensive training for arts reporters and their editors, especially those who live and work outside the major cultural centers of Los Angeles, New York City and Chicago. The program covers most of the participants’ expenses.

For more information, visit <http://annenberg.usc.edu/nea>

About the National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts – both new and established – bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Arts Endowment is the largest national funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities and military bases. For more information, please visit www.arts.gov.

About the USC Annenberg School for Communication

Located in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, the [USC Annenberg School for Communication](#) is among the nation’s leading institutions devoted to the study of arts journalism and criticism. It offers an innovative, nine-month graduate degree program focusing on arts journalism in partnership with USC’s five arts schools ([learn more](#)). Its midcareer education programs include the USC Annenberg/Getty Arts Journalism Program, the Knight Digital Media Center, the California Endowment Health Journalism Fellowships, and the Institute for Justice and Journalism ([learn more about these programs](#)). In addition to its programs for working journalists, USC Annenberg enrolls more than 1,900 students earning undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in journalism, communication, public diplomacy, and public relations.

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