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

April 5, 2010 – Twenty-five arts journalists have been chosen from 16 states to participate as fellows in the sixth **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 May 17-27, 2010.

Participants in USC Annenberg's 2010 NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater include theater critics, reporters and editors, as well as general arts and entertainment journalists. Many of them have shifted from print to online or are finding the balance in between. Some also work in radio. The 25 NEA Fellows are:

- **Bob Abelman**, affiliated theater critic, *News-Herald*, *Chagrin Valley Times*, *Solon Times* and *Geauga Times Courier*, Cleveland, Ohio.
- **Sabrina Artel**, independent radio producer and host, performance coordinator of "Trailer Talk," Liberty, N.Y.
- **Kelly Baker Ashkettle**, arts writer, *In This Week*, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- **Ian Buckwalter**, affiliated theater critic, DCist.com and NPR.org, Washington, D.C.
- **Lindsay Christians**, fine arts reporter, *The Capital Times* and *Wisconsin State Journal*, Madison, Wis.
- **Mark Cofta**, theater critic and arts correspondent, *Philadelphia City Paper*, Pennsylvania.
- **Sarah Fisch**, arts and online editor, *San Antonio Current*, Texas.
- **Nicole Gluckstern**, affiliated theater critic, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, California.
- **Matthew Irwin**, editor and reporter, *Jackson Hole Weekly*, Wyoming.
- **Michael Janairo**, arts & entertainment editor, *Times Union*, Albany, N.Y.
- **Melinda Johnson**, arts editor, *Post-Standard*, Syracuse, N.Y.
- **Mayank Keshaviah**, affiliated theater critic, *LA Weekly*, Los Angeles, Calif.
- **Elizabeth Kramer**, arts and humanities reporter, Louisville Public Media, Kentucky.
- **Larry Laneer**, affiliated theater critic, *Oklahoma Gazette*, Oklahoma City, Okla.
- **Christa Lawler**, arts & entertainment reporter, *Duluth News Tribune*, Minnesota.
- **Charles Patton**, arts writer, *The Florida Times-Union*, Jacksonville, Fla.

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- **Cindy Pierre**, theater critic and senior writer, *stageandcinema.com*, Elmhurst, N.Y.
- **Zachary Pincus-Roth**, freelance arts journalist, *Los Angeles Times*, Slate.com and other publications, Los Angeles, Calif.
- **Susan Saccoccia**, affiliated arts journalist, *Bay State Banner*, Boston, Mass.
- **Ben Siegel**, editor and writer, *Block Club Magazine*, Buffalo, N.Y.
- **John Staton**, arts & culture writer and editor, StarNews Media, Wilmington, N.C.
- **Suzi Steffen**, performing and visual arts editor, *Eugene Weekly*, Oregon.
- **Angie Fiedler Sutton**, associate editor, *KC Stage Magazine*, Kansas City, Mo.
- **Emiko Tamagawa**, associate producer, WBUR's "Here and Now," Boston, Mass.
- **Robert Waddell**, reporter, MyLatinoVoice.com and VirtualBoricua.org, Bronx, N.Y.

"I'm calling this the post-shock journalism generation," said **Sasha Anawalt**, director of the NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater. "Many Fellows in this year's class have created ways to practice their craft, demonstrating entrepreneurial spirit and confidence in spite of the economic tailspin. These young professionals (their average age is 32) have used technology and the Internet to serve the arts and their passion for covering theater. They are good, inquisitive journalists determined not just to survive, but thrive. We look forward to helping them go the distance."

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, N.C.

The 25 NEA Fellows will participate in a rigorous 11-day program that includes writing workshops and one-on-one master classes. Among the guest faculty are **Hilton Als**, theater critic for *The New Yorker*; **Irene Borger**, arts journalist, author and director of the Alpert Award in the Arts; **Kay Cole**, Broadway dancer, choreographer and teacher; **Steven Leigh Morris**, playwright and critic-at-large for *L.A. Weekly*; **Dominic Papatola**, theater critic for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*; **Jack Viertel**, artistic director, *New York City Center Encores!*, and creative director, *Jujamcyn Theaters*; and **Jeff Weinstein**, editor and critic formerly with the *Village Voice* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Entrepreneurship journalism training is emphasized, as well as multimedia and digital skill-building with **Douglas McLennan**, editor and founder of ArtsJournal.com.

Nine performances will be attended, including "**Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo**" directed by Moisés Kaufman at the Mark Taper Forum and the world premiere of "**Road to Saigon**," developed and directed by Jon Lawrence Rivera, at East West Players.

Over 50 applications were received from theater writers, editors and critics from 27 states and from a variety of media. Each newspaper, radio and television station represented in the 2010 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>.

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

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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, visit www.arts.gov.

About the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism

Located in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism 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 (<http://annenberg.usc.edu/specialized>). In addition to its programs for working professionals, USC Annenberg enrolls more than 2,200 students earning undergraduate and graduate degrees in journalism, communication, public diplomacy and public relations. For more information, visit <http://annenberg.usc.edu>.

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