



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Plays by Young Writers Bring New Voices to the Lyceum Theatre**

Who: Playwrights Project

What: *Plays by Young Writers*, a festival of winning scripts from the 25<sup>th</sup> annual *California Young Playwrights Contest*

When: February 18-28, 2010 (See schedule below)

Where: Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza, San Diego

Tickets:	Individual	\$20
	Seniors, students, military	\$15
	School Groups of 10 or more	\$9
	Other Groups of 10 or more	\$12
	Opening Night (includes reception)	\$50

How: Playwrights Project (619) 239-8222 or [www.playwrightsproject.org](http://www.playwrightsproject.org)  
 For information and reservations

San Diego – Playwrights Project’s *Play by Young Writers* began twenty-five years ago at the now defunct Gaslamp Quarter Theater. The festival returns to downtown for the 2010 season which will feature the teenage winners of the *California Young Playwrights Contest*. These young playwrights voice their views of the world with a variety of theatrical styles, including a whimsical comedy, a thought-provoking drama, and a daring exploration of modern teenage girls. Their characters will take center stage at the Lyceum Theatre, February 18-28, 2010. Selected from 242 submissions by teenagers statewide, 3 works will receive full professional productions and 3 will receive readings in this highly regarded festival of new voices.

Contest submissions were evaluated by theatre professionals who volunteered their time and expertise. The final selections for full production were made by Martin Benson, Judith Dolan, Stephen Metcalfe, Deborah Salzer and Arthur Wagner. All contest participants who requested feedback received individualized written critiques. Program Manager Chelsea Whitmore supervised the evaluation process, which focused on a sense of truth, imagination, fresh use of language, and grasp of dramatic structure.

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<b>Full productions</b>	<b>Playwright</b>	<b>Director</b>
<i>Re-Drowning Ophelia</i>	Katie Henry, 18, Berkeley	Katie Rodda
<i>Funny Little Thing</i>	Quinn Sosna-Spear, 17, Santa Barbara	George Yé
<i>What All School Children Learn</i>	Benjamin Sprung-Keyser, 16, L.A.	Anne Tran

*Re-Drowning Ophelia*, by Katie Henry who is currently studying dramatic writing at NYU, defies the current trend of likening modern teenage girls to Ophelia. Katie's younger sister was having a difficult time in school, and the self-help books recommended to her moved Katie to write this play. The teenage girls in Katie's play are not hapless victims defined by the men in their lives, nor are they easily compartmentalized into boxes. Katie's characters are free thinkers, exploring religion, sexuality and love from within the potentially confining setting of a Catholic high school. Stephen Metcalfe dramaturges the play, which is directed by Katie Rodda.

Quinn Sosna-Spear, currently a senior at Dos Pueblos High School in Santa Barbara, wanted to write a play that wasn't about making fun of others, but rather a play that was witty and uplifting. *Funny Little Thing* is a whimsical comedy about couples, from blind dates to the golden years. Quinn comments that, "Love expected is good; love unexpected is great." Playwrights Project favorite George Yé directs.

Benjamin Sprung-Keyser wrote *What All School Children Learn* after hearing a news story about bullying. This story inspired Benjamin to research on the subject of retaliation and to think about what makes people "bad." He realized that situations are not as easily defined as they may seem. Currently a junior at Harvard-Westlake in Los Angeles, Benjamin hopes the play will rouse differing opinions and spark discussions. Anne Tran will direct.

Festival performances will begin with readings of scripts by writers age 14 or younger, directed by Carrie Klewin.

**Readings**

**Playwright**

*In the Stars*

Nachiketa Baru, 13, San Diego  
Carmel Valley Middle School

*The Tale of Jack*

Enrique Hernandez, 13  
Mission Middle School, Escondido

*The Funny Bone*

Chris Toth and Mikie Kantya Layavong, 12  
Mesa Verde Middle School, San Diego

Nachiketa Baru is a two-time Contest winner and 2008 finalist. His play follows two friends as they find a get-rich-quick scheme written in the stars. Enrique Hernandez is also a two-time Contest winner, whose previous play was produced as a Staged Reading at the *PBYW* festival in 2009. Enrique wrote his entry during an in-school playwriting residency at Mission Middle School conducted by Playwrights Project. Chris Toth and Mikie Kantya Layavong wrote their comedic play during a similar program at Mesa Verde Middle School.

Sponsors of *Plays by Young Writers* include the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, Mandell Weiss Charitable Trust, The Helen K. and James S. Copley Foundation, and Horton Plaza Theatre Foundation, with additional support from California Arts Council, Community Service Association (CSA) of San Diego Unified School District, County of San Diego at the recommendation of Pam Slater Price, The Gold Diggers, The James Irvine Foundation, The Debby and Hal Jacobs Family Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation, Stacy and Paul Jacobs, Kiwanis Club of La Jolla, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Parker Foundation, Qualcomm, ResMed Foundation and The San Diego Foundation.

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**Plays by Young Writers**, professional productions of winning scripts from the *California Young Playwrights Contest*, opens at the Lyceum Theatre on Saturday, February 20 at 7:30 PM.

Additional public performances are Friday, February 26 at 7:30 PM; Saturday, February 27 at 2:00pm and 7:30 PM; and Sunday, February 28 at 2:00 PM.

**Saturday, Feb. 20 \***

7:30 PM Opening Night features all three full productions  
*Re-Drowning Ophelia, What All School Children Learn, and Funny Little Thing+*

**Friday, Feb. 26**

7:30 PM Full Productions: *Funny Little Thing, What All School Children Learn*  
Readings: *The Tale of Jack, The Funny Bone*

**Saturday, Feb. 27 †**

2:00 PM Full Productions: *Funny Little Thing, What All School Children Learn*  
Readings: *The Tale of Jack, The Funny Bone*

7:30 PM Full Productions: *Re-Drowning Ophelia+*  
Reading: *In the Stars*

**Sunday, Feb. 28**

2:00 PM Full Productions: *Re-Drowning Ophelia+*  
Reading: *In the Stars*

\*Opening Night includes a performance and reception. Proceeds help support Playwrights Project.

+Recommended for ages 17 and older; other plays for ages 11 and older.

†*Inspire a Youth Day* – Thanks to our supporters you can buy an individual ticket and bring a youth for free.

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