FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
September 26, 2017

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announces

**New Visions/New Voices 2018**
An Innovative Kennedy Center Festival Dedicated to The Development of New Plays & Musicals for Young Audiences

Seven New Works from American Playwrights

*Translation Project* workshop of a new English version of a play from Buenos Aires, Argentina

*Hans Christian Andersen*, a new musical with a book by Timothy Allen McDonald inspired by the musical film with songs by Frank Loesser

April 27-29, 2018 at the Kennedy Center

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announces the biennial festival **New Visions/New Voices** from April 27-29, 2018, marking the 15th showcase of this industry workshop. Dedicated to the development of new plays and musicals for young people and their families, this innovative series pioneers a unique and vital forum for the field of Theater for Young Audiences (TYA).

**New Visions/New Voices 2018** will present seven new works by American playwrights, selected from theater companies based in Atlanta, GA; Minneapolis, MN; New York, NY; Omaha, NE; St. Louis, MO; Tempe, AZ; and Washington, DC. For the third time, the festival’s *Translation Project* will workshop an unproduced English version of a previously successful script originally written in another language. The New
Visions/New Voices 2018 project will be Sobre Ruedas (On Wheels) by Maria Inés Falconi of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

There are common threads weaving between the young protagonists in all of this year’s plays, who exist in different cultures, different countries, in the past and in the present. They transcend emotional, spiritual, and physical obstacles, and, when they emerge on the other side, both they and the audience are changed.

Since its inception in 1991, New Visions/New Voices has assisted in the development of 111 new plays, musicals, and operas from 96 playwrights and 38 composers working with 61 U.S. and 12 international theater companies. This year’s conference will continue to expand opportunities for high-quality performance experiences for young people, facilitating the development of productions by a variety of world-class writing teams, directors, and organizations.

Washington, D.C. based playwright Karen Zacarías said, "For many years, New Visions/New Voices has always been on the frontiers of both TYA and the American Theater by giving diverse talented writers the opportunity to share their evocative, insightful and delightful stories and hone their work. New Visions/New Voices has always been about tearing down walls and creating bridges of understanding locally, nationally and internationally ... which is especially vital in this day and age”

“It is now more important than ever to cultivate imagination, curiosity, and empathy in young people,” said Jonathan Shmidt Chapman, Executive Director of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA. “In developing daring and original theatre for them, New Visions/New Voices creates one of the most powerful vehicles to achieve this outcome. As opportunities to develop new work are scarce across the field, New Visions/New Voices continues to offer the vital opportunity to incubate new stories that will go on to surprise, delight and challenge children and their families across the country and around the world.”
While at the Kennedy Center, selected playwrights, directors, music directors, composers, and Equity actors work collaboratively in a weeklong intensive workshop setting to develop their projects. After revisions, rewrites, and rehearsals of the new plays and musicals, the works are presented as rehearsed readings during a three-day national festival for theater professionals, educators, and others interested in the field, which will include discussions, conversations, and other events.

A full listing of *New Visions/New Voices* 2018 programming can be found on the following pages.
**New Visions/New Voices 2018**

**BETWEEN EARTH AND SKY**  
GALA Hispanic Theatre, Washington, D.C.  
On a Texas ranch in the 1930’s, 12-year-old Dolores struggles to hold onto her dream of studying astronomy. When her great-aunt Ynes arrives for a visit, she is swept into stories of Ynes' plant collecting expeditions in far-off countries. Based on the life of Mexican-American botanist Ynes Mexia, this bilingual play written by Cecilia Cackley and directed by Elena Velasco explores the equally compelling worlds of plants and stars, and the importance of finding your passion.

**CARTOGRAPHY**  
ArKtype, Brooklyn, NY  
Inflatable rafts on the Mediterranean, dark cargo holds of trucks and family photos wrapped carefully in a backpack that crosses several border checkpoints. The world is alive with movement, migration, and young people who set out into the unsure waters of their future fleeing the effects of climate change, or war, or poverty, to build new lives. Developed by artists Christopher Myers (author and illustrator) and Kaneza Schaal (director) through their creative work with refugee youth from around the world, Cartography asks what part we all have to play in these evolving experiences, where have we come from, how have we moved, and where are we all going.

**FOREVER POPPY**  
Childsplay, Tempe, AZ  
Born into a New Orleans family of Cajun bikers and experimental bakers, Forever Poppy lives an ideal life. But one night, her parent’s bakery is destroyed and Forever is dragged into a mysterious world. Heartbroken, she stumbles across elements of her ancestral legacy: immortal identical twins, a White Wolf guide, octogenarian players hidden in the forest and a lost Shakespearean play that only she can read. Laurie Woolery directs this magical tale by José Cruz González which asks us: What is heritage? What is legacy? And, in the face of loss, what is the meaning of forever?

**THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS**  
Metro Theater Company, St. Louis, MO  
Sheila is the eight-year-old white-hot sun around which her friends orbit. This story, written by Eric Coble, is about children left alone in summer with epic imaginations, and what happens when they meet wild animals intent on bringing that wild back to civilization. One night, as the children hide in their fortress of junk, a pick-up truck rumbles down the dirt road driven by a real-life coyote who walks on his hind legs, wears a denim jacket and sunglasses. Sheila steps up to meet him and suddenly the whole crew is in the truck hurtling toward…. where? Directed by Julia Flood, this universe spirals, leading our intrepid band to meet The Council of Howls, the Sting Brigade, the Challenge of The Cactus Flower, and much more.

**HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN**  
Alliance Theatre, Atlanta, GA and iTheatrics, New York, NY
13-year-old Christian Andersen is the first commoner ever chosen by the King of Denmark to study at the Royal Academy, but Christian isn’t sure he wants to go. He’ll have to move to Copenhagen and live without his mom and dad. Royal children have shoes without holes in them… and books; Christian can’t even afford paper. Plus his new teacher is rumored to be meaner than sea witch. Loosely based on the real life of Hans Christian Andersen, the show follows his journey from a poor storyteller to becoming one of the most celebrated writers of all time. This new musical for young audiences is directed by Rosemary Newcott, features a score by the legendary Frank Loesser utilizing songs from the film, never-before-heard trunk songs, and an original libretto by Timothy Allen McDonald.

THE HORMEL PROJECT
Children’s Theatre Company, Minneapolis, MN
Austin, Minnesota, 1985. A small community is torn apart when the workers at the Hormel meat packing plant strike for better wages and safer working conditions, and citizens are forced to take a stand. As the spotlight of national media is turned on Austin and the National Guard is called in, the bonds between neighbors, friends, and even family members strain and crack. Based on a historical moment, Philip Dawkins’ new play, inspired by interviews with local residents, and directed by Peter Brosius, explores the event from the perspective of the young people of Austin. What happens when your school is no longer safe, or your mom says you can’t play with your best friend—all because of a strike? Navigating through a time of uncertainty, the kids of Austin experience doubt and fear as well as kindness and clarity—moments that will shape their lives and their futures forever.

RETURN TO NIOBRARA
The Rose Theater, Omaha, NE
180 years ago, Steven’s great-great-grandfather Chief Standing Bear stood up in court and demanded that a federal Judge recognize that Indians are “persons” under the law. Today, following an altercation where Steven is bullied at school on account of his long hair, Steven must follow in his grandfather’s footsteps and speak out against his school district’s attempt to force him to cut his hair, and ultimately, to erase his identity. Written by Mary Kathryn Nagle (citizen of the Cherokee Nation) and directed by Roxanne Wach, the play invites the audience to see the past emerging in our present, and ultimately what it means to truly stand for who we are.

SOBRE RUEDAS (ON WHEELS)
The Translation Project, Argentina.
Boy messages Girl. Girl messages Boy. Boy and Girl go on a blind date and discover more than expected about themselves and the complex world they live in. As if going through puberty wasn’t hard enough, the two must confront their own preconceived notions about disability as well as the fears and prejudices of society at large. This play written by Maria Inés Falconi and directed by Rob McQuay asks, will the Boy and Girl find strength and value in their differences?
Alternates

Gretel!
Theatre Heroes, Austin, TX.
Written by Jason Tremblay with Susan Zeder, and directed by Noel Gaulin.
Composed by Jenn Hartmann Luck.

The Supadupa Kid
Barrington Stage Company, Pittsfield, MA.
Based on the book The Supadupa Kid by Ty Allan Jackson
Adapted for the stage by Harrison David Rivers. Composed by Joel Waggoner.
Lyrics by Sukari Jones.

About Education At the Kennedy Center
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is the national champion for arts learning and creativity. Committed to increasing opportunities for all people to participate in, learn about, and understand the arts, the Center offers programs and events that strive to reflect the nation and its communities, and that are accessible and inclusive for all. From the Center’s stages to classrooms and communities across the country, to online resources accessible nearly anywhere, the Center serves the burgeoning artist, the curious explorer, the student (of any age), the teacher and teaching artist,—any person interested in arts learning and utilizing the arts for positive change.

The breadth of the Center’s national education initiatives amplify community partnerships and support local and national infrastructure with programs including: Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child, which works with 25 municipalities and their school districts around the country to develop long-range strategic plans for arts education; ARTSEdge, a digital platform that offers standards-based materials for use in and out of the classroom; Partners in Education which forges relationships between arts organizations and their neighboring school systems to build effective arts education programs for teachers and teaching artists; the Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Awards celebrate teachers whose efforts have made a significant impact on their students; Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour brings original Kennedy Center productions for students and families into communities and performing arts centers around the country; and the Turnaround Arts program which empowers high-need, low-performing schools with innovative arts programming and resources to help address broader school challenges and close the achievement gap.
The Center’s locally-based school and community initiatives serve educators and students with Changing Education Through the Arts, a program that works in partnership with area schools to affect long-term change in school culture through professional learning in arts integration; professional development opportunities for teachers which trains educators to teach the arts or other subject areas through the arts; and a Washington, D.C. schools partnership program, where the Center provides resources and teaching artist residencies to 22 PreK-12 schools.

Culturally responsive programming draws from the Center’s resources as the national performing arts center and a convener of arts and education leaders, as well as the National Symphony Orchestra, The Suzanne Farrell Ballet, VSA (the international arts and disability organization), Washington National Opera, and the Performances for Young Audiences series. Over 100 events and performances throughout the season are offered for more than 100,000 local school-aged children. Additionally, the Explore the Arts series provides learners of all ages insights into the cultural and historical context of the works presented on stage and sparks connections between audiences and the artists who have created the performances through participatory workshops, demonstrations, panels, master classes, and open rehearsals. The annual spring Arts Summit brings thought leaders from the arts and related fields together for discussion and exploration of the power and impact of the arts on society.

Committed to nurturing young artists’ growth, the Center offers multiple local and national skill and development programs for students and professionals including the National Symphony Orchestra’s Youth Fellowship Program, Summer Music Institute, and High School Competition; the Washington National Opera’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, Opera Institute, and Kids Create Opera Partnership; the biennial New Visions/New Voices forum for development of new plays for young people; Exploring Ballet with Suzanne Farrell; Betty Carter’s Jazz Ahead; VSA’s Playwright Discovery Program, Young Soloists, and Visual Arts programs; arts administration internships; and the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival which impacts hundreds of thousands of college-aged theater students across the country and marks its 50th anniversary in 2018.

As an essential component of the living memorial to President Kennedy, the Center’s Education programs utilize the arts to embrace the ideals of service, justice, freedom, courage, and gratitude, and cultivate the Citizen Artists in all the people we serve. For more information, please visit kennedy-center.org/education/.

**Funding Credits**

Bank of America is the Presenting Sponsor of Performances for Young Audiences.

Major support for educational programs at the Kennedy Center is provided by David and Alice Rubenstein through the Rubenstein Arts Access Program.

Additional support for New Visions/New Voices 2018 is provided by
A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation; The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; Paul M. Angell Family Foundation; and the U.S. Department of Education.

Kennedy Center education and related artistic programming is made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts and the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts.

Discover the Kennedy Center on social media:

#NVNV2018
#KennedyCenter

# # #

PRESS CONTACT
Brendan Padgett
(202) 416-8004
bepadgett@Kennedy-Center.org

INFORMATION & REGISTRATION:
New Visions Hotline: (202)-416-8830
kctya@kennedy-center.org
kennedy-center.org/education/nvnv.html