



THE NEW HARMONY PROJECT
where writers' spirits soar

N E W S R E L E A S E

May 4, 2011

For Immediate Release

Joan F. David
Administrative Director
812-867-3340
www.newharmonyproject.org

Contact: Paul Walsh
Artistic Director
413-539-8870

Contact: Joel Grynheim
Project Director
317-709-5193

**The New Harmony Project Announces
Writers for 2011 Conference**

(Indianapolis, IN) The Board of Directors of The New Harmony Project is pleased to announce the 2011 Project writers.

Writers-in-full-development includes:

***Alexandria* by Alex Lewin**
***In the Book of* by John Walch**
***Dead Accounts* by Theresa Rebeck**
***The Body of an American* by Dan O'Brien.**

Writers-in-residence include:

Paola Mendoza
Lina Patel
Robert Schenkkan
Andrea Stolowitz
Meredith Stiehm.

(Writers bios and a synopsis of the scripts follows)

The twenty-fifth annual New Harmony Project (NHP) will be held May 23 through June 4, 2011, in New Harmony, Indiana. Free and open readings are held throughout the Project. For a schedule please refer to the website www.newharmonyproject.org or contact Administrative Director Joan David at jfdavid@newharmonyproject.org. A 25th Anniversary Benefit Celebration will be held on Saturday, June 4 beginning at 6 p.m.

The event includes dinner and readings: there is a charge for this event, and reservations are required by May 22nd. Contact is Joan David at above address.

Full-development projects will have benefit of a two-week workshop with a professional director, dramaturg, and a company of actors selected specifically to work with the writers to further develop their scripts. Writers-in-residence, generally more seasoned writers, attend to work on scripts of their choosing.

This year's selection panel, which included not only Board and staff but also director Lori Wolter Hudson, actor David Stradley, dramaturg Doug Langworthy, and playwright Allison Moore, reviewed 180 scripts submitted from some of the nation's best writers.

NHP Artistic Director Paul Walsh says, "We are pleased to have such distinguished writers with us this year. Five writers — **Alex Lewin**, **Lina Patel** (semi finalists for Sundance Theatre Institute), screenwriter **Paola Mendoza** who produced and wrote the screenplay for the award-winning film *Entre Nos*, playwright **Andrea Stolowitz** and **John Walch** — are with us for the first time. Award-winning playwrights **Theresa Rebeck**, **Dan O'Brien**, Pulitzer-prize winning playwright, screenwriter **Robert Schenkkan**, and **Meredith Stiehm** are returning. Each of these writers exemplifies the mission of The New Harmony Project by offering complex and insightful works that celebrate what it means to be human."

NHP was founded in 1986 by a group of theater, film, and television professionals in Indianapolis to encourage writers whose work *celebrates hope and the resiliency of the human spirit*. Scripts are chosen for development at the conference through an open submissions process that invites writers from across the country to submit projects for consideration that fit the spirit and the mission of The New Harmony Project: scripts *that "name, celebrate, honor and praise order in the midst of chaos; life in the midst of death; atonement in the midst of separating hatred; liberty in the midst of oppression; sacrifice in the midst of vanity; and spirit in the midst of corruption."*

NHP is a not-for-profit organization dependent upon gifts and grants from many individuals, foundations, and corporations and from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Continued on next pages with writers bios and synopsis of the 2011 scripts

**The New Harmony Project
2011 Writers' Bios**

ALEX LEWIN

Alex Lewin's plays have been developed and presented at the O'Neill Playwrights Conference, Chautauqua Theatre Company, Geva Theatre Center, MCC, The New Group, Ensemble Studio Theatre, the Alliance Theatre, Arena Stage, and New York Theatre Workshop, where he is an Artistic Associate. He is the recipient of the Ted & Adele Shank Professional Playwriting Fellowship, and a commission from Ensemble Studio Theatre and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Alex has been a finalist for the L. Arnold Weissberger Award, the Heideman Award, and the Keneda Graduate Playwriting Competition, among others. Alex holds an MFA in Playwriting from the University of California at San Diego. He was a '09-'10 Playwrights Realm Writing Fellow and a member of the '09-'10 P73 Writers Group. Alex is also a member of the MCC Playwrights' Coalition and the Dramatists Guild. He lives in Manhattan with his cat, Charlie Chaplin.

PAOLA MENDOZA

Paola Mendoza was named one of Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent Film. She is currently in post-production on the documentary *LA Toma*, a story of a rural village in Colombia fighting their eviction against a multi-national corporation because of the land's vast natural resources. *LA Toma* was commissioned by the Nelson Mandela Foundation and Tribeca Film Institute. Ms. Mendoza made her narrative directorial debut with *Entre Nos* which had its world premiere at the 2009 Tribeca Film Festival where it was awarded Honorable Mention. *Entre Nos* went on to win over ten international awards at film festivals around the world. The script of *Entre Nos* was an official selection at Tribeca All Access and the IFP's Independent Film Week, where it won the Grand Jury Prize for the Panasonic Digital Filmmakers Award.

She also directed the documentary *Autumn's Eyes*, about a 3-year old girl who tries to navigate herself through the harsh reality of severe poverty, her teenage mother's incarceration and looming foster care. *Autumn's Eyes* made its world premiere at the 2006 South by South West Film Festival.

Soon after *Autumn's Eyes*, Ms. Mendoza went on to helm a short documentary, *Still Standing*; about her grandmother trying to put her life back together after Hurricane Katrina. *Still Standing* made its world premiere at the 2006 Full Frame Film Festival and was selected to participate in Pangea Day, a celebration of 100 films from around the world that strive to make positive changes.

Ms. Mendoza was a nominee for the 2008 & 2010 NALIP Estel Awards, given to Latino filmmakers that show extraordinary promise in the field of directing.

DAN O' BRIEN

DAN O'BRIEN's current projects include *The Body of an American*, recipient of the McKnight Residency and Commission from the Playwrights' Center where Dan is a

National Core Writer, as well as a TCG Future Collaborations Grant, a Sundance Time Warner Storytelling Fellowship, and a 2011 residency at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Bellagio, Italy. A song cycle entitled *Theotokia (Hymn to the Mother of God)*, composed by Jonathan Berger with text by Dan O'Brien, premiered at the 2010 Spoleto Festival USA. Dan's play *The Three Christs of Ypsilanti* will premier next season at Black Dahlia Theatre in Los Angeles, directed by Michael John Garcés. Dan is currently a member of The Writers' Workshop at Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles.

Recent productions include *The Cherry Sisters Revisited* at Actors' Theatre of Louisville's Humana Festival (directed by Andrew Leynse, music by Michael Friedman), *The Angel in the Trees* with The Production Company in New York City, and *The House in Hydesville* at Geva Theatre Center. Previous productions include *The Dear Boy* at Second Stage Theatre (directed by Michael John Garcés), *The Voyage of the Carcass* off-Broadway with Tony winner Dan Fogler at SoHo Playhouse, *Moving Picture* at Williamstown Theatre Festival, *Key West* at Geva Theatre Center, *The Voyage of the Carcass* with P. 73 Productions, and *Am Lit* at Ensemble Studio Theatre. He has received commissions from Manhattan Theatre Club, Ensemble Studio Theatre / Sloan Foundation, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Geva Theatre Center, Trinity Repertory Company, and residencies and fellowships from Yaddo, O'Neill Playwrights Conference, New Harmony Project, and the Thomas J. Watson Foundation. Awards include the Osborn Award from the American Theatre Critics Association. His work is published by Playscripts, Samuel French and Dramatic Publishing.

Dan's poetry has appeared in many literary magazines including *Crab Orchard Review*, *Greensboro Review*, *Louisville Review*, *The Pinch*, *32 Poems*, *Nimrod*, *South Carolina Review*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, and *MARGIE*.

Dan has served as a Hodder Fellow at Princeton University as well as the inaugural Djerassi Fellow in Playwriting at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. In 2002-03, and again in 2005, he was the Tennessee Williams Playwright-in-residence at Sewanee, The University of the South. This summer he will serve on faculty at the 2011 Sewanee Writers' Conference. Dan holds a B.A. in English and Theatre from Middlebury College and a Master of Fine Arts in Playwriting and Fiction from Brown University. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, writer and actor Jessica St. Clair.

LINA PATEL

Lina Patel is an actor/writer based in Los Angeles. Lina is currently working on a commission for a new play for Yale Repertory Theater. Her first commission was produced at Silk Road Theater Project last year, part of *The DNA Trail*, co-presented with The Goodman. *The DNA Trail* was directed by Steve Scott. Lina's play, *SANKALPAN (Desire)*, a loose adaptation of *Three Sisters* set in pre-Partition Bengal, was a semi-finalist for the Sundance Theatre Institute. *SANKALPAN* received a staged reading at Chicago's Silk Road Theatre Project, followed by a workshop at the New Group in New York, directed by Ian Morgan and dramaturged by Stephen Wadsworth. Ian also directed the play for the Lark's Playwright's Week. Lina's comedy, *PERFECT FIT*, about fashion, race and parenthood, received two staged readings at the Groundling's Theatre in West Hollywood, directed by Shelley Butler. A Sherwood Award finalist, Lina was invited by Center Theatre Group to develop a new play in CTG's

Writer's Retreat. *THE RAGGED CLAWS* received a reading at the Taper, was further developed at the Lark, and is a BAPF finalist. Her new play *NEEL and NICKY* was recently work-shopped at The New Group, directed by Ian Morgan. Lina continues to develop her work at the Lark and at an informal, long-running writer's group, led by Jose Rivera. A critically acclaimed actor, Lina has performed in New York and regionally, at the Globe Theatres, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Pasadena Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, East West Players, the Kirk Douglas, Taper, Too, MCC, The New Group, Theatreworks, L.A. Women's Shakespeare Festival, and the Actor's Gang. Her one-woman show, *KRISHNA IN TEXAS* has been performed in San Diego and Los Angeles. Television appearances include guest-spots on: "Medium", "24", "Num3ers", "CSI". As a voice-over artist, Lina has voiced for animated series and narrated books, including William Faulkner's, *As I Lay Dying* and Arturo Perez-Reverte's *The Queen of the South*, for Penguin and Random House.

THERESA REBECK

Theresa Rebeck is a widely produced playwright throughout the United States and abroad. Past New York productions of her work include *Mauritius* at the Biltmore Theatre in a Manhattan Theater Club Production; *The Scene*, *The Water's Edge*, *Loose Knit*, *The Family of Mann* and *Spike Heels* at Second Stage; *Bad Dates*, *The Butterfly Collection* and *Our House* at Playwrights Horizons; and *View of the Dome* at New York Theatre Workshop. *Omnium Gatherum* (co-written, finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2003) was featured at the Humana Festival, and had a commercial run at the Variety Arts Theatre. Her newest work, *The Understudy*, premiered at the 2008 Williamstown Theatre Festival and ran in New York at the Laura Pels Theater in a Roundabout Theatre Company production as part of their 2009 - 2010 season.

All of Ms. Rebeck's past produced plays are published by Smith and Kraus as Theresa Rebeck: Complete Plays, Volumes I, II and III and in acting editions available from Samuel French or Playscripts. Ms. Rebeck's other publications are *Free Fire Zone*, a book of comedic essays about writing and show business. She has written for American Theatre Magazine and has had excerpts of her plays published in the Harvard Review. Ms. Rebeck's first novel, *Three Girls and Their Brother*, was published by Random House/Shaye Areheart Books in April 2008. Her second novel, *Twelve Rooms With A View*, was published by Random House/Shaye Areheart Books in May of 2010. Both novels are available online and at booksellers everywhere.

In television, Ms. Rebeck has written for *Dream On*, *Brooklyn Bridge*, *L.A. Law*, *American Dreamer*, *Maximum Bob*, *First Wave*, and *Third Watch*. She has been a writer/producer for *Canterbury's Law*, *Smith*, *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* and *NYPD Blue*. Her produced feature films include *Harriet the Spy*, *Gossip*, and the independent features *Sunday on the Rocks* and *Seducing Charlie Barker*, an adaptation of her play, *The Scene*. Awards include the Mystery Writer's of America's Edgar Award, the Writer's Guild of America award for Episodic Drama, the Hispanic Images Imagen

Award, and the Peabody, all for her work on *NYPD Blue*. She has won the National Theatre Conference Award (for *The Family of Mann*), and was awarded the William Inge New Voices Playwriting Award in 2003 for *The Bells*. *Mauritius* was originally produced at Boston's Huntington Theatre, where it received the 2007 IRNE Award for Best New Play as well as the Eliot Norton Award.

Ms. Rebeck is originally from Cincinnati and holds an MFA in Playwriting and a PhD. in Victorian Melodrama, both from Brandeis University. She is a proud board member of the Dramatists Guild, a Contributing Editor to the *Harvard Review*, an Associate Artist of the Roundabout Theatre Company and has taught at Brandeis University and Columbia University. She lives in Brooklyn, NY with her husband and two children.

ROBERT SCHENKKAN

ROBERT SCHENKKAN was born in Chapel Hill, N. Carolina but grew up in Austin, Texas. As a Plan II Honors student he received a B.A. in Drama from the University of Texas (Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude, Friars' Society, Distinguished Young Alumnus, Lifetime Texas-Ex's Member and Littlefield Society) and an M.F.A. in Theatre Arts from Cornell University.

Robert is the author of *The Kentucky Cycle*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama – the first play in the history of the Pulitzer to win before its NY premier. He has written and published nine other full-length plays: *By The Waters of Babylon*, *Lewis and Clark Reach The Euphrates*, *The Marriage of Miss Hollywood and King Neptune*, *The Devil And Daniel Webster*, *Handler*, *Heaven on Earth*, *Tachinoki*, *Final Passages*, and *The Dream Thief*. His One Act plays are published in a collection: *Conversations with the Spanish Lady and other plays*. Currently, Robert is writing several plays on commission, *All The Way*, for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, a sequel to *All The Way* for the Seattle Repertory Theater, *Docent* for director Warner Shook and South Coast Rep, and adapting the Newberry Award winning novel, *A Single Shard*, for the Seattle Children's Theatre. He is also at work (book/lyrics) on a rock musical, *The Twelve*, with composer/lyricist, Neil Berg, an adaptation of the memoir, *The Year of Yes*, as a musical with composer/lyricist team, Brian Lowdermilk and Kait Kerrigan, and is collaborating on a third musical, *A Night at the Alhambra Café*, with director, Megs Booker.

Other theater awards include: Tony nomination, Outer Critics Circle nomination, an LA Critics Best Play Award, the Julie Harris/Beverly Hills Theatre Guild Award, the PEN WEST Award, and the Best of the Fringe (Edinburgh Festival). He has received grants from New York CAPS, Vogelstein Foundation, Arthur Foundation, and the Fund for New American Plays.

Robert is the co-author of the film, *THE QUIET AMERICAN*. He is currently adapting Ed Brubaker's Eisner award winning graphic novel, *INCOGNITO*, for Fox/Peter Chernin. Other films in development include: *FALL OF SAIGON* (Fox, dir. Ross Katz), *USS*

FORRESTAL (Fox 2000, dir. John Moore), *THE CO*, (Pandemonium Films, dir. Sergei Bodrov) and *ANABASIS* (SONY, dir. Patrick Allesandrin). His television credits include four episodes of the Tom Hanks/Steven Spielberg/HBO miniseries, *The Pacific* (Emmy Award - Best Miniseries) for which he was nominated for two Emmys and two Writers Guild Awards, winning the WGA's "Best Writing Award Miniseries." Also, *The Andromeda Strain* (A&E – nominated for six Emmys, including "Best Miniseries"), *Crazy Horse* (TNT), and *Spartacus* (USA). He has just been hired by HBO to co-write and co-Executive Produce a seven part miniseries based on Taylor Branch's epic history of the American Civil Rights movement, *America In The Time Of King*. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild, PEN America, the Ensemble Studio Theatre, and is an alumnus of New Dramatists. He is married to the writer, Maria Dahvana Headley.

MEREDITH STIEHM

Produced plays: *The Meeting* (Circle X Theatre Company, 2011), *Little Rosa*, *Holiday House/Between the White Curtains*, *Hallelujah Junction* and the musical *Rules For Girls*. Her play *Mad City* was workshopped at the New Harmony Project in May 2009 and staged in the Ink Slingers series at La Mirada Theatre in August 2011, and her 10-minute plays *Hunger* and *Partners* were both finalists for the Heideman Award. She created the drama series *Cold Case*; other television credits include *NYPD Blue* (Emmy nomination) and *Cocaine Cowboys* (HBO). She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a B.A. in English/Playwriting.

ANDREA STOLOWITZ

Andrea Stolowitz is a graduate of the MFA playwriting program at the University of California San Diego. She has had her plays developed and presented at many venues including The Cherry Lane and New York Stage and Film in New York City, The Old Globe in San Diego, The Long Wharf in New Haven and The Portland Center Stage.

Knowing Cairo had its professional world premiere at The Old Globe Theater, where it earned a San Diego "Billie" Best New Play Award and was named as an *LA Times* Critic's Pick. It has had subsequent national and international productions and is published by Playscripts Inc.

Tales of Doomed Love premiered at The Studio Theater in Washington, DC at as part of the 2008 Fringe Festival where it was called "one of the finest entries in the Capital Fringe" by *DC Theater Scene*. The production was remounted in 2008 at DC's Spooky Action Theater. The play was also read at the StreetSigns Center for Literature and Performance in Chapel Hill, NC, where it was named "Best New Script" by the *Triangle Independent*.

Her latest play *Antarktikos* was at Artists Repertory Theater this past January and in February at Key City Public Theater. The play was a finalist for the PlayPenn Summer Play Festival and The Premiere Stages reading series.

Her other full-length plays including *Bad Family*, *Seascapes*, *Playing the Course*, *Berlin Circles*, *Hotel Traumbad*, and *Geological Disturbances* have been finalists and winners for various awards and prizes including the Jerome Foundation Grant, PlayLabs, the JET theater New Play Prize, the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, and The Princess Grace Award. Her screenwriting work includes *Jonathan's War*, a feature-length action film and the treatment for *Code Name: Pelicano*, which was sold to independent producers.

Andrea currently teaches at Willamette University and the University of Portland, and has served on the theater studies faculty at Duke University and UC-San Diego. She was a Walter E. Dakin fellow at The Sewanee Writers Conference in 2005, completed a residency at Ledig House Writer's Colony in the fall of 2006, was awarded a North Carolina Playwrights Grant in 2007, and Oregon RACC and OAC grants in 2009. She is a founding member of Playwrights West and is the Portland Regional Representative to the Dramatists Guild.

JOHN WALCH

John Walch's plays include *In The Book Of, Tea-Totaled, The Dinosaur Within, Circumference of a Squirrel, The Nature of Mutation, Jestings with Edged Tools, Craving Gravy or Love in the Time of Cannibalism, Alice Threw the Looking Glass* (a parody of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*), *Iraq: A Love Story*, as well as numerous one-acts, collaborations, and shorts.

His plays have been produced at theatres such as Center Theatre Group (Mark Taper Forum), Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey, Barter Theatre, Theatre @ Boston Court, Kitchen Dog, New Jersey Rep, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and off-Broadway at Urban Stages. His work has been developed or commissioned through the Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, A.S.K. Theatre Projects, Shenandoah International, The Playwrights' Center/PlayLabs, and the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London. His current project is *DoubleTime*—a musical with composer Nile Rodgers being workshopped at Alabama Shakespeare Festival, where is the Playwright-in-Residence.

Awards include: Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays; the American Theatre Critics Association's Osborn Award; the 2010 Frederick Loewe Award in Musical Theatre, the Charlotte Woolard Award from the Kennedy Center recognizing a promising new voice in the American theatre; the Marc Klein Playwriting Award; and three Austin Critic's Table Awards. John is a two time Sloan fellow (Manhattan Theatre Club, EST) and was a James Michener Fellow at the Michener Center for Writers at University of Texas @ Austin, where he earned his MFA in Playwriting. John served as artistic director of Austin Script Works and has taught playwriting at UT/Austin-Michener Center for Writers, Florida State, University of Iowa, and Bennington College among others; he serves as the playwriting consultant for Lincoln Center Education in the NYC public schools. John lives in New York City, where he is a resident playwright at New Dramatists.

Synopsis of Full Development Scripts

ALEXANDRIA by Alex Lewin

For three generations the Qasim family has run a coffee house on the Corniche, Alexandria's Mediterranean boulevard. Their lives are stable and prosperous until a man from America shows up and offers them a fateful choice: sell their lease to the Starbucks Corp. of America, or refuse and take their chances when Egypt's first Starbucks opens up across the street. All this is set against the strife of Egypt's 2005 presidential election, when Hosni Mubarak imprisoned opposition leaders, bribed voters, rigged results — and set the stage for his ouster.

THE BODY OF AN AMERICAN by Dan O'Brien

In 1993, while photographing the desecration of a dead American soldier in the streets of Mogadishu, Paul Watson heard the voice of the soldier speak to him: "If you do this, I will own you forever." *The Body of an American* examines questions of guilt and responsibility, both personal and cultural, in the true story of this haunted war reporter traversing the globe and the playwright who followed him to the Arctic in pursuit of the truth.

DEAD ACCOUNTS by Theresa Rebeck

For Jack, coming home to Cincinnati, Ohio, is both returning to his childhood and running away from New York City because of a small calculating issue in his bank account. Follow Jack in this comedy as it explores divorce, aging, big business, and the wonders of Cincinnati's local cuisine.

IN THE BOOK OF by John Walch "Where you go, I will go..." RUTH 1:16

This contemporary reimagining of *The Book of Ruth* explores the ongoing debate on Immigration. Naomi (a Lieutenant stationed near Kabul) and Anisah (her Afghan translator) reel from the loss of their husbands in Afghanistan. Naomi is discharged and prepares to come home when Anisah—fearing for her own safety—asks Naomi to bring her home with her. This simple leap of faith brings Anisah to the economically struggling town of Broxton, Mississippi, where she is greeted with suspicion by the citizens and with open hostility by Naomi's sister-in-law, Gail—who is running for mayor on a staunch anti-immigration platform. As Anisah struggles to find work in her new home, she is befriended by Gail's son, Bo, who hires her illegally to help with his landscape business. His kindness to her further divides and galvanizes the family.