FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES/USA ANNOUNCES

The 2018 TYA/USA Fellows

New York, NY, December 13, 2017 – In an effort to foster the professional growth of artists, practitioners and emerging leaders in the field of Theatre of Young Audiences, TYA/USA has awarded fellowships to six individuals across three program categories - the Ann Shaw International TYA Fellowship, along with the newly created UT Austin TYA Artistic Exchange Fellowship and the Emerging Leader in TYA Fellowship. The 2018 TYA/USA Fellows will travel across the country and internationally to engage in innovative practice, exchange ideas, and explore a new aspect of the TYA landscape. This marks a dramatic expansion of TYA/USA’s Fellowship Program (previously awarded in one program area) and demonstrates the organization’s commitment to leadership development in the TYA field.

Introducing the 2018 TYA/USA Fellows:

- The 2018 UT Austin TYA Artistic Exchange Fellows Lauren Jost (Artistic Director of Spellbound Theatre, NY) and Michelle Kozlak (Producing Artistic Director of Arts on the Horizon, DC) will spend two years attending conferences together; travelling to see each other’s creative processes in action and work in production; exchange ideas and best practice in the creation of theatre for the very young (0-5-years); and mentor a UT Austin graduate student throughout the process.

- The 2018 Emerging Leader in TYA Fellows Young Nae Choi, Shavonne T. Coleman, and Eric Norton will each complete an individual research project by travelling to leading TYA theatres and institutions across the country; receive mentorship and leadership development from the TYA/USA Staff and Board throughout the year; and participate in regular cohort meetings to discuss issues in the field.

- The 2018 Ann Shaw International TYA Fellow Todd Siff will travel to Grenada to develop a creative exchange between his home theatre, the North Carolina Theatre for Young People, and The Creative Arts Theatre in Grenada. He plans to engage in a devising process to create a new play by and for teens inspired by the theme of Acceptance. Created in conjunction with members of the Creative Arts Theatre under the direction of artistic director Neila Ettienne, the new work will aim to spark dialogue amongst teenagers on issues they face within the current Grenadian culture and society at large.
“We are so inspired by the dynamic 2018 Fellows. We received a competitive pool of applications this year, and we’re delighted to support these six individuals in their development and exploration,” said TYA/USA Executive Director Jonathan Shmidt Chapman. “We plan to continue to invest in our fellowship programming, cultivating the next generation of TYA leadership and field innovation. We hope their research and creative development will significantly impact both their own practice and the field at large through their future leadership.”

TYA/USA Fellowships are awarded annually. TYA/USA Fellowships are designed to offer dynamic opportunities for growth, discovery and exchange to practitioners in the field of Theatre for Young Audiences. TYA/USA Fellowships are made possible in part through the generous support of the Ann Shaw Estate and the UT Austin Department of Theatre and Dance. For more information, visit www.tyausa.org/tyausa-fellowships.

The 2018 TYA/USA Fellowships Selection Panel

Each year, TYA/USA Fellows are selected by a diverse panel of leaders from the TYA field comprised of TYA/USA Members and Board Leadership.

Chair: Deborah Wicks La Puma, TYA/USA Board Member

Megan Alrutz, UT Austin
Katherine Campbell, Arkansas Arts Center Children’s Theater / TYA/USA Board Member
Marcella Crowson, Oregon Children’s Theatre / TYA/USA Board Member
Sara Jane Hardy, Northwest Children’s Theater
Linda Hartzell, Seattle Children’s Theatre
Jenny Koppera, Spinning Dot Theatre
Steve McCormick, La Jolla Playhouse / TYA/USA Board Member
Courtney McEniry, Milwaukee Repertory Theater
Sara Morgulis, New York City Children’s Theater
Brant Pope, UT Austin / TYA/USA Board Member
Rebecca Posednick, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts
Roxanne Schroeder-Arce, UT Austin
Janet Stanford, Imagination Stage
Jeremy Winchester, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts / TYA/USA Board Member
More About the 2018 TYA/USA Fellows:

**Young Nae Choi** (MFA candidate in Theatre for Youth at Arizona State University) is a theater-maker, artist-researcher, performer, and educator from Seoul, South Korea. Her TYA experiences include interning as a dramaturg at Write Now 2017; and performing ‘Child’ in *A Village Fable*, and ‘facilitator/juror’ in *The Compass* at Arizona State University. She is currently working on a Theatre for the Very Young project that explores a dream narrative through Surrealist aesthetics, combining creative practice and research. Young Nae’s practice is shaped by the international and multidisciplinary environment of New York University Abu Dhabi where she earned a B.A. in theatre. Her international experiences make her passionate about interdisciplinary and transcultural possibilities of theatre for young audiences.

**Shavonne T. Coleman** is a performing artist, writer, and director from Detroit, MI. In recent years she has been a Teaching Artist for VSAMI, Cross Town Theatre, and Mosaic Youth theatre of Detroit as well as the founder of Acting O.U.T. a creative arts development organization in Detroit. She has a MFA from Eastern Michigan University for Applied Drama/Theatre for the Young. In 2013, Shavonne traveled to S. Korea to direct a Youth Theatre performance at the Zoom Theatre in Seoul. She is interested in cultivating an interest in theatre and the arts in urban areas. Her passion is to create opportunities for the arts to be incorporated not only as entertainment but as practice and exploration of life’s questions and answers. Ms. Coleman is honored to return to her alma mater for the 2017-18 school year as a Visiting Professor at Grand Valley State University in the Music, Theatre, and Dance Department.

**Lauren Jost** is a theatre artist and arts educator in New York. She is the Artistic Director of Spellbound Theatre, New York’s award-winning theatre exclusively for the very young. Lauren can occasionally be found performing as a storyteller and puppeteer, but spends most of her time directing and producing Spellbound’s public, school, and national touring theater productions for children ages 0-5. Her work can be seen this year at Miami Theater Center (Wink), Symphony Space (Wink), The Old Stone House (Babywild) and in 30+ schools and early childhood centers around New York City. Additionally, Lauren works as an arts educator with New Victory Theater, Lifetime Arts, the Brooklyn Public Library and New York University, and provides professional development on storytelling, theater, and puppetry for early childhood settings for teachers, artists, and theater companies in a variety of settings. Lauren is mom to J. and L., whose imaginations are her daily inspiration.
Michelle Kozlak is the Producing Artistic Director and Founder of Arts on the Horizon, dedicated to providing performances and education programs for young people ages 0 to 6 years old. Ms. Kozlak’s arts management career in the Washington, DC area started at the Kennedy Center, where she was the National Touring Manager for the Theater for Young Audiences program and then the Manager of Theater Programming, where she served as General Manager for the Tennessee Williams Explored festival, Mister Roberts, and Mame with Christine Baranski. After almost ten years at the Kennedy Center, Michelle left full-time employment in order to spend more time with her son, Gavin, after he was born. Since that time, she has served as the Casting Director for the Kennedy Center’s Theater for Young Audiences program, the VSA Playwrights Discovery Program productions (2008-2011), and Coming Home, the production that commemorated the grand opening of the Atlas Performing Arts Center. She has a BA in English with a minor in Theatre from the University of Oregon and an MA in Arts Management from American University.

Eric Norton is a Minneapolis based theatre director focused on new work for multigenerational audiences. Recent projects include Evan Placey’s Girls Like That, which performed at the Guthrie Theater’s Thespian Festival. Eric has directed Roald Dahl’s Willy Wonka, Sarah Ruhl’s The Melancholy Play, and the world premiere of Hazard by Megan Burns about the chosen family of a teenage runaway. As an assistant director, he has worked with the Children’s Theatre Company and Theatre Latté Da. Eric is a proud graduate of the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities and an alumnus of Double Edge Theater Training.

Todd Siff is a theatre artist, musician, and arts educator from Miami, Florida. He holds a BFA in Theatre Arts from Boston University and is currently an MFA Theatre for Youth candidate at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Throughout his career, Todd has focused on the development of new plays and musicals, both in the United States and the International TYA community. His passion for new and devised plays has led him to work in many countries around the world including Australia, Sweden, New Zealand, Venezuela, and India, where he was selected as member of the Next Generation Residency Program at ASSITEJ India’s TIFLI Festival in 2016. His production of Wolf Child: The Correction of Joseph by Edward Mast was selected to be performed at the 2017 TIFLI International Festival. Todd is also an accomplished musician and composer. His band Freerunner (freerunnermusic.com) is a nationally touring act with their third LP coming out in 2018. He has also written music for various plays and films.
About the UT Austin TYA Artistic Exchange Fellowship: Founded in 2017, the UT Austin TYA Artistic Exchange Fellowship provides a pair of TYA artists from across the US with the opportunity to attend an international festival together, see each other’s work in action, and apply what they learn to their future work. This fellowship aims to elevate the quality of the TYA landscape by sparking creativity, generating dialogue, and enriching the practice of artists in the field. A chosen UT Austin graduate student will participate in all of the visits as an observer. The fellows include the graduate student in their dialogue, impacting the next generation of TYA practitioners through their own exchange and development.

About the Emerging Leader in TYA Fellowship: Founded in 2017, the Emerging Leader in TYA Fellowship supports the early career development of emerging TYA students and professionals, providing the opportunity to explore, travel and seek mentorship in the national field of TYA. Fellows are funded to travel domestically to connect with an inspiring mentor or organization, and see their work in practice. Fellows expand their leadership potential by engaging with individuals or organizations they admire across the TYA field. Fellows are also offered the opportunity to exchange with their cohort, as well as seek mentorship and ongoing support from the TYA/USA Staff and Board throughout the year.

About the Ann Shaw International TYA Fellowship: The Ann Shaw International TYA Fellowship (originally the ASSITEJ/USA Observership fund) was founded in 1996 to support career development opportunities for theatre artists and administrators committed to theatre for young audiences. This program was renamed in 2003 in recognition of Ann Shaw’s visionary leadership and tireless efforts to support individual career development of TYA professionals. Since its inception, the Ann Shaw Fellowship has provided funds to assist over forty individuals with travel to theatres and festivals throughout the United States and abroad, for viewing outstanding work, pursuing mentorship opportunities and innovative collaborations and exploring challenging questions related to the field of theatre for young audiences.

About TYA/USA: Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (TYA/USA), is a national service organization whose mission is to promote the power of professional theatre for young audiences through excellence, collaboration, and innovation across cultural and international boundaries. The organization provides advocacy and resources in order to strengthen and diversify the field of theatre for young audiences. Founded in 1965, TYA/USA is the only theatre organization in the United States which has the development of professional theatre for young audiences and international exchange as its primary mandates. TYA/USA is the United States Center for the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ). TYA/USA hosts a bi-annual national conference, produces TYA Today Magazine, and offers a range of professional development opportunities, both for its membership and the greater field. www.tyausa.org.

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