Margie Salvante
Executive Director
Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia

Talking Points for New Play Celebration:

- **Snapshot Report:**
  - 81 world premieres - 26% of all productions.
  - Significantly higher than the 12% comparative set of TCG theatres
  - 63 workshops or readings of new works; commissioned 17 new works

- **2008-09 Season**
  - 87 new play events in spring out of 372 events for the year
    - Almost ½ are world premieres
  - 35 companies on this list
    - 5 from The People's Light & Theatre Company, 4 from The Wilma Theater, 6 from Philadelphia Theatre Company, 4 from 1812 Productions, 4 from Arden Theatre Company, 6 from Bristol Riverside Theatre, 5 from InterAct Theatre Company.

- **National Recognition**
  - **Recent press about new plays in Philly.**
    - New York Times – Giving Section, November 10, 2008: Focus on Independence Foundation support of new plays. Quotes Susan Sherman, Terry Nolen, Jen Childs, Gregory T. Rowe, Todd London (artistic director of New Dramatists, a New York organization for playwrights), David Dower (associate artistic director of Arena Stage in Washington), Polly Carl (producing artistic director of the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis), Fran Kumin, Geoff Sobelle, Michael Hollinger, and Margie Salvante.

    - Philadelphia Inquirer – January 29, 2009: Article about PlayPenn that references plays that were first read or workshoped there and have gone on to full productions (i.e.: *My Name is Asher Lev* @ Arden). Quotes Paul Meshijian, Aaron Posner and Seth Rozin.

  - **Continued Life**

- Countless plays commissioned or workshoped in Philly that have gone on to win Awards, be published or have continuous productions across the country.

- For example - in 2004, Wilma Associate Artist Doug Wright wins the Tony Award for Best Play for *I Am My Own Wife*, a play that had a workshop reading at The Wilma. Prior to winning the Tony, *I Am My Own Wife* won The Pulitzer Prize.

- InterAct website lists over a dozen new plays that got their start at InterAct and went on to a continued life across the country – two with significant national runs: October 2003 – *Permanent Collection* by Thomas Gibbons and March 1999 - *Bee-Luther-Hatchee* by Thomas Gibbons

- Arden Theatre Company has a strong commitment to developing and producing new work, and has brought over 20 new works of American theatre to the stage – many of which have since been produced at theatres across the country. Most notably *Opus* which was recognized by numerous awards programs at the end of the 2007/08 New York theatre season, including: 2008 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Sound Design, Jorge Cousineau (Winner) as well as nominations for Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk Awards.

- Philadelphia Theatre Company – also dedicated to presenting the Philadelphia and World Premieres of major works by contemporary playwrights. Over a dozen of the plays commissioned by Philadelphia Theatre Company listed on their website as having a continued life – most notably Tony Award-winning *Master Class* by Terrence McNally, and *Bunny Bunny* by Alan Zweibel (Lucille Lortel Award, 1997).

- **Promotional activities for New Play Month**

  - **Philadelphia New Play Initiative**

    - Conference February 14 and 15th.
      - Task force helmed by Seth Rozin (Artistic Director of InterAct Theatre Company), Walter Bilderback (Dramaturg and Literary Manager of The Wilma Theater), Glen Knapp (Executive Producing Director of Philadelphia Young Playwrights), Richard Kotulski (playwright and Board Chair of Philadelphia Dramatists Center), Paul Meshejian (Artistic Director of PlayPenn), Genne

Murphy (playwright and General and Program Manager at Philadelphia Young Playwrights), and Gigi Naglak (Dramaturg and Director of Development of Flashpoint Theatre Company).

- 200 attendees at each of three professional development workshops designed for playwrights and theatre professionals.
- 125 attendees came out for the closing event which featured a moderated discussion with Paula Vogel (Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *How I Learned to Drive*, *Hot N' Throbbing* and *The Baltimore Waltz*) and a post-event networking reception.
- Feedback focused on importance of creating community and dialogue between area playwrights, directors and theatres on expanded new play activity.
- Task force sees conference as first step in reaching their goal to improve the climate for new plays in the Philadelphia region, and build relationships between playwrights, local theatres, and theatre artists.

- **PR Activities**
  - Constant Contact e-blasts to over 6,000 contacts announcing events
  - Press release – dedicating February as New Play Month
  - Special edition of Now on Stage page published in programs
  - Link on TA homepage to special listing of new play productions and workshops
  - Philadelphia Weekly sponsored co-op style ad for new plays
  - Announcement of New Play grant for Spark theatres (More info available on our website.)
  - Announcement of Kimmel Center's Festival being planned for Spring 2011. (More info available on website.)