



**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES
CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR FIFTH GLOBAL AGE PROJECT**
New Plays for a New Century

BERKELEY, Calif. (May 26, 2009) Berkeley's acclaimed **Aurora Theatre Company** is proud to announce a call for submissions for its fifth season of the **Global Age Project** (GAP) festival of new works. The company will choose four new plays to be presented as staged readings with professional directors and actors during the GAP festival in February of 2010; the festival will coincide with the company's fully-staged World Premiere of 2009 GAP finalist Joel Drake Johnson's new play, *The First Grade*. The competition is open to playwrights from the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Each of the four finalists will receive a \$1,000 award and their work will be considered for further development and production during Aurora Theatre Company's regular season; out of town artists will receive travel and accommodation expenses. **Deadline for play submission is August 1, 2009;** finalists will be announced in November 2009.

Because this is a new play development program dedicated to the future, Aurora Theatre Company is excited to offer online script submission for the GAP. Playwrights may upload their submissions directly to Aurora Theatre Company's website at **www.auroratheatre.org**; there is a \$20 submission fee per play manuscript.

The Global Age Project is a discovery and developmental vehicle established to encourage playwrights to address important issues affecting our present and future at the dawn of this global age. Seeking forward-thinking work from both established and emerging playwrights, Aurora Theatre Company requests submissions that passionately challenge audiences to examine issues and concerns of the 21st century. Writers are encouraged to submit works that explore the current and future state of the global community and/or examine the changing state of human relationships in this new century. Works can be provocative, gentle, fierce, or transformational, anything that addresses an evolving understanding of the world in all of its complexities. The company also encourages

AURORA THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES GAP CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

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submissions that transcend traditional forms of theater presentation.

Aurora Theatre Company's Artistic Director **Tom Ross** states, "This year, I'm pleased to welcome Matthew Graham Smith as our new GAP producer and Deborah Taylor as his Associate. Graham has been with us for two prior seasons as a GAP reading director and his insights into the process are acute, as is his remarkable enthusiasm. Deborah's passion and experience producing new work makes her a great partner for Graham and they will no doubt raise the bar. We are equally excited to produce our first GAP world premiere, Joel Drake Johnson's *The First Grade*, a play that we'll be workshopping in the new Dashow Wing this summer, and that I will have the privilege of directing as our anchor GAP production next season."

Over the past four years, the GAP has established an astounding track record for nurturing new playwrights. During the first year, Dan Hoyle's early draft of *Tings Dey Happen* was a GAP prize-recipient and received its first public showing at Aurora Theatre Company; since then, the show has gone on to become a huge success in New York and San Francisco, where it won the Glickman Award. Laura Jacqmin, whose play *Happyslap* was a GAP prize-recipient during the festival's second year, recently won the Wasserstein Award for an outstanding script by a young woman who has not yet received national attention. Additionally, playwright Zayd Dohrn, whose play *Sick* was a 2008 GAP prize-recipient, garnered the first Sky Cooper New American Play Prize at Marin Theatre Company. *Our Dad is in Atlantis* by Javier Malpica, translated by Jorge Ingacio Cortiñas, was published in its entirety in American Theatre Magazine following its GAP reading in 2008.

GAP Producer **Mathew Graham Smith** is the founder and Artistic Director of Precarious Theatre. He has directed at the Walnut Theater in Philadelphia and the HERE American Living Room series in New York City. In addition to Aurora Theatre Company's GAP new works festival, in the Bay Area, Smith has directed productions at the Yerba Buena Garden's Festival, Bay Area Playwright's Festival, EXIT Theatre, Playground, and New Conservatory Theatre, where his *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* was nominated for Best Overall Drama by the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle. He recently Assistant Directed Peter DuBois' *Curse of the Starving Class* at American Conservatory Theater, and is the recipient of the SFAC individual artist grant for his writing/directing project *I'm Yours! (or Deranged by Love)* for Precarious Theatre. An accomplished educator, Smith currently teaches in American Conservatory Theater's MFA program, and is a guest teacher at New

AURORA THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES GAP CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

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Conservatory Theatre Center, San Francisco State University, Assumption University in Bangkok, and the Barcelona Meisner Program in Barcelona, Spain.

GAP Associate Producer **Deborah Taylor** has been working in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York as a producer and actor for the last 12 years. Her theater producing credits include: New Works Producing Director at Marin Theatre Company; Producing Director at the Zephyr Theatre in Los Angeles, where she started the Zephyr Reading Series; and Producer for FireMused Productions, a theatre and film producing company with a primary focus on developing and producing new works. In San Francisco, FireMused produced *Killer Joe* at the Magic Theatre, and has participated in several New York (On and Off-Broadway) productions, including Eve Ensler's *The Good Body*, Cultural Industry's *Shockheaded Peter*, *STOMP/Las Vegas*, and *The Last Schwartz* in Los Angeles at the Zephyr Theatre. With FireMused, Taylor is working on a new play festival at the Zephyr Theatre, scheduled for the fall of 2009. She is currently playing the role of Elmire in Del' Arte Theatre Company's touring production of *Tartuffe*.

Aurora Theatre Company rounds out its 17th season in June with Bob Glaudini's unconventional romantic comedy **JACK GOES BOATING**, directed by Joy Carlin. Following **JACK GOES BOATING**, Aurora Theatre Company opens its 18th season in August with Clifford Odets' legendary Depression-era drama **AWAKE AND SING!** directed by Joy Carlin. Tony-nominated director Barbara Damashek returns to Aurora Theatre Company in October to helm Neil LaBute's exploration of body image in contemporary America, **FAT PIG**, and the jingle bells will rock again this December with a new edition of **THE COVERLETTES COVER CHRISTMAS**. Aurora Theatre Company Artistic Director Tom Ross helms the World Premiere of Joel Drake Johnson's **THE FIRST GRADE** in January, and Aurora Theatre Company founding Artistic Director Barbara Oliver returns to direct Henrik Ibsen's masterwork **JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN** in April. Closing the season in June is the Bay Area Premiere of Stephen Karem's innovative comedy **SPEECH & DEBATE** directed by Robin Stanton. For tickets or more information, the public can call (510) 843-4822 or visit auroratheatre.org.

Aurora Theatre Company continues to offer challenging, literate, intelligent stage works to the Bay Area, each year increasing its reputation for top-notch theatre. Located in the heart of the Downtown Berkeley Arts District, Aurora Theatre Company has been called "one of the most important regional

AURORA THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES GAP CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

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theaters in the area” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, while *The Wall Street Journal* has “nothing but praise for the Aurora.” The *Contra Costa Times* stated, “perfection is probably an unattainable ideal in a medium as fluid as live performance, but the Aurora Theatre comes luminously close,” while the *San Jose Mercury News* affirmed “[Aurora Theatre Company] lives up to its reputation as a theater that feeds the mind,” and the *Oakland Tribune* declared “it’s all about choices, and if you value good theater, choose the Aurora.”

The **GLOBAL AGE PROJECT** is underwritten in part by the **Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation**. The Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation supports both fine arts and the performing arts in San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, and Marin County, California. The Foundation seeks to support smaller, independent arts organizations that present challenging and cutting-edge works.