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THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES/USA ANNOUNCES The 2019 TYA/USA Fellows

New York, NY, January 9, 2019 – 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 14 individuals across three program categories - the **Emerging Leader in TYA Fellowship**, the **Ann Shaw International TYA Fellowship**, and the **Colleen Toohey Porter TYA/USA Festival & Conference Fellowship**. The 2019 TYA/USA Fellows will travel across the country and internationally to engage in innovative practice, exchange ideas, and explore the TYA landscape. The growth of these fellowship initiatives demonstrate the organization's commitment to leadership development in the TYA field.

Introducing the 2019 TYA/USA Fellows:

- The 2019 Emerging Leader in TYA Fellows **Khalia Davis, Deepmala Tiwari, and Melisa Orozco Vargas** 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 2019 Ann Shaw International TYA Fellow **Ashley Laverty** will travel to Bologna, Italy to attend the Visionsi Di Futuro, Visionsi Di Teatro (International Festival of Theatre and Culture for Early Childhood) at La Baracca Testoni Ragazzi. There, she will witness theatre and dance performances for very young audiences from all over the world as well as participate in a conference for early childhood educators. She will apply these experiences to enhance her own creative practice, including her next piece for the very young: a devised, workshop production of *Things That Honk*, set in two public parks in different neighborhoods in Omaha.
- The 2019 Colleen Toohey Porter Fellows will attend the 2019 TYA/USA National Festival & Conference in Atlanta, Georgia in May. They will participate in all conference activities, introducing them to the range of the national TYA field. The program supports their career growth by utilizing the biennial festival & conference as a learning and network building opportunity. The 10 awarded fellows are **Giana Blazquez, Paulo Chiossi, Taylor Jane Cooper, Hana Holloway, Jasmine Middleton, Gregory Mytelka, Willow Jade Norton, Marisol Rosa-Shapiro, Sarah Tan, and Hanna Williamson**.

In addition, The 2018-19 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 enter their second year of fellowship, attending the TYA/USA National Festival & Conference 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 UT Austin graduate student Lina Chambers throughout the process.

"We are so inspired by the passion and promise of the 2019 Fellows. We received a very competitive pool of applications this year, and we're delighted to support these 14 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 2019 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: Jenny Koppera, TYA/USA Board Member

Katherine Campbell, Arkansas Arts Center Children's Theater / TYA/USA Board Member

Jonathan Shmidt Chapman, TYA/USA Executive Director

Ben Hanna, Indiana Repertory Theatre

Mireya Hepner, MainStreet Theatre Company / TYA/USA Board Member

Roderick Justice, Children's Theatre of Cincinnati

Janette Martinez, Disney Theatrical Group

Steve McCormick, CoTA / TYA/USA Board Member

Sara Morgulis, New York City Children's Theater

Troy Scheid, Brave Little Company

Todd Siff, Florida Gateway College

More about the 2019 TYA/USA Fellows:

2019 Emerging Leader in TYA Fellows



Khalia Davis is a multidisciplinary artist from the San Francisco/Bay Area now living in New York with a passion for children's entertainment and desire for content creation. BA in Theater Arts from the University of Southern California. Recent: Directed the world premiere play for the very young, *Pillowland* by Barbara Zinn Krieger with New York City Children's Theater and the Bay Area Premiere, *Judy Moody and Stink and the Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Treasure Hunt* by Allison Gregory with Bay Area Children's Theatre. Upcoming: Directing the world premiere musical, *She Persisted the Musical*, based on the popular children's book by Chelsea Clinton with Bay Area Children's Theatre. Ms. Davis currently teaches with New York City Children's Theater, the Atlantic Acting School through NYU, for their after school programs as a director and choreographer, and for the Disney Theatrical Group leading music and movement workshops and facilitating audience and community engagement. As a professional movement coordinator, she has devised new works with Bay Area Children's Theater, New York City Children's Theater and Atlantic Acting School's teen conservatory and high school residency program, *Staging Success*. She is also a director/actor/teaching artist for the nationally-known arts education organization The Story Pirates. As a performer, she has worked regionally with Bay Area Children's Theatre (*Resident Artist*), Live Source Theater Group, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Aurora Theatre, and California Shakespeare Theater just to name a few. Tours: *Gold Rush the Musical*, *Rock the Block*, *Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy the Musical*. To learn more about Ms. Davis, check her out at www.khaliashdavis.com.



Melisa Orozco Vargas is a candidate for the MFA in Theatre for Young Audiences at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where she currently serves as the TYA Coordinator for the Department of Theatre + Dance. Melisa's approach to theatre is influenced by her diverse personal, academic, and professional background: a multiethnic identity as a child of Hawai'i, bachelors degrees in International Relations and Italian from the University of Southern California, an early career in service- and sustainability learning in higher education focusing on community outreach and student development, experiences studying in Italy and volunteering in Brazil, and a transformational motherhood journey. Artistically, she has practiced hula, classical voice and choral music, and dance improvisation; in addition to learning and performing kyogen (Japanese satire) and chuanju (Sichuan "opera"), forms she studied with master artists from Japan and China, respectively, through UHM's Asian Theatre program. In her research, Melisa has taken a particular interest in curriculum development, applied theatre (especially Theatre of the Oppressed), devised performance, and now theatre for the very young. With two young children, ages 3 and 6, who have accompanied her through graduate school, and an affinity for babies since a child, the TVYA subfield amplifies her experience as a parent and artist.



Deepmala Tiwari was born and raised in New Delhi, India and has a specialization in Theatre In Education from the National School of Drama, Tripura, India. She came to North America to study Theatre for Youth at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the fall of 2018 after a long, rich history of devising, creating, directing, and producing theatre in India. Deepmala began as an actor performing in a number of plays which address female sexuality and gender diversity. Deepmala's interest in theatre allowed her to engage with children as she worked in hospitals reaching children through hospital clowning. In 2016, Deepmala was awarded a fellowship from the

Ministry of Culture in New Delhi as a Young Artist to devise a TYA production. That same year Deepmala founded her own theatre company, The Color Bakery, based in New Delhi, India. Unique in its vision, The Color Bakery worked to bring devised and produced theatre work to communities throughout India. In her most recent work, Deepmala directed Suzan Zeder's *Step on a Crack* and will direct the production of Anne Negri's *This Is Not a Test* (unpublished) next year. She was also cast in Suzan Zeder's *When She Had Wings* and will be touring the Southwest and Northeast regions of the US with the production in the spring of 2019.

2019 Ann Shaw International TYA Fellow



Ashley Laverty is a theatre maker originally from Massachusetts. She is the founding Artistic Director of Kerfuffle, a theatre company devoted to creating theatre and dance performances with and for very young children, and she most recently directed *Nested*, a play centered around family separation, love, and home for children under 6 years old. Ashley is the Director of Early Childhood and a Teaching Artist at The Rose Theater in Omaha, Nebraska, where she designs curriculum and

facilitates creative drama and musical theatre classes, teaches curricular topics using creative drama tools in classrooms, leads drama integration professional development workshops with early childhood educators, and writes and directs Theatre for the Very Young plays, such as *Wynken, Blynken and Nod*, and *The Music Makers*. Other plays for young and very young audiences include *The Caterpillar's Footprint*, *Nadine's Coloring Book*, *Where Our Stuff Goes*, and *Dotty Dot!*, written in collaboration with Travis Kendrick, Ryan Cavanaugh and John Wascavage. As an actress, Ashley has performed nationally for young audiences with the National Theatre for Children, VEE Corporation, Omaha Theater Company for Young People, Roxy Regional Theatre, Vital Theatre Company, and Storyland, a family amusement park. She holds an M.F.A in Theatre for Youth from Arizona State University and a B.A. in Theatre Arts with a concentration in Musical Theatre from Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts. She is the co-chair of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education's Early Childhood Network, a Master Teaching Artist on the Nebraska Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster, and she was proud to be one of the five 2018 Artist Fellows at the Union for Contemporary Art in Omaha, NE. For more information, please visit www.kerfuffletvy.com and www.ashleylaverty.com.

2019 Colleen Toohey Porter TYA/USA Festival & Conference Fellows



Giana Blazquez is a passionate emerging TYA professional committed to the power of youth theatre. She has been involved in Theatre for Young Audiences as a Teaching Artist, Director, and Choreographer for six years. Giana currently serves as the Next Steps/K-4 Program Director at First Stage Children's Theater and is applying for Graduate School at Arizona State University, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Central Florida.



Paulo de Morais Chiossi is an international student from Curitiba, Brazil, and is currently in his senior year at the University of Northern Colorado. He is getting his bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts with an emphasis in Acting and a minor in Dance. Within the field, his biggest passions are Theatre for Young Audiences and Stage Movement (with some extra love for Tadashi Suzuki's methods). Some of his favorite projects to date include *The Transition of Doodle Pequeño* (Reno), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Flute), *Love's Labour's Lost* (Longaville), and directing *Hush: An Interview With America* - all within the UNC School of Theatre Arts and Dance.



Taylor Jane Cooper is a theatre artist, educator, and activist working on her degree in theatre education at The University of Texas at Austin. As a student, she currently serves as a member of the UTeach Fine Arts Student Advisory Council where she helps the council bring artists, business professionals, and administrators in the fine arts field to enrich and connect UTeach Fine Arts students in their future careers and artistic endeavors. As an artist, Taylor Jane gravitates toward work that is reflective and empowering of the community around her as an architect of wonder. She hopes to do so by activating communities through creative collaborative art practices. As an educator, Taylor Jane hopes to create culturally responsive, inclusive, and diverse curriculum that uses drama-based strategies to engage and empower young people. As a theatre maker and participator, Taylor Jane is deeply invested in the wonder, power, and magic of theatre for young and very young audiences. In this, her investment centers around moving this field toward more diverse, equitable, and inclusive practices, processes, and stories for young people and those to come.



Hana Holloway has received training from University of North Carolina School of the Arts, as well as London Academy of Music and the Dramatic Arts, and is a recent graduate from University of North Carolina-Greensboro where she received her BFA in Acting. Although her concentration was in performance, her passions in writing, puppetry, devised theater and Theater for Young Audiences led to opportunities such as working with Peppercorn Theater at The Children's Museum of Winston Salem, to being a part of the apprentice company at Williamstown Theater Festival, to now being a Program Director for Lights, Camera, Learn! (a non profit that educates and empowers children through the art of filmmaking). She is currently working on lesson plans for future programs in the Philippines, Tunisia, Turkey, and Spain that incorporate improv and puppetry, and ways we can further edutainment. You can keep up with her travels and upcoming projects on instagram @holleryourway.



Jasmine Middleton is a Junior Acting Major at University of Northern Colorado. In her Sophomore year she played the role of 'Luna' in the TYA play *Luna* by Ramon Esquivel and has had the Theater for Young Audiences bug ever since. She is the co-founder of a theater for young audiences group called The Playground, and is very excited for the opportunity to learn more about the field and how to share it with others.



Gregory Mytelka is an emerging theatre artist and arts administrator passionate about the intersection of educational theatre, community engagement, and theatre for young audiences. Based in Upstate New York, Greg is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science in theatre management with a concentration in education from the Syracuse University Department of Drama. Greg has worked and studied with Syracuse Stage, Building Company Theater, and Saratoga Children's Theatre, most recently serving as the Assistant Director for Syracuse Stage's Bank of America Children's Tour *Miss Electricity* (Kathryn Walat). Greg is especially passionate about working with individuals with special needs and using the expressive arts to empower marginalized communities. A firm believer that "children's theatre creates adult audiences", Greg hopes to make the performing arts accessible to individuals of all ages.



Willow Jade Norton is an Oregon-based Director and Teacher focused on new work development. As Artist in Residence at Lane Community College, she developed and directed *Constant Revolution* and *Turning Red*. Recent directing projects include *Quicksilver* for Imagine That Eugene, *Marjorie Prime* for Oregon Contemporary Theatre, *In the Nest Room or the vibrator play* for Lane Community College, *LUNA PARK* and *RAIN AND ZOE SAVE THE WORLD* for Oregon Performance Lab, where she was Artistic Director; *Goodbye Avis* at New York Theatre Workshop; *¡Bocón!*, *RENT*, and *A Thousand Cranes* for The Majestic Theatre; and *S.H.A.V.E.D.* at HERE Arts Center. Norton is a Teaching Artist for The Village School, Oregon Contemporary Theatre, Lane Community College, and Tectonic Theater Project's

Moment Work Technique. She will receive her Masters in Nonprofit Management with a Certificate in Arts Management in June of 2019 from the University of Oregon. Norton holds a BFA in Theater: Original Works from Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, WA. She was also Associate Treasurer at The Shubert Theatre working on *MATILDA The Musical* on Broadway. And currently on the Board for ArtCity Eugene.



Marisol Rosa-Shapiro is a Seattle and New York-based performer, director, teaching artist, and creator of original works of theater. She is a graduate of Princeton University and of Giovanni Fusetti's Lecoq-based Helikos School of Theatre Creation in Florence, Italy. Her specialties include mask theater, mime, clown, commedia dell'arte, improvisation, physical comedy, movement- and ensemble-based creation and more. Marisol's recent performing credits include *The Up Close Festival* at the New Ohio Theatre; Barn Arts Collective's four-actor *Twelfth Night*; Play Your Part Seattle's *More Than Maria*; Convergences Theater Collective's *Babel*; and Spellbound Theater's *Wink* and *The Last Coin*. Her own red nose clown solo show, *Here at Home*

premiered in the Philadelphia Fringe Festival and has since toured to the NY Clown Theater Festival, Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble's Women's Solo Performance Festival, Phillips Academy at Andover and Feast Art Center in Tacoma, WA. Current directing projects include *In SEAtu*, a series of satirical shorts supported by a City Artist grant from Seattle's Office of Arts and Culture; and Soledad Ensemble's *The Seven Ravens Project* which was part of the New Victory Theater's LabWorks development program for theater for young audiences and families in 2018 (www.thesevenravensproject.com). Marisol has worked as a teaching artist for The New Victory Theater, Tectonic Theater Project, Seattle Repertory Theater, Seattle Children's Theater, Seattle Theatre Group, Village Theatre, the 5th Avenue Theatre, Partners for Youth Empowerment, Seeds of Peace, and many more. She is a proud volunteer performer and teacher with Clowns Without Borders USA, and is a 2019 Jim Rye Fellow with International Performing Arts for Youth (IPAY).



Sarah Tan is a deviser, producer, performer, and educator born and raised in Singapore. She is currently an MFA student in Theatre for Youth at Arizona State University. As an artist with a deep passion for building spaces of inclusivity, Sarah believes in the importance of creating relevant and impactful work (on stage and in classrooms) that bring together performance, education, social justice, and community engagement. With her personal work strongly leaning in the direction of devised theatre, Sarah envisions this theatrical form as a tool to artistically communicate the complexities of personal experiences through interdisciplinary performance. Learn more about Sarah's work at www.sarahtanhy.com.



Hanna Williamson is a Junior Acting major at the University of Northern Colorado. She is Co-President and Co-founder of The Playground, a theater for young audiences student group that focuses on creative play. Her passion was ignited with her first TYA tour— *Luna*, by Ramon Esquivel, in the Northern Colorado area. Some of her other roles include Vladimir in *Waiting for Godot*, Tilly in *She Kills Monsters*.

2018-19 UT Austin TYA Artistic Exchange Fellows



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.

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 the Colleen Toohey Porter TYA/USA Festival & Conference Fellowship: The Colleen Toohey Porter Fellowship supports undergraduates and graduate students, along with early career professionals, to participate in the TYA/USA Festival & Conference. Porter Fellows are awarded complimentary registration and housing to experience the full event alongside a diverse cohort of their peers. Fellows participate in a pre-conference professional development day. They also work alongside the Theatre for Young Audiences/USA board and staff to produce this dynamic event, offering support as needed throughout the festival & conference. The primary goal of the fellowship is to introduce participants to the range of the national TYA field, and help support their early career growth by utilizing the biennial festival & conference as a learning opportunity. The fellowship is named in remembrance and celebration of Colleen Toohey Porter, former Theatre for Young Audiences/USA Board Member and Vice President of Community Engagement & Education at PlayhouseSquare in Cleveland, Ohio. Colleen was a strong believer in supporting new voices in the field of Performances for Young Audiences.

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 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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