

May 3, 2010

Contact: Maureen Q. Wolyniec
Director of Institutional Development
860-443-5378 x213
maureen@theoneill.org

NEWS FROM THE O'NEILL

EUGENE O'NEILL THEATER CENTER WINS 2010 REGIONAL THEATER TONY AWARD

Waterford, Connecticut – The **Eugene O'Neill Theater Center** has been awarded the 2010 Antoinette Perry Award (Tony) for Regional Theater; it was announced by the Broadway League and American Theater Wing based on a recommendation by the American Theatre Critics Association. The award will be presented at the Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall in New York on Sunday, June 13.

The O'Neill was founded in 1964 with a mission to “discover, nurture, and develop new works and new artists for the stage.” Since that first year, thousands of plays, musicals, students, actors, directors, puppeteers, cabaret artists, and critics have launched their careers and achieved national prominence. The O'Neill now encompasses seven distinct programs supporting this mission: the **National Playwrights Conference** (founding program); the **National Music Theater Conference**; the **National Theater Institute**; the **National Puppetry Conference**; the **Cabaret and Performance Conference**; the **National Critics Institute**; and the **Monte Cristo Cottage** – O'Neill's home and setting for *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

The O'Neill is led by Executive Director **Preston Whiteway**, who oversees the seven programs each led by a distinct Artistic Director. Mr. Whiteway remarked: “We are completely thrilled and honored. The O'Neill has long been at the forefront of new work, and to have our efforts recognized in this way is very humbling. I thank **Tom Viertel**, Chairman, and the Board of Trustees; each of the Artistic Directors who have helped steer our programs to national prominence; and our founder **George C. White**, who pioneered the idea of play development with **Lloyd Richards**. This award belongs to every artist who has worked, studied or developed at the O'Neill. Thank you to the League, the Wing, and ATCA.”

Board Chairman **Tom Viertel** added, “I can't imagine a more inspiring honor. This award will remind everyone - our staff, the great artists we serve and our students - to cherish the process of making theater and not just the result.”

Wendy C. Goldberg, Artistic Director of the O'Neill's National Playwrights Conference said: “Leading the National Playwrights Conference during this extraordinary artistic period has been a unique honor. That the O'Neill has been awarded the Tony is a thrill of a lifetime.”

The O'Neill's Board is led by Chairman Tom Viertel; Vice-Chair **Ruth Hendel**; Treasurer **Stephen Hendel**; and Secretary **Linda Mariani**. Trustees include: **Roger S. Christiansen**; **Brian Dennehy**; **JoAnne Walton Dickinson**; **Michael Douglas**; **Brian Drutman**; **Lynn R. Fusco**; **Carolyn Greenspan**; **Heather Henson**; **Astrid Horan**; **Kenneth Kansas**; **Sara Katz**; **Chester Kitchings, Jr.**; **Dorita Lieberman**; **Leah Lowe**; **Dina Merrill Hartley**; **Jerome Meyer**; **John W. Rafal**; **Sally Speer**; **Betsy White**; George C. White; Preston Whiteway; **Frederick B. Whittemore**; **Michael B. Wray**.

The Programs:

NATIONAL PLAYWRIGHTS CONFERENCE, Wendy C. Goldberg, Artistic Director: Founded in 1964. Through a national Open Submissions process involving several hundred readers and a distinguished selection committee, playwrights are selected to attend a month-long residency, during which they develop their newest work in collaboration with outstanding theater professionals. The writers are encouraged to take risks while allowing their creative sensibilities to emerge in a collaborative process that responds to the individual needs of each artist involved in the process. Each work receives two public staged readings. Notable alumni include August Wilson; John Patrick Shanley; Wendy Wasserstein; Adam Rapp; Gina Gionfriddo; John Guare; David Henry Hwang; Adam Bock and hundreds more.

NATIONAL MUSIC THEATER CONFERENCE, Paulette Haupt, Founding Artistic Director: Begun in 1978, the National Music Theater Conference (NMTC) offers a dynamic residency to selected composers, librettists, and lyricists. Like the Playwrights Conference, NMTC discovers new voices through an Open Submissions process. Since 2004, NMTC has run concurrently with the National Playwrights Conference, providing artists involved in different theatrical disciplines the opportunity to share work and learn from each other's creative process. Each work developed at the NMTC receives between two and four public staged readings. Works developed include *Nine* (1979, Winner 1981 Best Musical Tony Award); *Avenue Q* (2002, Winner 2004 Best Musical Tony Award); *In The Heights* (2005, Winner 2008 Best Musical Tony Award); *Tales of the City* (2009, ACT premiere Spring 2011).

NATIONAL THEATER INSTITUTE, Jeff Janisheski, Artistic Director: Founded in 1970. The National Theater Institute (NTI) offers a college accredited, semester-long intense theater training for up to 30 students each semester. Undergraduates participate in a seven-day-a-week regiment of acting, directing, playwriting, movement, and stage combat. It also offers NTI Moscow, an accredited semester of training at the school of the Moscow Art Theater, and Theatermakers, a two course summer program for advanced students that runs concurrently with the Conferences. Notable alumni include: Jennifer Garner; John Krasinski (*The Office*); Josh Radnor (*How I Met Your Mother*); Ted Chapin (President, Rodgers & Hammerstein Org); Gordon Clapp (*NYPD Blue*); Jeremy Piven (*Entourage*).

NATIONAL PUPPETRY CONFERENCE, Pam Arciero, Artistic Director: Founded in 1990 by Jim and Jane Henson, this conference selects artists for an intense, ten-day residency. Participants develop works under the guidance of international master puppeteers and create new works specifically for the Conference and subsequent mountings. Participants explore innovative projects and techniques that extend the boundaries of puppetry in performance.

CABARET AND PERFORMANCE CONFERENCE, Michael Bush, Artistic Director: Reinstated in 2005. Working with Cabaret masters and musical directors, aspiring and established performers develop skills and projects during a ten-day residency. This Conference emphasizes each

performer's ability to bring his or her personal experience to the material, and on storytelling techniques. *[title of show]* (2005, 2008 Broadway) was developed in this conference.

NATIONAL CRITICS INSTITUTE, Dan Sullivan, Director: Established in 1968. Operating in a partnership with the National Playwrights' Conference, the Institute provides 20 aspiring and working arts journalists a sustained opportunity to explore the theatrical processes they cover.

THE MONTE CRISTO COTTAGE, Sally Pavetti, Curator: This was the only permanent childhood residence of Eugene O'Neill and the setting for his only comedy, *Ah! Wilderness!*, and his tragic masterpiece, *Long Day's Journey into Night*. The Cottage is a National Historic Landmark by a special act of Congress. It is maintained as an educational and cultural resource and is open to the public.

###