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CONTACTS:
Gus Schulenburg | gschulenburg@tcg.org | 212-609-5941

Theatre Communications Group Announces National Conference Awards

New York, NY – Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for theatre, proudly announces that at the 28th TCG National Conference in St. Louis, MO, from June 14-16, the following awards will be presented:

- Theatre Practitioner Award: Ron Himes, founder and producing director, The Black Rep;
- Theatre Practitioner Award: Steven Woolf, artistic director, Repertory Theater of St. Louis
- Visionary Leadership Award: Michelle Hensley, founding artistic director, Ten Thousand Things Theater Company
- Alan Schneider Director Award: May Adrales, director
- Local Funder Award: Kranzberg Arts Foundation

“This year, as we prepare to celebrate leaders in our theatre field, we are humbled by the breadth of their programmatic accomplishments, as well as their generosity in sharing their wisdom and expertise with others,” said Teresa Eyring, executive director of TCG. “They are visionary artists and leaders, essential funders and civic leaders. In honoring their work, we celebrate the diversity and vitality of our field, and its power to bring communities together.”

TCG’s 2018 National Conference in St Louis, MO from June 14-16 includes programming highlights such as: plenary remarks by Naomi Shihab Nye and Jer Thorp; field trips to significant local cultural destinations like The Griot, Art House, and Cherokee Street; a pre-conference gathering of theatres of color; a pre-conference for theatre education staff focused on cultural competencies and leadership skills with a keynote delivered by Karen Hall, superintendent of the Maplewood Richmond Heights School District in St. Louis; a meeting of the TCG Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Institute; and workshops led by local and national artists and thought leaders from the theatre field and beyond, including De Nichols, Robert O’Hara, and Roche Schulfer.

The Theatre Practitioner Award recognizes a living individual—artist or administrator, institutionally affiliated or unaffiliated—whose work in the American theatre has evidenced exemplary achievement over time and who has contributed significantly to the development of the larger field. This year, TCG honors two St. Louis based practitioners whose dedication to the field locally and nationally has inspired and activated countless artists, administrators, educators and audience members.

Ron Himes is an award-winning director who has been directing over 41 years. He is the founder and producing director of The Black Rep and the Henry E. Hampton, Jr. Artist-in-Residence at Washington University in St. Louis. He has produced and directed more than 200 plays at The Black Rep, including all ten plays written by August Wilson. His Black Rep directing credits include: Dot, Lines In The Dust, Twisted Melodies, Sunset Baby, Purlie, Black Nativity: A Holiday Celebration, the critically acclaimed productions of Ruined and The Montford Point Marine. Himes also created and directed the highly acclaimed, Crossin’ Over and Tell Me Somethin’ Good. He has directed a number of world premieres including Tom Asunder, Smash/Hit!, Insidious, Home the Musical, Servant of the People, Riffs, and Urban Transitions: Loose Blossoms. Directing credits from theatres across the country include Ain’t Misbehavin’ and Fences (The Clarence Brown Theatre in Knoxville); The Colored Museum and Blues for an Alabama Sky (Indiana Repertory Theatre); Flyin’ West (Delaware Theatre Company); For Colored Girls...........(People’s Light and Theatre Company in Philadelphia); Riffs (Seven Stages in Atlanta); Spunk, Spell #7, and Radio Golf (Studio Theatre in Washington, DC); One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest and I’m Not Rappaport (Old Creamery Theatre in Garrison, IA); and An Enemy of the People (Perseverance Theatre in Juneau, AK). In 2010 he was a member of the U.S. delegation to the third World Festival of Black Arts and Cultures in Dakar, Senegal and he has received numerous honors and awards, including the 2013 Outstanding...
Steven Woolf is Augustin Family Artistic Director of The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, where he has directed more than 40 productions, including last season's The Humans and Heisenberg. He received his BA in theatre and MFA in directing from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and an honorary doctorate by the University of Missouri–St. Louis. He has directed all over the country at theatres including Great Lakes Theatre Festival in Cleveland, Totem Pole Playhouse, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Lakewood Musical Playhouse, Ivoryton and Cecilwood Theatres, Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia, StageWest in Springfield, Massachusetts, Webster University’s Conservatory of Theatre Arts, and Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre. He is one of the first recipients of Webster University’s Declaration of Merit. In 2011, he was awarded the Kevin Kline Award for Outstanding Direction for his work on The Rep’s production of Red, and his production of Awake and Sing! at The New Jewish Theatre tied with Red for the Kevin Kline Award for Best Production of a Play. He is thrilled to have been honored by the Arts and Education Council, which awarded him the St. Louis Arts Awards for Individual Excellence in the Arts and Lifetime Achievement in the Arts, and by the Missouri Citizens for the Arts which awarded The Rep its Arts Award for Advocacy, and he is pleased to be among the first recipients of “The Good Guy Award” given by the St. Louis Women’s Political Caucus. He serves as a panelist and an on-site evaluator for the theatre program for the National Endowment for the Arts and served on the advisory panel for the Regional Arts Commission and the ad hoc committees for program assistance and touring for the Missouri Arts Council. He served on the executive committee and the national negotiating committee for the League of Resident Theatres, as well as on the board of Missouri Citizens for the Arts, the board of the Kevin Kline Awards, and he was a trustee of the IATSE Local #6 health fund. He has been on the faculty of the Drama Division of The Juilliard School under John Houseman and is adjunct faculty at Webster University.

The Visionary Leadership Award is given to an individual who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to advance the theatre field as a whole, nationally and/or internationally. Recipients of this award are individuals who regularly think beyond their day-to-day work in order to implement practices, new models, advocacy efforts, etc. on behalf of the field.

Michelle Hensley is the founding artistic director of Ten Thousand Things, where she has directed and produced over 60 tours of award-winning drama to audiences in prisons, shelters and housing projects, as well as the general public, with most productions making local critics’ Top Ten Lists. A McKnight Theater Fellow, in 2005 she received the Francesca Primus Prize from the American Theater Critics Association for outstanding contribution to the American theater, and in 2012 was named Best Artistic Director by the Star Tribune. She is a founding member of the Minnesota Theater Alliance, served on the boards of the Theatre Communications Group and Howlround, and in 2015 published the book All The Lights On: Reimagining Theater with Ten Thousand Things. TTT’s touring model has been adopted by at least a dozen theaters around the country including The Public Theater in New York City, the California Shakespeare Theater, Baltimore's Center Stage and The Old Globe Theater of San Diego. In 2017 Michelle won the Twin Cities’ Ivey Award for Lifetime Achievement, and Ten Thousand Things Theater received the Rosetta LeNoire Award from Actors Equity for artistic contributions to the universality of the human experience.

Alan Schneider Director Award: The Alan Schneider Director Award was established in honor of Alan Schneider's significant contribution to the American theatre and his lifelong concern for the development of career opportunities for freelance directors. The award is designed to identify and assist exceptional directors whose talent has been demonstrated through work in specific regions, but who may not be well known nationally.
May Adrales is a director, teacher, and associate artistic director of Milwaukee Repertory Theater. She helmed the world premiere of Lortel Award and Obie Award-Winning production Vietgone at Manhattan Theatre Club/ South Coast Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Rep; Luce at LCT3; Chisa Hutchinson's Somebody’s Daughter at Second Stage Theatre; Edith Can Shoot Things and Hit Them at Actors Theater of Louisville, after all the terrible things I do at Milwaukee Rep; Mary at The Goodman Theatre; Chisa Hutchinson's The Wedding Gift (Contemporary American Theater Festival); In This House at Two River Theater Company; Imani Uzuri and Zakiyyah Alexander's girl shakes loose at Penumbra Theater; Betty Shamieh’s The Strangest at East 4th Theater; Qui Nguyen's Five Days Till Saturday (NYU Tisch) Richard Dresser's Trouble Cometh at San Francisco Playhouse; and Katori Hall’s WHADDABLOODCLOT!! at Williamstown Theater Festival; Kristin Newborn and David Hancock's world premiere of Our Lot (Clubbed Thumb;) Lauren Yee’s Ching Chong Chinaman (Pan Asian Rep;) Thomas Bradshaw’s The Bereaved (Top Ten of 2009. Time Out) at Partial Comfort Productions; Tommy Smith’s The Wife (Access Theater;) Lisa Ramirez’s Exit Cuckoo (Best Solo Performance) at Midtown International Theater Festival; and Anton Dudley’s Cold Hard Cash at Williamstown Theater Festival. Other Productions: Dael Orlandersmith’s Yellowman and Katori Hall's The Mountaintop (Milwaukee Rep); Stefanie Zadrevec's The Electric Baby (Two River Theater) and David Henry Hwang’s Dance and the Railroad (Signature Theatre and Wuzhen International Theater Festival); David Henry Hwang's Chinglish (Portland Center Stage and Syracuse Stage); Daniel Beaty's Breath and Imagination (Cleveland Playhouse); In The Next Room (Syracuse Stage); Deathtrap (Pioneer Theater); Kimber Lee's Tokyo Fish Story (Old Globe Theatre); Disgraced (Syracuse Stage); The Who and the What (Milwaukee Rep); and Animal Farm (Milwaukee Rep/Baltimore Center Stage);

The Local Funder Award recognizes a local funding organization that has evidenced leadership and has provided outstanding sustained support of theatres in the city in which the conference is being held. The 2018 award honors a funder based in St. Louis.

The Kranzberg Arts Foundation is based in St. Louis, MO and believes that artists, communities, and cultural experiences represent the heart and soul of St. Louis—and the foundation is committed to providing the opportunities and resources necessary for the arts to thrive, now and in the future. Since 2006, the Kranzberg Arts Foundation has been passionately committed to providing local, emerging artists and community arts organizations the vital space and tools to perform and showcase their work, thus fulfilling the collective vision not only to be part of a vibrant and growing arts ecosystem, but a premier arts and entertainment destination. Through the development of performing arts venues, visual arts galleries, free music programs and work spaces for nonprofit arts organizations, we nurture the growth of artists, while working with emerging and leading arts institutions to engage with St. Louis’ greater community in ways that are relevant, inclusive and inspiring. The foundation’s need-based, ground-up approach to giving is at the heart of our mission to make St. Louis a true destination for artists to thrive and a more inspiring and interesting place to live.

For over 55 years, Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for U.S. theatre, has existed to strengthen, nurture, and promote the professional not-for-profit theatre. TCG’s constituency has grown from a handful of groundbreaking theatres to over 700 Member Theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 12,000 individuals nationwide. TCG offers its members networking and knowledge-building opportunities through conferences, events, research, and communications; awards grants, approximately $2 million per year, to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level; and through the Global Theater Initiative, TCG’s partnership with the Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics, serves as the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute. TCG is North America’s largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 16 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on the TCG booklist. It also publishes the award-winning American Theatre magazine and ARTSEARCH®, the essential source for a career in the arts. In all of its endeavors, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its Member Theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field, and promote a larger public understanding of, and appreciation for, the theatre. www.tcg.org

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