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## SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES ACTING COMPANY FOR 2008 SUMMER THEATRE LAB

Lab that Nurtured Tony Winners **PASSING STRANGE**, **SPRING AWAKENING** and **GREY GARDENS** Welcomes International Playwrights-in-Residence from Rwanda and Kenya

Advisors **James Bundy**, Artistic Director Yale Repertory Theatre, Playwright **Lynn Nottage** and **Les Waters**, Associate Artistic Director Berkeley Repertory Theatre

Los Angeles, CA –Sundance Institute today announced the acting company for its 2008 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab, to be held July 7 to July 27 at the Sundance Resort in Utah. The 2008 ensemble company includes: **Satya Bhabha**, (*Queens Boulevard*) **Reed Birney** (*Stuff Happens*), **J. Alex Brinson** (*The Happening*), **Amari Cheatom** (*Histoire du Soldat*), **Michael Chernus** (*Hunting and Gathering*), **Tracee Chimo** (*Water and Discarded Hair*), **Jennifer Dundas** (*Good as New*), **Greg Felden** (*Naked Will*), **Chinai Hardy** (*In the Red and Brown Water*), **Erin Hill** (*a-ha*), **Nicholas Hormann** (*The Little Foxes*), **Ella Joyce** (*Roc*), **Lisa Joyce** (*U.S. Drag*), **Christina Kirk** (*Well*), **David Margulies** (*Angels in America, 45 Seconds from Broadway, Wonderful Town*), **James McDaniel** (*Malcolm X*), **Kristine Nielsen** (*Les Liaisons Dangereuses, The Green Bird*), **Deirdre O'Connell** (*In the Blood, 'Tis a Pity She's a Whore*), **Nija Okoro** (*August Wilson's Joe Turner's Come and Gone*), **Alison Pill** (*The Lieutenant of Inishmore*), **Susan Pourfar** (*The Last Sunday in June*), **Gita Reddy** (*Hindustan*), **Heidi Schreck** (*Major Barbara*), **Jeanine Serralles** (*Hold, Please*), **Lois Smith** (*The Trip to Bountiful, Buried Child, The Grapes of Wrath*) and **Susie Sokol** (*The Sound and the Fury*).

As announced in April, the seven playwrights and plays selected for this year's residency are **Annie Baker** (*Circle Mirror Transformation*; director Sam Gold), **Kirsten Greenidge** (*Bossa Nova*; director Rebecca Taichman), **Lisa Kron** (*Five Questions*; director Leigh Silverman), **Dan LeFranc** (*Origin Story*; director Hal Brooks), **Darci Picoult** (*Lil's 90<sup>th</sup>*; director Jo Bonney), **Cori Thomas** (*When January Feels Like Summer*; director Chuck Patterson) and **Sarah Treem** (*Orphan Island*; director Stephen Fried).

Under the Artistic Supervision of Philip Humberg and produced by Christopher Hibma, the three-week Lab offers playwrights, directors, choreographers, composers, solo performers, and ensembles the time, space, and support to develop new plays and musicals or to explore new approaches to existing scripts. The Lab provides a protected environment, without the pressure of production, and an ensemble of professional actors, dramaturgs, and mentors to help shape work. Process is tailored to the project's individual needs and stage of development, including readings, text analysis, blocking rehearsals, music rehearsals, meetings with artistic staff, and private presentations to the assembled artistic community.

Following a tradition of hosting theatre artists from Eastern/Central Europe and East Africa annually over the last nine years, the Lab welcomes artists **Odile Gakire Katese** from Rwanda and **Eric Wainaina** from Kenya who have been selected to participate as Playwrights-in-Residence.

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Creative Advisors for this year's Lab include **James Bundy**, Artistic Director Yale Repertory Theatre; playwright **Lynn Nottage** and **Les Waters**, Associate Artistic Director Berkeley Repertory Theatre. The dramaturgy team consists of **Adam Greenfield**, **Mame Hunt** (Sundance Associate Artist); **Morgan Jenness** and **Janice Paran** (Sundance Associate Artist). The 2008 Theatre Lab's Advisory Committee included **Luis Alfaro**, **John Glore**, **Mame Hunt**, **Shelby Jiggetts-Tivony**, **Janice Paran** & **Diane Rodriguez**. **Meg Simon** and **Findley Davidson** are the casting directors.

Also attending the Lab are four young artists from partnering arts organizations: **Francesca Eaddy** (actor from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival); **Sean Lynch** (actor from the National Advancement for the Arts youngARTS™ program); **Kit Steinkellner** (Kennedy Center National Student Playwriting Award-winner) and **Stephen Lewis** (Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize-winner for Comic Playwriting). A cadre of stage managers and assistants from Sundance Institute's University Partners will also be on hand: From **CalArts**: Liz English, Lars Jon, Jessica Quadrato and Emily Williams; from **University of Utah**: Kirsten Bailey and Katie Mzik; from **Cornish College** in Seattle: Jonathan Hoonhout and from **Utah State University**: Kevin Doyle.

### **Sundance Institute Theatre Program**

The Sundance Institute Theatre Program is a program of the Sundance Institute. Through its developmental activities at the **Sundance Institute Theatre Lab**, the **Sundance Institute Playwrights Retreat at Ucross** and the **Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at White Oak**, the Program identifies and assists emerging theatre artists, contributes to the creative growth of established artists, and encourages and supports the development of new work for the stage. Under the guidance of Producing Artistic Director Philip Himberg, over 80% of the work coming out of the Program's labs has found professional production at theatres across the United States, Mexico and Europe. Recent productions of Sundance-developed work includes: *Grey Gardens* by Doug Wright, Scott Frankel and Michael Korie, and *Spring Awakening* by Duncan Sheik and Steven Sater, both currently on Broadway, *Some Men* by Terrence McNally at Second Stage, New York and *Blue Door* by Tanya Barfield at Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

### **The Sundance East Africa Initiative**

Sundance East Africa began with a series of exploratory meetings and workshops in Nairobi, Kenya and Kampala, Uganda over ten days in May 2008. Playwrights Noah Haidle (Lab alumnus 2007) and Charlayne Woodard (Lab Alumna 1998) accompanied Producing Artistic Director Philip Himberg, Associate Director Christopher Hibma and consultant/director Roberta Levitow to the region leading workshops, readings, and conversations with the local theatre communities in both countries. Additionally, Sundance invited two artists each from Tanzania and Rwanda to join in the activities. The Sundance/East Africa Initiative began in 2003 with a series of annual visits over five years, by Kenyan and Ugandan artists to the summer theatre lab, as well as Philip Himberg's month-long visit to the region to identify cultural partners in 2004.

### **Sundance Institute**

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is dedicated to the development of artists of independent vision and the exhibition of their new work. Since its inception, the Institute has grown into an internationally recognized resource for filmmakers and other artists. Sundance Institute conducts national and international labs for filmmakers, screenwriters, composers, writers and theatre artists. The annual Sundance Film Festival, a major program of Sundance Institute, is held each January and is considered the premier showcase for American and international independent film. The Institute supports non-fiction filmmakers through the Documentary Film Program by providing year-round support through the Sundance Documentary Fund and a series of programs that nurture their growth, encourage the exploration of innovative nonfiction storytelling and promote the exhibition of documentary films to a broader audience. Through the Sundance Institute Theatre Program, the Institute is committed to invigorating the national theatre movement with original and creative work and to nurturing the diversity of artistic expression among theatre artists. The Institute also maintains The Sundance Collection at UCLA, a unique archive of independent film.

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