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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 8, 2011**

**Media Contact:**  
Casey De La Rosa  
310.360.1981  
casey\_delarosa@sundance.org

## **SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES PROJECTS FOR 2012 THEATRE LAB AT WHITE OAK, OCT. 30-NOV. 13**

***New Work by The Debate Society, and New Musicals from  
Byron Au Yong & Aaron Jafferis and from Lisa Kron & Jeanine Tesori Selected to Receive Support***

**New York, NY** — The Sundance Institute Theatre Program today announced the three projects selected for its 2012 Theatre Lab at White Oak in Yulee, Florida. The Lab provides creative support and direction for innovative musical theatre projects and ensemble-generated projects, which have unique needs for collaboration and rehearsal time. Under the supervision of Philip Himberg, Producing Artistic Director of the Theatre Program, and Associate Director Christopher Hibma, the two week Lab (October 30 – November 13, 2011) is produced in partnership with the Howard Gilman Foundation.

“The projects selected further demonstrate the Institute’s commitment to providing ongoing support for artists and projects,” remarked Himberg. “*Stuck Elevator* and *Untitled World’s Fair Play* participated in our most recent Theatre Lab at The Banff Centre, and our artists-in-residence are also returning alumni – Ms. Tesori was a composer Fellow at the charter Sundance Institute Playwrights Retreat at Ucross Foundation in Wyoming, and Ms. Kron workshopped both *Well* and *In The Wake* at previous Labs.”

Himberg continued, “I was deeply moved by Byron Au Yong’s score and Aaron Jafferis’ distinctive vision for *Stuck Elevator*, a music theatre piece that vigorously explodes the story of a lone food delivery man into a narrative reflection of our modern world, and The Debate Society has emerged as one of New York’s most original and compelling creators of devised story-telling.”

In response to the changing needs of the field, the Theatre Program hosts a range of creative Labs throughout the year and around the world, including a Theatre Lab at the Sundance Resort, Playwrights Retreat at Ucross Foundation, and Sundance Institute East Africa. Past activities have also included a Theatre Lab at MASS MoCA and a Theatre Lab on Governors Island in New York.

“We recognize that work on stage comes in many different forms, each with a unique creative process, and our Theatre Program is responsive to that need by offering a range of Labs for artists,” said Keri Putnam, Executive Director of Sundance Institute. “Our Theatre Lab at White Oak adds to that range by providing musicals and ensemble-generated projects with the best resource for success – a focused, collaborative time to bring their ideas to life.”

The 2012 Theatre Lab at White Oak marks the Theatre Program’s return to the area for the first time since 2009. Projects supported at previous Theatre Labs at White Oak include *The Civilians*, *Doll*, *Grey Gardens*, *Like Water for Chocolate*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Punchdrunk*, *Roman Paska’s Puppet Ensemble*, *Saint Ex*, *Sycamore Trees*, *Siti Company*, *Theatre Mitu* and *Women of Brewster Place*.

The projects selected for the 2012 Theatre Lab at White Oak are:

***Stuck Elevator***

Aaron Jafferis, writer  
Byron Au Yong, composer  
Chay Yew, director

Based on the true story of an undocumented immigrant who survived 81 hours in a Bronx elevator, this comic-rap-scrap-metal-music-theatre work follows Guang's increasingly fantastic attempts to escape a 4' x 6' x 8' metal box. As he climbs into memories, nightmares, and impossible futures, he is cooked into a morsel of Orange Beef and mugged by a bursting bladder. Taking charge, Guang transforms into Takeout Man, battles his prison guard, flies paper airplane menu letters to his family, and leads an army of bicycle deliverymen. Suspended between the upward mobility of the American dream and the downward plunge into an empty abyss, *Stuck Elevator* travels between refuge/prison, freedom/safety, and voice/silence for our superhero. The text will be in Mandarin and English.

***Untitled World's Fair Play***

Made by The Debate Society  
Written and performed by Hannah Bos & Paul Thureen  
Developed and directed by Oliver Butler

Chicago 1893: The Zoopraxiscope, cracker jacks and neon lights. The Ferris Wheel, hootchy-kootchy... hell they even had the hamburger! On the eve of a glowing new century, something terrible happens in a humble two-story home. And everything ends. Chicago 1933: When The Fair returns 40 years later, so do the unfinished histories of everything that could have been. And so things begin for the hermit upstairs and the mysterious look-a-like below. Play-making company The Debate Society creates a haunted world of forgotten futures, a rotting building and the spirit of invention.

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE:

***Fun Home***

Adapted from the graphic novel by Alison Bechdel  
Lisa Kron, writer  
Jeanine Tesori, composer

"My father and I grew up in the same small Pennsylvania town and he was gay and I was gay and he killed himself and I became a lesbian cartoonist." *Fun Home* is Jeanine Tesori and Lisa Kron's musical adaptation of the acclaimed graphic novel by Alison Bechdel. The title refers to the family business, the Bechdel Funeral Home, and charts Alison's quest to come to terms with her father's life and death by painstakingly reconstructing their shared but unspoken bond.

**Sundance Institute Theatre Program**

The Sundance Institute Theatre Program is a program of Sundance Institute. Through its developmental activities at the Sundance Institute Playwrights Retreat at Ucross Foundation, the Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at White Oak, Sundance Institute East Africa, 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, more than 85% 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 Institute-developed work include: *Passing Strange* by Stew and Heidi Rodewald, which won the 2008 Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical, *Circle Mirror Transformation* by Annie Baker and *The Lily's Revenge* by Taylor Mac. [www.sundance.org/theatre](http://www.sundance.org/theatre)

**Sundance Institute**

Sundance Institute is a global nonprofit organization founded by Robert Redford in 1981. Through its programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, composers and playwrights, the Institute seeks to discover and support independent film and theatre artists from the United States and around the world, and to introduce audiences to their new work. The Institute promotes independent storytelling to inform, inspire, and unite diverse populations around the globe. Internationally recognized for its annual Sundance Film Festival, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as *Born into Brothels*, *Trouble the Water*, *Son of Babylon*, *Amreeka*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Spring Awakening*, *Light in the Piazza* and *Angels in America*. [www.sundance.org](http://www.sundance.org)

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