FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 2, 2009

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE THEATRE PROGRAM SELECTS SEVEN ARTISTS FOR THE 10th ANNIVERSARY 2009 SUNDANCE INSTITUTE PLAYWRIGHTS RETREAT AT UCROSS

Los Angeles, CA – Sundance Institute and the Ucross Foundation of Wyoming announced today the projects chosen to participate in the 2009 SUNDANCE INSTITUTE PLAYWRIGHTS RETREAT AT UCROSS held February 2-22, 2009. This residency program offers five playwrights and two composers three weeks in which to begin or refine new work at an idyllic working ranch in northeastern Wyoming. Sundance and Ucross celebrate the tenth year of their residency collaboration in 2009. More than 60 playwrights and composers, selected by the Sundance Theatre Program staff have benefited from this partnership.

The artists selected for this season’s residency are Todd Almond (composer), Amlin Gray, Adam Guettel (composer), Rajiv Joseph, Melinda Lopez, Robert O’Hara, and Kat Moira Ryan. The artists receive transportation, lodging and meals at the ranch, as well as writing studios in which to work. The participating artists are selected and invited by Philip Himberg, Sundance Institute Theatre Program Producing Artistic Director.

“The Sundance Institute Playwrights Retreat at Ucross in Wyoming offers artists an environment to begin new work, refine works-in-progress, or simply time to contemplate new ideas,” said Himberg. “The playwrights and composers selected for this year’s residency are given “dream time”, without any pressures from Sundance to produce a product. The Sundance/Ucross collaboration, now in year ten, has proven to be an extremely valuable asset to Sundance identified writers and composers. Artists need this unstructured support time, far from their usual urban environments.”

“We’re honored to mark the 10th anniversary of the Sundance Institute Playwrights Retreat at Ucross. Every February since 2000, the Ucross Foundation has hosted a wonderful group of playwrights and composers selected by Philip Himberg and his colleagues at the Sundance Institute. We couldn’t think of a better, more inspiring way to begin the year. Our collaboration with Sundance is truly a highlight of the Ucross program,” said Sharon Dynak, President of the Ucross Foundation.

2009 SUNDANCE at UCROSS PLAYWRIGHTS RETREAT PARTICIPANTS

Todd Almond
Composer
Almond is a composer and performer whose musicals include the award-winning People Like Us, Girlfriend, Ahraihsak (with Theater Mitu), Song of the Falling Man (with Adam Bock), and the upcoming shows We Have Always Lived in the Castle (also with Mr. Bock) and On the Levee (with Marcus Gardley and Lear deBessonet). Almond served as Music Director for the world premiere of Michael John LaChiusa’s Tres Niñas (starring Victoria Clark), and he has written musicals for both Juilliard and NYU Grad as well as music-directed and reconceived classic works, most notably the “bald” Hair at the Skirball. Almond regularly performs his own material in NYC's top venues including Joe's Pub and The Zipper Factory, and he recently released a CD of original songs entitled Mexico City.

Amlin Gray
Playwright
Gray’s plays include How I Got That Story, winner of an Obie Award and produced in a dozen countries; The Fantod, written for Milwaukee's Theatre X; Kingdom Come, written for the Milwaukee Repertory Theater; Ubu Unchained, written for San Francisco's Eureka Theater; and Zones of the Spirit, Six Toes, Mickey's Teeth, Pirates, and Trees Walking. He translates and adapts plays from Spanish, French and German, and has been awarded fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council for the Arts. He served for eight years as playwright-in-
residence at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater and as dramaturg for three at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, for twenty as a theater evaluator for the National Endowment for the Arts, and on the boards of the Theatre Communications Group and the Dramatists Play Service.

**Adam Guettel**
**Composer**
Guettel, a composer and lyricist, has received two Tony Awards (Best Original Score and Best Orchestrations) and two Drama Desk Awards (Best Music and Best Orchestrations) for *The Light in the Piazza*. The musical, with a book by Craig Lucas, premiered on Broadway at Lincoln Center in 2005. *The Light in the Piazza* received six Tony Awards, five Drama Desk Awards and three Joseph Jefferson Awards, including Best Musical. He wrote the music and lyrics for *Floyd Collins* (cast album on Nonesuch), winner of the Lortel Award for Best Musical and an Obie for Best Music, which has been seen at Playwrights Horizons, Prince Music Theater, the Goodman, Old Globe, London's Bridewell and elsewhere. Other works include *Love's Fire* (with John Guare, The Acting Company) and *Saturn Returns*, a concert at The Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival (recorded by Nonesuch as *Myths and Hymns*). Film scores include *Arguing the World*, a feature documentary by Joe Dorman, and *Jack*, a two-hour documentary for CBS by Peter Davis. Honors include the Stephen Sondheim Award (1990), ASCAP New Horizons Award (1997) and American Composers Orchestra Award (2005).

**Rajiv Joseph**
**Playwright**
Joseph's play *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, will be produced by the Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles at the Kirk Douglas Theatre during the 2008-09 season under the direction of Moisés Kaufman. *Bengal Tiger* has recently been awarded a grant for Outstanding New American Play by the National Endowment for the Arts. His New York productions include *Animals Out of Paper*, Second Stage Theatre, 2008; *The Leopard and the Fox* (adaptation), Alter Ego, 2007; *Huck & Holden*, Cherry Lane Theatre, 2006; *All This Intimacy*, Second Stage Theatre, 2006. In Los Angeles *Huck & Holden* was produced by The Black Dahlia Theatre in 2006. Future productions of *Animals Out of Paper* are currently scheduled in Australia and France. Rajiv is a former Lark Playwriting Fellow and Dramatist Guild Fellow. He received his B.A. in Creative Writing from Miami University and his M.F.A. in Playwriting from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and he is currently a Language Lecturer at NYU with the School of Art and Public Policy and the Expository Writing Program.

**Melinda Lopez**
**Playwright**
Lopez is a playwright and actress. Her play *Sonia Flew* won the Elliot Norton Award for "Best New Play" and the IRNE (Independent Reviewers of New England) for "Best Play" and "Best Production." Her other award-winning plays include *God Smells like a Roast Pig* (Women on Top Festival, Elliot Norton Award--Outstanding Solo Performance), *Midnight Sandwich/Medianoche* (Coconut Grove Playhouse), *The Order of Things* (CenterStage, Kennedy Center Fund for New Plays), *How do you Spell Hope?* (Underground Railway Theatre). Lopez was the first recipient of the Charlotte Woolard Award, given by the Kennedy Center to a "promising new voice in American Theatre." Lopez has served as a panel member for the National Endowment for the Arts, and has enjoyed residencies with Sundance Institute and The New York Theatre Workshop. She teaches theatre and performance at Wellesley College, and playwriting at Boston University.

**Robert O'Hara**
**Playwright**
O'Hara, a director and playwright, received a 2006 Obie Award for his Direction of the World Premiere production of *In the Continuum*. He wrote and directed *Insurrection: Holding History* at the New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater. His play, *Antebellum*, was workshopped at the O'Neill Theater Conference; *American Ma(u)l* was produced by ACT/Magic Theater and The Culture Project; *The Spot*, was produced at Mark Taper Forum and NYSF; *Down Low*, was produced by Mixed Blood Theater; and *B.Candy*, was produced by Partial Comfort Productions. He has been an artist in residence at the American Conservatory Theater, New York Shakespeare Festival, and Theater Emory, as well as a visiting Professor at DePaul University School of the Arts. He has been commissioned by Mark Taper Forum, National Endowment of the Arts, McCarter Theatre, Theatres de Nimes, Le Theatre l'Odeon, Theaterworks/USA and Theater Emory. O'Hara also served as director on Marcus Gardley’s *...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi*, part of the Sundance Institute Theatre Program in Residence at the Public Theater in 2007.
Kate Moira Ryan  
Playwright
Recent projects include her adaptation (written with Linda S. Chapman) of Ann Bannon’s *The Beebo Brinker Chronicles*. The play won a 2008 GLAAD Media Award. It will be published by Dramatists Play Service in the spring of 2009. Her critically acclaimed collaboration with Judy Gold, *25 Questions For A Jewish Mother*, won the 2007 GLAAD Media Award for Best Play and is now in its second year of a national tour. Voice/Hyperion published a book based on the play and was nominated for the Quill Award. Her play *Otma*, published by Playscripts, was produced at Atlantic Theatre (director Karen Kohlhaas) and Russia's Yakaterinburg. Her adaptation of Dorothy Allison's *Cavedweller* was produced by New York Theatre Workshop (director Michael Greif) and is published by Dramatists Play Service. She is alumna of New Dramatists and received her MFA from Columbia University.

Sundance Institute
Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is a not-for-profit organization that fosters the development of original storytelling in film and theatre, and presents the annual Sundance Film Festival. Internationally recognized for its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, film composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as *Angels in America*, *Spring Awakening*, *Boys Don't Cry* and *Born into Brothels*. www.sundance.org

The Sundance Institute Theatre Program is part of the Sundance Institute. Through its developmental activities at the SUNDANCE INSTITUTE THEATRE LAB, the SUNDANCE INSTITUTE PLAYWRIGHTS RETREAT AT UCROSS the SUNDANCE INSTITUTE THEATRE LAB AT WHITE OAK and SUNDANCE 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-developed work includes: *THE GOOD NEGRO* by Tracey Scott Wilson, and *SPRING AWAKENING* by Duncan Sheik and Steven Sater, *TERRE HAUTE* by Edmund White, *THIS BEAUTIFUL CITY* by The Civilians and *PASSING STRANGE* by Stew and Heidi Rodewald, which after its Broadway run, was made in a film by Spike Lee that premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival.

UCROSS FOUNDATION
Located on a 22,000-acre working cattle ranch at the westernmost edge of the Great Plains, the Ucross Foundation was founded in 1981 and has awarded Fellowships to over 1,000 writers and artist in all disciplines from around the United States and the world. The Residency Program recognizes excellence in the arts, literature and natural sciences by supporting the work of individuals who have demonstrated exceptional achievement or potential for making a significant contribution to their field of inquiry and to society. Through the Foundation’s creative retreat and private studio space, public art gallery, cattle ranch, nature preserve and abundant wildlife, Ucross is a true living laboratory in which the diverse interests of conservation, the arts and the natural environment work together on mutually compatible goals. www.ucrossfoundation.org

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