



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SOUTHERN REP ANNOUNCES
HONEY MUSHROOM BY Gabrielle Reisman
AS 2011 WINNER OF THE 10-MINUTE NEW PLAY RIOT CONTEST**

**PLUS
ANNOUNCING AN ADDITION TO OUR BACCHANAL SCHEDULE
A TOWN HALL DISCUSSION
“THE VISION THING: THE FUTURE OF THEATRE IN NEW ORLEANS”**

New Orleans – **Southern Rep** is thrilled to announce the delightful new play **HONEY MUSHROOM** by **Gabrielle Reisman** as winner of our **10-Minute New Play Riot Contest**. Additional Finalists are: **HMO** by Meghann McCracken, **OMAR’S PARTY** by Gamal Abdel Chasten, and **JINXED** by Alexa Mavromatis. Also performed will be our 2010 contest winner, **ROCKS & SHADOWS** by Shawn Hirabayashi.

The 10-Minute Play Contest is a great opportunity for both emerging and established playwrights to see a new play up on its feet, in front of an audience. Southern Rep is particularly proud to provide this experience to new playwrights, who gain invaluable production experience that fuels their future creative processes.

I am new to playwriting, and being selected as a finalist in Southern Rep's New Play Bacchanal 10-Minute Play Contest is the single most encouraging thing that has happened to me since I started putting my work out there. The blind submission process, open to both established and emerging playwrights, assured me that the development staff saw some promise in my work, just when I was starting to think there was no hope for success in the creative world without nepotism. And that magical thing that every writer hopes for is happening: I am actually being produced! Thanks again Southern Rep!

—Meghann McCracken, contest finalist

Southern Rep is cultivating local new work at a level so high, it's placing New Orleans squarely on the national theatre map. I'm so thrilled to be part of the Bacchanal this year. With so many great writers coming into town it's going to be a party you won't wanna miss. —Gabrielle Reisman, contest winner

Southern Rep is also **pleased to announce a late addition to our Bacchanal Schedule: a Town Hall discussion called “The Vision Thing: The Future of Theatre in New Orleans.”** A panel of local theatre leaders, including individual artists and administrators, will explore the future of theatre in New Orleans. What’s our vision for where we want to go as an artistic community? What role do we want to play in the local arts scene? What makes us better New Orleans theatre-makers? Come join what promises to be a spirited and invigorating discussion. If you love New Orleans theatre and want to support it either as an artist or an audience member, this conversation is for you!

The 10-Minute Plays are a centerpiece of our Annual New Play Bacchanal, and are performed at 8 p.m. on January 20, 21, and 22nd on our mainstage at The Shops at Canal Place, 365 Canal St., 3rd Floor. Tickets are just \$5. Our Town Hall discussion, “The Vision Thing,” will take place on January 20th at 6pm. Admission is FREE and open on a first come-first served basis. Book your BACCHANAL tickets now by going online to www.SouthernRep.com or by calling our box office at (504) 522-6545.

THE NEW PLAY BACCHANAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

January 20th

6:00pm – “The Vision Thing: The Future of Theatre in New Orleans.” – This event is FREE!

8:00pm - The 10-Minute Play Slam: See the best plays from our 10-Minute Play contest!

Readings of contest winner HONEY MUSHROOM by Gabrielle Reisman and finalists HMO by Meghann McCracken, OMAR’S PARTY by Gamal Abdel Chasten, and JINXED by Alexa Mavromatis. Plus a reading of the 2010 Contest Winner, ROCKS & SHADOWS by Shawn Hirabayashi.

January 21st

5:30pm - A reading of Ruby Prize Finalist FIGHT, by Kimber Lee

What does it take to be a fighter? Dani Perez is about to find out. On the run from the oppressive silence of her aunt's apartment, Dani starts training at the boxing gym where her estranged father once reigned supreme. Day after day she works to learn the sweet science of boxing, and finds true victory in the ring comes not only through strength and speed but also persistence, hard work, and having the heart to stand, face your own worst fears and never give up.

8:00pm - The 10-Minute Play Slam: See the best plays from our 10-Minute Play contest!

Readings of contest winner HONEY MUSHROOM by Gabrielle Reisman and finalists HMO by Meghann McCracken, OMAR’S PARTY by Gamal Abdel Chasten, and JINXED by Alexa Mavromatis.

January 22nd

2:00pm – A reading of Ruby Prize Finalist HURT VILLAGE, by Katori Hall

This two-act play concerns the residents of a Memphis housing project, principally three generations of women living under one roof who struggle with the effects of urban blight, drug addiction, and soldiers returning from war. At its heart it is an examination of a close-knit community, delighting in joy when they find it, and surviving tragedy when it befalls them. The keen eye with which Hall investigates this community is equaled by the lyricism with which she renders the struggles of ordinary people.

5:00pm - Women of Color in the American Theatre: Empowerment, Tradition and Trend

A stirring discussion of how and where women of color playwrights find artistic resonance and support in the field; where racial and feminist history intersects, influences and shapes their voices; and what promise the future holds. Featuring guest speakers Carol Bebel, Valerie Curtis-Newton, Tarell Alvin McCraney, John O’Neal & Jim O’Quinn. – This event is FREE!

8:00pm - The 10-Minute Play Slam: See the best plays from our 10-Minute Play contest!

Readings of contest winner HONEY MUSHROOM by Gabrielle Reisman and finalists HMO by Meghann McCracken, OMAR’S PARTY by Gamal Abdel Chasten, and JINXED by Alexa Mavromatis.

10:30pm - Late Night - AlternaEnding Play Slam: allows theatre makers an opportunity to submit and perform a twist ending to familiar works. Hilarious fun!

11:30pm - TOGA PARTY! (*Sheets will be available to the unadorned.*)

Tickets for the New Play Bacchanal are just \$5, with FREE lectures on January 20th and 22nd! To make reservations, go online to www.SouthernRep.com or call our box office at (504) 522 – 6545. All events are held at the Southern Rep theatre at The Shops at Canal Place, 365 Canal Street, 3rd Floor.

Biographies of the New Play Riot playwrights –

Gabrielle Reisman (New Play Riot Contest Winner): Originally from Urbana, Illinois, Gabrielle has lived in New Orleans for five years, during which she has worked as an arts educator, served as Artistic Director of The Alamo Underground, and received a B.A. from The University of New Orleans. Currently an M.F.A. playwriting candidate at the University of Texas at Austin, her work has been produced in New York, New Orleans, Champaign and Chicago and has been translated into German. Her first four full-lengths are published in the 2007 anthology *More Pepper*, published by Hot Lead Press. Selected monologues from *Brian and Shevat* are published by Simon and Schuster. Gabrielle's play, *Taste*, will be adapted into a Web TV series of the same name in the spring of 2010. The NOLA Project will premiere her new full length, *LAFFBOX*, in the summer of 2011.

Gamal Abdel Chasten (New Play Riot Contest Finalist): Gamal's theatrical writing credits include: *THE LAST WORD*, *GOD TOOK AWAY HIS POEM*, *THE BLACK MANN ACT/THE TRAIL OF JACK JOHNSON/VAUDEVILLE SHOW*, *THE RIDE (UNIVERSES)*, *SLANGUAGE (UNIVERSES)*, *AMERIVILLE (UNIVERSES)*, AND *LET BYGONES BE*, featured at this year's 2010 Humana Festival Ten-Minute Play series. Gamal has been commissioned by the Oregon Shakespeare Festivals to write *United States History Cycle*. He has been featured on the cover of *American Theater Magazine* in 2004 and *The Source Magazine* in 2000. His written work has been included in several anthologies: *Writers Corp Teacher Anthology*, published by City Lights Books, 2009; *The Fire This Time: African American Plays For The 21st Century*; *Humana Festival: The Complete Plays, 2003, 2009, 2010*; and his upcoming anthology, *The Big Bang, Universes Plays/Poetry and Process*, published by TCG.

Alexa Mavromatis (New Play Riot Contest Finalist): Alexa is pursuing an MFA in playwriting at Boston University. Her play *THE BACK ROOM* was the 2008 third-place winner of the David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award, presented by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival and the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. She is also the author of several short plays including *BASTARD* (a finalist for the Actors Theatre of Louisville's Heideman Award in 2008), *BONE CHINA* (produced internationally and included in the Smith & Kraus anthology *2006: The Best Ten-Minute Plays for Two Actors*), and a new post-apocalyptic comedy, *JINXED*. Alexa is a member of the Dramatists Guild, Theatre Communications Group, and Rhombus Playwrights.

Meghann McCracken (New Play Riot Contest Finalist): Is a writer who lives in New Orleans. Raised in Sacramento, California, Meghann received a Bachelor of Arts in Film/Digital Media production from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1999. Meghann lived all over California, and in New Orleans, before permanently settling in New Orleans in 2004. *HMO* is Meghann's first experiment in 10-minute playwriting. Her first full-length stage play, *ARTS AND CRAFTS*, has been read in full at The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, and in part at Southern Rep in New Orleans. Her one-act play *GIRLS WHO DREW HORSES* is currently being workshopped in the MFA Directing program at Tulane University for Spring 2011 production. Meghann is also at work on her second full-length stage play, *BOOM BOOM*, which is set in southern Louisiana, as well as a yet-to-be-named screenplay that takes place in the Pacific Northwest.

Southern Rep enters its 24th season as the region's premiere professional theatre, continuing to produce bold world and regional premieres under the leadership of Artistic Director, Aimée Hayes and Managing Director, Marieke Gaboury. In addition to an exciting Mainstage season that takes us on a journey from the dining room table to a 19th Century doctor's examining table to a magical realm inhabited by mythical creatures, Southern Rep at Le Chat Noir offers a second stage season of eclectic, smart, silly and audacious theatrical fare. Southern Rep continues to offer educational programs such as free student matinees, \$10 student rush tickets and Academy SRT; as well as providing an artistic home to new works in development in the annual *New Play Bacchanal*.

Southern Rep continues to show that it is staging the most important, challenging, and downright mesmerizing pieces of theater New Orleans audiences are graced to experience.

- Theodore P. Mahne, *The Times-Picayune Lagniappe*