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Jenny Windstrup
Managing Director
504-523-9857
pr@southernrep.com

SOUTHERN REP THEATRE ANNOUNCES WINNER OF THE 2015 RUBY PRIZE

Dawn Renee Jones wins Southern Rep's national new play award for her play, A HEAP SEE.

NEW ORLEANS (February 29, 2016) – Southern Rep Theatre is pleased to announce Dawn Renee Jones as the winner for the 2015 Ruby Prize for her play, *A HEAP SEE*. Two finalists, Dipika Guha (*I ENTER THE VALLEY*) and Antoinette Nwandu (*PASS OVER*) were also named along with three semi-finalists, Germaine Netzband (*TREASURE HUNTING IN DAWNLAND*), Caridad Svich, (*THIS THING OF OURS*), and Christina Quintana (*THREE THOUSAND SEIZURES*).

Named in honor of American activist Ruby Bridges, the Ruby Prize is presented annually to a woman playwright of color. As the Ruby Prize winner, Jones will receive a \$10,000 cash prize, as well as a ten-day writer's residency at Hedgebrook and a workshop and reading of her play in New York City. As finalists, Guha and Nwandu will each receive a roundtrip to New Orleans to attend the readings of their plays at Southern Rep's New Play Bacchanal this June.

The 2015 Ruby Prize review panel included nationally recognized theatre makers such as Maria Goyanes, Daniel Alexander Jones, and Niegel Smith. Panelists responded to the intrepid, theatrically adventurous worlds of winner's and finalists' work.

ABOUT A HEAP SEE AND DAWN RENEE JONES

Koua, young Hmong mother of six, has immigrated to Minnesota after living for years in squalid Thai refugee camps. Determined to give her children all the tools for success, her efforts are constantly challenged by her husband and his family. As Koua's family life becomes more violent, Anita, her next door neighbor, is torn between calling the police, offering Koua sanctuary, or minding her own business. Dawn Renee wrote and produced print and broadcast advertising in Chicago and New York before pursuing her interest in theatre. She has directed main stage productions at Actors Theatre of St. Paul, Penumbra Theater, At the Foot of the Mountain Theatre, Women's Theatre Project, and Starting Gate Theatre in Minneapolis and St. Paul, where she was also the founder and Artistic Director of Alchemy Theater. Dawn Renee studied Film Production at The New School, which led her to produce and direct music videos for Motown, Tabu, Flyte Time, Warner, and Paisely Park records. Her screenplay *Man of the Word* won Best Screenplay at the New York Film Columbia Film Festival (2008). Dawn Renee received an MFA in Creative Writing with emphasis in Playwriting from Goddard College in 2014.

ABOUT I ENTER THE VALLEY AND DIPIKA GUHA

Renowned national poet Augusto Reál has written (almost) nothing for seven years. But now, in the twilight of his life his house in the valley is flooded with women. They disturb his peace, revitalize his life force and tip the balance of power irrevocably away from the old world into the new. *I ENTER THE*



VALLEY is a play about literature, longing, and creativity inspired by the life and work of Pablo Neruda. Born in Calcutta, Dipika Guha was raised in tea drinking countries. Her work has been developed by San Francisco Playhouse, Crowded Fire Theatre, New Georges, Playwrights Horizons New Works Lab, the Lark & Soho Rep W/D Lab among others. Dipika has an MFA in Playwriting from the Yale School of Dramal. She is currently a Visiting Artist at the Schell Center for Human Rights & under commission from Oregon Shakespeare Festival & South Coast Repertory Theatre. www.Dipikaguha.com

ABOUT PASS OVER AND ANTOINETTE NWADU

In PASS OVER, a bold, incendiary riff on WAITING FOR GODOT, pop culture, historical and religious references collide to create a hilarious and disturbing meditation on manhood, race, and the cycle of violence that prevents too many from realizing their full potential. This spring, the play will receive a workshop at the Cherry Lane theater as part of the 2016 Mentor Project (mentor: Katori Hall). Antoinette Nwadu is a New York-based playwright via Los Angeles. She is second-year member of the Ars Nova Play Group, a New Georges Affiliated Artist, the 2015-16 Naked Angels Issues PlayLab Resident Playwright, and a Dramatists Guild Fellowship alum. Her plays have been produced and developed by Page73, Ars Nova, The Flea, Naked Angels, Fire This Time, The Movement Theater Company, WordBRIDGE and Dreamscape Theatre. Honors include the Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award, the Negro Ensemble Company's Douglas Turner Ward Prize and a Literary Fellowship at the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference. And she has been named a PONY Fellowship finalist, Page73 Fellowship finalist, NBT's I Am Soul Fellowship finalist, and two-time Princess Grace Award semi-finalist. Education: Harvard, the University of Edinburgh, NYU Tisch.

PAST WINNERS AND FINALISTS

2014: Winner: brownsville song: b side for tray by Kimber Lee // Finalists: REALLY, REALLY, REALLY, REALLY, REALLY by Jackie Sibblies Drury, NO MORE SAD THINGS by Hansol Jung

2012: Winner: MERIT by Lenelle Moise // Finalists: YOU FOR ME FOR YOU by Mia Chung, TAKARAZUKA!!! by Susan Soon He Stanton

2011: Winner: RAMP by Eisa Davis // Finalists: AFRICAN AMERICANS by Jocelyn Bioh, HURT VILLAGE by Katori Hall, FIGHT by Kimber Lee, MALA HIERBA by Tanya Saracho

About Hedgebrook

Hedgebrook is a literary non-profit that supports the work of visionary women writers whose stories shape our culture now and for generations to come. Celebrating our 28th year in 2016, Hedgebrook hosts a global community of writers, more than 1500 in over two decades, at our retreat. Hedgebrook's public programs connect these women's work with thousands of readers and audience members each year through readings, screenings, events, salons, publications and festivals. The annual Hedgebrook Women Playwrights Festival (HWPF) celebrates the work of women writing for the theatre. Since the festival's inauguration in 1998, HWPF has supported the work of an impressive array of women playwrights and served an important role in the development of new plays by women.

About Southern Rep Theatre



Now entering its 29th Season, Southern Rep Theatre produces award-winning productions that are engaging, educational, and accessible for audiences of every socioeconomic background. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Aimée Hayes and Managing Director Jenny Windstrup, Southern Rep Theatre's Mainstage Season work includes bold World and Regional Premieres as well as the best of Broadway, off-Broadway, and classic plays. Southern Rep Theatre's Lagniappe Series and "School to Stage Pipeline" of Arts Education Programs reflect the company's ongoing commitment to new play development by providing resources for students and burgeoning theatre professionals and supporting a more diverse theatre community. A mainstay of New Orleans' arts community, Southern Rep Theatre continues to build on its unique position as a sector leader, creative force, and important resource for contemporary American theatre.

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