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Theatre Communications Group Announces National Conference Speakers ***Award-winning Columnist Mona Eltahawy to Keynote***

New York, NY – Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for theatre, announces an initial list of three speakers for its annual National Conference in Los Angeles, June 16-18, 2011. At the multi-day convening, the largest forum for the national theatre community bringing 1,000 theater practitioners together from around the world, TCG will kick off its year-long 50th anniversary celebration.

The opening keynote speaker will be **Mona Eltahawy**, award-winning columnist, who has written for and been published by periodicals in the US and the Middle East, including *The Washington Post*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Canada's Toronto Star* and *Israel's The Jerusalem Report*. She has been a regular correspondent on CNN and has been a go-to source on Twitter reporting on the developments and unfolding demonstrations in northern Africa and the Middle East. Eltahawy will share her insights on the revolutions in the Middle East and the reverberations of those uprisings on Arab American communities, the changing nature of freedom of speech and the role that the arts play in making impactful change.

Futurist **David Houle** and author and artistic director **Todd London** will speak at the large plenary sessions:

- Futurist and author David Houle will direct attendees to think through the future of theatre – given the transformation and the dynamics that are currently reshaping the world. Author of *The Shift Age*, Houle spent more than 20 years in media and entertainment; he worked with NBC, CBS and helped launch MTV, Nickelodeon, VH1 and CNN Headline News.
- Finishing his fifteenth season as artistic director of New Dramatists, Todd London will explore the questions that shaped the founding visions of the theatre field. He has worked closely with more than a hundred of America's leading playwrights – and has written, edited, and/or contributed to a dozen books, including *An Ideal Theatre: Visions That Built an American Art* (published by TCG) and *Outrageous Fortune* (Theatre Development Fund) and *The Artistic Home* (published TCG).

“These speakers bring expertise and diverse viewpoints that will help us frame and imagine what is possible for the future,” said Teresa Eyring, executive director of TCG. “By asking the central question ‘what if?’ – we will determine how we can work together to turn that vision for the future into reality.”

View the speakers' bios, conference details and registration information at: www.tcg.org/conference.

TCG will be hosted in Los Angeles by the LA Stage Alliance. In conjunction with the conference, TCG has collaborated with the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Center Theater Group, LA Stage Alliance, REDCAT, The Under the Radar Office at the Public Theater and the Los Angeles Theatre Center, to present the international festival of contemporary theatre – RADAR LA from June 14 to 20. TCG conference attendees have the opportunity to participate in a professional development pre-conference symposium on integrating presenting opportunities into theatre business and artistic models – and will be exposed to new and contemporary theatrical expressions from L.A. and around the globe: www.radarla.org. TCG will partner with the Asian American Theatre Association, whose festival takes place in Los Angeles from June 16 to 26: www.caata.net. TCG's National Conference will also coincide with the Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and

Musical Theater, conducted by the University of Southern California's Anneberg School for Communication & Journalism and the National Endowment for the Arts: annenbergl.usc.edu/nea.

For 50 years, **Theatre Communications Group (TCG)**, the national organization for the American theatre, has existed to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre. Founded in 1961, TCG's constituency has grown from a handful of groundbreaking theatres to nearly 700 member theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 12,000 individuals nationwide. TCG offers its members networking and knowledge-building opportunities through conferences, events, research and communications; grants approximately \$2 million per year to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level and serves as the US Center of the International Theatre Institute, connecting its constituents to the global theatre community.

TCG is the nation's largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 11 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on our booklist; it also publishes the award-winning AMERICAN THEATRE magazine and ARTSEARCH®, the essential source for a career in the arts. In all of its endeavors, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its member theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field and promote a larger public understanding of, and appreciation for, the theatre.

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