



Press Release

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Theatre Communications Group Announces **Spring/Summer International 2009 TCG/ITI Travel Grant Recipients**

"I've spent many years building bridges between US and Polish artists, but the TCG/ITI Travel Grant has enabled me to dig a complete freeway tunnel under the Atlantic--this summer, I am bringing more than 60 U.S. theatre directors, presenters, journalists, and drama students to Poland to be guests of a major international theatre festival and foster future collaborations with their Eastern European counterparts."

---Joanna Klass, Artistic Director of Arden2 and Director of *The Grotowski Year 2009*

NEW YORK, May 2009 – Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for American not-for-profit theatre, which serves as the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute (ITI), is pleased to announce the recipients of the TCG/ITI Travel Grants for Spring/Summer 2009.

The TCG/ITI Travel Grants, funded by the Trust for Mutual Understanding, are designed to foster cultural exchange and artistic partnerships between theatre professionals in the United States and their counterparts in Russia, Eastern and Central Europe. These grants support travel in either direction between theatre artists, administrators and educators, enabling them to share ideas, gain exposure to each other's cultural traditions and communicate contemporary theatre techniques.

In announcing the latest recipients, TCG's director of artistic programs and director of the U.S. Center of ITI Emily Cachapero remarked, "Fostering relationships between U.S. theatre artists and their colleagues in Russia and Central and Eastern Europe is important to the burgeoning landscape of shared artistry and cultural diplomacy. The TCG/ITI Travel Grants program continues to provide theatres and theatre professionals with opportunities for successful and ongoing international collaborations. We are again grateful to the Trust for Mutual Understanding for their continued support of such a valuable program."

TCG's relationship with the Trust for Mutual Understanding began in 2000, when together, they inaugurated the TCG/ITI Travel Grants. Since then this program has awarded over 100 grants to US theatre practitioners and organizations to

explore the creative possibilities of working with artists from over a dozen countries including the Czech Republic, Republic of Bulgaria, Romania, Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia.

ITI was created by UNESCO at the outset of the Cold War as a way to transcend political borders and provide performing arts practitioners worldwide with a forum for communication and collaboration. The resulting relationships were credited with helping to bring about glasnost, but they also led to an expansion of creative thinking and repertoire for theatres on both sides. TCG became the US Center for ITI in 1999 and today, actively participates in the strengthening of ITI and is committed to engaging the current generation of working theatre practitioners.

Applicants for the TCG/ITI Travel Grants may either be a U.S. not-for-profit theatre applying on behalf of a theatre professional, or an individual theatre professional who is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.

TCG/ITI Travel Grants Spring/Summer 2009 Recipients

Kristin Marting, artistic director of **HERE Arts Center** (New York, NY) will travel to Moscow to participate in the New European Theatre and Big Break Festivals to develop future collaborations.

Playwright **Aditi Brennan Kapil** and dramaturg **Liz Engelman** (Minneapolis, MN) will work with a Bulgarian director, actors and commedia artists on a new play at the Rhodopi International Theater Laboratory in Smolyan, Bulgaria.

Director and choreographer **Artemis Preeshl** (New Orleans, LA) will co-direct and choreograph *Money, Money, Money* with playwrights Jeton Neziraj and Michael Devine at Kosovo National Theatre with Kosovar, Canadian and American actors.

Poor Dog Group (Los Angeles, CA) will travel to Eastern Europe for further exploration of post-dramatic theatre. They will develop their collaborative performance, titled *The Internationalists*, at The Student Centre in Zagreb, attend The Grotowski Festival in Poland and tour throughout Croatia with Daska Theater.

Theater Breaking Through Barriers (New York, NY) staff will travel to the 6th International Theater Festival for the Blind in Zagreb, Croatia in fall 2009. Held bi-annually, it includes artists from many European countries.

Jiri Zizka, co-artistic director of **The Wilma Theater** (Philadelphia, PA) will travel to Prague to consult with playwright Václav Havel and director Ondrej Hrab prior to a 2010 production of *Leaving*.

Rebecca Joy Fletcher* (New York, NY) is a performer, playwright and cantor who will further develop her acclaimed off-Broadway show, *KLEYNKUNST!* by traveling to Warsaw to collaborate with the State Jewish Theater and the Shalom Foundation.

** Rebecca Joy Fletcher is a Spring/Summer 2008 Recipient*

PANELISTS

A national independent selection panel comprised of theatre professionals reviewed applications for the Spring/Summer round of the TCG/ITI Travel Grants. The panelists were Susan Claassen, managing artistic director of Invisible Theatre (Tucson, AZ); Rob Orchard, executive director at American Repertory Theater (Cambridge, MA); Thaddeus Phillips, artistic director, Lucidity Suitcase Intercontinental (Philadelphia, PA); Jay Scheib, freelance director and Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor (Cambridge, MA); and Michael Sommers, artistic director of Open Eye Figure Theatre (Minneapolis, MN).

The **Trust for Mutual Understanding** was established in 1984 by an anonymous American philanthropist as a private, grantmaking organization dedicated to promoting improved communication, closer cooperation, and greater respect between the people of the United States, the Soviet Union, and other countries in Eastern and Central Europe. Today, the Trust makes grants to American nonprofit organizations to support the international travel component of cultural and environmental exchanges conducted in partnership with institutions and individuals in Russia and Eastern and Central Europe. Priority consideration is given to projects in which direct, professional interaction plays a major role. For more information on the Trust for Mutual Understanding please visit their website at www.tmuny.org.

Theatre Communications Group's (TCG) mission is to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional, not-for-profit American theatre. TCG initiatives include a variety of artistic, management, international and advocacy programs. Its many publications offer a national resource for reference, opinion and debate on theatre and the performing arts today. TCG's artistic programs support member theatres and theatre artists by awarding approximately \$2 million in development grants annually, and offer career enhancement programs for artists. As the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) world-wide, it supports cross-cultural exchanges and collaborations. TCG has nearly 500 member theatres.