



Theatre  
Communications  
Group

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## **Theatre Communications Group Announces Veterans and Theatre Institute Playwright and Veteran Maurice Decaul Joins as Artist-in-Residence**

New York, NY – Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for theatre, is pleased to announce the launch of the **Veterans and Theatre Institute** (VTI), a pilot program for veterans and active military personnel to experience, study, and create theatre. By developing unique curricula for four communities through engagement with military and community partners, VTI will build sustainable relationships among veterans and the theatre community. Playwright and veteran **Maurice Decaul** will lead VTI as TCG’s first official artist-in-residence, constructing curriculum and programming over a three-year development period. VTI is supported by **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation’s** Building Demand for the Arts program.

“We’re thrilled to have Maurice Decaul join TCG as our first ever official artist-in-residence,” said **Teresa Eyring**, executive director, TCG. “With his dual perspectives as artist and veteran, Maurice is the ideal person to build on the momentum of our Blue Star Theatres program and lead the Veterans and Theatre Institute.”

“I believe that if veterans are provided with an opportunity which presents theatre as an option, these men and women have the potential to significantly influence the field,” said Decaul. “The Veterans and Theatre Institute is that opportunity and I am thrilled to be working with TCG and our partners to make VTI a reality.”

VTI builds on the partnerships and learnings developed over the past five years by TCG’s **Blue Star Theatres** (BST) program, a partnership with Blue Star Families with leadership support from MetLife Foundation. Through events, grantmaking, and knowledge-sharing activities, BST recognizes the profound contributions of service families and seeks to build stronger connections between theatres, military families, and their communities. VTI will support and extend this work through a three-phase process that seeks to remove the barriers between veterans and theatre:

1. **Community Assessment and Curriculum Development:** This phase will answer critical questions like: How does a specific military community define itself in relation to theatres in its geographic vicinity? What are the best pathways to increase participation from this community in theatre? How are theatres already reaching this community and how can our program complement this work? Based on the answers to these questions, VTI will develop partnerships and curricula that meets the specific needs of each community.
2. **Program Pilot Launch and Rollout:** The program will then receive a robust pilot process over the following year, deepening relationships with military, educational, community, and theatre partnerships.
3. **Evaluation and Dissemination:** In the third year, TCG will coordinate an evaluation process with all partners to assess the overall success of the VTI and identify any areas for improvement. From this, learnings from the program along with the curriculum will be made available to the theatre field at large.

“We are pleased to support the collaboration between TCG and Maurice Decaul and proud that they have joined this year’s cohort of 24 organizations implementing strategies that build demand for the arts by connecting with targeted populations,” said **Cheryl Ikemiya**, senior program officer for the Arts at DDCF.

“Reaching our military community and providing them with a bridge to the rich rewards of live theatre is a crucial and worthwhile challenge. We look forward to the learnings that this important partnership will contribute to the field.”

DDCF’s **Building Demand for the Arts** program launched in 2013 and supports partnerships between artists and arts organizations focused on using the performing arts in unique ways to develop meaningful connections with targeted audiences. Implementation grants support organizations working with artists, during a 90-day residency over a period of three years, to implement previously crafted initiatives and projects that have strong potential to spark demand for the arts in their communities. Each grant also includes an extra \$5,000 dedicated specifically to evaluation of the funded project.

**Maurice Emerson Decaul**, a former Marine, is a poet, essayist, and playwright, whose writing has been featured in the *New York Times*, *The Daily Beast*, *Sierra Magazine*, *Epiphany*, *Callaloo*, *Narrative*, *The Common* and others. His poems have been translated into French and Arabic and his theatre pieces have been produced at New York City’s Harlem Stage, Poetic License Festival in New York City, Washington DC’s Atlas INTERSECTIONS FESTIVAL in 2013 and 2014, l’Odéon-Théâtre de l’Europe in Paris, The Paris Banlieues Bleues Festival, The Middelheim Jazz Festival in Antwerp, The Avignon Theatre Festival in France and Détours de Babel, The Grenoble Festival, Grenoble France, Arizona State University Gammage Memorial Auditorium, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, The David Rubenstein Atrium at Lincoln Center and the Park Avenue Armory in NYC. Forthcoming productions include The Mary L Welch Theatre at Lycoming College in Pennsylvania, The Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Brown University. His album,  *Holding it Down*, a collaboration with Vijay Iyer and Mike Ladd was The LA Times Jazz Album of the year in 2013. Maurice, a Callaloo and Cave Canem Fellow, is a graduate of Columbia University [BA], New York University [MFA] and an MFA Candidate in playwriting at Brown University.

**Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**’s mission is to improve the quality of people’s lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and child well-being, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke’s properties. The Arts Program of DDCF focuses its support on contemporary dance, jazz and theatre artists, and the organizations that nurture, present and produce them. For more information, please visit [ddcf.org](http://ddcf.org).

For over 50 years, **Theatre Communications Group** (TCG), the national organization for theatre, has existed to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit theatre. 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; awards grants, approximately \$2 million per year, to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level; and serves as the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute, connecting its constituents to the global theatre community. TCG is North America’s largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 14 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on the TCG 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. [www.tcg.org](http://www.tcg.org)

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