

2016 National Playwrights Conference

Writer Bios

Aurin Squire - Brooklyn, NY

Running on Fire

Aurin Squire is an award-winning playwright, journalist, and multimedia artist. In 2015 he graduated from The Juilliard School after a two-year fellowship in the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program. He is a two-time recipient of the 2014 Lecomte du Nouy Prize from Lincoln Center. In 2014-2015, he had fellowships at the Dramatists Guild of America, National Black Theatre, and Brooklyn Arts Exchange. Squire's play *Defacing Michael Jackson* was the winner of the 2014 Act One Writing Contest at Lincoln Center Theatre and the one-act version of the play has been published by Samuel French. After graduating with honors from Northwestern University, he worked as a reporter for publications like *ESPN*, the *Miami Herald*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. His dark comedy *To Whom It May Concern* won New York LGBT theatre awards for best play, best playwright, and best actor before being optioned and remounted off-Broadway to critical acclaim at the ArLight Theatre. As a documentary writer, Squire received a year-long commission to live in New Mexico, interviewing Jewish Latinos. He worked with an ensemble to create *A Light in My Soul*, a docudrama produced around New Mexico about Jewish families who fled from the Spanish Inquisition and settled in the American southwest. Squire also wrote *Dreams of Freedom*, the multimedia installation video about Jewish immigrants in the 20th century for the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia. *Dreams* won 3 national museum awards and is in the permanent exhibit at NMAJH. In 2013 his drama *Freefalling* was produced at Barrington Stage Company and won the 2013 Fiat Lux Award ("Let There Be Light") from the Catholic Church's Theatre Conference. In 2014 Squire won the grand prize in the InspiraTO Theatre's International Play Festival in Toronto (largest theatre festival in Canada) for *Freefalling*, and the play was published in Dramatists Play Service's Outstanding Short Plays Volume 2. *Article 119-1*, his drama about a gay rights activist in Belarus, was produced in Florence, Italy; Norway; Vancouver; and Los Angeles in March 2014. Squire's comedy *African Americana* received its world premiere at London's Theatre 503 in June 2014. He has been a guest artist and lecturer at Gettysburg College, Malloy College, and the New School. His plays have been produced at venues like Abingdon Theatre, ArLight Theatre, Ars Nova, Barrington Stage Company, Brooklyn Arts Exchange (BAX), Cherry Lane, Lincoln Center Lab, and National Hispanic Cultural Center. Squire works as a video writer/producer for media organizations like Learn Liberty. He has also worked as a journalist at publications like *The New Republic*, *Talking Points Memo*, and *Take Part*. Squire works as a staff writer for the new CBS political satire *BrainDead*, which is a summer series set to premiere in June. He lives in New York City.

Mike Lew - Brooklyn, NY

Teenage Dick

Mike Lew's plays include *Teenage Dick* (Public Studio; O'Neill NDF and NPC, FST, and PF workshops), *Tiger Style!* (Alliance, La Jolla Playhouse, and Huntington productions; O'Neill NPC, CTG, and Juilliard workshops), *Bike America* (Ma-Yi and Alliance productions), *microcrisis* (Ma-Yi, InterAct, and Next Act productions), *Stockton* (AracaWorks and EST workshops), *People's Park* (Victory Gardens workshop), *In Paris You Will Find Many Baguettes...* (Humana), *Roanoke* (Humana), and *Moustache Guys*. He is a Tony voter, Dramatists Guild Council member, and recipient of a Mellon Foundation Residency, NYFA fellowship, and the Lanford Wilson, Helen Merrill, Heideman, and Kendeda awards. He is co-director of Ma-Yi Writers Lab. Training: Juilliard, Yale.

Matt Schatz - Los Angeles, CA

The Burdens

Matt Schatz is a writer and composer. He won the 2012 Kleban Prize in Musical Theatre for *Love Trapezoid*. Other plays and musicals include *The Burdens*, *Dunkfest '88*, *Georama* (with West Hylar and Jack Herrick), *I Battled Lenny Ross* (with Anna Ziegler), *The Tallest Building in the World*, *An Untitled New Play By Justin Timberlake*, and *Where Ever It May Be*. Matt's work has been produced by Actors Theatre of Louisville, Ars Nova, Astoria Performing Arts Center, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Great River Shakespeare Festival, Luna Stage, the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, and others. He has been a finalist for the P73 Playwriting Fellowship, Jonathan Larson Award, Fred Ebb Award, and the O'Neill National Music Theatre Conference. Matt is currently working on new play/musical commissions from the EST/Sloan Project and Jill Furman Productions. Also a TV writer, Matt has written pilots for Fox Television Studios, the USA Network, and TBS. Matt lives in Los Angeles with his wife Jenna.

Kathryn Walat - Savannah, GA

Small Town Values

Kathryn Walat is a playwright with an interest in the details and rhythms of contemporary life, which she explores beyond the norms of dramatic structure and language. Her play *Creation* was developed at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's NPC 2010, premiered at the Theatre @ Boston Court (Pasadena), and was nominated for a 2013 LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award for Playwriting. Her *Victoria Martin: Math Team Queen* premiered at the Women's Project and was published in *New Playwrights: The Best Plays of 2007* (Smith & Kraus) and in *Dramatics* magazine. Her politically resonant *Bleeding Kansas* premiered at the Hangar Theatre (Ithaca) and received a Francesca Primus citation from the American Theatre Critics Association. Other works include *Ancient Gods of the Backwoods* (New Georges' Germ Project), *Know Dog* (Salvage Vanguard, Austin), and the one-act *Johnny Hong Kong* (Perishable Theatre, Providence). Walat is also the co-librettist, with composer Gregory Spears, of the chamber opera *Paul's Case* (adapted from the Willa Cather story), which made its NYC premiere at PROTOTYPE and was named in *New Yorker* magazine's Ten Notable Performances and Recordings of 2014. Walat has received commissions from MCC, Yale Rep, and Actors Theatre of Louisville (On the Road Anthology), and her plays are published by Samuel French and PlayScripts. Her recent work *See Bat Fly*, developed at the Orchard Project and Brown/Trinity Rep, was recognized on the Kilroys' List for 2014; her *Romeo & Naomi Ramirez* was on the Kilroys' list for 2015. Walat is an Affiliated Playwright with New Georges, and a Core Member of the Playwrights' Center, where *Romeo & Naomi Ramirez* was featured in their Ruth Easton New Play Series last spring, and *Small Town Values* appeared in PlayLabs in October 2015. She teaches playwriting at Savannah College of Art and Design and splits her time between New York and Savannah. BA Brown University, MFA Yale School of Drama.

Sylvia Khoury - New York, NY

Against the Hillside

Sylvia Khoury grew up in Westchester, NY, but didn't speak English until she was five. Her mother is French (by way of Algeria and Tunisia) and her father is Lebanese (by way of Turkey). Her play, *Against the Hillside*, was presented as part of Roundabout Theater Company's Underground Reading Series in February 2016. *Against the Hillside* was also presented at NNPN's National Showcase of New Plays in December 2015. She is a member of EST's Youngblood and a 2015-2016 Dramatists Guild Fellow. She attended the Kennedy Center/NNPN's MFA Playwrights' Workshop in May 2015. Other full-length plays include *An Inferno* and *Coffee for Women*. These plays and other short works have been produced or developed at Naked Angels, Crashbox Theater Company,

Sanguine Theater Company, the New School for Drama, and Columbia University. Semi-Finalist: Jerome Fellowship at the Lark. Sylvia completed her undergraduate degree in Middle Eastern Studies at Columbia University (2012) and received an MFA in Playwriting at the New School for Drama (2015). She lives in New York City, where she is currently a medical student pursuing Psychiatry at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

Kate Tarker - Brooklyn, NY

Laura and the Sea

Kate Tarker's plays include *THUNDERBODIES* (Carlotta Festival of New Plays), *An Almanac for Farmers and Lovers in Mexico* (2015 Kilroys List), and *Laura and the Sea* (finalist, L. Arnold Weissberger award). Her work has been produced or developed by Primary Stages/ESPA at 59E59 Theaters, the Playwrights' Center, the Lark, the Southern Theater in Minneapolis, LOCAL lab in Boulder, Theater Masters in Aspen/NYC, Nautilus Music-Theater, and the National New Play Network at the Kennedy Center. She is the recipient of a Jerome Fellowship, a MacDowell Colony Fellowship, a Tofte Lake Center residency, and the Kennedy Center's National Science Playwriting Award. Currently: Ars Nova Play Group, Affiliated Artist with New Georges, Core Writer at the Playwrights' Center. Under commission from the Wilma / Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation to develop a new play with Dominique Serrand, and a recipient of the 2016 Theater Masters Visionary Playwright Award & Commission. Kate holds a BA from Reed College and an MFA from the Yale School of Drama. She lives in Brooklyn.

Tegan McLeod - Austin, TX

Girls in Cars Underwater

Tegan McLeod was born in Iowa City, Iowa. She later moved to the UK where she went on to study English Literature at Oxford University. She began acting in the National Youth Theatre, and her first play *Never Such Rain* (written at age 18) was a runner-up in the Oxford New Writer's Festival. Dominic Cavendish of the *Independent* remarked: "Its virtues are outstanding...there's not a beat wasted in the dialogue...Do I feel guilty at this not getting through? Probably more so by the day." Upon graduating, Tegan became one of only two playwrights, internationally, to be awarded a full scholarship to the University of Texas at Austin as a Michener Fellow in Playwriting and Screenwriting in 2013. At UT she has had numerous productions, most recently a world premiere of her first opera, produced in the New Works Festival, and entitled *Rose Made Man*; an opera about trans identity. At present she is completing her sixth full-length play, *Girls in Cars Underwater*, which was developed at Center Stage in Baltimore and will be showcased in the UTNT festival in Austin, spring 2016.

Keith Huff - Chicago, IL

Up the Hill

Notable theater productions include *A Steady Rain* featuring Daniel Craig and Hugh Jackman (Broadway), *The Detective's Wife* (Writers' Theatre), *Big Lake Big City* (Lookingglass Theatre) directed by David Schwimmer. *A Steady Rain* continues to be produced across the United States. Internationally, it has been translated and performed in more than a dozen languages. In television, Keith is currently Writer/Supervising Producer for John Ridley's Emmy Nominated ABC Series *American Crime*. Before that he was Writer/Co-Producer for *Mad Men* (Writers Guild Award, Best Drama Series), and Writer/Producer for *House of Cards* (Writers Guild Award, Best New Series). Keith has written original pilots for HBO, Steven Spielberg/DreamWorks, AMC, STARZ, and has developed projects with Jason Lee's Staircase Films, Lorenzo DiBonaventura Pictures/ABC, EON Films, Smuggler

Entertainment. Keith currently divides his time between Chicago and Los Angeles, but his home base is Chicago, where he lives with his wife, Georgette, and his daughter, Robin.

Stephen Karam – New York, NY

Writer in Residence

Stephen Karam is the author of *The Humans* (currently on Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theater) and *Sons of the Prophet*, a finalist for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize and winner of the 2012 Drama Critics' Circle, Outer Critics Circle, Lucille Lortel, and Hull-Warriner Awards for Best Play. Other plays include *Speech & Debate*, *Dark Sisters* (an original chamber opera with composer Nico Muhly), and a forthcoming adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* for Roundabout Theatre Company. For film, Stephen has written a screenplay adaptation of Chekhov's *The Seagull* (starring Annette Bening, Elisabeth Moss, Corey Stoll, and Saoirse Ronan). A graduate of Brown University, Stephen was born and raised in Scranton, PA.