

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 26, 2018

**MARIN THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES  
ANTOINETTE NWANDU AS  
2017 SKY COOPER NEW AMERICAN PLAY PRIZE WINNER  
AND AUDREY CEFALY AS  
2017 DAVID CALICCHIO EMERGING AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHT PRIZE WINNER**

MILL VALLEY, CA—[Marin Theatre Company](#) is proud to announce **Antoinette Nwandu** as the 2017 Sky Cooper New American Play Prize winner for her play **Pass Over**—and **Audrey Cefaly** as the 2017 David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize winner for her play, **Alabaster!** Now in its eleventh year, MTC's [two new play prizes](#) continue to celebrate the work of the American playwright and encourage the creation of bold, powerful new voices and plays for the American stage.

Established by Norton J. “Sky” Cooper in 2007, **The Sky Cooper Prize** is awarded annually to either an established or emerging playwright for an outstanding new work. As the Sky Cooper winner Ms. Nwandu’s **Pass Over** will receive a \$10,000 award and a developmental workshop as part of MTC’s annual New Play Reading Series. **Pass Over** will also be considered under option for a full production on MTC’s main stage.

**Antoinette Nwandu on receiving the  
2017 Sky Cooper New American Play Prize:**

*"I'm so grateful to the folks at Marin Theatre Company for opening this door for me. The prize money alone is a blessing. But the recognition of my work and introduction to this theatre community feels like a gift that's going to keep on giving."*

**Antoinette Nwandu’s Pass Over**

Moses and Kitch stand around on the corner—talking shit, passing the time and hoping that maybe today will be different. As they dream of their promised land, a stranger wanders into their space with his own agenda and derails their plans. Emotional and lyrical, **Pass Over** crafts everyday profanities into poetic and humorous riffs, exposing the unquestionable human spirit of young men stuck in a cycle just looking for a way out. A provocative riff on *Waiting for Godot* and the Exodus saga, **Pass Over** is a rare piece of politically charged theater by a bold new American voice, that was most recently [adapted for film by Spike Lee](#), after its stirring World Premiere at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre.

**More About Antoinette Nwandu**

**Antoinette Nwandu** is a New York-based playwright. In June 2017, Steppenwolf presented the [World Premiere of her play Pass Over](#), a mashup of the biblical Exodus story and Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, which sparked a national conversation about bias in the theater community. Her play *Breach: a manifesto on race in america through the eyes of a black girl recovering from self-hate*, about a black woman forced to confront her self-loathing after unexpectedly getting pregnant, will receive a World Premiere at Victory Gardens in February 2018. Antoinette is

currently under commission from Echo Theater Company and Colt Coeur. Her work has been supported by The MacDowell Colony, The Sundance Theater Lab, The Cherry Lane Mentor Project (mentor: Katori Hall), The Kennedy Center, P73, PlayPenn, Space on Ryder Farm, Southern Rep, The Flea, Naked Angels, Fire This Time, and The Movement Theater Company. She is an alum of the Ars Nova Play Group, the Naked Angels Issues PlayLab, and the Dramatists Guild Fellowship. Honors include [The 2018 Whiting Award](#), The Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, 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. Antoinette's plays have been included on the 2016 and 2017 Kilroys lists, and she has been named a Ruby Prize finalist, PONY Fellowship finalist, Page73 Fellowship finalist, NBT's I Am Soul Fellowship finalist, and two-time Princess Grace Award semi-finalist. Antoinette graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College with a bachelor's degree in English and holds a Master's of Science degree in Cultural Politics from The University of Edinburgh, and an MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU Tisch School of the Arts.

Norton J. "Sky" Cooper established the **David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize** award at Marin Theatre Company in 2007 in honor of Calicchio's lifelong career as a playwright, and in support of Marin Theatre Company's commitment to the discovery and development of emerging American playwrights. The Calicchio Prize is awarded annually to a professionally unproduced playwright for a new work that shows outstanding promise and a distinctive new voice for the American theatre. As the Calicchio Prize winner Ms. Cefaly's **Alabaster** will receive two public staged readings at Marin Theatre Company as part of MTC's annual New Play Reading Series. Ms. Cefaly will receive a \$2,500 award, as well as travel and accommodations for the MTC rehearsal period.

### **Audrey Cefaly on receiving the 2017 David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize:**

*"I was absolutely thrilled to get the call informing me that **Alabaster** had won. It's a wonderful affirmation of the ongoing work I've been doing to bring Alabama voices to the stage. I'm really looking forward to meeting the creative team at MTC to see how we can develop the work further. What an honor. Thank you MTC!"*

### **Audrey Cefaly's Alabaster**

When Alice (a noted photographer) arrives at the home of June (an undiscovered folk artist) to take photographs of her for an upcoming series called "Scars," the chemistry between them is electric and immediate. What follows is a three-day spiritual convergence on June's family farm near Alabaster, Alabama. **Alabaster** is an intimate portrait, exploring the meaning and purpose of art and the struggle of the lost and tortured souls that seek to create it.

### **More About Audrey Cefaly**

**Audrey Cefaly** is published by Samuel French (*The Gulf, Maytag Virgin, Love Is A Blue Tick Hound*), Smith and Kraus (two volumes of Best American Short Plays), and Applause Books (numerous "Best of" anthologies). She is an outspoken proponent of silence in story-telling and has authored numerous articles (and lectured at colleges and high schools) on the craft of playwriting. Her articles appear in HowlRound and Samuel French's *Breaking Character*

*Magazine*. Her new play **Alabaster** recently received a reading at Signature Theatre (Arlington, VA) as well as a workshop and reading at Theater Alliance (Washington, DC) as part of the Hothouse New Play Development Series. Her play *The Gulf* won the 40th Annual Samuel French OOB Festival. Its full-length adaptation (a recipient of the 2016 Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award) received its world premiere at Signature Theatre, Arlington, VA, in September of 2016 (directed by Joe Calarco) and was subsequently nominated for The Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play. It is scheduled to receive its Australian premiere in August of 2017. Cefaly's *Love Is A Blue Tick Hound* premiered at Terrific New Theatre in Birmingham, Alabama, and received its Baltimore premiere as part of *2018 Women's Voices Theater Festival*. Her Southern drama *Maytag Virgin* premiered as part of the inaugural *Women's Voices Theater Festival* in 2015 and will receive its SE regional premiere at Aurora Theatre (Lawrenceville, Georgia) in January 2018. Cefaly is a recipient of grants from the Boomerang Fund for Artists as well as the Alabama and Maryland state arts councils. She is a member of the New Play Exchange, the Playwrights' Center and the Dramatists Guild.

## **ABOUT MTC**

**Marin Theatre Company** is the Bay Area's premiere mid-sized theatre and the leading professional theatre in the North Bay. We produce a six-show season focused on new American plays. We are committed to the development and production of new plays, with a comprehensive New Play Program that includes productions of world premieres, two nationally recognized annual playwriting awards and readings and workshops by the nation's best emerging and established playwrights. Our numerous education programs serve more than 10,000 students from over 40 Bay Area schools each year. MTC strives to create intimate, powerful and emotional experiences that engage audiences to discuss new ideas and adopt a broader point of view. We believe in taking risks and inspiring people to participate in live theatre, regardless of personal means. MTC celebrates the intellectual curiosity of our community, and we believe that theatre is an important tool to help build empathy. MTC was founded in 1966 and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

## **PRESS CONTACT**

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