

WEXNER CENTER AND OHIO STATE RECEIVE CREATIVE CAMPUS GRANT SUPPORT EARMARKED FOR CROSS-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIMEDIA THEATER WORK ABOUT MORTGAGE CRISIS

October 7, 2010—Columbus, OH—From an application field of 140 campuses, the Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University has been awarded a \$140,000 **Creative Campus Innovations grant** by the Association of Performing Arts Presenters to support the development of New York-based theater company **The Builders Association's ROAD TRIP** (working title), a multimedia theater work centered on the impact of today's mortgage crisis. The highly competitive Creative Campus grant, funded with support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, was awarded to only six campuses this year.

With its creative development also supported by a Wexner Center Residency Award, *ROAD TRIP* will contrast Steinbeck's Depression-era story *The Grapes of Wrath* with a tale of a contemporary Silicon Valley family made homeless through today's mortgage crisis, using current trends to forecast near-future scenarios of the socio-economic impact of this phenomenon. The piece contrasts the Joads' journey West with a modern journey East: a family foreclosed out of its upscale California housing development, hitting the road in their SUV, learning to live from a car and bearing witness to the stranger-than-fiction realities of 21st-century America. The conclusion will present a vision of the future, including a different idea of home and new ideas of community, potentially including urban farming in the Midwest, one area of the Builders Association's research at Ohio State.

The research phase and creative process for *ROAD TRIP* will involve students and faculty from across Ohio State in both arts and non-arts disciplines, including **Department of Theatre**, the **Fisher College of Business**, the **Knowlton School of Architecture**, **History**, **Comparative Studies**, and the **Living Culture Initiative in the Department of Art**. Using this theater project as a platform for critical thinking and a catalyst for cross-campus collaboration, students and faculty will assist in the research that will shape the underpinning ideas of the work. They will address issues related



to the mortgage crisis and other related trends that inform the theater work's narrative, such as the banking industry, business ethics, and urban planning, with a special emphasis, where appropriate, on the impact the crisis has had on Ohio. Classroom sessions with Builders will involve discussions integrated into academic curricula; research conducted by students and faculty; open rehearsals with feedback sessions; and ongoing interaction and workshops with Builders and theater students, staff, and faculty. The Department of Theatre at Ohio State is the co-sponsor with the Wexner Center of two in-depth creative residencies that culminate with **ROAD TRIP's premiere at Ohio State in October 2011**. *ROAD TRIP* will subsequently tour internationally, and the project will be tracked and documented at <http://creativecampusosu.org/>.



Images from a work-in-progress showing of *ROAD TRIP*

CREATIVE CAMPUS TIMELINE

October 4–8, 2010: The Builders conduct **in-class sessions** with Ohio State students and faculty from departments across campus. Groups will work from their discipline's perspectives for research for the larger project.

November 22, 2010 1:30–3:30 pm: Students and faculty present their collective findings in cross-disciplinary discussions with the Builders in Bowen Theatre at Drake Center.

January 10–22, 2011: First creative residency for development of *ROAD TRIP* sponsored by the Wexner Center and Ohio State's Department of Theatre at Thurber Theatre in Drake Center. Open rehearsal Jan. 20 3:30–5 pm with cross-disciplinary discussion sessions with Builders in Thurber Theatre at Drake Center.

September and October 2011: The Builders return for a final multi-week residency and will perform the **world premiere of ROAD TRIP** at Ohio State's Thurber Theatre. The show will subsequently tour internationally.

Notes Ohio State University President E. Gordon Gee, "This Creative Campus project, led by the Wexner Center, is tangible demonstration of the enormous creative, intellectual, social, and academic value that comes from cross-discipline learning. I am excited to watch the progress of the research, the development of the production, and the premiere next fall."

Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin says, "The Wexner Center is proud to serve as a catalyst for bringing accomplished artists together with university colleagues spanning several academic, professional, and creative disciplines. Providing pioneering creative artists with university resources and expertise while offering Ohio State faculty and students unique opportunities for substantive and sustained engagement with leading contemporary theater companies makes this an exemplary collaboration. We are pleased to work again with the Builders Association, whose multimedia stage productions are always astutely topical and bracing for a wide spectrum of audiences."

Notes Charles Helm, the Wexner Center's Director of Performing Arts, who heads this Creative Campus project, "It's been terrific working with the Builders Association and my academic colleagues across campus to design this project together, and it will be even more fascinating to see it unfold here over the next year. The recognition we've received from the prestigious Creative Campus program as one of the leading campus-based performing arts programs in the nation is validation for the work we all do at the Wexner Center to keep Ohio State at the forefront in the arts, while sparking creative exchange in our classrooms."

Marianne Weems, Artistic Director of The Builders Association, says, "Our work embodies the multidisciplinary approach encouraged by the Creative Campus program. The creative development of *ROAD TRIP* will be informed by intensive

investigation of the production's themes with the students and faculty at OSU. We are looking forward to this opportunity for a deeper collaboration with the Wexner Center and campus partners, and to the world premiere in 2011."

Notes Sandra Gibson, president and CEO of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, "Arts Presenters is pleased support the outstanding work of the performing arts program at the Wexner Center with a Creative Campus grant and is excited about this new collaboration with the Builders Association developed through a wide-ranging set of campus partners. We look forward to witnessing the development of *ROAD TRIP* as the project unfolds and to sharing the progress with the field."

MORE about APAP and DDCF

Founded in 1957, the **Association of Performing Arts Presenters** (Arts Presenters, or APAP) is the national service organization for the field of arts presenting. The organization is dedicated to developing and supporting a robust performing arts presenting field and the professionals who work in it. Arts Presenters has nearly 2,000 organizational members worldwide and brings nearly 4,000 performing arts professionals together from around the world at the annual APAP|NYC Conference. Members range from the nation's leading performing arts centers, civic, and university performance facilities, culturally specific centers and festivals, to the full spectrum of artist agencies, managers, producers, consultants and support organizations that service the field, and a growing roster of self-presenting artists. www.artspresenters.org.

The mission of the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation** is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, wildlife conservation, medical research, and the prevention of child maltreatment, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's Properties. Established in 1996, the foundation supports four national grantmaking programs in the areas described above. It also oversees three properties that were owned by Doris Duke in Hillsborough, New Jersey; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Newport, Rhode Island. www.ddcf.org

PROJECT SUPPORT

This project is made possible in part by a grant from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Creative Campus Innovations Grant Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Additional support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. This project is also supported by a Wexner Center Residency Award in Performing Arts.

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