

press contact: Sam Rudy, 212-221-8466

## **VINEYARD THEATRE ANNOUNCES WINNER OF 2008 PAULA VOGEL PLAYWRITING AWARD**

**Rajiv Joseph, author of "Animals Out of Paper," is recipient of second annual award.**

Vineyard Theatre presents its 2008 Paula Vogel Playwriting Award to emerging playwright Rajiv Joseph, whose works include ANIMALS OUT OF PAPER and HUCK AND HOLDEN, it has been announced today by Vineyard Theatre's Artistic Director Douglas Aibel and Associate Artistic Director Sarah Stern.

Named in honor of playwright and teacher Paula Vogel -- whose play HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE debuted at The Vineyard in 1997, winning the Pulitzer Prize for Drama -- the award comes with a cash prize, artistic development support, and a staged reading of the recipient's work. Launched in 2007, The Vogel Award is presented annually by The Vineyard to an emerging playwright of exceptional promise. The Award's first recipient was playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney, author of THE BROTHERS SIZE, whose play WIG OUT! is currently being developed by The Vineyard.

Rajiv Joseph is a 2004 graduate of NYU's MFA program in Dramatic Writing. His new play, ANIMALS OUT OF PAPER, will be produced by Second Stage Theatre Uptown in the summer of 2008. His play BENGAL TIGER IN THE BAGDHAD ZOO was developed by the Magic Theatre in San Francisco, and HUCK AND HOLDEN was produced at the Cherry Lane Theatre in 2006. Other New York productions include THE LEOPARD AND THE FOX (adaptation), Alter Ego; ALL THIS INTIMACY, Second Stage Theatre, 2006. Los Angeles: HUCK & HOLDEN, The Black Dahlia Theatre, 2006. Mr. Rajiv is a former Lark Playwriting Fellow and Dramatist Guild Fellow. He currently teaches Essay Writing at NYU. He served for three years in the Peace Corps in Senegal, West Africa.

About The Vineyard's award, Mr. Aibel says, "We are delighted to present this year's Paula Vogel Award to Rajiv Joseph. His plays present a remarkable and original mix of sharp, smart writing, emotional pathos, and magical, imaginative theatricality. He is a gifted and promising talent." Ms. Stern adds, "Mr. Joseph's writing reflects his deep interest in the ways in which history and politics shape individual lives in our present moment. He explores these complex questions with nuance, humor, and always with an eye towards his characters' humanity."

When the Paula Vogel Award was launched in 2007, Ms. Vogel said, "They say a person is judged by the company he or she keeps, and I am so honored by my association with the Vineyard Theatre -- they are a company I always want to keep. I am doubly honored: honored by having the award in my name from the Vineyard, and honored to be blessing a new generation of rising playwrights. The Vineyard fulfills the promise of its name: in planting the seeds of new plays, we as audiences reap the harvest."

Paula Vogel's long and cherished relationship with The Vineyard began with the theatre's acclaimed production of HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE, directed by Mark Brokaw; the play won the Pulitzer Prize, Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk Awards for Best Play. THE LONG CHRISTMAS RIDE HOME, also directed by Mark Brokaw, premiered at The Vineyard in 2003, and was praised by Ben Brantley of The New York Times as "The most visually exquisite production of the season. It's enough to make even diehard agnostics believe in the mystical powers of drama." Subsequent to their productions at The Vineyard, both DRIVE and LONG CHRISTMAS RIDE have gone on to numerous productions at U.S. theatres and around the world. Ms. Vogel's other plays include THE BALTIMORE WALTZ, THE MINEOLA TWINS, THE OLDEST PROFESSION and HOT N THROBBING.

After more than 20 years heading the MFA Playwriting program at Brown University, it was recently announced that Ms. Vogel will assume the Chair of the MFA Playwriting Program at the Yale School of Drama.

Under the artistic leadership of Douglas Aibel, the Vineyard Theatre has presented some of the most provocative and original new plays and musicals written for the stage in its first quarter century, including

the Tony Award-winning AVENUE Q, Edward Albee's Pulitzer Prize-winning play THREE TALL WOMEN, Craig Lucas' THE DYING GAUL, Gina Gionfriddo's AFTER ASHLEY, numerous plays by Nicky Silver including PTERODACTYLS and RAISED IN CAPTIVITY, and the recent smash hit musical [title of show]. Jennifer Garvey-Blackwell is the Vineyard Theatre's Executive Director.

The Vineyard has received acclaim this season for its sold-out productions of Julia Cho's THE PIANO TEACHER, and cartoonist Ben Katchor and composer Mark Mulcahy's THE SLUG BEARERS OF KAYROL ISLAND, OR THE FRIENDS OF DR. RUSHOWER. The Vineyard's third mainstage production of the season, Jenny Schwartz's GOD'S EAR, directed by Anne Kauffman, begins previews April 9th prior to its official press opening April 17.

Vineyard Theatre is located at 108 East 15th Street and is one of the most popular cultural destinations in the thriving Union Square area. For performance and ticket information, call The Vineyard box office at 212-353-0303 or visit [www.vineyardtheatre.org](http://www.vineyardtheatre.org).

###