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Hollinger Garners National New Play Award **Villanova University Theatre Professor Awarded Prestigious Citation** **for His Drama, *Opus***

Michael Hollinger, Philadelphia-based playwright and assistant professor of theatre at Villanova University, has been awarded a Harold and Mimi Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association New Play Citation for his play *Opus*.

The award is one of three presented at the annual Humana Festival of New American Plays in Louisville, KY; the Harold and Mimi Steinberg/ATCA Award and \$25,000 prize were given to Peter Sinn Nachtrieb for his play *Hunter Gatherers*, while Hollinger and playwright/actor Jeff Daniels received citations and \$7,500 each. The awards recognize the best new American plays to premiere outside of New York, NY during 2006.

Hollinger's drama *Opus* enjoyed an extended-run world premiere at Philadelphia's Arden Theatre Company in 2006, where it was nominated for seven Barrymore Awards by the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia. (It went on to win for Outstanding New Play and Outstanding Direction of a Play, and received a special award for collaboration.) The play has since been produced at Pittsburgh's City Theatre Company, Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, Florida Stage, Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, Red Barn Theatre, and Washington Stage Guild. In August it will debut off-Broadway at Primary Stages.

Opus portrays the members of a world-renowned string quartet as they rehearse Beethoven's Opus 131 in preparation for a televised performance at the White House. With only a few days to rehearse, tensions arise and personalities clash within the quartet as they confront the inspired yet ephemeral nature of their craft. Hollinger's other full-length plays include *Red Herring*, *Incorruptible*, *An Empty Plate in the Café Du Grand Boeuf*, *Tiny Island*, and *Tooth*

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and Claw. His many awards include the Roger L. Stevens Award from the Kennedy Center's Fund for New American Plays, a Mid-Atlantic Emmy Award, the Frederick Loewe Award for Musical Theatre, a second Barrymore Award for Outstanding New Play, and fellowships from the Independence Foundation, MidAtlantic Arts Foundation, and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

Since the inception of ACTA's New Play Award in 1977, the list of honorees has included August Wilson, Craig Lucas, Lanford Wilson, Marsha Norman, Jane Martin, Arthur Miller, Mac Wellman, Adrienne Kennedy, Donald Margulies, Lynn Nottage, and Horton Foote. The awards are funded by a generous annual grant of \$40,000 from the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. The American Theatre Critics Association, founded in 1974, works to raise critical standards and public awareness of a critic's duties and responsibilities. It is the only national association of professional theatre critics and has several hundred members working for newspapers, magazines, radio, and television stations across the United States.

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