



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **The Westin St. Louis Again Named Official Hotel of Metro Theater Company**

Partnership renewed for 39<sup>th</sup> season

**St. Louis, MO** – The Westin St. Louis will once again be the Official Hotel of Metro Theater Company. During the 2011-2012 season, The Westin St. Louis will host visiting artists, including nationally-known playwrights José Cruz González and Wesley Middleton.

“This continuing partnership with The Westin St. Louis makes it possible for José Cruz González and Wesley Middleton to discuss their new work with our community,” says Artistic Director Carol North.

González will be in St. Louis briefly during fall rehearsal of his play, *Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle*, which will have begin touring this season. He will return in the spring for a public premiere of his play, commissioned by Metro Theater Company. *Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle* is presented this season by PNC Arts Alive. Middleton will be in St. Louis twice during the next twelve months. She will first be in town in October to conduct community interviews regarding her work-in-process, *The Gender Project* (working title). Middleton will again be in St. Louis in late spring 2012 for a development workshop for her new play.

“The Westin St. Louis is helping Metro Theater Company fulfill an important element of our mission: new work development,” notes Managing Director Matthew Neufeld.

The 39<sup>th</sup> season of Metro Theater Company will also feature a Civil War piece presented in partnership with the Missouri History Museum: *Battledrum*, a play with lively action, rich music, evocative costumes, and just the right amount of humor. Set in 1863, *Battledrum* offers young people a compelling point of entry into the complexities of the war that divided our nation.

“We are proud to partner with Metro Theater Company,” says Dan Kaplan, General Manager of The Westin St. Louis. “Metro Theater Company always presents thought-provoking theater, as well as outstanding education programs for the St. Louis region. We are pleased to help them bring their art and values to our community.”

**JOSÉ CRUZ GONZÁLEZ**, Playwright / *Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle*, is a nationally-acclaimed playwright. His plays include *Invierno, Sunsets and Margaritas, The Heart's Desire, The Blue House, Tomás and the Library Lady, The Cloud Gatherer, Earth Songs* (premiered by Metro Theater Company), and *September Shoes*. A collection of his plays, *Nine Plays by José Cruz González: Magical Realism & Mature Themes in Theatre for Young Audiences* was published by the University of Texas Press in 2009. González has written for PAZ, the Emmy Award nominated television series produced by Discovery Kids for The Learning Channel. He was a recipient of a 2004 TCG/Pew National Theatre Residency grant. In 1997, he was awarded a NEA/TCG Theatre Residency Program for Playwrights, and in 1985 was a NEA Director Fellow. González teaches theatre at California State University at Los Angeles. He is a member of The Dramatists Guild of America and TYA/USA. He is an Associate Artist with Cornerstone Theater Company (CA), and Playwright in Residence with Childsplay (AZ).

**WESLEY MIDDLETON**, Playwright / *TOMATO Plant Girl*, has been writing for the theatre since 1991, when she co-adapted Ariel Dorfman's short story "The Rebellion of the Magical Rabbits" into a children's play for the Yale Drama Children's Theatre Commencement Show. She received her bachelor's degree in theatre studies and comparative literature from Yale University in 1992 and her M.F.A in playwriting from the University of Texas at Austin in 1996. Her play *Tomato Plant Girl* was developed through the New Play Development Workshop at UT/Austin in 1997 and jointly premiered by Metro Theater Company and Idaho Theatre for Youth (Boise, Idaho). Her play *Degas's Little Dancer* was commissioned by Zachary Scott Theatre's Project Interact (Austin, Texas) and premiered by Project Interact in the spring of 2000.

**CAROL NORTH**, Artistic Director / *Metro Theater Company*, celebrates her 34<sup>th</sup> year with the Company this year. North has directed most of Metro Theater Company's acclaimed original and repertory works, including the U.S. premiere of *Hana's Suitcase, To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Giver*, produced in partnership with Edison Theatre. Under her direction, the Company has toured to 41 states, including Alaska and Hawaii, and performed in international festivals in Canada, Italy, Japan and Taiwan. Honors include the Zony "Best Director Award" for David Saar's *The Yellow Boat*, produced by Childsplay, Inc. of Tempe, Arizona; the Women's Leadership Arts Award presented by the YWCA of St. Louis; the Missouri Arts Award for "Outstanding Contributions to the Citizens of Missouri"; the "Excellence in the Arts" Award from the Arts & Education Council of Greater St. Louis; the Visionary Award presented by Grand Center for "Outstanding Arts Professional"; and the Mickey Miners Award for Lifetime Achievement presented by the International Producers and Presenters of Theater For Young Audiences (IPAY). An adjunct instructor at Maryville University, North designed and taught for 18 years the Company's professional development institute for educators, *Reaching All the Learners through the Arts*.

**About The Westin St. Louis**

The Westin St. Louis is a 255 room upper-upscale hotel located in the heart of downtown St. Louis in the historic Cupples Station Complex and directly adjacent to Busch Stadium. Opened in March of 2001, The Westin St. Louis has been awarded the prestigious AAA Four Diamond Award for 9 consecutive years. For more information on The Westin St. Louis, visit the hotel's websites: [www.westinstlouishotel.com](http://www.westinstlouishotel.com) and [www.clarkstreetgrill.com](http://www.clarkstreetgrill.com).

**About Metro Theater Company**

Inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of young people, Metro Theater Company creates professional theater, fosters inclusive community, and nurtures meaningful learning through the arts. Founded in 1973, the Company tours its productions to schools and community sites throughout the St. Louis region, presents public performances for family audiences, and offers a range of education programs. Metro Theater Company has performed for two million people and toured nationally and internationally. For more information, visit [www.metrotheatercompany.org](http://www.metrotheatercompany.org) or call 314-997-6777.

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