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Mixed Blood Theatre Artistic Director Jack Reuler receives prestigious Peter Zeisler Memorial Award from the national theater alliance, Theatre Communications Group (TCG), at the largest TCG conference in its history

At the 2010 TCG conference in Chicago from June 17-19, Mixed Blood Artistic Director Jack Reuler was honored in front of Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and approximately than 900 national theater artists and administrators from the largest theaters in the country with the Peter Zeisler Memorial Award.

The Peter Zeisler Memorial Award recognizes an individual or organization whose work reflects and promotes the ingenuity and artistic integrity that Peter Zeisler, late executive director of TCG, prized. The honorees exemplify pioneering practices in theater, are dedicated to freedom of expression and are unafraid of taking risks for the advancement of the art form.

Mixed Blood Theatre Artistic Director Jack Reuler discovered his inspiration for both his theater and an important movement in the rest of American theater in Martin Luther King's vision for American society: "The participation of all people leads to social pluralism."

Jack set out in 1976 to create a theater that invited and encouraged participation from artists and audiences of all colors. Jack was far ahead of many in the American theater, and 35 years later, Mixed Blood Theatre continues to perform in its converted 1887 firehouse with culturally specific artists and audiences whose communities are most closely linked to the subject matter of the play.

Throughout the Mixed Blood history, Jack has selected or commissioned plays that speak to communities that are underrepresented on the American stage. Nominator Michael Dixon notes, "He has put into practice what he preached, and to those who are aware of his achievements, he's been a beacon of hope, a source of information, and a thorn in their own consciences. He has made a commitment to artists and audiences interested in diversity, difference, the other, community, sub-community, the differently abled, and more—and through word-of-mouth he has reached many many more people than those who have attended his productions."

From Jack's comments:

Peter Zeisler started a theater in Minneapolis and left. He then started TCG and we are all the beneficiaries of that decision. I started a theatre in Minneapolis and refuse to go away.

The Mayor and others have done a lot of proselytizing about Chicago and the Chicago theater scene. I am impressed and even persuaded. But be reminded that the Mecca of the American theater resides in Minnesota, with its unparalleled talent pool, the unwavering support of funders,

audiences, policy makers, and critics, and where the theaters care for one another and generously support each other's success.

Theater has long contended that it can lead to social change. At *Mixed Blood* I have witnessed live theater lead to health care reform that saves lives, influence the judicial system to ensure better justice, and to dilute the negative effects of the many isms that plague American society. This has been done measurably, quantifiably,

I used to lament that the American theater was stratified into the mainstream and margins. I felt that it was my job to help bridge the two. But as the years have gone on, I am proud to have a career in the center of the margins.

It has been said that a community is defined by those who stick around long enough to become a parody of themselves. I look in the mirror every day to see if that applies to me. But last week I spent the weekend with my colleagues at the National New Play Network, this week with all of you, and next week with the Minnesota Theater Alliance. Parody or not, I'm sticking around because the best is yet to come. Thank you.

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