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***THE ALTRUISTS, BY CRAIG BAXTER, WINS 4TH ROUND OF STAGE
INTERNATIONAL SCRIPT COMPETITION FOR BEST NEW PLAY ABOUT
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY***

**WINNER CHOSEN BY PULITZER, TONY, OLIVIER & NOBEL-WINNING JUDGES
DAVID AUBURN, DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE, JOHN GUARE, DR. ALAN HEEGER &
SIR ANTHONY LEGGETT**

The prestigious *STAGE* International Script Competition for the best new play about science and technology announces the winner of its 4th round. *The Altruists*, by British playwright Craig Baxter, was chosen by a stellar panel of judges, all multiple award-winners in their own right: Pulitzer Prize and Tony-Award winning playwright David Auburn; Tony, Olivier, and Obie Award-winning playwright John Guare; Nobel Laureate in chemistry Dr. Alan Heeger; Nobel Laureate in physics and KBE Sir Anthony Leggett; and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright David Lindsay-Abair.

STAGE – Scientists, Technologists and Artists Generating Exploration – will award Baxter a \$10,000 cash prize and an opportunity to further develop his play. Along with the announcement of Baxter’s win, *STAGE* is embarking on the next round – the fifth – of the Competition.

All of the highly-distinguished judges for *STAGE* have previously served on the Competition’s panel. It is undoubtedly a level of excellence that entices such illustrious playwrights and scientists to sign on for a second – and in Nobel Laureate Heeger’s case – a third term.

Baxter’s winning script was chosen from nearly 225 entries hailing from fifteen countries. Each year, plays are received from all over the world and written by a wide range of authors. Entrants have included established and prominent playwrights and screenwriters, an unknown playwright living in a remote part of Nigeria, highly-regarded scientists, and even a Nobel Laureate.

In Baxter’s *The Altruists*, American eccentric George Price’s scientific work parallels his personal quest for answers to fundamental questions: How should we live – for ourselves, or for others? And what are the benefits and costs of our choices? Based on a true story and set in London in the “Swinging 60’s,” *The Altruists* takes us behind the scenes with George Price, Bill Hamilton and John Maynard Smith – scientists whose fundamental work in evolutionary biology nearly fifty years ago resonates deeply with current investigations into fields ranging from social networking to cell behavior and beyond.

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Baxter is a published and produced playwright whose plays have been performed in London and throughout the U.K., as well as in the U.S., Canada, Turkey and, in translation, in Berlin and Madrid. His plays have also been broadcast on the BBC World Service and BBC Radio. He has been both a scriptwriter and script consultant for BBC TV. Baxter, who lives in Cambridge, England and divides his professional time between playwriting and scientific publishing, holds a B.S. in zoology and an M.A. in playwriting.

Along with Baxter's winning play, four other plays were singled out as finalists in this round of the Competition. These are *Gyroball*, by Tim Bauer; *Leg Man*, by David Caudle; *Instructions to Any Future Socialist Government Wishing to Abolish Christmas*, by Michael Mackenzie; and *The Other Place*, by Sharr White.

The next deadline for entries is December 1, 2011. That leaves writers plenty of time to hone a current script or even to write a new one, since, although the fifth round has officially begun, submissions won't actually be accepted until September 15, 2011.

STAGE began as a unique collaboration between the Professional Artists Lab (the Lab), a dynamic artistic laboratory, and the California NanoSystems Institute (CNSI), an esteemed science institute, both housed at the University of California, Santa Barbara. *STAGE* grew out of efforts to catalyze the development of theatre that depicts the technological age in which we live and to foster new and imaginative voices and methods of storytelling, as well as to promote understanding of the sciences in the public arena. And while the Lab and CNSI are still at the helm, *STAGE* has, in a sense, developed its own identity as a result of enormous success and a subsequent expansion of activities.

The new *STAGE* Collaboratory, launched last year, is bringing together an international array of professional artists, scientists and engineers to create original multi-media theatre pieces in which science and technology play prominent roles in content and/or form.

Nancy Kawalek, founder/director of *STAGE* (and the Professional Artists Lab) is at the helm of the Collaboratory's first theatrical creation: *The Brain Project*, a multi-media theatre piece about the brain. Prominent psychologists, neuroscientists and engineers such as Drs. Michael Gazzaniga, Kenneth Kosik and Maurizio Seracini are participating in the novel creative process.

"We're deeply honored and proud that *STAGE*'s efforts have garnered the support of such celebrated talents in the arts and sciences," said Kawalek. "The ultimate goal is to take chances with the work we're doing. Accidents in scientific laboratories often lead to great discoveries. I'm convinced that theatre also needs to be a place in which accidental discoveries provide the seeds for great work."

For more information:

STAGE: www.stage.cnsi.ucsb.edu

Professional Artists Lab: www.proartslab.ucsb.edu

California NanoSystems Institute: www.cnsi.ucsb.edu

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