UC SANTA BARBARA

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In a Cast of Luminaries

Risa Brainin has led some stellar casts in her long career as a director and artistic director on stages across the country. Now she's been inducted into a company that includes such luminaries as Edward Albee, Moses Gunn and Paula Vogel: The College of Fellows of the American Theatre.

With the honor, the UC Santa Barbara theater professor follows in the footsteps of her own mentor, the late Garland Wright.

"I am deeply honored and grateful to be inducted into The College of Fellows of the American Theatre," Brainin said. "The College of Fellows is composed of artists and scholars I admire, including my nominators Janet Allen, artistic director of Indiana Repertory Theatre; Felicia Londre, Curators' Distinguished Professor of Theatre at University of Missouri-Kansas City; and James Still, playwright and three-time Pulitzer Prize nominee."

Brainin, who founded the acclaimed LAUNCH PAD play development program, has been a professional director for 30 years.

"I'm especially touched because one of my most important mentors, the late Garland Wright, artistic director of the Guthrie Theater, was also a member of this esteemed body," she said. "I've spent my life dedicated to both the professional theater and the academy, and this acknowledgement of my contribution to the field means the world to me.

“I’m especially thankful for the home I have at UCSB in the Department of Theater and Dance,” Brainin continued. “UCSB has given me the opportunity to create our thriving new play development program LAUNCH PAD; help train the artists of tomorrow alongside our brilliant faculty; and continue to create work at theaters across the country.”

Irwin Appel, professor and chair of theater and dance, said Brainin’s induction is a fitting honor for an artist who has bought professionalism and passion to the department.

“The Department of Theater and Dance is thrilled to celebrate Risa Brainin’s induction into the College of Fellows of the American Theatre,” he said. “This organization recognizes the highest level of excellence in educational and professional theater, and it has inducted some of the most significant names in the history of theater in the United States.

“Of course, we in the department have known and cherished Risa’s presence and skills from the moment she arrived,” Appel added. “She values collaboration above all else, and every artist she works with feels welcomed and inspired. Risa is one of the prime reasons that the UCSB Department of Theater and Dance has such a strong reputation both nationally and internationally. We are so lucky to have her!”

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.