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*Illinois Wesleyan University*

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## Snyder-Young Selected as Theatre Critic

May 1, 2013

Dani Snyder-Young

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Dani Snyder-Young, assistant professor of theatre arts and head of the Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts program at Illinois Wesleyan University, has been selected as a theatre critic by the *HowlRound* journal as part of its NewCrit initiative.

*HowlRound* is an online theatre journal, with articles, reviews and interviews encouraging dialogue among a national audience of theatre artists, scholars, students, board members and theatre enthusiasts. It is an initiative of the Center for the Theatre Commons in Boston, Mass.



“Theatre criticism is generally considered to exist as a consumer guide,” said Snyder-Young. “Criticism in the popular press answers the question: ‘is this play worth my time and money?’ ”

In comparison, the NewCrit initiative seeks to re-center theatre criticism as theatre theory for audiences of practitioners rather than scholars, according to Snyder-Young. The reviews seek to ask, “Why tell this story here and now? What does this production say about the world in which it is produced?”

“This kind of criticism opens up a space for larger conversations about theatre’s function in society,” she said.

Snyder-Young primarily will be reviewing productions in Chicago, with works ranging from mainstream plays like *The Happiest Song Plays Last* at The Goodman Theatre to community-based plays such as *I Will Kiss These Walls* at

Albany Park Theatre Project.

“I tend to be most interested in plays engaging with social and political issues,” said Snyder-Young, whose scholarly

work centers on applied and community-based theatre. She is an artist-in-residence with the Halcyon Theatre in

Chicago and the author of the forthcoming book *Theatre of Good Intentions: Challenges and Hopes for Theatre and Social Change* (Palgrave Macmillan, September 2013).

As a director, critic and dramaturg (a professional position within a theatre or opera company that deals mainly with research and development of plays or operas), her work focuses primarily on political theatre, community-based performance, new play development and adaptations of classical texts for diverse audiences.

Snyder-Young earned a bachelor of arts from Wesleyan University, and a master of arts and a Ph.D. from New York University. She joined the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan in 2008.

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