

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES LINE-UP FOR 2016-17 EMERGING WRITERS GROUP SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Free Full-Length Readings
Showcasing Exciting New Voices
In American Playwriting

**Liza Birkenmeier, Hammaad Chaudry, Phillip Howze,
Monet Hurst-Mendoza, Geraldine Inoa, Jeremy J. Kamps,
MJ Kaufman, Stav Palti-Negev, and Celine Song**

**Directors Include Knud Adams, Tea Alagić, Elena Araoz,
Katherine Brook, Will Davis, Tina Landau, Billy Porter,
Liesl Tommy, and More**

April 20, 2017 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced the line-up for the popular **Spotlight Series** of free staged readings of new plays by The Public's **Emerging Writers Group**, beginning on Wednesday, May 31 and running through Monday, June 26. Now in its ninth year, the Emerging Writers Group is an important part of The Public's commitment and long legacy of supporting current and future generations of our country's most important writers.

This year's Spotlight Series will present readings of a full-length play by each writer of the 2016-17 Emerging Writers Group: **Liza Birkenmeier, Hammaad Chaudry, Phillip Howze, Monet Hurst-Mendoza, Geraldine Inoa, Jeremy J. Kamps, MJ Kaufman, Stav Palti-Negev, and Celine Song**. These evenings are directed and performed by experienced artists from the theatrical community. Tickets for the EWG Spotlight Series are free, but must be reserved in advance by calling (212) 967-7555, or online at www.publictheater.org, or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street.

The **Emerging Writers Group** is a component of **The Public Writers Initiative**, a long-term program that provides key support and resources for writers at every stage of their careers. It creates a fertile community and fosters a web of supportive artistic relationships across generations. Time Warner is the Founding Sponsor of the **Emerging Writers Group**, and provides continued program support through the Time Warner Foundation.

"At the Time Warner Foundation we believe in the transformative power of great storytelling. We also believe in the importance of cultivating the next generation of diverse storytellers for a global audience. That is why we are so proud to support the work of The Public Theater and their ongoing commitment to

nurturing talented new voices. The Time Warner Foundation champions programs that promote equity and inclusion, like the Emerging Writers Group,” said Lisa Garcia Quiroz, President, Time Warner Foundation.

In just nine years, The Public’s **Emerging Writers Group** has nurtured numerous playwrights who have gone on to have their plays staged at The Public and elsewhere around the country. In February 2013, The Public presented the Public Lab production of *Detroit '67*, written by EWG alum Dominique Morisseau. The Obie Award-winning *No Place To Go* written by Emerging Writers Group alum Ethan Lipton was presented at Joe’s Pub at The Public in March 2012. Emerging Writers Group alum Mona Mansour’s *Urge For Going* was presented in The Public Lab in March 2011, as well as Branden Jacobs-Jenkins’ *Neighbors* in February 2010 and Raúl Castillo’s *Knives and Other Sharp Objects* in March 2009. In 2014, The Public launched a new initiative, Public Studio which features pared-down productions by up-and-coming writers, including four Emerging Writers Group alums: Mary Kathryn Nagle’s *Manahatta*, *Fidelis* by Christina Gorman, *Pretty Hunger* by Patricia Ione Lloyd, and *On The Grounds of Belonging* by Ricardo Pérez González.

2017 SPOTLIGHT SERIES SCHEDULE:

Wednesday, May 31

3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

ROCKET PARK

Written by Liza Birkenmeier

Directed by Katherine Brook

In some small American town in 1979, Marlene is concerned that her new neighbor is listening to her through the shared wall of their apartments. Her queer, Christian experience of the Cold War leads to a bizarre accident. As she copes in the aftermath, she begins to wonder: Is she being watched?

Thursday, June 1

3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

UNICORNS OF THE SEA

Written by MJ Kaufman

Directed by Will Davis

Max is a trans guy who recently transitioned. The men in his family are so supportive they throw him a big Super Bowl party to celebrate! But what if the guys in his family aren’t the kind of men he wants to be?

Wednesday, June 7

3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

THE UNBEARABLE WHITENESS OF BEING

Written by Jeremy J. Kamps

Signey Mooney is a woker-than-woke white ally — until the going gets tough and her privilege sabotages her intentions. What does it mean to be an ally for racial justice? And what happens when an ally fails to be an ally?

Thursday, June 8

3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

ELSEWHERE: A PLAY FOR AN AUDIENCE OF ONE

Written by Stav Palti-Negev

Directed by Tea Alagić

One at a time, we witness the stories of refugees from Syria, Palestine, Bosnia and beyond as they share their stories of displacement. **ELSEWHERE** takes each of us on an individual journey to meet the people who live in the margins of our society.

Tuesday, June 13

3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

ENDLINGS

Written by Celine Song

Directed by Knud Adams

On the island of Man-Jae in Korea, three elderly women spend their dying days diving into the ocean to harvest seafood with nothing but a rusty knife. They are “haenyeos”— “sea women” —and there are no heiresses to their millennium-old tradition. ***ENDLINGS*** is a real estate lesson from the last three remaining “haenyeos” in the world: don’t live on an island. Unless it’s the island of Manhattan...

Thursday, June 15

3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

DESSERT

Written by Phillip Howze

Directed by Tina Landau

To break the silence of perpetual mourning, a small community stages an epic intervention. But when the past and present collide, the fates of a forgotten few become the destiny of a nation.

Monday, June 19

3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

THE ADVENTURES OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS

Written by Hammaad Chaudry

Directed by Liesl Tommy

Why do the values of the United States get to set the benchmark of what a successful culture is? And who gets to define what those values are in the first place? Through a kaleidoscopic lens, join us on ***THE ADVENTURES OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS***, as we embark upon an uncharted adventure through Muslim America.

Thursday, June 22

3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

RECKONING: FURIES FROM A NEW QUEER NATION

Written by Geraldine Inoa

Directed by Billy Porter

2015: a year when the Supreme Court's landmark ruling on marriage equality coincided with a record number of trans women being murdered. ***RECKONING: FURIES FROM A NEW QUEER NATION*** examines the most pressing issues affecting Queer America today: gay white male privilege, homelessness, and racism. It follows the parallel lives of characters sharing one city and one community—yet experiencing opposing realities. Because when a Supreme Court ruling like marriage equality passes, we must ask: what did we accomplish and who did we leave behind?

Monday, June 26

3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

TORERA

Written by Monet Hurst-Mendoza

Directed by Elena Araoz

Childhood friends Elena and Tanok come from different worlds, but they share one dream: to become matadors in Mexico's bullfighting circuit. Though class and gender divide them, they are determined to ascend to the top of this cutthroat sport. Who will rise, and who will fall?

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER'S EMERGING WRITERS GROUP

The Emerging Writers Group creates an artistic home for a diverse group of exceptionally talented up-and-coming playwrights. Developed in collaboration with Time Warner's Office of Corporate Responsibility, the Emerging Writers Group is one element of The Public Writers Initiative, a long-term program that provides key support and resources for writers at every stage of their careers. Each emerging writer receives a two-year fellowship at The Public which includes a \$7,500 honorarium; participation in a biweekly writers' group led by The Public's Literary Department; master classes with established playwrights; career development advice and artistic support from acclaimed writers and Public artistic staff; complimentary tickets to Public shows and supplemental stipends for productions at other theaters; and a reading of their work in the Emerging Writers Group Evening of Excerpts and Spotlight Series. Bios for the 2016-17 Emerging Writers group can be found at www.publictheater.org.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

The Public Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, is the only theater in New York that produces Shakespeare, the classics, musicals, contemporary and experimental pieces in equal measure. Celebrating his 10th anniversary season at The Public, Eustis has created new community-based initiatives designed to engage audiences like Public Lab, Public Studio, Public Forum, Public Works, and a remount of the Mobile Unit. The Public continues the work of its visionary founder, Joe Papp, by acting as an advocate for the theater as an essential cultural force, and leading and framing dialogue on some of the most important issues of our day. Creating theater for one of the largest and most diverse audience bases in New York City for nearly 60 years, today the Company engages audiences in a variety of venues—including its landmark downtown home at Astor Place, which houses five theaters and Joe's Pub; the Delacorte Theater in Central Park, home to free Shakespeare in the Park; and the Mobile Unit, which tours Shakespearean productions for underserved audiences throughout New York City's five boroughs. The Public's wide range of programming includes free Shakespeare in the Park, the bedrock of the Company's dedication to making theater accessible to all; Public Works, an expanding initiative that is designed to cultivate new connections and new models of engagement with artists, audiences and the community each year; and audience and artist development initiatives that range from Emerging Writers Group and to the Public Forum series. The Public is located on property owned by the City of New York and receives annual support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; and in October 2012 the landmark building downtown at Astor Place was revitalized to physically manifest the Company's core mission of sparking new dialogues and increasing accessibility for artists and audiences, by dramatically opening up the building to the street and community, and transforming the lobby into a public piazza for artists, students, and audiences. The Public is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning acclaimed American musical *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, and in Spring 2017, Lynn Nottage's acclaimed new play *Sweat*. The Public has received 59 Tony Awards, 168 Obie Awards, 53 Drama Desk Awards, 54 Lortel Awards, 32 Outer Critics Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics Awards, and six Pulitzer Prizes. www.publictheater.org.

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