

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES LINE-UP FOR 2014-15 EMERGING WRITERS GROUP SPOTLIGHT SERIES

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

**Kevin Artigue, Damon Chua, Keli Goff,
Ricardo Pérez González, Glenn Gordon, Elizabeth Irwin,
Paola Lázaro-Muñoz, Patricia Ione Lloyd,
Jiehae Park, Sarah Sander**

**Directors Include Lileana Blain-Cruz, Kip Fagan, Robert O'Hara,
Niegel Smith, Lucie Tiberghien, Eric Ting, Jose Zayas**

March 5, 2015 – 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 Tuesday, April 7 and running through Tuesday, May 26 at the Sheen Center Black Box Theater (18 Bleecker Street). Now in its seventh 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 2014-15 Emerging Writers Group: **Kevin Artigue, Damon Chua, Keli Goff, Ricardo Pérez González, Glenn Gordon, Elizabeth Irwin, Paola Lázaro-Muñoz, Patricia Ione Lloyd, Jiehae Park, and Sarah Sander**. 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**, 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. In doing so, The Public hopes to create an artistic home for a diverse and exceptionally talented group of up-and-coming playwrights. The Public Writers Initiative 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.

“As a global company, Time Warner is committed to lighting up the world with the best storytelling,” said **Lisa Garcia Quiroz, SVP Cultural Investments & Chief Diversity Officer, Time Warner Inc., and President, Time Warner Foundation.** “That commitment is the inspiration for the mission of the Time Warner Foundation – to discover, nurture and celebrate the next generation of storytellers. Through innovative partnerships with leading arts organizations like The Public Theater, the Time Warner Foundation invests in programs that develop promising talent from all backgrounds. This is why the Emerging Writers Group continues to be such a wonderful example of our mission brought to life.”

“How exciting to be in this moment when 10 thrilling new plays are introduced to the world from our talented and passionate Emerging Writers Group,” said **Public Theater Associate Artistic Director Mandy Hackett.** “At the peak of their two-year residency with us at The Public, the writers have forged a meaningful sense of community and camaraderie, held observerships, and participated in master classes, and now we couldn't be more excited to kick-off another year of our Spotlight Series and introduce their work to larger audiences.”

In just seven 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 two Emerging Writers Group alums. The inaugural Public Studio season featured Mary Kathryn Nagle's *Manahatta* and this year's line-up included *Fidelis* by Christina Gorman.

2015 SPOTLIGHT SERIES SCHEDULE:

Tuesday, April 7

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

IN THE MIDWEST

Written by Sarah Sander

Directed by Lucie Tiberghien

The Jacobs live a seemingly average American life in suburbia: Celia is a cheerleader, Henry is a star student, Louise grows tomatoes and David teaches college. However, when John Keller and his mother Jocelyn move in across the street, the Jacobs' wholesome façade begins to crack. ***In the Midwest*** is a play about sex, sibling rivalry and the importance of neighbors.

Monday, April 13

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

THE FORCINGS

Written by Kevin Artigue

Directed by Lileana Blain-Cruz

Company man Ernie Ledezma is the public face of Exxon in Mexico. As his family gathers at his vacation home in coastal North Carolina, seventeen anti-fracking activists remain missing in Mexico. The truth behind their disappearance will set off a chain of events with shocking repercussions for Ernie and his entire family. A contemporary riff on Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*, ***The Forcings*** depicts a tragedy of power, self-delusion and civilization barreling towards extinction.

Tuesday, April 14

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

THE BLACK FRIEND

Written by Keli Goff

Shortly after accepting her dream job as the first African-American executive at a cosmetics company owned by a lifelong friend, Erica Reynolds discovers that the company and her friend are being sued for racial discrimination. The revelation places Erica firmly in the crossfire of the debates taking place among her family and friends and the nation at large in the Obama era.

Thursday, April 16

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

SEPARATE & EQUAL

Written by Ricardo Pérez González

It's an old-fashioned love story set in a pair of racially segregated gay bars in 1950s Houston, Texas. And Tom and Russ are a pair of old-fashioned lovers—one white, one black—risking their lives in an old-fashioned world that would rather see them dead than together.

Monday, April 27

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

GETTING OVER

Written by Elizabeth Irwin

Directed by Kip Fagan

Give a working class kid from desolate-ass Holyoke a dollar, he might buy a scratch ticket or a few looseys; give him a free prestigious liberal arts college education in the bucolic town next door, he'll turn that dollar into a million working at an elite investment banking firm and get down on his knees and thank you every day. Right?

Tuesday, April 28

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

OPTIMISM

Written by Damon Chua

What does the 1964 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows have to do with Wall Street in the 1980s? Quite a lot according to Larry Yang, a true optimist who grows up in Flushing and becomes a junk bond salesman during the Reagan years. *Optimism* simultaneously tells the story of an inter-racial romance between Larry's mom and a black man in the sixties and Larry's financial misadventures in the eighties, showing how Space Age boosterism and capitalistic exuberance is often at the expense of minority rights.

Thursday, April 30

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

SYNCING INK

Written by Glenn Gordon

Directed by Niegel Smith

"When I'm alone in my room/sometimes I stare at the wall/and in the back of my mind I hear my conscience call" telling me I have a hidden gift I need to tap/could it be...this suburban teen is destined to rap?

Monday, May 4

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

LA GEMA

Written by Paola Lázaro-Muñoz
Directed by Jose Zayas

You're in Puerto Rico. Old San Juan. You're a tourist, you walk down the stairs of this beautiful old fort built by the Spaniards. When you reach the bottom, you realize you're in the hole, a slum. Welcome to La Gema, the barrio and the underbelly that lies under the tourism and behind the fort walls. You spend three days there, you don't want to leave. Oh no, you're addicted to the beauty, the women and the drugs.

Tuesday, May 19

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

PRETTY HUNGER

Written by Patricia Ione Lloyd

Directed by Robert O'Hara

Leah, a biracial seven year old girl with an epic imagination, takes us on a journey of growing up as she realizes that her babysitter is actually her father and that she is actually Black. Guided by her imaginary friend Bette Davis, Leah explores what it means to be a woman of color and how to come to terms with both of her parents and the baggage they carry with them.

Tuesday, May 26

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

THE GOOD ONES

Written by Jiehae Park

Directed by Eric Ting

Education is broken. Jenna, Karol, and Matt want to fix it. Shouldn't be too hard, right? A story of what happens when idealism meets reality (and a robot named Bob).

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 Literary Manager Liz Frankel and 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 2014-15 Emerging Writers group can be found at www.publictheater.org.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER AT ASTOR PLACE

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public Theater is the only theater in New York that produces Shakespeare, the classics, musicals, contemporary and experimental pieces in equal measure. 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 its beloved, 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, a new initiative that is designed to cultivate new connections and new models of engagement with artists, audiences and the community each year; new and experimental stagings at

The Public at Astor Place, including Public Lab; and a range of artist and audience development initiatives including its Public Forum series, which brings together theater artists and professionals from a variety of disciplines for discussions that shed light on social issues explored in Public productions. The Public Theater 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. Key elements of the revitalization an expanded and refurbished lobby; the addition of a mezzanine level with a new restaurant lounge, The Library, designed by the Rockwell Group www.publictheater.org

The LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities; Bank of America, Proud Season Sponsor of Shakespeare in the Park; The Harold & Mimi Steinberg New Play Development Fund at The Public Theater Supports the Creation and Development of New Plays; The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation - Lead Supporter of The Public's Access and Engagement Programming; The Time Warner Foundation, Founding Sponsor of The Emerging Writers Group; Delta Air Lines, Official Airline of The Public Theater; *New York Magazine* is the official print sponsor of The Public Theater's 2014-2015 downtown season; Public support is provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; and the National Endowment for the Arts, an independent federal agency.

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