

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES 2023/2024 SEASON

SUBSCRIPTION SLATE TO FEATURE FIVE FASCINATING WORLD PREMIERES, INCLUDING A BRAND NEW MUSICAL AND AN ADAPTATION OF A CLASSIC NOVEL STARRING STAGE AND SCREEN FAVORITE MATTHEW BRODERICK

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse is pleased to announce the first five productions of its 2023/2024 season, including the world-premiere musical ***The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical***, music and lyrics by **Joe Iconis** (*Be More Chill*), book by **Joe Iconis** and **Gregory S. Moss**, directed by Tony Award winner **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse (*Come From Away*), along with four world-premiere plays: ***Love All***, by acclaimed writer/actor **Anna Deavere Smith** (*Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*; Playhouse's *Let Me Down Easy*), directed by **Marc Bruni** (Broadway's *Beautiful: The Carole King Story*); ***Is It Thursday Yet?***, created, choreographed and performed by **Jenn Freeman**, created, choreographed and directed by **Sonya Tayeh** (Broadway's *Moulin Rouge*, Playhouse's *Hundred Days*), composed and performed by **Holland Andrews**; ***SUMO***, developed during the 2021 DNA New Work Series, written by **Lisa Sanaye Dring**, directed by **Ralph B. Peña**, in a co-production with **Ma-Yi Theater Company**; and ***Babbitt***, by Tony Award winner **Joe DiPietro** (*Memphis*), adapted from the novel by **Sinclair Lewis**, directed by **Christopher Ashley**, and featuring acclaimed stage and screen star **Matthew Broderick** (*The Producers*, Playhouse-born revival of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*).

A sixth subscription production, along with full run dates, will be announced shortly. Tickets for the Playhouse's 2023/2024 season are currently available via a subscription purchase, available December 13 at LaJollaPlayhouse.org or by calling (858) 550-1010.

"This season beautifully illustrates our mission of serving as a home for artists as they harness the transformative power of theatre to explore potent undercurrents in our society," said **Ashley**. "Whether rooted in the 'now' or transporting us to a past that looks very much like our present, these five new works feature bold characters who possess uncommon talent, vision and courage, while never failing to shed new insights and perspectives into our own world."

Prior to the start of the subscription season, the Playhouse will mount its acclaimed **Without Walls (WOW) Festival**, presented in association with the San Diego Symphony at the Rady Shell at Jacobs Park **April 27 – 30, 2023**. Like previous WOW Festivals, the event will feature four action-packed days of theatre, dance and music, with multiple performances by renowned local, national and international artists occurring simultaneously throughout the weekend. A complete roster of artists and projects will be announced at a later date.

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About the 2023/2024 Season***Love All***

By Anna Deavere Smith
Directed by Marc Bruni
June/July 2023

Love All is the triumphant story of the rise of sports icon and social justice pioneer Billie Jean King. The trailblazer for equality faced tough competition on the court and adversity in the world, all against a backdrop of the massive social changes of the 1960s and '70s. With support from King herself, this exciting world premiere comes from the pen of award-winning playwright, professor, actor and author Anna Deavere Smith, whose artistry is evidenced by the ground-breaking work she has created for more than four decades, including the Tony-nominated *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*. Under the skillful hand of director Marc Bruni (*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*), *Love All* evokes the highs and lows of Billie Jean King's extraordinary career, and asks not just what it takes to be a champion, but what it takes to change the course of history.

Is It Thursday Yet?

Created, Choreographed and Performed by Jenn Freeman
Created, Choreographed and Directed by Sonya Tayeh
Composed and Performed by Holland Andrews
July/August 2023

Dancer and choreographer Jenn Freeman was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder in 2021 at age 33, and since then she has navigated an endless sea of epiphanies. Inspired by a deep curiosity to examine her childhood memories through this new lens, Jenn found a way to illuminate her story using the language she knows best: Dance. *Is It Thursday Yet?* invites audiences into the unique complexities of Jenn's neurodivergent brain through a stunning tapestry of dance, live music and home video footage. Original live music from renowned musician Holland Andrews is woven with audio narrations from Jenn's therapist, vocals, clarinet, drums and electronic music. A vibrant, colorful and tactile scenic design by Tony Award winner Rachel Hauck is inspired by Jenn's sensory sensitivities to texture, color, light and sound. This inventive, engrossing new work is co-created and directed by Sonya Tayeh, the electrifying, Tony Award-winning choreographer of Broadway's *Moulin Rouge*. *Is It Thursday Yet?* celebrates what it means to live a life on the spectrum.

The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical

Music and Lyrics by Joe Iconis
Book by Joe Iconis and Gregory S. Moss
Directed by Christopher Ashley
September/October 2023

Who was Hunter S. Thompson? He changed journalism. He defined counterculture. Equal parts philosopher, clown and genius, he was armed and dangerous with a typewriter as his preferred weapon. Careening from the 1940s to his death in 2005, this gonzo musical blasts into the life of one of America's most influential and destructive icons. In relentless pursuit of the meaning of the American Dream during an era of political and social upheaval, Hunter S. Thompson cultivated a new form of journalism that — for better or worse — injected his subjective view into the heart of the story. Now, in another, even more severe moment of fake news, propaganda and polarization, Hunter's story helps explore how we got here, and how to keep fighting. Set to Joe Iconis' anarchic and tuneful score, this musical is a rock 'n' roll portrait of an artist seeking greatness and coming to terms with his own legacy. It's a heartfelt trumpet call to the moral idealists, the outraged, the outlaws and the outsiders. There will be peacocks, there will be breakdowns, there will be fireworks.

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SUMO

By Lisa Sanaye Dring
Directed by Ralph B. Peña
Co-Production with Ma-Yi Theater Company
September/October 2023

Entrenched in an elite sumo training facility in Tokyo, six men practice, eat, love, play and ultimately fight. Akio arrives as an angry, ambitious 18 year old with a lot to learn. Expecting validation, dominance and fame, and desperate to move up the ranks, he slams headlong into his fellow wrestlers, especially Mitsuo, the highest-ranked fighter. With sponsorship money at stake, their bodies on the line, and their futures at risk, the wrestlers struggle to carve themselves – and one another – into the men they dream of being. Lisa Sanaye Dring has painted a vivid world with poetic precision, mixing ancient, divine ritual with the guttural ferocity of competition. SUMO was a hit as part of the 2021 DNA New Work Series. Directed by Ma-Yi Theater Artistic Director Ralph B. Peña and featuring live taiko drumming, this tenderly drawn and unique work will come to life for San Diego audiences.

Babbitt

By Joe DiPietro
Adapted from the novel by Sinclair Lewis
Directed by Christopher Ashley
November/December 2023

Multi-award-winning star of stage and screen Matthew Broderick and Tony Award-winning playwright Joe DiPietro join forces with our own Christopher Ashley for this comedic, unmissable theatrical event. *Babbitt* entered the zeitgeist in 1922 as a novel by white-hot satirist Sinclair Lewis, the first American Nobel Laureate. An instant literary classic, *Babbitt* has been a stalwart on “best ever” lists for over 100 years, and is now adapted for the stage. George F. Babbitt is a middle-aged real estate broker in the Midwestern city of Zenith. By day, he has a prosperous, respectable middle-class existence. By night, he’s plagued by the thought that he has amounted to nothing. Searching for more to life than his top-of-the-line toaster and hickory golf club — more *meaning* — Babbitt leaps with abandon into the most spectacular rebellion of his life — one that could end up costing him everything.

La Jolla Playhouse is a place where artists and audiences come together to create what’s new and next in the American theatre, from Tony Award-winning productions, to imaginative programs for young audiences, to interactive experiences outside our theatre walls. Founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer, the Playhouse is currently led by Tony Award winner Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Managing Director Debby Buchholz. The Playhouse is internationally renowned for the development of new plays and musicals, including mounting 105 world premieres, commissioning 60 new works, and sending 33 productions to Broadway – including the hit musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

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Artist Biographies

Holland Andrews (Composer/Performer: *Is It Thursday Yet?*; they/them) is an American vocalist, composer, and performance artist whose work focuses on the abstraction of operatic and extended-technique voice to build soundscapes encompassing both catharsis and dissonance. Frequently highlighting themes surrounding vulnerability and healing, Andrews arranges music for voice, clarinet, and electronics. Andrews harnesses these instruments' innate qualities of power and elegance to serve as a cohesive vessel for these themes. As a vocalist, their influences stem from a dynamic range including contemporary opera, theater, and jazz, while also cultivating their own unique vocal style which integrates these influences with language disintegration and vocal distortion. Andrews previously performed solo music under the stage name Like a Villain. In addition to creating solo work, Andrews develops and performs soundscapes for dance, theater, and film, and their work is still toured nationally and internationally with artists such as Bill T. Jones, Dorothee Munyaneza, Will Rawls, and poet Demian Dinéyazhi. Notable musical collaborations have been with composers and artists such as Son Lux, Christina Vantzou, William Brittle, Peter Broderick, and is one of the first artist on releasing on the label Leiter, a Berlin-based record label spearheaded by composer, Nils Frahm. Andrews has gained recognition from publications such as *The Wire*, *The New York Times*, *Electronic Sound*, *Uncut Magazine*, *Le Monde*, and BBC Radio. Holland Andrews is currently based in Brooklyn, New York. In addition to creating solo work, Andrews develops and performs the soundscapes for dance, theater, and film, and whose work is still toured nationally and internationally. Andrews has gained recognition from publications such as *The Wire*, *The New York Times*, *Uncut Magazine*, BBC Radio, and more. Holland Andrews is currently based in New York City.

Tony Award winner **Christopher Ashley** (Director: *The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical* and *Babbitt*) has served as La Jolla Playhouse's Artistic Director since 2007. During his tenure, he directed the world premieres of *Come From Away*, *Diana: The Musical*, *Memphis*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *The Squirrels*, *A Dram of Drummhicit*, *Restoration* and *Chasing the Song*, as well as *As You Like It*, *His Girl Friday*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Freaky Friday* and *Xanadu*. He also spearheaded the Without Walls (WOW) initiative, the DNA New Work Series and the Theatre-in-Residence program. Mr. Ashley recently directed *Come From Away* for AppleTV+ and *Diana: The Musical* for Netflix. Other screen credits include the feature films *Jeffrey* and *Lucky Stiff*, and the American Playhouse production of *Blown Sideways Through Life* for PBS. Broadway credits include *Come From Away* (Tony and Outer Critics Circle Awards), *Diana: The Musical*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Memphis* (Tony nomination), *Xanadu*, *Leap of Faith* (Drama Desk Award nomination), *All Shook Up* and *The Rocky Horror Show* (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle Award nominations). He also helmed productions of *Come From Away* in London (Olivier Award nomination), Toronto, Australia and on national tour. Other national tours include *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Memphis*, *Xanadu*, *All Shook Up* and *Seussical: The Musical*. Additional New York stage credits include *Blown Sideways Through Life*, *Jeffrey* (Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards), *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, *Valhalla* (Lucille Lortel Award nomination), *Regrets Only*, *Wonder of the World*, *Communicating Doors*, *Bunny, Bunny*, *The Night Hank Williams Died* and *Fires in the Mirror* (Lucille Lortel Award), among others. Mr. Ashley is the recipient of the Princess Grace Award, the Drama League Director Fellowship and an NEA/TCG Director Fellowship.

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Two-time Tony Award-winning actor and instantly recognizable film presence **Matthew Broderick** (title role: *Babbitt*) was recently seen on screen in Shawn Snyder's *To Dust*, which won the Tribeca Film Festival Audience Award for Narrative feature, and the animated comedy *Wonder Park*, starring Jennifer Garner and Mila Kunis. He also starred in *Rules Don't Apply*, directed by and starring Warren Beatty, as well as *Manchester by the Sea*, directed by Kenneth Lonergan. He will next star in Netflix's *Opioid Drama Painkiller*, opposite Uzo Aduba. On stage, Broderick was most recently seen starring in the Broadway revival of Neil Simon's *Plaza Suite* alongside his wife, Sarah Jessica Parker. Other theater credits include: *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Tony and Outer Critics Circle Award), *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Tony and Outer Critics Circle Award), *The Starry Messenger*, *Biloxi Blues*, *The Foreigner*, *The Philanthropist*, *The Odd Couple*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *Sylvia*, *It's Only a Play*, *The Seafarer*, *The Closet*, *Evening at the Talk House*, *Shining City* (Obie Award), *Torch Song Trilogy* (Outer Critics Circle Award), *The Widow Claire* and *Valentine's Day*. In 2005, he starred in the feature film version of *The Producers*, reprising the Tony-nominated performance he gave during the record-breaking production on Broadway. Broderick has also starred in such blockbuster movies as *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, *Glory*, *War Games*, and Disney's *The Lion King*, as the adult voice of *Simba*. Additional credits include *You Can Count on Me*, *Election*, *Lazy Susan*, *Love Is Blind*, *The American Side*, *Dirty Weekend*, *Tower Heist*, *Margaret*, *Bee Movie*, *Then She Found Me*, *Deck the Halls*, *The Last Shot*, *The Stepford Wives*, *Inspector Gadget*, *Godzilla*, *Addicted to Love*, *The Cable Guy*, *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*, *The Night We Never Met*, *The Freshman*, *Family Business* and *Max Dugan Returns*. On television, Broderick was last seen in Netflix's *Daybreak*. He has also appeared on Fox's live musical event *A Christmas Story Live!*, *Modern Family*, *30 Rock*, the Showtime film *Master Harold...and the Boys* and received an Emmy nomination for the TNT production of David Mamet's *A Life in the Theater* in which he starred opposite Jack Lemmon.

Marc Bruni (Director: *Love All*) most recently directed the critically acclaimed *Guys and Dolls* at the Kennedy Center, where he also directed *The Music Man*, *How to Succeed...*, and *50 Years of Broadway*. He directed the Tony, Grammy and Olivier Award-winning *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* on Broadway, in the West End, US/UK Tours, and in Australia, winning the Helpmann and Green Room Awards for Best Direction of a Musical. His production of *Trevor: The Musical* (Off Broadway's Stage 42) is currently streaming on Disney+. Other selected credits include *The Explorers Club* (Manhattan Theater Club), *Ordinary Days* (Roundabout), *Old Jews Telling Jokes* (Westside Theatre and Royal George - Jeff Award nomination for Direction), *Other People's Money* (Long Wharf - CCC Award nomination), *I Hate Hamlet* (Bucks County), *The Sound of Music* (Chicago Lyric Opera), *The Tale of Despereaux* (with PigPen Theatre Co.- Old Globe, Berkeley Rep), *The Nutty Professor* (Ogunquit), *Hey, Look Me Over!*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Pipe Dream* and *Fanny* for NY City Center Encores! and seven shows for the St. Louis MUNY. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College.

Joe DiPietro (Playwright: *Babbitt*) is a playwright and lyricist. He has won two Tony Awards, a Drama Desk Award and three Outer Critics Circle Awards. His musicals and plays have received thousands of productions across the country and around the world. Broadway: *Diana*, *Nice Work If You Can Get it* starring Matthew Broderick and Kelli O'Hara (ten Tony nominations, including Best Book, Best Musical), *Memphis* (four Tony Awards including Best Musical, Best Book, Best Score), *All Shook Up*, *Living on Love* (starring Renee Fleming). Off-Broadway: *Ernest Shackleton Loves Me*, *Clever Little Lies* (starring Marlo Thomas), *The Toxic Avenger* (OCC Award - Best Off-Broadway Musical), *The Thing About Men* (OCC Award - Best Off-Broadway Musical), the much-produced comedy *Over the River and Through the Woods*, and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (longest-running musical revue in Off-Broadway history). Other recent regional credits include: *The Second Mrs. Wilson* (Long Wharf Theatre and George Street Playhouse), *Hollywood* and *Chasing the Song* (La Jolla Playhouse), *The Last Romance* (The Old Globe), *Creating Claire* (George Street Playhouse). His new Tom Jones musical, *What's New, Pussycat?*, recently debuted at Birmingham Rep to critical acclaim and is slated to make its West End debut. He is a long-time board member of Only Make Believe, a charity dedicated to bringing interactive, therapeutic theatre to chronically ill children.

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Lisa Sanaye Dring (Playwright: *SUMO*) was honored as a recipient of the 2020/21 PLAY LA Stage Raw/ Humanitas Prize. *The Wicked One* was a finalist for the Relentless Award, a finalist for the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, a finalist for the Seven Devils Playwrights Conference and a semi-finalist for the O'Neill Playwrights Conference. *Kaidan Project: Walls Grow Thin*, a play she co-wrote with Chelsea Sutton, was nominated for eight Ovation Awards including Best Production. She is writing *Kaidan Project: Alone*, an augmented reality experience, with the same team, which will be coming this fall. Lisa's work has been developed/produced by The New Group, Actors Theatre of Louisville, East West Players, Circle X, Playwrights' Arena, Rogue Artists Ensemble, The Motor Company, Theatre of NOTE and with the DCA's Reimagine Public Art Series. She recently served as the head writer on *Welcome to the Blumhouse Live*, an interactive film event for Blumhouse/Amazon Prime by Little Cinema. Lisa was a member of East West Players' Playwrights Group and is a MacDowell and Yaddo Fellow.

Jenn Freeman (Creator/Choreographer/Performer: *Is It Thursday Yet?*) is an American choreographer, dance performer and educator based in New York City. Most recently Freeman premiered a new work at The Festival des Arts de Saint-Sauveur. This year she was commissioned to create a new work for the Martha Graham Dance Company. In 2018 Freeman self-produced and choreographed/directed Freemove Dance's debut evening-length work, *...it's time...* at the Theater at The 14th St Y. After a sold-out run the show was invited back for a second run in 2019. Freeman's choreography has been commissioned by Marymount Manhattan College, Wayne State University, BYU and The University of Texas at Austin. Her work has also been presented at The Kaatsbaan Summer Festival, The Reverb Dance Festival and The McCallum Theater Choreography Festival (Finalist). For over a decade Jenn has worked as Sonya Tayeh's associate and resident choreographer in the development of pieces for The Gibney Company, American Ballet Theatre, The Martha Graham Dance Company, Guggenheim Works & Process, LA Ballet, The Juilliard School and Cirque du Soleil. Professionally, Jenn has danced in works by choreographers Sonya Tayeh, Kyle Abraham, Larry Keigwin, Charlotte Boye-Christensen (NOW-ID) and many others.

Joe Iconis (Book, Music, Lyrics: *The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical*) is a musical theater writer and performer. He has been nominated for a Tony Award, four Drama Desk Awards, two Lucille Lortel Awards, two Outer Critics' Circle Awards, and is the recipient of an Ed Kleban Award, a Jonathan Larson Award and a Richard Rodgers Award. His musical *Be More Chill* (with Joe Tracz) has played Broadway, London and Tokyo. Joe is the author of *Love in Hate Nation* (directed by John Simpkins; Two River Theater), *Broadway Bounty Hunter* (with Lance Rubin and Jason SweetTooth Williams; Barrington Stage Company and Greenwich House Theater Off-Broadway), *Bloodsong of Love* (Ars Nova, NAMT), *Punk Rock Girl!* (for Lively McCabe), *The Black Suits* (with Robert Maddock; Center Theater Group, Barrington Stage Company), *ReWrite* (Urban Stages, Goodspeed), *Things To Ruin* (Second Stage Theater, The Zipper Factory) and Theaterworks USA's *The Plant That Ate Dirty Socks* and *We the People*. His music appeared on season two of NBC's *Smash* and he frequently performs at 54 Below and the Laurie Beechman Theater. Albums: *Album (Joe Iconis & Family)*, *Be More Chill* (OCR and OBCR, which have been streamed over 500 million times); *Broadway Bounty Hunter* (OCR); *Things to Ruin* (OCR); *Two-Player Game* (with George Salazar) and *The Joe Iconis Rock & Roll Jamboree*, all available on Sh-K-Boom/Ghostlight Records. Joe is hugely inspired by Robert Altman, Dolly Parton, The Muppets, and the Family of artists he frequently surrounds himself with.

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Founded in 1989, **Ma-Yi Theater Company** (Co-Producer: *SUMO*) is a Drama Desk, Lortel and Obie Award-winning, Off-Broadway not-for-profit organization whose primary mission is to develop and produce new and innovative plays by Asian American writers. Its numerous acclaimed productions include Mike Lew's *Teenage Dick* and *Bike America*, Qui Nguyen's *The Inexplicable Redemption of Agent G* and *Soul Samurai* (with Vampire Cowboys), and Hansol Jung's *Among the Dead*. Other productions include: *Rescue Me* by Michi Barall, Lloyd Suh's *The Chinese Lady* and Lonnie Carter's *The Romance of Magno Rubio*. The Ma-Yi Writers Lab, a signature program founded in 2004, is the largest resident company of Asian-American playwrights ever assembled. The Lab emboldens a new generation of Asian American artists to voice their experiences, while developing a steady stream of quality new works by Asian American playwrights for Ma-Yi's own performing repertory. New works developed at the Writers Lab have gone on to successful productions around the country at such theaters as Laguna Playhouse, Denver Center, Long Wharf Theater, Woolly Mammoth and the Actors Theater of Louisville, to name a few. Ma-Yi's productions have earned 10 Obie Awards, five Henry Hewes nominations, a Lortel Award for Best Musical, six Drama Desk nominations and the Special Drama Desk Award for "more than two decades of excellence and for nurturing Asian-American voices in stylistically varied and engaging theater."

Gregory S. Moss (Book: *The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical*) is a MacDowell Fellow and the recipient of a Jerome Fellowship and a McKnight Fellowship. He is the recipient of the Reva Shiner Comedy Prize and an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. He's an Affiliated Artist with Clubbed Thumb, and he has served as a mentor for Clubbed Thumb's early career playwrights' group, Columbia University's MFA in Playwriting Program, and through the Playwrights' Center. His work is published by Overlook Press, Dramatists Play Service, Dramatic Publishing Company, Playscripts and in the journals *Play: A Journal of Plays* and *n+1*. He is an Associate Professor of Theatre and Dance at the University of New Mexico and Head of the MFA Dramatic Writing Program. Recent productions include the world premiere of *Indian Summer* at Playwrights Horizons, NYC (Critics' Pick, *Time Out New York*; The 2016 Edgerton Foundation New Play Award); the UK Premiere of *punkplay* at The Southwark Theatre; *House of Gold* at La Comédie Française, Paris (Winner, Prix du Public), and at EST-LA, Los Angeles (*LA Times* and *LA Weekly* Critics' Pick) and at Square Product Theater, Boulder CO.; "*I Promised Myself to Live Faster*": A *Queer Space Opera in the Decadent Style*, with Pig Iron Theater Company, Humana Festival of New American Plays, Actor's Theatre of Louisville; *Reunion* at South Coast Rep, Costa Mesa, CA (Best New Play of 2014, *OC Weekly* and *StageSourceLA*); *La Brea*, Clubbed Thumb, NYC. He is currently at work on a collection of short stories and his first novel.

Ralph B. Peña's (Director: *SUMO*) recent Off Broadway directing credits include *The Wong Kids*, *microcrisis*, *Among the Dead*, *The Chinese Lady*, *Felix Starro* and the short film *Vancouver*. His work has been seen on the stages of The Public Theater, Long Wharf Theater, Laguna Playhouse, Victory Gardens, LaMama ETC, The Children's Theater Company and Vineyard Theater, among others. Ralph is Ma-Yi Theater Company's Artistic Director, and has been instrumental in establishing Ma-Yi Theater as the country's leading incubator of new works by Asian American playwrights, reaping numerous Obie and Drama Desk Awards, a Lucille Lortel Award for Best Musical (*KPOP*) and the 2018 Ross Wetzsteon Obie Award.

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Anna Deavere Smith (Playwright: *Love All*) is a playwright and actress. She's credited with having created a new form of theater. Her plays, which focus on contemporary issues from multiple points of view, are composed of excerpts of hundreds of interviews. Plays and films based on them include *Fires in the Mirror* and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*, *Let Me Down Easy*, and *Notes from the Field*, about the school-to-prison pipeline. Her work as an actress on television includes: *Inventing Anna*, *The West Wing*, *Nurse Jackie* and *Black-ish*. Mainstream movies include *Philadelphia*, *The American President*, *Rachel Getting Married* and Billy Crystal's new movie *Here Today*. President Obama awarded Smith the National Endowment for the Humanities Medal. She's the recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship, several Obie awards, a Drama Desk award, and the George Polk Career Award in Journalism and the Dean's Medal from Stanford University School of Medicine. She was a runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize and nominated for two Tony Awards. She's a professor at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She has several honorary doctorate degrees including those from Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Spelman College, Juilliard and Oxford.

Sonya Tayeh (Creator/Choreographer/Director: *Is It Thursday Yet?*) is a New York City-based Tony Award-winning choreographer and director. Since paving her professional career, her work has been characterized as a blend of powerful versatility and theatrical range. Selected credits include: *Moulin Rouge!* (Broadway, Australia, UK, Tour/ Dir. Alex Timbers), *Sing Street* (Broadway/ Dir. Rebecca Taichman), Martha Graham Dance Company (Joyce Theatre/Tour), American Ballet Theatre/*What Becomes of Love* Film, *Unveiling* with Moses and dancers (Fall For Dance/City Center), *Rent Live!* (Fox Network/Directed by Michael Greif and Alex Rudzinski), *The Lucky Ones* (Ars Nova/Dir. Anne Kauffman), *Face the Torrent* for Malpaso Dance Co. (commissioned by The Music Center/ LA), *You'll Still Call Me By Name* (commissioned by New York Live Arts and Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival), Martha Graham Dance Company's Lamentation Variation Series (Joyce Theatre), *Hundred Days* (New York Theatre Workshop/Dir. Anne Kauffman), *The Skin of Our Teeth* (Theatre for a New Audience/Dir. Arin Arbus), Andrew Lippas' *The Wild Party* (City Center Encores!/Dir. Leigh Silverman), *Kung Fu* (Signature Theatre/Dir. Leigh Silverman). Tayeh has directed and choreographed for world renowned music artists, including Miley Cyrus (directed and choreographed The Gypsy Heart Tour), Florence and the Machine (choreographed performances for The Brit Awards, *The Voice* and *American Idol*), Kylie Minogue (Aphrodite Tour). She has gleaned many accolades for her versatile work, including a Tony Award, two Emmy nominations, one Drama Desk Award, an Obie Award and two Lucille Lortel Awards for "Outstanding Choreography."

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