

**PLAYWRIGHTS FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES
PLAYWRIGHT LINEUP FOR 45th ANNUAL
BAY AREA PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL
July 29 – August 7, 2022**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (16 May 2022) — **Playwrights Foundation**, the West Coast’s premier launchpad for exceptional new plays and playwrights, has announced its lineup for the 45th Annual **Bay Area Playwrights Festival (BAPF)** which will be presented as a hybrid (in-person and streamed) festival **July 29 - August 7, 2022**. Selected from 240 applicants via a committee process with 150 readers (the majority of whom are also playwrights), five powerful plays by five exciting new voices will receive public readings and workshops in this year’s festival. Tickets to attend or stream the readings, priced on a sliding scale, will be available in July. For more information the public may visit playwrightsfoundation.org or call **415-626-2176**.

Spotlighting the power of human connection, the works include an intimate drama of luminous personal revolution between siblings; a taut, biting comedy about a Black female screenwriter facing plagiarism claims from a White male author; a poetic and silence-shattering exploration of love, caregiving, and illness in a community of lesbian elders; a witty deep dive into resilience, belonging, and the yearning for second chances among a trio of strangers from different cultures set in the American South; and a boldly theatrical bilingual family drama about a millennial healthcare worker and three generations of unbreakable bonds.

The playwrights represented this year are HBO and Shondaland screenwriter/playwright **Inda Craig-Galván**, award-winning novelist **Elana Dykewomon** who is writing her first play in her 70s, acclaimed Bay Area performer and playwright **Denmo Ibrahim**, multitalented writer/director/actor **Iraisa Ann Reilly**, and award-winning director/playwright **Sharifa Yasmin**.

Building on the success of the previous two online festivals, Playwrights Foundation will launch an innovative hybrid structure for the 2022 BAPF, including virtual and in-person reading presentations. The festival is scheduled to welcome in-person audiences over two weekends at Potrero Stage in San Francisco, CA and to live stream readings online during its second weekend only, allowing audiences around the globe to experience exhilarating new work by emerging theater artists.

Of the five festival scripts, three plays are scheduled to be read live onstage by actors, and two plays will be offered as digital workshops presented to Potrero Stage audiences on screen via watch parties. This combination of physical and virtual processes provides the opportunity for artists to enjoy the most agency and freedom possible, transforming digital theatre necessities of the pandemic into a springboard for ongoing innovation. Three playwrights have chosen to gather intimately with collaborators for energized in-person explorations, while digital processes will allow the other two playwrights to break geographic boundaries as well as offering additional safety for high-risk practitioners as they build their artistic teams. **All plays will invite in-person audiences to gather at Potrero Stage for both festival weekends and all plays will also live stream online to viewers at home the second weekend.** Additional engagement conversations and artistic events will be announced at a later date.

“We celebrate the 45th Bay Area Playwrights Festival and its impactful legacy over the years with our most ambitious festival to date. Producing online theatre these past few years has elevated access across the world, and we are dedicated to building a future of hybrid programming for greater inclusivity of both playwrights’ and audiences’ needs,” Said Executive Artistic Director, **Jessica Bird Beza**, “We can’t wait to uplift this powerful cohort of five playwrights and their new plays about resilience, unbreakable bonds, honesty, love, and the life-changing moments that snap us into deep relationship with others. In a different way, each script illuminates the power of human connection.”

Bay Area Playwrights Festival is one of the oldest and most successful new play festivals for new works in their early stages. Established in 1976 by acclaimed director Robert Woodruff and now led by Executive Artistic Director **Jessica Bird Beza**, the festival has built a stellar reputation for uplifting original and distinctive new voices in the theater, investing in the development of their work, and launching storied careers. Among the first writers developed at the inaugural BAPF was the young Sam Shepard. Since then, more than 500 prize-winning, nationally significant playwrights have received their first professional experience at the BAPF. Among the American theater’s brightest voices who are alumni of the festival are Pulitzer Prize winners Sam Shepard, Nilo Cruz, Jackie Sibblies Drury, Paula Vogel, and Annie Baker; MacArthur Award winner Anna Deavere Smith; Tony Award winner David Henry Hwang; and acclaimed playwrights Lauren Gunderson, Rajiv Joseph, Katori Hall, Christopher Chen, Lauren Yee, and Marcus Gardley. BAPF’s ongoing success in supporting and amplifying exceptional, newly emerging writers and launching their ground-breaking new work

is its enduring legacy.

In addition to the selected playwrights, Playwrights Foundation is announcing five honorable mention plays from the Finalist list: *Cercle Hermaphroditos* by Shualee Cook, *Black Girl Joy* by Phanesia Pharel, *Morbid Obesity Surprise Intervention Birthday Party* by Amy Gijbers van Wijk, *Brown Face* by Carissa Atallah, and *Berlindia!* by Daniel Holzman. “Our dedicated community of national and local Bay Area readers are such passionate advocates of the plays we read, they’ve challenged us to live up to our Purpose, Vision, and Values of championing more writers we love on a national level.” says Literary Manager **Heather Helinsky**. “Honorable Mention writers are offered one-on-one literary consultation and will be featured at the festival. These five Honorable Mention writers have highly theatrical stories and strong voices with compelling stories of trans history and community, a ritual healing plays for black girls, characters navigating identity politics in Spoken Word poetry, Bay Area siblings wandering around strange new worlds, and body positive empowerment.”

In June 2022, Playwrights Foundation will open new applications for playwrights interested in consideration for the 46th Bay Area Playwrights Festival in 2023. This new timeline, a departure from the organization's legacy schedule of a Fall application window, will allow for more space in the review, selection, and producing process. Interested playwrights can check Playwrights Foundation’s website on June 1st for more details on exact requirements and application deadlines.

The Festival lineup is as follows:

A Jumping-Off Point By **Inda Craig-Galván**

As a superstar Black female writer on the Hollywood fast track, Leslie's career dreams are on the cusp of coming true. When her White former classmate Andrew shows up and cries plagiarism, their confrontation becomes a lively reckoning on representation, privilege, and who gets to tell what story in this taut, biting comedy. Can anyone be justified in masking another human being’s voice when correcting a wrong?

Inda Craig-Galván’s (she/her) work often explores conflicts and politics within the African-American community, with plays that are grounded in reality with a touch of magical realism that plays with time and memories. Produced plays include *Black Super Hero Magic Mama* (Geffen Playhouse, Los Angeles) and *I Go Somewhere Else* (Playwrights' Arena, Los Angeles); *The Great Jheri Curl Debate* will have its world premiere at East West Players (Los Angeles) in the Fall of 2022. Craig-Galván is the recipient of the Kesselring Prize,

Jeffrey Melnick New Playwright Award, Blue Ink Playwriting Prize, Jane Chambers Student Award for Feminist Playwriting, and Stage Raw Best Playwright Award. Her plays have been included on the Kilroys List and Steppenwolf Theatre's The Mix. Craig-Galván holds an MFA in Theatre from University of Southern California.

How To Let Your Lover Die

By Elana Dykewomon

When Susan is diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia in her 70s, her lover Mich must find her own way to let go. Surrounded by a chorus of lesbian elders, the couple lives out their relationship from courtship to final goodbye in a poetic journey through past and present. Spiritual and political urgency meet intimate connection in this silence-shattering story of caregiving, community, and honoring the requests of the dying.

Elana Dykewomon (she/her) is a long-time social justice activist, editor and teacher in Oakland, CA. She's published eight award-winning books foregrounding Lesbian heroism, including the Lambda-winning *Beyond the Pale*, and received the 2018 Lee Lynch Classic Award for her first novel *Riverfinger Women* (1974). Most recently, she co-edited with Judith Katz "To Be a Jewish Dyke in the 21st Century," a Sinister Wisdom special issue. Her play is about love, dementia, right to die, caretaking and community, and honoring her late spouse, Susan Levinkind.

An Arab Spring

By Denmo Ibrahim

When they receive news that their estranged father Sami is dead, a fractured family is forced to confront years of pain in this luminously honest story. As siblings Heba and Haroon return to their childhood home in Fremont to bury a man they hardly knew, they face an uprising of secrets and lies in a struggle for truth. As Sami's spirit hovers between worlds, can grief act as a revolution for love?

Denmo Ibrahim (she/her) is an American playwright, children's book author, and actor of Egyptian descent. Her recently released audio-immersive book *Zaynab's Night of Destiny* (Fons Vitae, Commonwealth Theatre Center) will engage thousands of elementary and middle school students throughout 25 public schools in Louisville, KY in 2022. Her plays include the hybrid experience *Brilliant Mind* at Marin Theatre Company, *BABA* at Alter Theatre, *Ecstasy / A Waterfable* at Golden Thread, *The Day Naguib Mahfouz Was Stabbed In The Neck And Almost Died a.k.a. The Selkie Play* (Finalist: Sundance Theatre Lab, Finalist: NNPN's Showcase of New Plays). Her work is currently in development with The Civilians' R&D Group (*Untitled: Little Palestine*), The Ground Floor at Berkeley Repertory Theatre (*The Dream Fugue of May Ziyadeh*), and Audible for a new ten-part historical drama on the life of Hatshepsut. Ibrahim holds an MFA in Lecoq-based Actor Created Physical Theater from Naropa University and a BFA in Acting from Boston University.

Saturday Mourning Cartoons

By Iraisia Ann Reilly

While mourning the death of their younger brother Marty, Jessica and Benny find themselves divided on the choice of putting their abuela, Yolanda, in a nursing home. When social distancing forces them to visit only from outside of her window, the millennial siblings must confront the pains of their past to heal their own

shattered relationship across chasms of belief, the isolation of loss, and the complexity of parental expectations. This imaginatively poetic family drama dives deep into mourning and healing across three generations of unbreakable bonds.

Iraisa Ann Reilly (she/ella) is a Jersey-born artist passionate about bilingual stories. Select full-length plays include *Good Cuban Girls* (Teatro del Sol, at The Arden Theatre), *The Jersey Devil is a Papi Chulo* (Yale Drama Series Shortlist 2022, KCACTF) *Madame Anastasia's Crystal Ball* (Semifinalist, Bay Area Playwright's Festival 2021), *One Day Old* (Philadelphia Fringe, New York Classical Theatre Finalist, Rorschach Theatre Finalist), and *A Beginner's Guide to Interpreting Aphasia* (writer/performer, Philadelphia's SoLow Fest). Her work has been developed with Theatre Exile, The New Harmony Project, The Chain Theatre, and The Latinx Playwright's Circle. Reilly is a Yes and Laughter Lab Finalist (2022), and was semifinalist for the Page 73 Fellowship (2019). As a Development Studio Fellow with NYU'S Production Lab, Reilly wrote her original screenplay, *La Reina Del Bronx* (Winner, Fusion Film Festival, 2022). MFA in Dramatic Writing, NYU, BA Theatre and English University of Notre Dame.

Close to Home

By Sharifa Yasmin

Three southerners explore whether the second chances they are desperately seeking might be found with one another. Witty and resilient teenage trans femme Zara, rough-edged builder Colt, and protective Muslim immigrant Kaysar are each on their own journeys through landscapes of hope, survival, trauma, and the persistent call of joy. When their paths intertwine, new possibilities emerge for what the trio might mean to each other in this fresh, deeply felt comedic drama about belonging.

Sharifa Yasmin (she/her) is a trans Egyptian-American director and playwright. She has completed directing fellowships with The Drama League, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Manhattan Theatre Club, Geva Theatre, and is a Eugene O'Neill national directing fellow. Sharifa's favorite directing projects include *The War Boys* (Hangar Theater), *3:59AM* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *In the Blood* (Duende Productions), *Mosque4Mosque* (National Queer Theatre) and *Beirut* (Brown/Trinity Rep). Sharifa's playwriting focuses on the intersection of Queer and Arab identities. Her plays have been produced with Uprising Theatre, Amphibian Stage, Trans Theatre Fest, Mirrorbox Theatre, Women's Theatre Festival, taught at DePaul, Susquehanna, and Kansas Universities, and published in The Methuen Drama Book of Trans Plays. Yasmin was honored as the inaugural recipient of the SCDF Barbara Whitman Award in 2021. She currently serves as a member of The Drama League's Directors Council, and is completing her MFA in Directing with Brown/Trinity Rep.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **Playwrights Foundation**, the West Coast's premiere launchpad for exceptional plays and playwrights, has announced the lineup for the 45th annual **Bay Area Playwrights Festival** (BAPF). The five new plays include an intimate drama of luminous personal revolution between siblings; a taut, biting comedy about a

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WHEN: **Friday, July 29 – August, 7, 2022**

WHERE: **Friday, July 29 – August, 7, 2022**
In-person at Potrero Stage, 1695 18th St, San Francisco, CA

Friday, August 5 – August 7, 2022
Streaming will also be available these dates. Patrons who purchase a ticket will be emailed links to stream the programs at home on their computer, SmartTV, or other device.

TICKETS: Tickets (priced on a sliding scale) for the festival will be available in July at **www.playwrightsfoundation.org**.

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PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/2022BAPF>