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Playwrights  
Foundation

PRESENTS

# BAY AREA PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL 2020

5 NEW WORKS

5 PLAYWRIGHTS

JULY 17-26

[playwrightsfoundation.org](http://playwrightsfoundation.org)

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# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

## Friday, July 17, 2020

5PM ..... *Mingus*

## Saturday, July 18, 2020

12PM ..... *To Saints and Stars*

5PM ..... *Derecho*

## Sunday, July 19, 2020

12PM ..... *Babes in Ho-lland*

5PM ..... *Final Boarding Call*

## Wednesday, July 22, 2020

5PM ..... *BAPF Playwright Panel*

## Friday, July 24, 2020

5PM ..... *Babes in Ho-lland*

## Saturday July 25, 2020

10AM ..... *Decolonizing New Play  
Development Panel*

12PM ..... *Derecho*

5PM ..... *Final Boarding Call*

## Sunday, July 26, 2020

12PM ..... *Mingus*

5PM ..... *To Saints and Stars*

ALL READINGS AND EVENTS ARE PACIFIC  
STANDARD TIME ONLINE THIS YEAR.  
Click on the readings above to learn more



**Playwrights  
Foundation**

Playwrights Foundation  
1616 16th St, Suite 350  
San Francisco CA 94103  
415.626.2176  
playwrightsfoundation.org



Dear National Community of New Play Lovers,

2020 has been a year that none of us could have predicted, with the cancellation of our beloved artform. However, it has also been a time to reflect, to call out and fight injustice, to innovate, and to take advantage of opportunities that we have never had before because there is no other choice.

This historical Festival is an opportunity. We are gathering across the country and world to support the development of these five new plays in a way that has never been possible before. The opportunity to support the playwrights' needs and gather artists from the West to East Coast all the way to Hong Kong and Taiwan would not have been possible if we weren't forced to innovate our artform. The opportunity for wider access with sliding scale tickets and higher audience capacity will bring family, friends, and over 250 theatre professionals from all across the country to discover these new voices.

Our playwrights this year, Tyler, Jordan, Noelle, Deneen, and Stefani, are writing about revolution, desire, hope, and loss. For some, at a risk of their safety, and all with courage and honesty. At our retreat, where each playwright reads their own play, someone said "I can't stop thinking about how much revolution costs everyone." Right now, we are in a revolution, and what will it cost us?

At Playwrights Foundation, we are committed to being a part of the change. We have an opportunity to rebuild a more equitable and just organization. This year has laid bare the depth of injustice that is not only within our country's systems but our field at large. There is a movement across the country and collective action being taken within our own Bay Area Community. We have to rebuild anyway, and we have the choice as to what that will look like. We invite you as audience members, donors, and theatre professionals to join us on that journey towards fighting racism within our systems, policies, and hearts.

During my first Festival at Playwrights Foundation, we have the opportunity to develop community differently this summer, and I look forward to having you engage in unique ways. Thank you for joining us and being a part of the story of BAPF2020.

Warmly,

*Jessica Bird Beza*  
Jessica Bird Beza,  
Executive Artistic Director

**About Playwrights Foundation:** Playwrights Foundation was founded in 1976 and is today widely recognized as one of the top organizations in the country dedicated to the creative development and career acceleration of local and national playwrights. Our mission is to support and champion a diverse and inclusive range of contemporary playwrights in the creation of new works to sustain theatre as a vital, dynamic art form. Our primary artistic goals are:

- to provide a home that supports, encourages and advances the creative process of contemporary playmaking,
- to elevate the role of the playwright as a 21st-century storyteller,
- to feed the tributaries and rivers of the American theatre in the Bay Area and beyond.

For over 40 years, Playwrights Foundation has served over 500 exceptionally gifted emerging and mid-career writers as they reach for national prominence. Focusing on cultural diversity, and geographic and gender parity, we seek to identify exceptional writers and give them the space, time, and professional artistic collaborators they need to explore new theatrical ideas and take risks with structure, form, and content in a supportive, rigorous environment. The only non-producing playwright support organization of its size and scope on the West Coast, the Foundation has been lauded for its programmatic excellence. Our programs include:

- the Bay Area Playwrights Festival,
- the Resident Playwrights Initiative, providing an array of resources for ten Bay Area playwrights over a four-year term, as they individually advance their professional playwriting careers,
- the Producing Partners Initiative, which allows us to leverage relationships and form ongoing partnerships with producers to advance new work to full production,
- a mentorship program which provides training and experience to young artists and arts administrators.

Discovered early in their careers, our program alumni include some of the most prominent names in contemporary theatre, including Sam Shepard, David Henry Hwang, Nilo Cruz, Anna Deavere Smith, Paula Vogel, Marcus Gardley, Annie Baker, and Naomi Iizuka. Recent alumni have won four consecutive Will Glickman Awards, multiple American Theatre Critics Association awards, a MacArthur Genius grant, and a Pulitzer Prize, among other recognition. Katori Hall and Rajiv Joseph premiered work developed at Playwrights Foundation on Broadway. These artists exemplify just a few of the many successful beneficiaries of our organization's work.

**Submissions for 2021 Open September 7:** Each year through our Open Application Process, the PF Literary Team and Festival Literary Council select plays for the Festival from approximately 700 submissions. We encourage emerging and mid career writers of all ages to apply. Select writers will also be considered for other PF programs by invitation. These opportunities include the Rough Readings Series, Producing Partnership and Commissioning program. Bay Area based playwrights are eligible for the Resident Playwrights Initiative and will be invited to apply upon review.

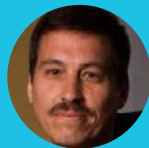
## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### ***The House of the Negro Insane* by Terence Anthony** BAPF 2019



Slated to premiere this month at the Contemporary American Theatre Festival. Due to COVID-19, the production was cancelled but the production team has continued working toward staging the production for 2021. See sneak peeks on July 25 at CATF Unmuted.

### ***When Lighting the Voids* by Jon Bernson** BAPF 2018



Premiered in New Orleans at Dillard University with Storyworks Theatre in December, 2019. After that, the play was developed into an audio drama on the Reveal podcast. Listen now on Spotify.

### ***The Daughters* by Patricia Cotter** BAPF 2018



Premiered at San Francisco Playhouse's Sandbox Series in 2019.

### ***FLEX* by Candrice Jones** BAPF 2019



Slated to premiere in 2020 as part of the Humana Festival. Was cancelled due to COVID-19, and the play is still looking for a home for its world premiere.

### ***We Swim, We Talk, We Go To War* by Mona Mansour** BAPF 2017



Premiered at Golden Thread Productions in 2018.

### ***how to make an American Son* by christopher oscar peña** BAPF 2019

Was set for a premiere co-produced by Arizona Theatre Company and Rattlestick Theater in NYC in February, 2021. Due to COVID-19, the premiere will be pushed to Summer, 2021. Get more information at the Arizona Theatre Company's website.



### ***House of Joy* by Madhuri Shekar** BAPF 2018



World premiere at California Shakespeare Theater in Summer, 2019 in partnership with Playwrights Foundation. Second production at San Diego Repertory Theatre in March, 2020.

RESIDENT PLAYWRIGHTS: Victoria Chong Der, Megan Cohen, Star Finch, Bennett Fisher, Nick Mwaluko, Michael Gene Sullivan, Noelle Viñas, Dan Wolf

RESIDENT PLAYWRIGHTS ALUMNI: Jon Bernson, Erin Bregman, Gamal Chasten, Eugenie Chan, Chris Chen, Patricia Cotter, Garret Groenveld, Dipika Guha, Lauren Gunderson, Chinaka Hodge, Julia Jarcho, Min Kahng, Aaron Loeb, Lisa Ramirez, Geetha Reddy, Kate E. Ryan, Andrew Saito, Tanya Shaffer, Betty Shamieh, Jonathan Spector, E. Hunter Spreen, Peter Sinn Nachtrieb, Brian Thorstenson, Marisela Treviño Orta

BAPF 2020 FELLOWSHIP COHORTS: Isabella Benning *University of Maryland, College Park* • Hailee Foster - *Linfield University* • Kathryn Gubler - *Saint Mary's College of California* • Lucas Nash • Chelsy Ricanor - *Hult International Business School* • Isabelle Smith - *University of California Los Angeles* • Emily Zhou - *University of Maryland, College Park*

*"Theory isn't just theory to me. I have to live this 'non-human' life." Before I had even written that line, that was the thesis of the play to me. While I believe that theory is important to imagine and map out a revolutionary way of being, the "being" is what is most urgent. As a student myself, I was struck by the hypocrisy that I saw in the academy especially when it came to the interpersonal relationships between Black men and women.*

— Tyler English-Beckwith



# MINGUS

by Tyler English-Beckwith

## CAST

B: **Emma Van Lare** (she/her)\*

Harrison: **Adrian Roberts** (he/him)\*

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association. This theater operates under an agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## CREATIVE TEAM

Director: **Margo Hall** (she/her)

Dramaturg: **Lindsay A. Jenkins** (she/her)

Production Assistant: **Gracie Brakeman** (she/her)

Fellow Assistants: **Isabelle Smith** (she/her), **Hailee Foster** (she/her)

Content Expert: **Tammy Hall** (she/her)

## PERFORMANCES

Friday, July 17, 2020 | 5PM PST

Sunday, July 26, 2020 | 12PM PST

## PRODUCER Anonymous

## PLAYWRIGHT

**Tyler English-Beckwith** (she/her) is a recent graduate of the Dramatic Writing MFA program at NYU. She holds a B.A. in African and African Diaspora Studies as well as a B.A. in Theater and Dance from The University of Texas at Austin. Originally from Dallas, Texas, Tyler currently resides in Brooklyn, NY. Her plays include *Mingus* for which she received the 2018 KCACTF Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, was a 2019 O'Neill National Playwrights Conference finalist, and was a finalist for the 2018 Goldberg Playwriting Prize. Her play *TWENTYEIGHT* received a world premiere in 2017 at The Vortex in Austin, Texas where it received Honorable Mention on *The Austin Chronicle's* Top Ten Plays of 2017. She is currently a member of Page 73's 2020 Interstate 73 Writers Group. Tyler recently wrote, co-directed and starred in a series of afro-futurist short films for Meow Wolf's narrative chapter, "The Rift" which can be seen online at [meowwolf.com](http://meowwolf.com) and in their flagship exhibit House of Eternal Return in Santa Fe, NM. Tyler hopes to create worlds, in her writing, where black women live beyond the basic means of survival and have the audacity to be autonomous.

# TO SAINTS AND STARS

by Jordan Ramirez Puckett

## CAST

Sofía Wilson: **Sarita Ocón** (she/her)\*

Zoe Cardenas: **Rosie Hallett** (she/her)\*

Ken Roberts: **Eddie Ewell** (he/him)\*

John Cardenas: **Christopher Salazar** (he/him)\*

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association. This theater operates under an agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## CREATIVE TEAM

Director: **Jessica Bird Beza** (she/her)

Dramaturg: **Divinia Shorter** (she/her)

Production Assistant: **Sabrina Sonner** (they/them)

Fellow Assistant: **Kathryn Gubler** (she/her)

Content Experts: **Scott Hubbard** (he/him), **Phyllis Whittlesey** (she/her)

## PERFORMANCES

Saturday, July 18, 2020 | 12PM PST

Sunday, July 26, 2020 | 5PM PST

**PRODUCER** Kathy Roberts

## PLAYWRIGHT

**Jordan Ramirez Puckett** (she/her) is a Chicana playwright and lighting designer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She often writes about being caught between two identities and our intrinsic desire for human connection, no matter how brief. She recently participated in the 2018-2019 Playwrights Realm Scratchpad Series. Her work has also been produced and/or developed by 2Cents Theatre Group, Abingdon Theatre Company, Custom Made Theatre Co., Goodman Theatre, Harold Clurman Laboratory Theatre Company, Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, National Winter Playwrights Retreat, Playwrights Center of San Francisco, San Diego REP, San Francisco Playhouse, among others. She is a graduate of Northwestern University and the former Associate Artistic Director at San Francisco Playhouse. She is currently pursuing her MFA in playwriting at Ohio University.





*I'm at a time in my life where a lot of my female friends are having children, while I have been putting my career first. So I wanted to write a play that bridges the gap, that honors all of the amazing women in my life regardless of what path they choose. I hope that in this world of self-quarantining, *To Saints and Stars* inspires audiences to reach out to old friends and loved ones that maybe they haven't spoken to in a while."*

— Jordan Ramirez Puckett



*In some ways, Derecho in its first iteration was built to specifically serve a purpose: a play that could potentially educate a regional theater audience that Latinidad is not a monolith. We're all very different in our politics, our languages, our nationalities and therefore will never be predictable or something that can get put in a box. I also wanted to give voice to what it is to be bicultural and feel pulled by all these different communities that make you feel at home.*

— Noelle Viñas

# DERECHO

by Noelle Viñas

## CAST

Eugenia Silva: **Sarah Nina Hayon** (she/her)\*  
Mercedes Silva: **Alejandra Escalante** (she/her)\*  
Gabe Diaz: **Rodney Gardiner** (he/him)\*  
José Portillo: **Francisco Arcilla** (he/him)  
Soledad Portillo: **Regina Morones** (she/her)  
Jeff Reavis: **Max Forman-Mullin** (he/him)\*

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association. This theater operates under an agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## CREATIVE TEAM

Director: **Nicholas C. Avila** (he/him)<sup>o</sup>  
Dramaturg: **Laura Brueckner** (she/her)  
Production Assistant: **Ariana Johnson** (she/her)  
Fellow Assistant: **Isabella Benning** (she/her)  
Content Expert: Delegate **Elizabeth Guzmán** (she/her)

<sup>o</sup> Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

## PERFORMANCES

**Saturday, July 18, 2020 | 5PM PST**  
**Saturday July 25, 2020 | 12PM PST**

**PRODUCER** Linda K. Brewer

## PLAYWRIGHT

**Noelle Viñas** (she/her) is a playwright, educator, and theater-artist from Springfield, Virginia and Montevideo, Uruguay. She is a resident playwright at Playwrights Foundation, was a 2019 Djerassi Resident Artist, and is an Emerson College alumna. Derecho won the John Gassner Playwriting Award, was a 2019 Jane Chambers Award Honorable Mention, along with being a Semi-Finalist for both the Playwrights Realm Writing Fellowship and the 2019 Primary Stages Staged Reading Series. She currently resides in Brooklyn, where she is an MFA Playwriting candidate at Brooklyn College under Erin Courtney and is a proud member of the NYC Latinx Playwrights Circle.

# BABES IN HO-LLAND

by Deneen Reynolds-Knott

## CAST

Ciara: **Afua Busia** (she/they)\*

Kat: **Sarah Traisman** (she/they)\*

Taryn: **Summer Brown** (she/her)\*

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association. This theater operates under an agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## CREATIVE TEAM

Director: **Dawn Monique Williams** (she/her)<sup>°</sup>

Dramaturg: **Leigh Rondon-Davis** (they/them)

Production Assistant: **Ariella Wolfe** (she/her)

Fellow Assistant: **Chelsy Ricanor** (she/her)

Content Experts: **Sherrice Mojgani** (she/her), **Nikki Chery** (she/her)

<sup>°</sup> Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

## PERFORMANCES

**Sunday, July 19, 2020 | 12PM PST**

**Friday, July 24, 2020 | 5PM PST**

**PRODUCER William J. Gregory**

## PLAYWRIGHT

**Deneen Reynolds-Knott** (she/her) is a member of Clubbed Thumb's 2019-2020 Early-Career Writers' Group and received a finalist grant from their 2018 Open-Application Commission. She is a New Georges affiliated artist and has developed work with Liberation Theatre Company's Writing Residency, Project Y's Playwrights Group, Rising Circle's INKtank Development Lab and Frank Silvera Workshop's 3in3 Playwright Residency. Her full-length play, *BATON*, was selected for the 2018 Premiere Play Festival and received a workshop reading at Premiere Stages, the 2017 Playfest at the Orlando Shakespeare Company, and was a finalist for the 2017 PlayPenn and Bay Area Playwrights conferences. Deneen's play, *ANTEPARTUM*, was presented at the 2020 Fire This Time Festival as part of their signature ten-minute play program. She received her MFA in film from Columbia University.



*When my niece began her college search, I reflected on my own college experience as a young black woman on a predominantly white campus in the 90s: sharing a small room with a stranger, meeting someone new and spending every free moment with them, angry white girls with dark lipstick and combat boots, professors making little attempt to know their students. Writing *Babes in Holland*, I imagined two young black women, meeting just in time to create a sanctuary for each other.*

— Deneen Reynolds-Knott

*The anti-extradition movement in Hong Kong had been going on for two or three months when a friend of mine asked, "are you writing a play about Hong Kong?" I said I wasn't -- why would I want to capitalize on my city's pain? But then he said, "if you don't, some white British guy who has never been to Hong Kong will, you'll try to defend yourself, but have no play to do it with." And that's when I realized I had the voice and responsibility to tell a (not the) story about Hong Kong because it is important, not just to me or my city, but to the rest of the world, which is affected by it whether they realise it or not.*

— Stefani Kuo 郭佳怡



# FINAL BOARDING CALL

by Stefani Kuo 郭佳怡

## CAST

Christina Ho: **Sarah Lo** (she/her)  
Godfrey Kwok: **Will Dao** (he/him)\*  
Feng Xiao Feng: **Ya Han Chang** (she/her)\*  
Ting-ting Ho: **Terrence** (he/him)  
Lucy Wang: **Monica** (she/her)\*  
Marc Olberg: **Victor Talmadge** (he/him)\*  
Ravichandran Chopra: **Dean Koya** (he/him)

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association. This theater operates under an agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## CREATIVE TEAM

Director: **Desdemona Chiang** (she/her)<sup>o</sup>  
Dramaturg: **Heather Helinsky** (she/her)  
Production Assistant: **Miranda Campbell** (she/they)  
Language Consultant: **Crystal Lee** (she/her)  
Fellow Assistant: **Emily Zhou** (she/her)\*

<sup>o</sup> Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

## PERFORMANCES

**Sunday, July 19, 2020 | 5PM PST**  
**Saturday, July 25, 2020 | 5PM PST**

**PRODUCERS** Jean & Fergus Bordewich

## PLAYWRIGHT

**Stefani Kuo (郭佳怡)** (she/her) is a playwright/performer and native of Hong Kong and Taiwan. She received her B.A. from Yale and is an MFA Playwriting Candidate at the Yale School of Drama. Fluent in Cantonese, Mandarin, French, and English, she is interested in crafting multicultural, multilingual narratives for an international audience. She has been an awardee of the Jerome Fellowship at PWC, finalist for the National Playwrights Conference, Jerome fellowship at Lanesboro Arts Centre, Many Voices Fellowship at PWC, SPACE on Ryder Farm, Van Lier New Voices Fellowship, NAP Series, DVRF Playwrights' Program, BRIC Lab, semi-finalist for the Page 73 Playwriting Fellowship, Princess Grace Fellowship, Ground Floor at Berkeley Rep. She is represented as a playwright by Kevin Lin at CAA and Jacob Epstein at Lighthouse Management. For more on Hong Kong - [www.parachutehongkonger.wordpress.com](http://www.parachutehongkonger.wordpress.com).

## MINGUS

**MARGO HALL** (director, she/her) Actor/director/educator that has performed and directed in theaters throughout the Bay Area. Recent directing credits: *How I Learned What I Learned* for MTC, *BARBECUE*, (which she also starred in) *Red Velvet*, and *The Story* for SF Playhouse. *Brownsville Song*, *B-Side for Tray*, and *Bulrushes* with Ellen Sebastian Chang for Shotgun Players. She is a founding member of Campo Santo, where directing credits include *Mission Indians* with Nancy Benjamin, *The Trail of Her Inner Thigh* with Rhodessa Jones, *Hotel Angulo*, and *Simpatico*. Other credit: *Thurgood* for LHT, and *Friend of my Youth* and *Sonny's Blues* for Word for Word. Chabot College: *Fabulation*, *Hamlet Blood in the Brain*, *The Trojan Women*, *SPUNK*, *Ragtime*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Polaroid Stories* at UC Berkeley.

**Lindsay A. Jenkins** (dramaturg, she/her) is a dramaturg, educator and producer. L.J. holds a Masters of Arts degree in Theatre from CalState Northridge. Her specific area of research is Black performance heritage, connecting past performances to contemporary experiences. Currently, L.J. is developing a project that explores Afrocentric methods for putting research into the body. This summer, she is presenting a guided visualization to the City of Bones at the 2020 ATHE Post-Conference event: *Performing Black Futures*. L.J. is the founder of Maroon Arts and Culture, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowerment through arts education and cultural programming.

## TO SAINTS AND STARS

**JESSICA BIRD BEZA** (director, she/her) Please see biography on page 18.

**DIVINIA SHORTER** (dramaturg, she/her) Divinia Shorter is a born and raised DMV dramaturg and writer with a B.A. in Theatre from Towson University. Divinia was previously Playwrights Horizons' Literary Fellow, and is the Literary Associate at Adventure Theatre MTC. Dramaturgy credits include: DMV Q-Fest 2.0, Adventure Theatre MTC, Quarantined Theatre Company, and Towson University. A writer of many forms, she is currently working on a collection of sestinas, a novel, and a full length play. Her most recent article, "Run Me My Language", is available online through Playwrights Horizons' website.

## DERECHO

**NICHOLAS C. AVILA** (director, he/him) is very excited to be returning to Playwrights Foundation and honored to be participating in Jessica Bird Beza's first BAPF. Nicholas' previous BAPF experience was directing JC Lee's *Pookie Goes Grenading*, also having worked on other Playwrights Foundation projects including Noelle Viñas' *Derecho*. Nicholas has directed and/or developed plays at theatre's that include Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Denver Center, La Jolla Playhouse, The Chance Theater, and South Coast Repertory to name a few. Nicholas is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

**LAURA BRUECKNER** (dramaturg, she/her) is a Bay Area-based dramaturg specializing in world premieres. She's been honored to support the WPs of Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon's *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* and *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*, plus Jen Silverman's *Wink*, at MTC; Idris Goodwin's *The Way the Mountain Moved* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; and Christopher Chen's *A Tale of Autumn* and *The Late Wedding*, Dipika Guha's



*Mechanics of Love*, and Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig's [4:10] *Gone at Crowded Fire Theater*. She also has served as a researcher for branching-narrative video games, including James Cameron's *Titanic*. She believes that playwrights are superheroes.

Seven Devils, Hollins, and Jewish Plays Project. Amongst other credits, original dramaturg on JT Rogers' OSLO for PlayPenn. Training: M.F.A. in Dramaturgy, A.R.T./Moscow Art/Harvard ('07) and O'Neill National Critics Institute ('16). Board member for LMDA.

## FINAL BOARDING CALL

**DESDEMONA CHIANG** (director, she/her) is a stage director based in Seattle, WA and Ashland, OR. Directing credits include Guthrie Theater, Alley Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, People's Light Theatre Company, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, California Shakespeare Theater, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Playmakers Repertory Company, Studio Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, ACT Theatre Seattle, American Shakespeare Center, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Book-It Repertory, Aurora Theatre Company, Seattle Public Theatre, Crowded Fire, Playwrights Foundation, among others. Awards/Affiliations: Princess Grace Award, Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise, SDC Gielgud Fellowship, Drama League Fellowship. BA: UC Berkeley. MFA Directing: University of Washington.

**HEATHER HELINSKY** (dramaturg, she/her) is a freelance dramaturg based in Philadelphia and current Literary Manager for Playwrights Foundation. Fifteen years experience as a professional dramaturg, working with independently with 35-50 writers/year, focused on advocating for women/trans playwrights and BIPOC writers. She provides research, consultation, and workshops to playwrights, theater companies, and university programs. She's been a teaching artist for The Kennedy Center's ACTF for nine years. Summer 2020: also

## BABES IN HO-LLAND

**DAWN MONIQUE WILLIAMS** (director, she/her) is Associate Artistic Director at Aurora Theatre Company. Recent directing credits include: *The Piano Lesson*, *Bull in a China Shop*, *TiJean and His Brothers*, *Earthrise*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *By the Way*, *Meet Vera Stark*, *The Secretaries* (Willamette Week's Top 10 Portland Theatre Productions of 2018), *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Dawn's worked in theatres abroad and across the US; awards include a Princess Grace Theatre Fellowship, a TCG Leadership U Residency Grant, and a Drama League Directing Fellowship. Dawn is a proud member of SDC.

**LEIGH RONDON-DAVIS** (dramaturg, they/them) is a performer, visual artist, and dramaturg from both New York City and the Bay Area. They attended Wellesley College and was a member of Oakland's Laney College Fusion Theatre Project. Leigh has performed at number of local theaters, including: Cutting Ball, FaultLine, Curran, and Magic Theatre. They have also assistant directed and dramaturged at Shotgun Players, Ubuntu Theater Project, PlayGround, Aurora Theatre Company, Crowded Fire, and Magic Theatre. Leigh currently works for and is a Company Member at Ubuntu Theater Project and Shotgun Players, and is a staff member and Resident Artist at Crowded Fire Theater.

## PLAYWRIGHTS FOUNDATION STAFF

**MICHELLE BANK** (public engagement manager, she/her) is a Bay Area based theater artist. She frequently works on productions around the Bay Area as a Stage Manager or Assistant Stage Manager. She is thrilled to continue to work on the Bay Area Playwrights Festival for the third time, after beginning as an intern on BAPF2018. She has a dual degree in English and Theater Arts from the University of Puget Sound.

**KIERAN BECCIA** (associate literary manager, they/them) Kieran is a Bay Area director, producer, and dramaturg focused on devised performance and development of new work. Recent favorite directing credits include *Sarafael* (The Forum/Ubuntu Theater Project), *An Invitation Out* (Quantum Dragon Theater), *Where the Boys Are* (FaultLine Theater), and *Pains of Youth* (independently produced). They have assistant-directed at many theatres throughout the Bay Area and currently serve as the Associate Literary Manager for the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. They are a TITAN Award winner, a two-time CA\$H Grant recipient, a company member at the Ubuntu Theater Project, and a founding member of The Forum.

**JESSICA BIRD BEZA** (executive artistic director, she/her) has served as Executive Artistic Director since October 2019 and held leadership positions at the following organizations: The Old Globe, La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego REP, and Mo'olelo. Jessica is committed to community-building, fostering diverse artists, and advancing the new play field. She was the Associate Director on the Tony Award-winning new musical *Come From Away* and developed new

work at Theatreworks Silicon Valley, American Conservatory Theatre, The Old Globe, La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego REP, Diversionsary Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Ford's Theatre, among others. M.A. in Nonprofit Leadership and Management: USD. [www.jessicabird.net](http://www.jessicabird.net)

**ANDREW CUSTER** (design consultant, he/him) is excited to be returning to the Playwrights Festival for his 8th year, though in a new capacity. His lighting design credits include *Sail Away* and *The Boys from Syracuse* (42nd St. Moon), *The Turn of the Screw* (Dragon Productions), and *The Crucible* (Foothill Theatre Conservatory). Andrew also spent ten years at TheatreWorks and Opera San José as an electrician, carpenter and stagehand.

**LAUREN ENGLISH** (casting director she/her) is the resident casting director at Playwrights Foundation where she cast both the summer festival and rough reading series for three seasons. A founding member and Artistic Associate at San Francisco Playhouse, she works extensively in new works development. Recent directing credits include: *How the Baby Died* by Tori Keenan-Zelt (Bay Area Playwrights Festival) *Good Better Best Bested* by Jonathan Spector (Custom Made Theatre Company) *When Lighting The Voids* by Jon Bernson (Bay Area Playwrights Festival). *Non-Player Character* by Walt McGough, *Zenith* by Kirsten Greenidge, *123* by Lila Rose Kaplan and *Significant Other* by Joshua Harmon (SF Playhouse). MFA from NYU Graduate Acting. For more information go to [www.laurenenglish.net](http://www.laurenenglish.net).

**HEATHER HELINSKY** (literary manager, she/her) Please see biography on page 17.

**DAVID HYRY & ASSOCIATES** (publicist, he/him) has represented hundreds of artists for thousands of performances at theaters ranging from the intimate Marsh and Magic Theatre venues to American Conservatory Theater and the Palace of Fine Arts. David has specialized in the launching and positioning of performing artists, composers, choreographers, organizations and festivals, with public relations, media planning, marketing, and advertising. DH&A has represented a range of artists and organizations including Bill Irwin, Spalding Gray, Rinde Eckert, Whoopi Goldberg, Diamanda Galas, Anne Bogart, Karole Armitage, La La La, Paul Dresner, George Coates Performance Works, Word for Word, BAM, Goethe-Institut, Italian Cultural Institute, Alliance Française, and Teatro Di Roma.

**LEANNA KEYES** (festival producer, she/her) is a multi-hyphenate theater professional. As a producer, she has pioneered systems for digital live events (performances, galas, graduations), with clients from Hawaii to Maine. As a playwright, her plays have been produced at theaters and studied at colleges around the country (recent: Doctor Voynich and Her Children at Uprising Theatre Co). She is a co-editor and contributor for The Methuen Drama Book of Trans Plays, due out next year. Just don't ask her to be a dancer. No one wants to see that. Learn more about her plays and digital live events consulting business at [leannakeyes.com](http://leannakeyes.com).

**TESSA SAITO KING** (Operations Manager, she/her) After interning with the company on BAPF2017, Tessa joined the staff as Operations Manager in April, 2018. A playwright, and recent graduate from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, she is currently obtaining her MFA in Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media at Royal Central

School of Speech and Drama in London. She is looking forward to another amazing year with the Playwrights Foundation!

**DEN LEGASPI / Arc & Type Design** (graphic designer, "den") - extraordinary invention x daredevil design for nonprofits, artists, musicians, theater, music, performing and visual arts, small and local businesses, community organizations, and the LGBTQ+ community. Den has recently finished tenure as the Art Director of Cal Shakes and is the new incoming Art Director for TheatreWorks Silicon Valley. [ARCandTYPEdesign.com](http://ARCandTYPEdesign.com)

**JAYNE WENGER** (director of artistic process, she/her) is a director and dramaturg dedicated to the development of new works for the theatre. She is the past artistic director of the Bay Area Playwrights Festival and the Women's Ensemble of New York. Jayne is an alumna of Djerassi Resident Artists Program, a guest artist for the Last Frontier Theatre Conference, and a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, and the League of Professional Theatre Women.

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