

EXOTIC DEADLY: OR THE MSG PLAY



BY KEIKO GREEN

DIRECTED BY JESCA PRUDENCIO



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In Memoriam

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather belongs to the Ohlone people of past, present, and future, whose homelands extend from Big Sur to the San Francisco Bay Area. We recognize that every member of the Bay Area community has, and continues to benefit from, the use and occupation of this land. We recognize that the Ohlone people are alive and flourishing members of the Bay Area communities today. We are grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and learn on their land. Visit sfplayhouse.org/edi for more information.

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Costume Designer

Kris Wong

Lighting Designer

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WELCOME

Exotic Deadly or The MSG Play is one of those rare scripts that became a front-runner for season selection before I even finished reading it. The play was handed to me by Marie-Claire Erdynast, our associate artistic director, who saw the play in its Old Globe run in San Diego. Before I reached Page 10, I was laughing out loud and also startled by the unique, fresh voice



of playwright Keiko Green. *Exotic Deadly* is the coming-of-age story of a fifteen-year-old Japanese-American girl, told in format of a time-travelling odyssey, with a journey to the bottom of the psychic seas, and incorporating the style of Japanese anime. Wow!

If that already seems like enough for a captivating night at the theatre, Keiko has also seamlessly melded into Ami's journey a scathing indictment of the racism implicit in the scandal of MSG. Our protagonist's exposure to the "Chinese restaurant syndrome" and the bogus health issues illegitimately dumped on MSG (found in tomatoes and Doritos) is integrated in to the drama without preachiness or lecturing. Instead, we are led

to understand the outrageous racist scope of the MSG lies by being whisked on a madcap journey across continents and decades.

We also travel to the bottom of the sea, into the depression of Ami, and share her discovery that she is a part of generational suffering shared by her mother and grandfather. As she struggles to find out how and why she got there, she and we are led to understand the hurt and loneliness of cultural separateness through this lovely undersea metaphor. Led gently into empathy and understanding, we root for her to find her way up to the surface.

We are doubly honored to have not just Keiko here to work with us, but Jesca Prudencio, who directed the original production in San Diego. The two of them have taken what they learned from the first production and applied re-writes and ran a workshop with us so that the play could continue to grow and blossom. Ultimately, *Exotic Deadly* is about the power of a family to learn to accept each other's struggles and heal. They triumph through the courage to face their suffering and the miraculous power of meals shared together.

Bill English

Artistic Director

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to share stories that uplift spirits, deepen self-awareness, and nurture compassionate community. Our theater is an Empathy Gym where we come to practice our powers of compassion. Here, safe in the dark, we can risk sharing in the lives of the characters. We feel what they feel, fear what they fear, and love what they love, and as we walk through our doors we take with us greater powers of understanding to make our community a better place, one play at a time.

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE

BILL ENGLISH, Artistic Director, **SUSI DAMILANO**, Producing Director,
and **BETTY & CLIFFORD NAKAMOTO**, Executive Producers, present

EXOTIC DEADLY: OR THE MSG PLAY

By KEIKO GREEN

Directed by JESCA PRUDENCIO^o

Scenic Designer
HEATHER KENYON[^]

Costume Designer
KATHLEEN QIU

Lighting Designer
MICHAEL OESCH[^]

Sound Designer
JAMES ARD

Properties Designer
LAUREL ENOS

Wig Coordinator
AMBER LOUDERMILK

Fight Director
PHIL WONG

Intimacy Director
VICKI L. HOSKINS

Casting Director
R. RÉAL VARGAS ALANIS
Casting Collective

CAST

Actor 1ANA MING BOSTWICK-SINGER*
Actor 2FRANCESCA FERNANDEZ*
Actor 3 JAMES AARON OH
Actor 4NICOLE TUNG*
Actor 6PHIL WONG*
Actor 5EDRIC YOUNG

UNDERSTUDIES

Actor 5, Actor 6NICO JAOCHICO
Actor 4 DIAN SITIP MEECHAI
Actor 3 THOMAS NGUYEN
Actor 1, Actor 2 VIVIENNE TRUONG

Understudies never substitute for the listed performers unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance.

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Stage ManagerADA MAY*
Assistant Stage Manager.....KAYA LEHR-LOVE
Dresser ESHANI MOREIS
Deck Crew JUSTIN HAMMER
SAM HATTERSLEY

* 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.

^o The director is a member of the Stage Directors and
Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

[^] Member of United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 of the International
Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.



Exotic Deadly: Or The MSG Play received its world premiere
in 2023 at The Old Globe in San Diego, California.
Barry Edelstein, Erna Finci Viterbi Artistic Director
Timothy J. Shields, Audrey S. Geisel Managing Director

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director of Production	ANGELA KNUTSON
Technical Director	TISH LEUNG
Assistant Director	NICK ISHIMARU
Master Electrician	LIZ KRETER-KILLIAN
Audio Supervisor	JAMES ARD
Costume Director & Properties Coordinator	ALEX NOSEWORTHY
Production Coordinator	SARAH MARIE SELIG
Carpenters	QUINN BARRINGER JOSHUA GRAVES CONRAD HUBNER COLIN JOHNSON JOSHUA LIPPS JIM WILSON
Electricians	SHY BANIANI ARASHI CESANA TRAVIS CLARK COLIN JOHNSON MARGARET LINN NORI QUIST KRYSS SWAN BRENT WIRTH
Painters	KENZIE BRADLEY CAITLYN BROWN WYN DI STEFANO ALEXANDRIA XIONG
Sound Associates	ELLIOTT ORR
Lighting Designer Assistant	TRISTAN FABIUNKE
Light Board Programers	TAYLOR RIVERS KRYSS SWAN
Scenic Charge	CAYLA RAY-PERRY
Assistant Technical Director	ARIAN GRIMSRUD
Shop Carpenters	KEVIN O'SHAUGHNESSY YOUSSEF RIAHI
Assistant Costume Designer	TIFFANY CARTA
Costume Designer Assistant	ALIA DAVIS
Wardrobe Associate	CLAERY GRACE
Production Associate	JOEL MOORE

SPECIAL THANKS: Boba and San Diego Old Globe Theatre.

This performance lasts approximately 100 minutes with no intermission.
Any video and/or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

Performance Dates: January 30 to March 8, 2025

Playbill content current as of January 21, 2025

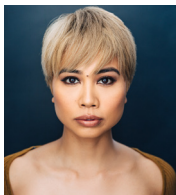
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BIOGRAPHIES



**ANA MING
BOSTWICK-SINGER**



**FRANCESCA
FERNANDEZ**



**NICO
JAOCHICO**



**DIAN SITIP
MEECHAI**



**THOMAS
NGUYEN**



**JAMES AARON
OH**



**PHIL
WONG**



**VIVIENNE
TRUONG**



**NICOLE
TUNG**



**EDRIC
YOUNG**

CAST

ANA MING BOSTWICK-SINGER*

Actor 1

Ana is excited to make her San Francisco Playhouse debut. She was last on stage as Ida in *Methusalem, or The Eternal Bourgeois* by Ivan Goll (The Actors' Gang) and Raelynn in *John Proctor is the Villain* by Kimberley Bellflower (South Coast Repertory, Ojai Playwrights Conference). She also played Hero in *Much Ado about Nothing* and Luciana in *The Comedy of Errors* as part of youth summer Shakespeare outreach program at The Actors' Gang. Ana earned a BA in dance from Sarah Lawrence College. Her film and television credits include *The Lincoln Lawyer* (Netflix), *General Hospital* (ABC), the currently in-production *Forelock*, and the leading role in the short film *Only Here and Now* by the writers of *Mulan*. She thanks her parents, Ray and Eugenia, and her boyfriend, Sawyer, for their love and support.

FRANCESCA FERNANDEZ*

Actor 2

Francesca is from the Bay Area and thrilled to make her San Francisco Playhouse debut. New York credits include *Smart* (Ensemble Studio Theatre), *...what the end will be* and *Jonah* (Roundabout Theatre), *Sex and the Abbey* (The Brick), *Marilla of Green Gables* (Royal Family Productions), *House of Telescopes* (Pipeline Theatre Company), *Gloria: A Life* (Daryl Roth Theatre), *Kenny's Tavern* (59E59), and *Love, Medea* (Center at Park West). Regional credits

include *Bald Sisters* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *The Good Person of Szechwan* (California Shakespeare Theater), *Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson - Apt. 2B* (Dorset Theatre Festival), *Twelfth Night* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre), *SYZYGY* (Two River Theatre), *The Lily's Revenge* (Southern Rep Theatre), *Sheddin'* (Horizon Theatre Company), *The Hotel Plays* (Provincetown Players), *Romeo and Juliet* (The NOLA Project), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (New Orleans Shakespeare Festival), *Numb* (Goat in the Road Productions), and *The Cradle Will Rock* (Cripple Creek Players). Film and television credits include *Law & Order: SVU*, *Blue Bloods*, *The Hardest Part*, and *Locker Room Talk*. You can hear her as Cordelia in *King Lear* and Emilia in *Othello* at *Play On Podcasts*. Francesca earned an MFA in acting from Yale School of Drama. @chesfernandez | francescafm.com

NICO JAOCHICO

U/S: Actor 5, U/S: Actor 6

Nico has been an active Bay Area actor for ten years now, having pursued his passion for theatre since high school and graduating from California State University, East Bay, in 2021. He is so proud to be working at San Francisco Playhouse for the first time. Recent credits include Wickersham in *Seussical* and Nick in *The Prom* (Berkeley Playhouse), Pappy in *My Brother's Gift* and Actor A in *Puppy Mind* (New Conservatory Theatre Center), Joey Evans in *Pal Joey* and Arthur De Bourgh in *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (Altarena Playhouse),

Princeton in **Avenue Q** (Plethos Productions), Plankton in **The SpongeBob Musical** (Palo Alto Players), and Mark in **Rent** (Landmark Musical Theatre). @neekdadeek

DIAN SITIP MEECHAI

U/S: Actor 4

Dian (she, her) is making her nonmusical play debut! Some favorite roles include Lady Eugenia in **A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder** (Lamplighters Music Theatre), Sheila in **A Chorus Line** (San Francisco Playhouse), and The Girl in **The Roar of the Greasepaint, The Smell of the Crowd** (Landmark Musical Theatre). Other credits include **The Empire Strips Back!** (Foster Entertainment/Neil Gooding Productions), **Evita** (San Francisco Playhouse), **The Merry Widow** (Pocket Opera), **The Gondoliers** (Lamplighters Music Theatre), and the onboard productions vocalist for the Silver Spirit cruise ship. Born in the "Boogie Down" Bronx, Dian aspired to perform as a child. She is a songwriter, a recording artist, a National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) Certified Personal Trainer, a retired contortionist, and a graduate of Northwestern University. In 2007, Dian moved to San Francisco for circus school and fell in love with the city. dianmeechai.com | @dmeechai

THOMAS NGUYEN

U/S: Actor 3

Thomas is very excited to be making his San Francisco Playhouse debut. Past credits include Manny in **Protection Detail** (Wild Dogs Productions), Jamie in **Is He** (Black Iris Productions), Melchior Gabor in **Spring Awakening** (Masquers Theater), Mr. Collins in **Pride and Prejudice** (Plethos Productions) and McDermott in **American Psycho** (B.A.D Musical Theater). Thomas was recognized by Chabot College with the highest honors award in theatre arts in 2018, and earned a BA in theatre arts and performance studies from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2023. He thanks his friends, family, and teachers for all their love and support.

JAMES AARON OH

Actor 3

James (he, him) is excited to make his San Francisco Playhouse debut with this wacky, meta-comedy infused with the creativity, generational trauma, and teenage angst he also experienced growing up Asian American at the turn of the millennium. Recent theatre work includes **The Great Leap** (Center REP, Oklahoma City Repertory Theater, San Jose Stage Company), **Sanctuary City** and **The**

Great Wave (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), **PrEP Play: Or Blue Parachute** and **The Book of Mountains and Seas** (New Conservatory Theatre Center). Offstage, he's regularly sequestered in his vocal booth, lending his thousand and one voices to animations, video games, and audiobooks. James can also be found sipping tea, listening to jazz, or running up mountains. "Thank you for coming and enjoy the show!" @jamesaaronoh | jamesaaronoh.com

VIVIENNE TRUONG

U/S: Actor 1, U/S: Actor 2

Vivienne (she, her) is a newcomer to San Francisco Playhouse and is so excited to be here. She has performed throughout the Bay Area and some favorite roles include Agnes in **She Kills Monsters** (Plethos Productions), Dromio of China in **The Comedy of Errors** (Silicon Valley Shakespeare), Annie in **The Play That Goes Wrong** (San Jose Stage Company), and the Playwright in **Vietgone** (City Lights Theatre Company). Regional credits include **A Strange Library** (Z Space), **Tiger Style!** (TheatreWorks Silicon Valley), **The Great Leap** and **Red Bike** (Center REP), **Tea Party** (One of Our Own Theatre), and **Noises Off** (The Pear Theatre). Vivienne is a San José State University alumna with a BA in psychology and a BA in theatre arts. She is also an administrative assistant and workshop facilitator at Red Ladder Theatre Company and a producer and casting director for More Más Marami Arts.

NICOLE TUNG*

Actor 4

Nicole was last onstage at San Francisco Playhouse portraying Xi Yan in **Chinglish**, for which she received the San Francisco Bay Area Theater Critics' Circle award for Principal Performance - Comedy. Other recent credits include Connie in **The Great Leap** (Center REP), Him in **Bald Sisters** (San Jose Stage Company), and Thuy/Mui/Danielle in **Colonialism Is Terrible But Pho Is Delicious** (Aurora Theatre Company). Past credits include work with American Musical Theatre of San Jose, Foothill Music Theater, Hillbarn Theatre & Conservatory, Magic Theatre, Palo Alto Players, San Jose Repertory Theatre, South Bay Musical Theatre, South Valley Civic Theatre, and TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, as well as commercials for Toyota, Slack, and Stanford Children's Hospital. Nicole earned a psychology degree from Santa Clara University and is a Board Certified Massage Therapist. Favorite personal roles to date include wife opposite husband, Jason, and mom to their daughter, Kalana. @nicole_tung

PHIL WONG*

Actor 6

Fight Director

Phil (he, him) is a multi-hyphenate, award-winning artist from the city of Oakland. He returns to the San Francisco Playhouse stage after playing Bing and Judge Xu Geming in **Chinglish**, Richard Hannay in **The 39 Steps**, and most recently Chris in **The Play That Goes Wrong**. Recent regional credits include Duch in the national tour of **Cambodian Rock Band** (A Contemporary Theatre), Louis in **Revenge Song** (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), and as a guest artist in the national tour of the Tony Award-winning **Freestyle Love Supreme** (American Conservatory Theater, Portland Center Stage). Local credits include work with TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Z Space, Word for Word Performing Arts Company, Shotgun Players, Lamplighters Music Theatre, Killing My Lobster, Hillbarn Theatre & Conservatory, Los Altos Stage Company, Palo Alto Players, Ray of Light Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater ("RIP!"), Bay Area Children's Theatre ("RIP!"), EXIT Theatre ("RIP!"), and Cutting Ball Theater ("RIP!"). As a playwright, Phil's first play **Sic, Heung, Mei 色香味** was recently developed at the 2024 Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. He is also the co-founder (along with Dan Wolf) of Bay Area Theatre Cypher, a collective of local hip-hop theatre artists. @phillywongsteak | @phillywongsnacks

EDRIC YOUNG

Actor 5

Edric (he, him) is thrilled to be back again at San Francisco Playhouse. Recent theater credits include the roles of Joe in **Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes** (Oakland Theater Project) and Alan in **Torch Song** (Marin Theatre). Edric is originally from Indiana and graduated from Stanford University. He speaks English, Spanish, Korean, and sometimes Mandarin. @edricyz

CREATIVE TEAM

KEIKO GREEN

Playwright

Keiko (she/her) is a biracial and bilingual playwright, screenwriter, and performer based in Los Angeles and Seattle, originally from Georgia. She is a Core Company Member at ACT Contemporary Theatre, the 2023 Resident Playwright at Chance Theatre, and previously part of the Writers Group at Seattle Rep and the Mu Tang Clan at Theatre Mu. Previous produced

full-length plays include: **Exotic Deadly: Or the MSG Play** (The Old Globe), **The Bed Trick** (Seattle Shakespeare Company), **Sharon** (Cygnets Theatre), **Hometown Boy** (Actor's Express, Seattle Public Theater), **Hells Canyon** (Theater Mu), and **Nadeshiko** (Sound Theatre Company). Other plays have been developed or produced by the National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, The Old Globe, The Kennedy Center, National New Play Network, The Playwrights Realm, Ensemble Studio Theatre/LA, and Atlantic Theater Company. She currently holds commissions from the Sloan Foundation at Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC) and The Old Globe. As a screenwriter, Keiko wrote for the new series **Interior Chinatown** on Hulu. As an actor, she has performed at theaters nationwide and originated the role of Connie in **The Great Leap** by Lauren Yee at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts and Seattle Rep keikogreen.com

JESCA PRUDENCIO*

Director

Jesca is a director and choreographer dedicated to developing new theatrical experiences that humanize issues nationally and internationally. Recent works include **Kairos** (East West Players), the national tour of **DOT DOT DOT: A New Musical** (TheatreWorks USA), **Exotic Deadly: Or The MSG Play** (The Old Globe, Craig Noel Award for Outstanding Direction of a Play), **We Fancy** and **It's a Ship Show!** (Virgin Voyages Cruise Line), **Bald Sisters** and **The Great Leap** (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), **King Liz** (Geffen Playhouse), **Can We Now?** (La Jolla Playhouse WOW Festival), **Interstate** (Mixed Blood Theatre, East West Players), **Vietgone** and **Actually** (San Diego Repertory Theatre), **Calling** (La MaMa ETC), **Man of God** (East West Players), **A&Q** (Pineapple Lab, Philippines) and **Fan: Stories from the Brothels of Bangkok** (B-Floor Theatre, Thailand). She is a recipient of a Drama League Fellowship and the inaugural Julie Taymor World Theater Fellowship. Jesca is head of directing at San Diego State University where she is an associate professor. She earned her BFA at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts and her MFA at the University of California, San Diego. jescaprudencio.com

JAMES ARD

Sound Designer

James is a noisemaker specializing in new works, live experiences, and immersive stage productions. His recent designs at San Francisco Playhouse include **Waitress**, **Evita**, **The Glass Menagerie**, **Guys and Dolls**, **A**

Chorus Line, Chinglish, and Indecent. Other recent work includes collaborations with Under the Radar at The Public Theater, American Conservatory Theater, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Summerhall at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Sibiu International Theatre Festival, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Guthrie Theater, American Repertory Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage, Center REP, Ensemble Theatre Company, Cutting Ball Theater, Joe Goode Performance Group, Stanford University, Atlantic Theater Company, and the University of California, Berkeley. James is currently a resident artist with Golden Thread Productions and Crowded Fire Theater.

CASTING COLLECTIVE

R. Réal Vargas Alanis , Casting Director

The Casting Collective is a team of casting directors with extensive experience and deep ties to the Bay Area theatre community. They have created and maintain the most comprehensive, regularly updated local talent database in the region. Casting locally is the predominant practice of the Collective. In the wake of the pandemic and the massive national call for greater EDI representation and prioritization, regional theatre has fundamentally changed. The Casting Collective is a response to this call for change in the way theatres access, promote, and hire artists, in order to foster an anti-racist, inclusive, collaborative future. Their purpose is to advance the interests of local actors and encourage institutions to explore, engage with, and hire from within this community instead of searching elsewhere for their talent castingcollective.org

LAUREL ENOS

Properties Designer

Laurel is a Sacramento-based properties designer and thrilled to be making her professional design debut with the San Francisco Playhouse. Previous credits include **Macbeth: I Want It Frat Way, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, and She Kills Monsters** (Barnstorm Theater Company), as well as **Eurydice** (The Department of Performance, Play & Design at the University of California, Santa Cruz). laurelenos.com

VICKI L. HOSKINS

Intimacy Director

Vicki (she/her) is a scholar-teacher-artist trained in intimacy choreography and consent-based practices from Theatrical Intimacy Education and Open Intimacy Creatives. She

choreographed intimacy here for **Evita** and **Waitress**, and has also enhanced productions of **The Rocky Horror Show, Iphigenia Crash Land Falls on the Neon Shell That Was Once Her Heart, Stupid F**king Bird, and She Kills Monsters.** Vicki is an assistant professor of theatre studies at San Francisco State University, where she is also the resident intimacy choreographer for their productions. Vicki earned a PhD in theatre and performance studies from the University of Pittsburgh. vickihoskins.com

HEATHER KENYON^A

Scenic Designer

Heather (she, her) is a Bay Area scenic designer. Previous scenic designs for San Francisco Playhouse include **Evita, Guys and Dolls, A Chorus Line, Clue, The 39 Steps, As You Like It, Follies, Twelfth Night, Starting Here, Starting Now, The Fit, and Washed Up on the Potomac.** She designed lighting for the Playhouse productions of **Heroes of the Fourth Turning, Songs for a New World, I Was Right Here, Art, and Hold These Truths.** Heather has also worked with American Conservatory Theater (Young Conservatory and MFA Program), TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Aurora Theatre Company, The Western Stage, Ballet San José, Palo Alto Players, CMT San José, Custom Made Theatre Co., South Bay Musical Theatre, and WVLO Musical Theatre Company. Heather earned an MFA from San Francisco State University, teaches scenic design at Santa Clara University, and is a proud member of United Scenic Artists, IATSE Local USA 829. heatherkenyon.net

KAYA LEHR-LOVE

Assistant Stage Manager

Kaya (he, they) is thrilled to return to work for San Francisco Playhouse after joining the team for **The Play That Goes Wrong** last fall. He first fell in love with theatre after seeing **Ideation** as part of the Rising Stars program in 2016. Since then, he's worked on other productions in the Bay Area including **Witch Hunt** and **House of Desires** (Those Women Productions), and produced and directed his own production of **Ideation** in 2018. Kaya is grateful for all the opportunities that San Francisco Playhouse has opened up for him, and for his mother and partner who both helped him get to where he is today!

AMBER N. LOUDERMILK

Wig Coordinator

Amber is a makeup, wig and hair artist. She is a freelance IATSE member and a San Francisco native. Amber has worked in the theatre industry

for over twenty years and her artistry has taken her from Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York, to San Francisco for tours of Broadway shows and work with the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet, and to Hollywood for television and film projects. Amber is an artist who loves what she does and her hands have had the privilege to create looks in many different creative genres including editorial, corporate, theatre, and on the big screen.

ADA MAY*

Stage Manager

Ada (she, her) is a San Francisco native with a background in immersive site-specific theatre, cabaret, bar, improvisation, and corporate event experience. Previous work at San Francisco Playhouse includes *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Evita*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *My Home on the Moon*, *Chinglish*, *Clue*, *As You Like It*, *Follies*, *The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin*, *The Song of Summer*, *Hold These Truths*, *Born in East Berlin*, and *Groundhog Day The Musical*. "In loving memory of my big brother, Kuya Keith."

MICHAEL OESCH^

Lighting Designer

Michael is a lighting designer for musicals, dance, theatre, and opera. Since first working with San Francisco Playhouse in 2007 on *Man of La Mancha*, he has designed lighting for over 27 productions here. Some recent designs include *Evita*, *My Home on the Moon*, *A Chorus Line*, *Cashed Out*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *Cabaret*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Camelot*, and *City of Angels*. Michael also designs lighting for Smuin Ballet, as well as many other companies in the Bay Area. Michael won a TBA Award for lighting, along with multiple award nominations from the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle, the Shellie Awards, and an Isadora Duncan Award. He earned an MFA from the University of California, Davis, and is a proud member of United Scenic Artists 829, the Union of Professional Theatrical Designers. michaeloesch.com

KATHLEEN QIU

Costume Designer

Kathleen is a Los Angeles-based costume designer and thrilled to be returning to San Francisco Playhouse. Previous credits here include *Waitress*, *My Home on the Moon*, *Guys and Dolls*, *As You Like It*, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, and *The Great Khan*. Other recent credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Lysistrata*, and *Killing*

Game (California State University, Northridge), and *A Night of Absurdity* (Santa Clarita Shakespeare). In addition, Kathleen has worked on major film and television productions including *Grotesquerie*, *Shining Vale*, *Grown-ish*, *Westworld*, and *The Accidental Getaway Driver*, and a variety of short films and independent productions. She is a proud member of IATSE 705 Motion Picture Costumers. kathleenq.com | @katjlk

FOUNDERS

SUSI DAMILANO

Founder & Producing Director

Susi (she, her) is co-founder and producing director of San Francisco Playhouse, with over two decades of professional collaboration with Bill English. She is a five-time recipient of the Excellence in Theatre Award for Principal Actress in a Play from the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle and she has directed over a dozen Playhouse productions. When absolutely necessary, Susi will admit to being a CPA, and in another life she played the role of a VP of Human Resources. For real.

BILL ENGLISH

Founder & Artistic Director

Bill is the co-founder and artistic director of the San Francisco Playhouse. In twenty-two years, with Susi Damilano, he has guided its growth from a bare-bones storefront to the second-largest nonprofit theatre company in San Francisco. Bill designed our first theater space at 536 Sutter Street and personally reconfigured our current space from a barn-like 700-seat hall into the current gracious and intimate 199-seat venue. Along the way, he has served as director, actor, scenic designer, and sound designer, winning San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle nominations or awards in each of those categories. Bill is also an accomplished musician and builder. Milestone accomplishments include bringing Pulitzer Prize-winner Stephen Adly Guirgis to the Bay Area by directing three of his plays, commissioning twelve playwrights including Theresa Rebeck, Aaron Loeb, Lauren Gunderson, Lauren Yee, and Christopher Chen, and developing world premieres from workshops to Sandbox Series to Mainstage Season to Off-Broadway (including the Off-Broadway transfers of *Ideation* and *Bauer*), and presenting the very first production of *Grounded* by George Brant which later played at the Public Theater. He coined the phrase "the empathy gym" and it drives everything at the Playhouse.

PRODUCTION AFFILIATIONS

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1913, Actors' Equity Association is the US labor union that represents more than 50,000 actors and stage managers. Equity seeks to foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages and working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Actors' Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. actorsequity.org

STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY

The Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC) is the theatrical union that unites, empowers, and protects professional stage directors and choreographers throughout the

United States. Its mission is to foster a national community of professional stage directors and choreographers by protecting the rights, health, and livelihoods of all our members by negotiating and enforcing employment agreements across a range of jurisdictions, facilitating the exchange of ideas, information, and opportunities, and educating current and future generations about the critical role of directors and choreographers in leading the field. sdcweb.org

UNITED SCENIC ARTISTS

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San Francisco Playhouse, the City's "Empathy Gym" as described by Artistic Director and Co-Founder Bill English, is celebrating over 150 productions of award-winning theatre. Every season for 22 years, it has offered a selection of original works mixed with reimagined classic plays and musicals, "making the edgy accessible and the accessible edgy." Commissions and world premières are a regular feature at the Playhouse and include works by esteemed playwrights George Brant, Christopher Chen, Ruben Grijalva, Lauren Gunderson, Claude Jackson Jr., Theresa Rebeck, Michael Gene Sullivan, Steve Yockey, and Aaron Loeb, resident playwright. Three of these transferred directly to New York productions. Gunderson's *Bauer* and Loeb's *Ideation* opened Off-Broadway at 59E59 Theaters, and Loeb's *Abraham Lincoln's Big, Gay Dance Party* won the best of New York International Fringe Festival. This steadfast focus on new works has been honored by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Theatre Wing, and Playhouse commissions have garnered regional acclaim. Grijalva's *Shoot Me When*, presented online during the pandemic, won the Will Glickman Award and Rebeck's *Seared* opened the 2016–2017 season and was nominated for ten San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle awards. Works developed by the Playhouse have also gone on to national recognition. Chen's *You Mean to Do Me Harm* won the Lanford Wilson Award from the Dramatists Guild of America in 2016. Yockey's *Pluto*, a Playhouse commission, was named a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere. Brant's *Grounded*, a Playhouse premiere, was produced at the Public Theater starring Anne Hathaway and directed by Julie Taymor in 2015 and has been adapted by Tony-winner Jeanine Tesori for the Metropolitan Opera this season. Rebeck's *Seared* was produced Off-Broadway at MCC Theater starring Tony-nominee Raúl Esparza in 2019. The Playhouse has also supported emerging voices in its experimental Sandbox Series, running from 2009 to 2020, and including original works and world premieres by Steven Dietz, Dipika Guha, Chelsea Marcantel, Rogelio Martinez, Walt McGough, Carey Perloff, Geetha Reddy, Lynn Rosen, and Lauren Yee. sfplayhouse.org

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Karen Sullivan &
Ken Mitchell
Norbert Szmyt
Nancy Thompson &
Andy Kerr
W.L. Thomson,
Madelene Todel
Jim Turner
Mary Wais
Morey & Jonnie Weingarten
John Wildermuth
Stanley Yantis

Donations are listed for the year ended December 10, 2024.

RISING STARS CONSERVATORY - SUMMER PROGRAM



cast members from *a chorus line* (2023) • image by jessica palopoli

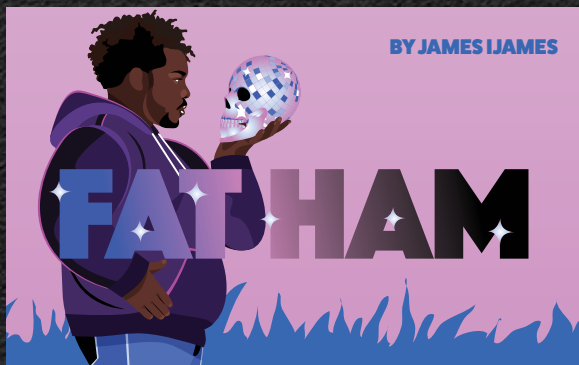
Taught by award-winning choreographer Nicole Helfer (Cassie in our *A Chorus Line*), San Francisco Playhouse invites Bay Area youth (Grades 5-12) to develop your performance skills and immerse yourself in the world of musical theatre in two exciting week-long sessions this summer.

Students will receive daily training in dance, voice and acting, and finish with a performance on the Playhouse stage!



Space is limited. Scan for more information or contact risingstars@sfpplayhouse.org to make a reservation.

STILL TO COME IN OUR 2024/25 SEASON



In this Pulitzer Prize-winning reinvention of *Hamlet*, Juicy is a college kid grappling with his identity when the ghost of his father shows up.

**MARCH 20 -
APRIL 19, 2025**



When exceptional teenager Christopher discovers that his neighbor's dog is dead, he goes on a thrilling journey that upturns his world.

**MAY 1 -
JUNE 21, 2025**



Winner of six Tony Awards, Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady* tells the story of Eliza Doolittle's journey to become a "proper lady."

**JULY 3 -
SEPTEMBER 13, 2025**

SUBSCRIBE NOW

FOR SOME TASTY ENTERTAINMENT!