

STUDY GUIDE

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE  
**THE INHERITANCE**  
PART 1 & PART 2



WEST COAST PREMIERE  
**THE INHERITANCE**  
**PART 1 & PART 2**

**09.13–11.27.2022**

GIL CATES THEATER

**SPECIAL THANKS TO**

Amy Levinson, Brian Dunning, Olivia O'Connor, Isaac Katzanek, Isaak Berliner, Paloma Nozicka, J. Jason Daunter

**STUDY GUIDE COMPOSED BY**

Brian Allman

This publication is to be used for educational purposes only.

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ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS THE STEPHEN DALDRY PRODUCTION OF

# THE INHERITANCE

## PART 1 & PART 2

WRITTEN BY  
**MATTHEW LÓPEZ**

INSPIRED BY THE NOVEL *HOWARDS END* BY E. M. FORSTER

DIRECTED BY  
**MIKE DONAHUE**

SCENIC DESIGNER  
**JAIMIE TODD**

ORIGINAL SCENIC DESIGN  
**BOB CROWLEY**

COSTUME DESIGNER  
**SARA RYUNG CLEMENT**

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
**JOSH EPSTEIN**

SOUND DESIGNER  
**VERONIKA VOREL**

COMPOSER  
**PAUL ENGLISHBY**

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
**COLM SUMMERS**

FIGHT DIRECTOR  
**JULIE OUELLETTE**

INTIMACY CHOREOGRAPHER  
**AMANDA ROSE VILLARREAL**

DRAMATURG  
**OLIVIA O'CONNOR**

PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR  
**J. JASON DAUNTER**

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER  
**MARIE JAHELKA**

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS  
**LUCY HOULIHAN  
SHAHZAD KHAN**

CASTING DIRECTOR  
**PHYLLIS SCHURINGA, CSA**

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES FOR *THE INHERITANCE* ARE SUPPORTED BY THE SHERI AND LES BILLER FAMILY FOUNDATION.

### CAST

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ADAM / LEO .....	NIC ASHE
MORGAN / WALTER POOLE .....	BILL BROCHTRUP
MARGARET AVERY .....	TANTOO CARDINAL
TOBY DARLING .....	JUAN CASTANO
YOUNG MAN 6 / TRISTAN .....	JAY DONNELL
YOUNG MAN .....	ERIC FLORES
YOUNG MAN 2 / JASON #1 / DOORMAN #1 / TOBY'S OTHER AGENT .....	ISRAEL ERRON FORD
YOUNG MAN 3 / YOUNG HENRY / TUCKER .....	AUGUST GRAY GALL
ERIC GLASS .....	ADAM KANTOR
YOUNG MAN 5 / TOBY'S AGENT / CHARLES WILCOX / TOBY'S DEALER .....	EDDIE LOPEZ
YOUNG MAN 7 / JASPER / PAUL WILCOX / DOORMAN #2 .....	KASEY MAHAFFY
YOUNG MAN 4 / YOUNG WALTER .....	MIGUEL PINZON
YOUNG MAN 8 / JASON #2 / CLINIC WORKER .....	AVI ROQUE
HENRY WILCOX .....	TUC WATKINS



# SYNOPSIS

In contemporary Manhattan, Eric and Toby are 30-somethings who seem to be very much in love and thriving. But on the cusp of their engagement, they meet an older man haunted by the past, and a younger man hungry for a future. Chance meetings lead to surprising choices as the lives of three generations interlink and collide—with explosive results.

**PART 1 TIME/SETTING** Summer 2015–Spring 2017. New York and its environs.

**PART 1 RUNNING TIME** 3 hours and 15 minutes, with two intermissions.

**PART 2 TIME/SETTING** Spring 2017–Spring 2018. New York and its environs.

**PART 2 RUNNING TIME** 3 hours and 20 minutes, with one intermission and one pause.

**PRODUCTION NOTES** Contains profanity, depicted sexual situations, nudity, haze and smoke effects, strobe lighting effects, the smoking of herbal cigarettes, and discussions of difficult subject matter including addiction, sex work, abuse, and the AIDS epidemic.

## ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHIES



### **MATTHEW LÓPEZ** Playwright

Matthew López is an American playwright and screenwriter. His play *The Inheritance*, directed by Stephen Daldry, is the most honored American play in a generation, sweeping the “Best Play” awards in both London and New York, including the Tony Award, Olivier Award, Drama Desk Award, Evening Standard Award, London Critics Circle Award, Outer Critics Circle Honors, Drama League Award, and GLAAD Media Award. He is the first Latine writer to win the Tony Award for Best Play. In New York, Matthew’s work has been seen off-Broadway with *The Whipping Man* and *The Legend of Georgia McBride*. Other works include *Somewhere*, *Reverberation*, *The Sentinels*, and *Zoey’s Perfect Wedding*. Matthew is currently co-writing the musical adaptation of the classic film *Some Like It Hot*. Matthew is also working on a

reimagining of the iconic 1992 Whitney Houston box office hit, *The Bodyguard* for Warner Bros, as well as a feature film adaptation of the novel *Leading Men* for Searchlight Pictures, which centers on Tennessee Williams and his longtime partner Frank Merlo. Matthew will be making his directorial feature debut with the LGBTQ+ romantic comedy *Red, White & Royal Blue* for Amazon Studios. In addition to directing the film, Matthew has adapted the script, based on Casey McQuiston’s bestselling novel. In October 2020, he signed an overall television development deal with Amazon Studios.



### **MIKE DONAHUE** Director

NYC credits include: world premieres of Ana Nogueira’s *Which Way to the Stage* (MCC Theater); Matthew López’s *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (MCC Theater, Geffen Playhouse, and Denver Center for the Performing Arts); Jen Silverman’s *Collective Rage* (MCC Theater, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company) and *Phoebe in Winter* (Clubbed Thumb); Jordan Seavey’s *Homos, Or Everyone In America* (Labyrinth Theater Company); and Ethan Lipton’s *Red-Handed Otter* (The Playwrights Realm). Regionally: *Little Shop of Horrors* with Mj Rodriguez, George Salazar, and Amber Riley (Pasadena Playhouse), and world premieres of Matt Schatz’s *A Wicked Soul in Cherry Hill* (Geffen Playhouse), Jen Silverman’s *The Roommate* (Humana Festival, William-

stown Theatre Festival, Long Wharf Theatre); Rachel Bonds’ *Curve of Departure* (South Coast Repertory, Studio Theatre); Kate Cortesi’s *Love* (Marin Theatre Company); Matthew López’s *Zoey’s Perfect Wedding* and Lauren Feldman’s *Grace, or The Art of Climbing* (Denver Center for the Performing Arts); and the U.S. Premiere of Anne Carson’s adaptation of Euripides’ *Bakkhai* with music by Diana Oh (Baltimore Center Stage); and Shostakovich’s *Moscow, Cheryomushki* with a new libretto by Meg Miroshnik (Chicago Opera Theatre). Mike’s first short film, *Troy*, premiered this past June at the Tribeca Film Festival and recently screened here in L.A. as an Official Selection of both Outfest Los Angeles LGBTQ+ Film Festival (Audience Award for Best Narrative Short) and HollyShorts Film Festival.

# THE WITNESS GENERATION



PHOTO BY JUSTIN BETTMAN

Playwright Matthew López

## EXCERPT FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT MATTHEW LÓPEZ ON “THE FABULOUS INVALID” PODCAST

Rob Russo and Jamie DuMont, hosts of *The Fabulous Invalid Podcast*, sat down with playwright Matthew López in March of 2020, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Broadway production of *The Inheritance* to close. The episode was released on May 6, 2020.

*This transcript has been condensed and edited for clarity.*

**ROB RUSSO:** We were both struck by the way that the play dramatizes intergenerational relationships among gay men, which is something that we don’t really see a lot in media. What inspired you to craft a story that touches on this dynamic of gay men from different generations?

**MATTHEW LÓPEZ:** It started with the novel, *Howards End*. I was so in love with that book and the film as a teenager, and it has stayed with me all

my life. I was in Central Park one afternoon in 2008, rereading it for the hundredth time. And it was just this bolt of inspiration. I knew in that instant that I could take these families from the novel from three social classes and retell it using gay men from three different generations.

As a gay man who was born in 1977—alive during the epidemic, but not old enough to be directly imperiled by it—I’ve always thought of my generation as a witness generation. We witnessed the events in the ‘80s and the early ‘90s, but we were not directly impacted by them. And then we became adults, and our lives became settled as adults. And now there’s a new world that I’m watching this next generation of the queer community run with: this explosion of openness, of redefining who we are and who we are in the world.

**ROB RUSSO:** I have to imagine that someone who’s just now turning 18 or 20 would see this play

in an entirely different way than I do, as someone in his 30s, or as you do, as someone in his 40s. It's amazing how that small difference in time can mean so much for the progress of gay men, but also the timeline of this epidemic.

**MATTHEW LÓPEZ:** A lot can happen in a small period of time, and the world can change overnight. Anybody who has even a cursory understanding of history knows that's true. I think that there's a general human tendency towards amnesia. Every generation believes they invented sex. Every generation believes they invented rebellion. The idea of revolution seems to have been invented by whatever generation has come up with the latest one.

[But] there's nothing that we haven't seen before. Everything can be understood within the continuum of history. I've taken great solace in learning about my history as a gay man, my history as a member of the LGBTQ community, my history as an American, my history as a Puerto Rican American. I mean, it's trite, but those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. And as I was writing the play, I saw the election of Donald Trump. I saw a lot of things that began to feel analogous to the epidemic years, to a lot of calamities in world history.

It is very difficult for me to imagine what the world looks like to an 18-year-old right now. And people have asked me, why are there only two characters from the younger generation in the play?

And there are several answers to that. One is it's a question of adaptation, which is that the Schlegel sisters became Toby and Eric, and they're the central characters in the novel; therefore those became the central characters in my play. They are the age that I roughly was when I started working on the play. I can write about my generation. I have copious amounts of research and books and films and plays to help understand the generation that came before me. But the generation that is coming after me, their story is only starting to be written, and they're the ones who are going to write it, not me. I realized quickly that any attempt on my part to do with their generation what I allowed myself to do with my own would be dishonest. It's not my story to tell. It's not my place to speak for them.

**JAMIE DUMONT:** I came out of the closet in the mid-'80s, at the height of the AIDS epidemic. And the thing I remember about that time is how it felt

very special to be a part of the gay community. I feel that a lot of that is in this play, and it resonates quite clearly. It's important to look back, as you said, and I think it informs our future.

**MATTHEW LÓPEZ:** One of my favorite historians, Shelby Foote, always contended that American history really began with the Civil War: everything that happened before the Civil War led up to the Civil War, and everything that happened after the Civil War was a result of the Civil War. And I think an argument could be made that the gay community was forged really in those [epidemic] years.

I look at those years as a student of history and as someone who knows people who were alive then and who have told me their stories. And of course the question that I always ask myself is, what would you have done? What would your reaction have been? Would you have hid? I hope not, I like to think not. Would I have been on the front lines, would I have been storming the FDA? Would I have died? There are so many "what ifs" that no one can answer. But it is the act of investigation into that question that leads to understanding and compassion. For history to be any use to us, it cannot just be facts and figures and numbers. It can't be cold. It has to be hot. And the way to make it hot is to make it personal and applicable to our lives today.

The act of compassion is not the act of understanding someone's feelings so much as it is the attempt to imagine yourself in their experience. And that is what I forced myself to do with this play. It's the spirit in which I wrote the play and it's what I hope people take away from the play.

I think if there's any lesson that could be applicable to this play outside of the gay community, it is that no one is immune from history, and we own our own history, whether we like it or not. We own each other's history, because in a country as diverse and as disparate as ours, if we don't own each other's history, we can't build a future together.



Listen to the full episode of *The Fabulous Invalid* Episode 76: "Matthew López: Theatre Is About Limitations" at [www.thefabulousinvalid.com](http://www.thefabulousinvalid.com).



# THE INHERITANCE OF HISTORY— THE STONEWALL INN



PHOTO COURTESY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Though the Stonewall Uprising, also known as the Stonewall Riots didn't start the gay rights movement, it was a galvanizing force for LGBT political activism, leading to numerous gay rights organizations, including the *Gay Liberation Front*, *Human Rights Campaign*, *GLADD* (formerly Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), and *PFLAG* (formerly Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

The first documented U.S. gay rights organization, *The Society for Human Rights* (SHR), was founded in 1924 by Henry Gerber, a German immigrant. Police raids forced them to disband in 1925, but not before they had published several issues of their newsletter, "Friendship and Freedom," the country's first gay-interest newsletter. America's first lesbian rights organization, *The Daughters of Bilitis*, was formed in San Francisco on September 21, 1955.

Very few establishments welcomed lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans in the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time, solicitation of same-sex relations was illegal in places like New York City. For such reasons, LGBT individuals flocked to gay bars and clubs, places of refuge where they could express themselves openly and socialize without worry. However, the New York State Liquor Authority penalized and shut down establishments that served alcohol to known or suspected LGBT individuals, arguing that

the mere gathering of homosexuals was "disorderly."

As a result, members of *The Mattachine Society*, an organization dedicated to gay rights, staged a "sip-in" where they openly declared their sexuality at taverns, daring staff to turn them away and suing establishments who did. When The Commission on Human Rights ruled that gay individuals had the right to be served in bars, police raids were temporarily reduced.

Thanks to activists' efforts, these regulations were overturned, and LGBT patrons could now be served alcohol. But engaging in gay behavior in public (holding hands, kissing, or dancing with someone of the same sex) was still illegal, so police harassment of gay bars continued, and many bars still operated without liquor licenses—those that did were often run by organized crime groups known as the Mafia.

The local crime syndicates saw profit in catering to shunned gay clientele, and by the mid-1960s, the Genovese crime family controlled most of Greenwich Village's gay bars. In 1966, they purchased *Stonewall Inn* (a "straight" bar and restaurant), cheaply renovated it, and reopened it the next year as a gay bar.

Stonewall Inn was registered as a type of private "bottle bar," which did not require a liquor license because patrons were supposed to bring their own liquor. Club attendees had to sign their names in a book upon en-



## SOURCES

Marsha P. Johnson Biography  
[www.biography.com/activist/marsha-p-johnson](http://www.biography.com/activist/marsha-p-johnson)

Stonewall Inn – NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project  
[www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/stonewall-inn-christopher-park/](http://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/stonewall-inn-christopher-park/)

Why Did the Mafia Own the Bar? – PBS American Experience  
[www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/stonewall-why-did-mafia-own-bar/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/stonewall-why-did-mafia-own-bar/)

1969 Stonewall Riots  
[www.history.com/topics/gay-rights/the-stonewall-riots](http://www.history.com/topics/gay-rights/the-stonewall-riots)

Queer Culture – Literary Theory and Criticism  
[www.literariness.org/2018/08/15/queer-culture/](http://www.literariness.org/2018/08/15/queer-culture/)

Pride Month  
[www.nationaltoday.com/pride-month/](http://www.nationaltoday.com/pride-month/)

LGBTQ Rights Timeline in American History– Teaching LGBTQ History  
[www.lgbtqhistory.org/lgbt-rights-timeline-in-american-history/](http://www.lgbtqhistory.org/lgbt-rights-timeline-in-american-history/)

try to maintain the club's false exclusivity. The Genovese family bribed New York's Sixth Police Precinct to ignore the activities occurring within the club.

Without police interference, the crime family could cut costs how they saw fit: The club lacked a fire exit, running water behind the bar to wash glasses, clean toilets that didn't routinely overflow and palatable drinks that weren't watered down beyond recognition. What's more, the Mafia reportedly blackmailed the club's wealthier patrons who wanted to keep their sexuality a secret.

Nonetheless, Stonewall Inn quickly became an important Greenwich Village institution. It was large and relatively cheap to enter. It eventually welcomed drag queens, who received a bitter reception at other gay bars and clubs. It was a nightly home for many runaways and homeless gay youths, who panhandled or shoplifted to afford the entry fee. And it was one of the few—if not the only—gay bar left that allowed dancing.

Raids were still a fact of life, but usually corrupt cops would tip off Mafia-run bars before they occurred, allowing owners to stash the alcohol (sold without a liquor license) and hide other illegal activities. In fact, the NYPD had stormed Stonewall Inn just a few days before the riot-inducing raid.

When police raided Stonewall Inn on the morning of June 28, it came as a surprise—the bar wasn't tipped off this time.

Armed with a warrant, police officers entered the club, roughed up patrons, and, finding bootlegged alcohol, arrested 13 people, including employees and people violating the state's gender-appropriate clothing statute (female officers would take suspected cross-dressing patrons into the bathroom to check their sex).

Fed up with constant police harassment and social discrimination, angry patrons and neighborhood residents hung around outside of the bar rather than disperse, becoming increasingly agitated as the events unfolded and people were aggressively manhandled. At one point, an officer hit a lesbian over the head as he forced her

into the police van—she shouted to onlookers to act, inciting the crowd to begin throw pennies, bottles, cobblestones and other objects at the police.

Within minutes, a full-blown riot involving hundreds of people began. The police, a few prisoners and a *Village Voice* writer barricaded themselves in the bar, which the mob attempted to set on fire after breaching the barricade repeatedly.

The fire department and a riot squad were eventually able to douse the flames, rescue those inside Stonewall, and disperse the crowd. But the protests, sometimes involving thousands of people, continued in the area for five more days, outside the bar on Christopher Street, in neighboring streets and in nearby Christopher Park, flaring up at one point after the *Village Voice* published its account of the riots.

The message was clear—protestors demanded the establishment of places where LGBT+ people could go and be open about their sexual orientation without fear of arrest. The Stonewall Riots became a pivotal, defining moment for gay rights. Key people at the riots who went on to tell their stories were: Sylvia Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson, Dick Leitsch, Seymore Pine and Craig Rodwell. Pride Month (JUNE) is largely credited as being started by bisexual activist Brenda Howard. Known as 'The Mother of Pride,' Brenda organized Gay Pride Week and the Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade a year after the Stonewall Riots. This eventually morphed into what we now know as the New York City Pride March and was the catalyst for the formation of similar parades and marches across the world.

Stonewall Inn became the first LGBT site in the country to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1999) and named a National Historic Landmark (2000). It received additional recognition by city landmark designation in 2015, as a State Historic Site in 2016, and the designation as part of the Stonewall National Monument in 2016.

# A LIST OF LOVE OF LITERATURE

Many of the characters in *The Inheritance* are well educated, cultured, and appreciate good literature. Many novels and films, museums, art galleries and various cultural centers are referenced throughout Parts 1 & 2, delivered to make jokes and timely references. These artists and their works are also referenced as analogies and used as metaphors for the struggles and successes found in life. Cultural references help to define the relationships, the awareness, and the experiences of the of the characters, but also, of we in the audience. Below is a list of the many of the novels, films, plays and artists mentioned in *The Inheritance*. We invite you to see how many texts you are familiar with.

## FILMS

*Sophie's Choice* by Alan J. Pakula  
*Atonement* by Joe Wright  
*The English Patient*  
 by Anthony Minghella  
*Return of the Jedi* by George Lucas  
*Jules et Jim* by François Truffaut  
*400 Blows* by François Truffaut  
*The Deer Hunter* by Michael Cimino  
*Breathless* by Jean-Luc Godard  
*MILK* by Gus Van Sant  
*The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*  
 by John Ford  
*Lawrence of Arabia* by David Lean  
*E.T.* by Steven Spielberg  
*Titanic* by James Cameron  
*The Muppet Show* by Jim Henson  
*Game of Thrones* (HBO)  
*Broad City* (Comedy Central)  
 Merchant Ivory Productions—  
 Praised for their visual beauty, their mature and intelligent themes, and the shrewd casting and fine acting from which they derive their unique power.

## WRITTEN WORD

*Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin  
*Go Tell It on the Mountain*  
 by James Baldwin  
*Another Country* by James Baldwin  
*Call Me By Your Name* by André Aciman  
*The Swimming Pool Library*  
 by Alan Hollinghurst  
*Howard's End* by E. M. Forster  
*Maurice* by E. M. Forster  
*A Room with a View* by E. M. Forster  
*Hamlet* by William Shakespeare  
*The Odyssey* by Homer  
*The Mahabharata* by Vyasa  
*The Open Road* by Jean Giono  
*Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace  
*Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austin  
*Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austin  
*Emma* by Jane Austin  
*Persuasion* by Jane Austin  
*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte  
*Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte  
*Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens  
*David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens  
*Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens  
*A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens  
*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison

## BROADWAY

*The Nutcracker*  
 by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
*Gypsy* by Stephan Sondheim, Arthur  
 Laurents, Jule Styne  
*Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare

## ADDITIONAL AUTHORS

Arthur Evelyn St. John Waugh  
 Marcel Proust  
 Ernest Hemingway  
 Walt Whitman  
 Gabriel Barcia Marquez  
 Toni Morrison  
 Christopher Isherwood  
 Zadie Smith  
 John Steinbeck  
 Virginia Woolf  
 Edward Carpenter  
 George Merrill

## CHALLENGE

Choose one of the texts from above that you have not yet read or watched. Utilizing your local library, discover new stories and read or watch for free. You can find your local library at [Library Near Me \(libraryfinder.org\)](http://LibraryNearMe.org).

# SCENE SPOTLIGHT



PHOTO COURTESY PIXABAY

In Scene 2 of *The Inheritance Part 1*, Eric and Toby are celebrating Eric's thirty-third birthday with their friends Tristan, Jason #1, Jason #2, and Jasper, at Eric and Toby's apartment. They are listening to Ravel's "String Quartet in F Major." The men talk about how this piece of music makes them feel, sharing descriptions like, "captivating"; "the bubbles in a glass of champagne"; "a bumblebee racing around a meadow". They are interrupted by the character Young Man 1, who shares his interpretation of Ravel's work, stating, "I think...I think maybe it's about unrequited love. It's romantic but in a way that feels unresolved." The character continues:

## YOUNG MAN 1

Okay. Well, in the first movement, the phrases are legato, rising and falling, like breath—no—like a sigh. I imagine someone looking at photos of someone they've loved for a long time. Then the second movement starts with plucking instead of bowing. It's summery and fresh. It makes me think of a butterfly flitting through a meadow.

But then halfway through the second movement, the sadness returns, as if our character suddenly sees the object of their desire in the flesh. That painful, yearning feeling when you want someone so badly but can never have them. Then the last movement is like a raging fire that completely consumes the person. Burned alive by their own desire.

## DISCUSSION POINT

We invite you to listen to Ravel's "String Quartet in F Major," courtesy of YouTube.  
<https://tinyurl.com/34yuvu63>

After listening, what was your assessment of the piece? What were some images that came to your mind to describe how this music made you feel?



# INSPIRATIONAL FIGURES— THE LIFE & TIMES OF E. M. FORSTER



## SOURCES

TheFamousPeople.com and glbtq.com

One of the most gifted writers of his time, Edward Morgan Forster was an English novelist, short story writer, essayist, and librettist. He penned some of the best novels of the 20th century that were well-plotted and ironic and included themes of class and hypocrisy in English society. He began his literary journey at the age of six. His only interest in life was writing and he used his time and experiences to contribute to this interest immensely. The testament to his greatness is his nomination for the Nobel Prize in Literature for 13 different years. Forster was widely traveled and narrated these events in his stories. He was a constant opponent of adapting books into films; he was of the view that a film or stage performance does not do justice to a literary work. Despite this view, many of his works were adapted into highly successful films and have kept his legacy alive.

Born January 1st, 1879 in Middlesex, England, as Henry Morgan Forster, his name Edward was accidentally given during his baptism, solidifying him as E. M. Forester. Before Forster was two years old, his father, an architect, passed away from tuberculosis, forcing him to be raised by his mother and paternal aunt. Raised by two families completely polar to each other gave E. M. Forster an insight into family tensions. When his aunt passed away in 1887, he inherited £8000, enough to live

on and help him pursue his dream of becoming a writer. He enrolled at Tonbridge School in Kent, forming the basis of many of Forster's criticism of the English public school system.

His first novel was *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905). It was a dialogue with his audience that urged them to stay in contact with the Earth and cultivate their imagination. The same theme is followed in *The Longest Journey* (1907) and his masterpiece, *Howards End* (1910). The novel explores many themes such as social conventions in England, codes of conduct, and personal relationships. *A Room with a View* (1908) was his most optimistic work. Set in Edwardian England, the book is a critique of English society. His last novel was also his most successful one, *A Passage to India* (1924). It explores British colonial occupation in India. Rather than present a conflict between the two nations, the novel examined a friendship between the two protagonists. Though he no longer wrote novels after *A Passage to India*, he did write many short stories and continued to do so until the end of his life. In the 1930s and 1940s, he became a broadcaster for the BBC radio and presented a weekly book review during the war. In 1949, he declined a Knighthood from the British honors system.

During the mid-1960s, he suffered from strokes that weakened him greatly. His last stroke on June 7, 1970, ended the life of this remarkable literary genius. Not many at the time knew of Forster's homosexuality. He confided it to his close friends but not to the public. His novel *Maurice* was officially published in 1971, a year after his death, and almost 60 years after having first started writing it. This was done at his request due to the overtly homosexual theme of the novel. Forster's acute consciousness of gay oppression, as epitomized in the persecution of fellow writer Oscar Wilde, haunted his imagination throughout his life, fueling his anger at social and political injustices of all kinds. When he was almost eighty-five years old, he noted in his diary, "how *annoyed* I am with Society for wasting my time by making homosexuality criminal. The subterfuges, the self-consciousness that might have been avoided."



# MORE KNOWLEDGE HELPS US ALL

The play *The Inheritance* by Matthew López brings to Geffen audiences an intimate and vulnerable understanding of what many gay men, lesbians, bisexual, and transgender Americans have faced over the last 40+ years. While the storyline and the plot of this show may be news and eye-opening to some, many Geffen audience members will recognize this play on a more visceral, personal level, having lived through and experienced some of the heartaches and tragedies detailed in Part 1 & Part 2 of *The Inheritance*. Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, attacks and assaults on personal freedoms are once again on the rise against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Americans, and we must all do our part to look out for each other.

Below are some vocabulary, concepts, and individuals mentioned throughout *The Inheritance* that unless you have some understanding or personal experience, you may not know the importance of those references. The best way to overcome a stigma or personal bias is to do some research, educate yourself more on a topic, be open to changing your understanding and way of thinking, and then reflect on how you can help others to be better prepared. More knowledge helps us all.

**LGBTQIA+** Until somewhat recently, variations of the term “gay community” were used to encompass the entirety of the group that we now refer to as LGBTQIA+. According to *Ms. Magazine*, the first acronym to take shape in the 1990s was “GLBT,” used to describe those who identified as either gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. “LGBT” eventually replaced “GLBT” in the mid-2000s, as lesbian activists fought for more visibility. Activists and members of the queer community have since come together to form the current acronym, “LGBTQIA+.” This denotation includes space for those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (and in some cases, “questioning”), intersex, asexual, and the “+” is for a plethora of other orientations and identities. With this fairly new acronym, the LGBTQIA+ community has been able to more fully encompass a group of people that, just decades ago, were outcasts of society. (<https://bestlifeonline.com/what-lgbtqia-means>)

**PREP** (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is medicine that reduces your chances of getting HIV from sex or injection drug use. When taken as prescribed, PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV.

**PEP** (post-exposure prophylaxis) means taking medicine to prevent HIV after a possible exposure. PEP should be used only in emergency situations and must be started within 72 hours after a recent possible exposure to HIV.

**UPSTAIRS LOUNGE FIRE** occurred on June 24, 1973, at a gay bar located on the second floor of a three-story building in New Orleans. Thirty-two people died and at least fifteen were injured as a result of fire or smoke inhalation. Until the 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting, in which 49 people were murdered, the UpStairs Lounge arson attack was the deadliest attack on a gay club in U.S. history.

**“SIP-IN” AT JULIUS’** on April 21, 1966, four members of the *Mattachine Society*, an early queer rights organization decided to challenge regulations adopted by bars to deny service to patrons who were seen as “disorderly”—a vague definition that New York City police used to refer to same-sex flirting, kissing or even touching. Inspired by earlier sit-in demonstrations, protests enacted to desegregate diners in the American south, the four activists set out to expose the bigotry faced by the community at the time—three years before the Stonewall Riots. They invited some reporters and a photographer, ordered a drink at Julius’ and then declared that they were gay. The bartender refused to serve them, the story made it to the press, and their courageous action became instrumental in bringing attention to gay rights. That pivotal moment in queer liberation history is known as the “Sip-In” at Julius’.

*Continued*

# MORE KNOWLEDGE HELPS US ALL

**WILLI NINJA** known as the ‘godfather of voguing’, immortalized in the 1990 documentary film *Paris Is Burning*. Inspired by Fred Astaire, “Great Performances” on PBS, Asian Culture and Olympic gymnasts, Ninja was a self-taught performer who stitched together a patchwork of a career that extended into the worlds of dance, fashion, and music.

**HARVEY MILK** was an American politician and the first openly gay man to be elected to public office in California. He was a strong advocate of gay rights and was assassinated along with the Mayor of San Francisco in 1978.

**BARBARA GITTINGS** is widely regarded as the mother of the LGBT civil rights movement. In 1958 she started the New York chapter of the *Daughters of Bilitis* (DOB). Founded in San Francisco, the DOB was the first lesbian civil rights organization in the United States. From 1963 to 1966, Gittings was the editor of the DOB’s publication, *The Ladder*, the first national lesbian magazine.

**MARSHA P. JOHNSON** was an African American transgender woman who was an LGBTQ rights activist and an outspoken advocate for trans people of color. Johnson spearheaded the Stonewall uprising in 1969 and along with Sylvia Rivera, she later established the Street Transvestite (now Transgender) Action Revolutionaries (STAR), a group committed to helping homeless transgender youth in New York City.

**SYLVIA RIVERA** A veteran of the 1969 Stonewall Inn uprising, she was a tireless advocate for those silenced and disregarded by larger movements. Throughout her life, she fought against the exclusion of transgender people, especially transgender people of color, from the larger movement for gay rights.

**EDIE WINDSOR** When Edie Windsor’s wife died after 44 years together, Edie was required to pay taxes that a straight widow would not have to pay. Her lawsuit against the federal government went all the way to the Supreme Court. The case that bears her name overturned the federal government’s ban on recognizing same-sex marriages. Edie Windsor and her wife Thea Spyer were a Jewish lesbian couple whose life in late-twentieth-century New York reflected the increasing visibility of LGBT people in the decades after the Stonewall uprising. Before Edie became a full-time activist, she was a computer programmer at IBM in the early days of a male-dominated field.

**MATTHEW SHEPARD** On October 7th, 1998, Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming, was brutally attacked and tied to a fence in a field outside of Laramie, WY and left to die. On October 12th, Matt succumbed to his wounds in a hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado. In the aftermath of Matt’s death, his parents, Judy and Dennis Shepard, started the Matthew Shepard Foundation to honor his life and aspirations. Inspired by the tragedy they endured, the initial purpose of the Foundation was to teach parents with children who may be questioning their sexuality to love and accept them for who they are, and to not throw them away.

**ISLAN NETTLES** In the early hours of Aug. 17, Islan Nettles, a 21-year-old transgender woman, was beaten to death. She was attacked across the street from New York City’s Police Service Area 6 precinct in Harlem, the life pummeled from her in a fit of violence. Charges against the assailant were eventually dropped. Too often, this is what happens when someone dies at the hands of anti-transgender violence. Victims are forgotten, perpetrators are let free, and the world moves on as though nothing happened.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**President James Buchanan (1857-1861)** A lifelong bachelor, Buchanan had a long-term relationship with William Rufus King, who served as vice president under Franklin Pierce. The two men lived together from 1840-1853 until King’s death. Some historians suggest Buchanan, by today’s terms, was gay.

# SHOW YOUR PRIDE!

June is recognized as Pride Month and celebrated as a tribute to those who were involved in the Stonewall Riots. As a sub-holiday during Pride Month, Pride Day is celebrated on June 28th. The day marks the date in history when the first march was held in New York City in 1970. However, different communities celebrate Pride Day on different days. Throughout the month of June, you will often see people (and businesses practicing performative allyship) fly various flags in support of rights for the LGBTQ+ communities. Below are some of the various flags of identity and support you may see flown during the month of June, but also proudly displayed throughout the rest of the year.

The rainbow Pride Flag has a rich and beautiful history. For more than 40 years, it's been an enduring symbol of community and solidarity, while continuously evolving to encompass additional identities, too. (Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln LGBTQ+ Center)



**ORIGINAL 8-STRIPE PRIDE FLAG**

In 1978, Gilbert Baker created the original Pride Flag, with eight horizontal stripes. Each band of color celebrates a different attribute or characteristic. The eight colors (from top to bottom) are:

Hot Pink for sexuality, Red for life, Orange for healing, Yellow for sunlight, Green for nature, Turquoise for magic, Blue for serenity, Violet for spirit



**6-STRIPE PRIDE FLAG**

In 1979, the two colors of Hot Pink and Turquoise were dropped, thus creating the well-recognized 6-stripe Pride Flag. This flag with the Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, and Violet horizontal stripes remains a popular symbol of LGBTQ+ Pride.



**PROGRESS FLAG**

The Progress Pride Flag gained prominence in the community in 2018. This new edition of the Pride Flag has colors to represent both trans people and LGBTQ+ people of color in addition to the six rainbow stripes. For anyone wanting to show as much support as possible for the LGBTQ+ community, the Progress Flag—with the arrows to represent inclusion and progression—is a great way to indicate pride for multiple identities.

The five arrows (from left to right) are White, Pink, and Light Blue for transgender individuals and Brown and Black for people of color.



**BISEXUAL PRIDE FLAG**

The bisexual pride flag has three stripes, from top to bottom: Hot Pink, Violet, and Blue.



**PANSEXUAL PRIDE FLAG**

The pansexual pride flag has three stripes, from top to bottom: Hot Pink, Yellow, and Turquoise.



**TRANSGENDER PRIDE FLAG**

The transgender pride flag has five stripes, in order from top to bottom: Light Blue, Light Pink, White, Light Pink, and Light Blue.

# AN INTERVIEW WITH ISAAK BERLINER



**What is your position and how long have you been at the Geffen?**

My position at the Geffen Playhouse is the Social Media and Communications Manager. As of this writing, this is my 90th day on the team!

**What educational, artistic, and professional experiences led to you working at the Geffen?**

I've been involved in theater since I was 12, starting with after-school musical theater programs, until college. I earned a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts, which I put to use working on film and television sets as a Production Assistant. I also bought my first camera to have an artistic craft in my off-time. After about a year, I felt I had enough experience to include photography on my resume, which got me an internship at a startup in Beverly Hills as their "Social Media Intern," back when social media was seen as something kids and teens used. The internship was a few months, but it gave me creative freedom to explore what these platforms could do for businesses. Then I joined the Marketing Department at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Connecticut, taking pictures and videos of everything that happened on the campus. After six years, I felt I needed to move on and was lucky to stumble across the position at the Geffen. The rest is history.

**What are your primary responsibilities as a Social Media and Communications Manager?**

I manage and monitor our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and online presence; create digital content, including blog posts, photography, and videos; assist with writing press releases; and support for openings and press nights.

**What key skills and dispositions do you need to possess as a Social Media and Communications Manager?**

An eye for design; time/project management; being unafraid to interact with new people; friendly; have an ear for brand voice; keeping up with online trends; and customer service experience is always helpful.

**Was there a pivotal moment when you realized you wanted a life in the arts or did it occur incrementally?**

From the start, I knew I enjoyed being with "theater people." When I explored other industries, something pulled me back to what felt familiar and welcoming—and that was the arts community.

**What do you find most challenging about your work?**

It can be challenging to constantly be creative or churn out content every single day. It's a profession that leads easily to burnout. As I've worked in social media more, particularly so in the midst of the pandemic, I've learned to value getting offline. Often my best ideas, like in any creative venture, happen when I've had time to step away and not think about it!

**What do you find most rewarding?**

I love seeing the responses social media posts get. Friendly, excited comments are my favorite part of the day!

**Why do you think audiences should see *The Inheritance*?**

Smartly written, with a stellar ensemble of acting greats. If you're a fan of long epic stories, like *The Count of Monte Cristo* or *Les Misérables*, you'll appreciate the scope of this inter-generational story.



# AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE



PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH

Going to the theater is a unique experience, and we all need to be mindful of “audience etiquette.”

**THE AUDIENCE’S ROLE** The audience plays an essential role during the performance of a play. Without an audience, the actors are only rehearsing. Audience members’ concentrated silence and responses, such as laughing and applauding, provide energy to the actors as they bring their performance to life.

**BEHAVIORS TO AVOID** Since the actors can hear the audience so clearly, it is important not to engage in behaviors that might disturb or distract them—and fellow audience members. These actions include:

- Talking
- Texting
- Allowing cell phones to ring
- Taking photographs or video
- Getting up to leave before intermission or the end of the show (unless it is a true emergency)
- Eating or drinking
- Unwrapping candy or cough drops.

**USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA** We appreciate you sharing your Geffen Playhouse experience via social media, but ask that you **do not do so inside the theater, where the use of electronic devices is prohibited.**

We recommend that you post your status in the lobby after the performance, and invite you to tag @GeffenPlayhouse and use #GeffenPlayhouse to share your experience and continue the conversation with us online.

**AUDIENCE AWARENESS ACTIVITY** Before going to the Geffen Playhouse for the first time, compare and contrast the experience of seeing a live play with:

- going to the movies
- attending a live sporting event
- watching television

## DISCUSSION POINT

- If you were onstage performing in a play, how would you want to experience the audience?

# POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Depending on the time available and your participants' interests, guide them to respond to questions selected from those suggested below. Encourage everyone to participate, while having respect for differing opinions. Individuals can share their thoughts with a partner or in a small group. Ask for several volunteers to share their groups' answers with the larger group.

- Overall, how did you feel while watching this show? Engaged? Conflicted? Amused? Inspired? Provoked? Put off? What made you feel this way?
- Were you able to see both Part 1 & Part 2 of *The Inheritance*? If so, did you have a preference? Why?
- What did you enjoy most about the play? What did you find difficult to enjoy? Why? (Provide evidence from the production.)
- How would you describe the inner life of each character in the play? Are they conflicted? If so, how, and why?
- Did you identify or empathize with any of the characters? If so, which character(s) and why? If not, why not?
- How does the title *The Inheritance* relate to the themes, plot, and characters of the play?
- What did you find most moving about the play?
- What did you appreciate most about the performances by the actors?
- How did the set, props, costumes, and music contribute to the impact of the show?
- Would you recommend this production of *The Inheritance* to other theatergoers? Why or why not?
- For those who have seen *The Inheritance Part 1 & Part 2*, what was it like to watch a 7+ hour play experience?

# RESOURCES

**DEFEND** Queer Youth. Transgender Rights are Human Rights. The ACLU works in courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and the laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country. [www.aclu.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/transgender-rights](http://www.aclu.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/transgender-rights)

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**DISCOVER** more about GLAAD. GLAAD works through entertainment, news, and digital media to share stories from the LGBTQ community that accelerate acceptance. [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

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**DONATE** if you can. Planned Parenthood delivers vital reproductive health care, sex education, and information to millions of people worldwide. [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)

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**FIGHT** for Equity for All at Human Rights Campaign. [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

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**FIND** support, information, and resources for LGBTQ+ people, their parents and families, and allies at PFLAG. [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

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**LEARN** more about Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer News & Politics at [www.advocate.com](http://www.advocate.com)

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**LISTEN** to LGBTQ+ History at [tinyurl.com/ys8hsyd8](http://tinyurl.com/ys8hsyd8)

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**READ** more about Queer Culture Literary Theory and Criticism at [tinyurl.com/yeaptw9v](http://tinyurl.com/yeaptw9v)

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**STAND** against discriminatory anti-LGBTQI+ bills in states across the country and learn what can be done to oppose these damaging legislative attacks at [tinyurl.com/4wjuhjtz](http://tinyurl.com/4wjuhjtz)

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**SUPPORT** the Trevor Project at [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

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**TAKE** charge of your health by visiting Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

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