

# GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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### GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE SELECTS EIGHT WRITERS FOR 2021/2022 CYCLE OF “THE WRITERS’ ROOM”

#### Initiative Develops New Work by Local Writers

LOS ANGELES (October 27, 2021) – Geffen Playhouse today announced its selection of eight local writers to participate in the 2021/2022 cycle of The Writers’ Room, a forum for engagement and collaboration between Los Angeles playwrights. The participants are **Vivian Barnes, Lisa Sanaye Dring, Weston Gaylord, Nicholas Pilapil, Michael Shayan, and the musical-writing team of Alexandra Kalinowski, Tova Katz and Katie Lindsay.**

Originally founded in 2018, The Writers’ Room is a product of Geffen Playhouse’s commitment to supporting new plays and specifically to fostering bold, relevant works by the vibrant artistic community in Los Angeles.

During this one-year residency, playwright members gather monthly to share their work and receive feedback from their peers in a forum facilitated by Geffen Playhouse Director of New Play Development Rachel Wiegardt-Egel.

In addition to the feedback from their fellow writers, members receive dramaturgical support from the theater’s artistic staff, a ticket to all Gil Cates Theater shows at Geffen Playhouse for the season in which their residency takes place, and the opportunity to further develop their work with a director and actors in a culminating reading that may be open to the public.

The Writers’ Room 2021/2022 is made possible through the generous support of Jerry and Terri Kohl.

Playwrights who have developed work as part of The Writers’ Room include: Juan José Alfonso, Boni B. Alvarez, Meghan Brown, Diana Burbano, Angelica Chéri, Inda Craig-Galván, Dipika Guha, Chloé Hung, Donald Jolly, Chelsea Marcantel, Ramiz Monsef, Matthew Paul Olmos, Brian Otaño, Liza Powell O’Brien, Matt Schatz, Ruby Rae Spiegel, T. Tara Turk-Haynes and Ali Viterbi.

The Writers’ Room was originally launched through the generous support of Patricia Kiernan Applegate.

#### **ABOUT THE WRITERS**

*\*Denotes writers participating as a writing team*

### **Vivian Barnes**

Vivian is a writer from Virginia. Her plays have been produced at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Montana Repertory Theatre, and Steppenwolf Theatre. She has developed work at Clubbed Thumb and the Ojai Playwrights Conference. She is a Lark Venturous Fellow and currently lives in Los Angeles.

### **Lisa Sanaye Dring**

Lisa was honored as a recipient of the 2020/21 PLAY LA Stage Raw/Humanitas Prize. She has been a finalist for the Relentless Award, the O'Neill Playwrights' Conference, the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, and the Seven Devils Playwrights Conference. Her work has been developed/produced by The New Group, La Jolla Playhouse, Actors Theatre of Louisville, East West Players, Circle X, SCF at Son of Semele, Playwrights' Arena, Theatre of NOTE, and Rogue Artists Ensemble. She has been awarded fellowships at MacDowell, Blue Mountain Center, and Yaddo. As a screenwriter, Lisa co-wrote *Welcome to the Blumhouse Live*, which was recently nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Interactive Program. She's a member of the 2021/22 WarnerMedia Access (formerly HBO) TV Writers Program, the 2021 Film Independent Episodic Lab, and the 2021 Giant Leap Accelerator.

### **Weston Gaylord**

Weston Gaylord is a playwright and librettist based in Los Angeles. In 2020, Weston was a recipient of the Humanitas Prize PLAY LA fellowship and selected for The Vagrancy Writers' Group, and his play *A Long Time Coming* was workshopped at The Vagrancy's 2021 Blossoming Festival. His original work in theater and immersive media often combines live performance, music, and/or virtual reality: *Octopus's Garden* (2021 Seven Devils Playwrights Conference Finalist), *Sherwood & Nottingham* (Spy Brunch), *Chained: A Victorian Nightmare* (MWM Interactive), *Retrospective* (Co.Reality), *Gravity: A New(tonian) Musical* (O'Neill NMTC Finalist, TheatreWorks New Works Festival). His writing has also been featured at the Cannes Film Festival XR Showcase, Games For Change, A Little New Music, and the Future of Storytelling Festival. He holds a B.S. in Human-Computer Interaction from Stanford, where he also studied playwriting with Amy Freed and puppetry with Basil Twist. [westongaylord.com](http://westongaylord.com)

### **Alexandra Kalinowski\***

Alexandra Kalinowski is a composer for film, TV, and musical theater. She is a fellow of the 2021 Sundance Composers Lab and is a graduate of USC's Thornton School of Music Screen Scoring Masters program. She recently scored the documentary *The Boxers of Brule*, released by Vice World News, which premiered at Big Sky Film festival and was an official pick of the Tribeca Film Festival. Additionally, she has written music for short films and podcasts as well as writing additional music on the CBS documentary *Not Done* and Lifetime movie *Dating a Killer*. She led a five-piece orchestral pop band in New York and is also a session vocalist, songwriter, and arranger.

### **Tova Katz\***

Tova Katz is a queer, genre-bending lyricist-composer, writer and performer. She's performed her original musical work across NYC, including La Mama E.T.C., Ars Nova, and 54 Below, she's been a featured vocal performer at Joes' Pub, and is a founding member of performance collective A Beautiful Desperation. Select credits include 2019 West Coast premiere of her original award-winning solo dark musical comedy *See You at the Funeral!* (Broadwater Main Stage). She composed music and music directed a reading of *Menstruation: A Period Piece* by Miranda Rose Hall in 2020 (Center Theatre Group, We the Women Collective). In 2021, Tova wrote the script, lyrics and music for a new short musical film - an irreverent and visceral queer contemporary Western called *Dina* (The Barn, Jer Adrienne Lelliott), gearing up to film in 2022. Imagination saves her life every day. Pronouns: she/her/hers. SAG-AFTRA/AEA/ASCAP.

### **Katie Lindsay\***

Katie Lindsay is a writer, director, and producer of new plays, musicals, and theatrical experiences. During the pandemic, she created *A Walk in My Neighborhood*, an immersive audio experience in Atwater Village which the *LAist* called "genius." Katie was the 2019 Bill Foeller Fellow at Williamstown Theatre Festival, where she directed *Orlando* by Sarah Ruhl. Select directing credits include *Red Emma & the Mad Monk* by Alexis Roblan (The Tank, *NY Times* Critic's Pick), *Bar Dykes* by Merrill Mushroom (Celebration Theatre), *Keeping up with the Prozorovs* by Lucy Gillespie (Hollywood Fringe; Encore Producers Award, Best Female Director nomination), and *Harry & The Thief* by Sigrid Gilmer (The Habitat). Katie is the Co-Founder of MeetCute, an evening of short plays that builds community in Los Angeles. Proud member of the Dramatists Guild and SDC and graduate of Dartmouth College.

### **Nicholas Pilapil**

Nicholas Pilapil is a Filipino-American playwright. His play *The Bottoming Process* will be developed as part of Victory Gardens' Ignite Chicago Festival of New Plays during the 2021-22 season and was a finalist with honorable mention at the 2021 Bay Area Playwrights Festival. His work has also been developed with Artists at Play, Becky and Baldwin, Fresh Produce'd LA, IAMA Theatre Company, Playwrights Foundation, Theatre Rhinoceros, The Fountain Theatre, The New Cosmopolitans, and The Vagrancy. He is an alum of the IAMA Theatre Under 30 Playwrights Lab, The Vagrancy Playwrights Group, and artEquity.

### **Michael Shayan**

Michael Shayan is a queer Iranian-American writer and performer from Los Angeles. He recently received the inaugural Sundance Institute Uprise Grant. He's writing a new play commission for Audible, and his work has been seen and developed at theaters like La MaMa, New York Stage & Film, Rattlestick, The Lark, Project Y, Dixon Place and Art House, among others. He was a Lambda Literary LGBTQ Voices Fellow in Playwriting, and his work has been featured in The Advocate Magazine. TV: HBO, Discovery+. At 13, he was the youngest performer at the Hollywood Magic Castle. Michael studied playwriting at Harvard and received his MFA from Mac Wellman's program at Brooklyn College. Recipient: Himan Brown Playwriting Award. Distinguished Achievement: Paul Stephen Lim Playwriting Award, Kennedy Center. Residencies: Stillwright, La MaMa Umbria, Lambda Emerging LGBTQ Voices Retreat. Finalist: New Dramatists, Dramatists Guild. Rep: The Gersh Agency.

### **ABOUT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE**

Geffen Playhouse has been a hub of the Los Angeles theater scene since opening its doors in 1995. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its world-renowned mix of classic and contemporary plays, provocative new works and second productions, the not-for-profit organization continues to present a body of work that has garnered national recognition. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who made the initial donation to the theater, the company was founded by Gilbert Cates and is currently helmed by Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., Artistic Director Matt Shakman and Board Chair Adi Greenberg. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains extensive education and community engagement programs, designed to involve underserved young people and the community at large in the arts.

[www.geffenplayhouse.org](http://www.geffenplayhouse.org)

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