

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES WRITERS FOR 2023/2024 CYCLE OF “THE WRITERS’ ROOM”

Initiative Develops New Work by LA-Based Writers

LOS ANGELES (July 26, 2023) – Geffen Playhouse today announced its selection of LA-based writers to participate in the 2023/2024 cycle of The Writers’ Room, a forum for engagement and collaboration between Los Angeles playwrights. The participants are **Ashley August, Paris Crayton III, Christina Ham, Paloma Nozicka, Alexis Roblan**, and the musical-writing team of **Jennifer Chang** and **Inara George**.

The Writers’ Room is a product of Geffen Playhouse’s commitment to supporting new plays and specifically to fostering bold, relevant work by the vibrant artistic community of Los Angeles. During this twelve-month residency, playwright members gather monthly to share their work and receive feedback from their peers in a forum facilitated by Geffen Playhouse Literary Manager & Dramaturg Olivia O’Connor. The 2023/2024 cycle of The Writers’ Room will begin September 2023.

At the conclusion of the residency, each playwright will have the opportunity to further develop their completed draft in a culminating reading produced by the Geffen.

Playwrights who have developed work as part of The Writers' Room include: Juan José Alfonso, Boni B. Alvarez, Vivian Barnes, Meghan Brown, Diana Burbano, Angelica Chéri, Inda Craig-Galván, Lisa Sanaye Dring, Weston Gaylord, Dipika Guha, Chloé Hung, Donald Jolly, Alexandra Kalinowski, Tova Katz, Katie Lindsay, Chelsea Marcantel, Ramiz Monsef, Matthew Paul Olmos, Brian Otaño, Nicholas Pilapil, Liza Powel O'Brien, Matt Schatz, Michael Shayan, Ruby Rae Spiegel, T. Tara Turk-Haynes and Ali Viterbi.

The Writers’ Room is made possible through the generous support of the William Randolph Hearst Foundation and Jerry and Terri Kohl.

ABOUT THE WRITERS

**Denotes writers participating as a writing team*

Ashley August

Ashley August is black, alive, and loves a good list! She is a Brooklyn born and raised afro-latina actress, author, playwright, activist, teaching artist, global touring spoken word artist, previously 3rd ranked woman poet in the world, a member of the ABC/Disney Discovers cast ('21-'22), hip-hop junkie, former Youth Poet Laureate of New York City, and named one of *The New York Times* 30 Under 30 Most Influential people. Along with multiple stage and screen appearances, her credits include Sundance, Cannes Film Festival, Netflix, Marvel, HBO, The Public Theater, and The Lark Play Development Center. She's also written and performed for brands like Adidas, Refinery 29, Under Armour, Nike, MTV, Comedy

Central, and more. August is the author of three self-exploratory books, *Love Handles*, *Licorice*, and *Say I Won't*. She is the former curator and Slam Master of the legendary Bowery Poetry Club (NYC). With Belize and Brooklyn embedded into her (he)art, August is motivated to speak the unsaid truth and push the boundaries of the page and performance to realms they've yet to live in. She currently resides in LA and is figuring it all out!

Jennifer Chang*

Jennifer Chang is a multi-hyphenate artist based in Los Angeles. Writing: Her play *The Devil is a Lie* premiered with Quantum Theatre and she was the 2022 Beatrice Terry Drama League Resident for her play *Matter*. She is collaborating with Inara George and Larry Goldings on the musical *Dear Margaret Sanger*. Select Directing: *The Heart Sellers* by Lloyd Suh at Milwaukee Rep (World Premiere), *American Fast* by Kareem Fahmy at City Theatre, *On Gold Mountain* with LA Opera at The Huntington, *The Great Leap* by Lauren Yee at Round House Theatre, *Undo The Sea* by Inda Craig-Galván with Primary Stages, *Vietgone* by Qui Nguyen (LADCC Award for Direction). New Play/Musical Development: Williamstown Theatre Festival, Geffen Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, Ashland New Plays Festival, O'Neill Playwrights Conference, The New Harmony Project, Center Theatre Group, The Sông Collective, Black and Latino Playwrights' Conference, Theatre Mu, Chance Theater, Boston Court, PlayOn!, East West Players, Artists at Play. Upcoming: *King of the Yees* at Signature Theatre DC. As an actor, she has appeared in theatres across the country, in film, TV, and commercials. Member: SDC, AGMA, SAG-AFTRA, AEA. SDCF Fichandler Award Finalist, APAFT Award for Direction. Directors Lab West, Drama League New York Fellowship, Classical Directing Fellow at The Old Globe. B.F.A. NYU, M.F.A. UCSD. Associate Professor UCLA School of TFT. More info: www.changinator.com

Paris Crayton III

Paris Crayton III is an award-winning playwright, actor, and director. He was one of *ArtsATL's* "30 under 30" and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* "Artist to Watch." *Creative Loafing* named him 2014's "Best Local Playwright." Critics have called him "a powerful dramatist" and praised him as "One of the most important playwrights of our time." His plays have been presented/workshopped by The Classical Theatre of Harlem, NewYorkRep, Aurora Theatre, Clark University, Rising Sage Theatre, Atlanta Black Theatre Festival, and more. Please visit www.pariscrayton3.com for more info.

Inara George*

Inara George is an LA native who has worked her way through many musical incarnations starting from the early 1990s to the present. She is best known for her solo work and for her many collaborations—including The Living Sisters, Merrick, and her Grammy nominated band, the Bird and the Bee, with producer Greg Kurstin. George has recorded close to 20 studio albums and has travelled the world playing rock clubs, music festivals, and venues like Carnegie Hall and The Hollywood Bowl. She has also sung with or backed up some of music's greatest talents, including Paul McCartney, Sia, Shirley Manson and Garbage, Beck, Dave Grohl and the Foo Fighters, Feist, Brian Wilson, Elton John, Van Dyke Parks, Terry Allen, and Jackson Browne. Her longtime collaborator and the producer of her solo albums, Michael Andrews, says her music doesn't fit easily into any particular genre—and that's part of its strength. "If her music was like a movie, it would be one of those quiet movies that no one knows until it wins an Oscar or something," Andrews says. "And then everyone's like 'Yo, you gotta see that movie!'"

Christina Ham

Christina Ham's plays have been produced both nationally and internationally at The Kennedy Center, Arena Stage, South Coast Repertory, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Tokyo International Arts Festival, and The Market Theatre in South Africa, to name a few. Christina is a two-time recipient of a McKnight Fellowship in Playwriting and a Jerome Fellowship from the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, and a

MacDowell Residency. She has received commissions from the Guthrie Theater, Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and The Kennedy Center, among many others. Her plays are published by Dramatic Publishing, Heinemann, Playscripts, Inc., Smith & Kraus, and Oberon Books. She is currently a member of the Playwrights Union and The Kilroys. A graduate of the University of Southern California and an M.F.A. in Playwriting from the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, she was a writer/producer on HBO's Emmy Award-winning series *Westworld* and was nominated for the 2021 Writer's Guild of America Award for her work on the critically acclaimed Amazon series *Them* and nominated for an Emmy Award on the Netflix series *Sweet Tooth*. www.christinaham.com

Paloma Nozicka

Paloma Nozicka is a Mexican-American actor, writer, and filmmaker, based in Los Angeles. As an actor she's had the pleasure of working at many notable regional theaters, including Geffen Playhouse, Goodman Theatre, and Steppenwolf Theatre. Her award-winning short film, *Each Lovely Thing*, was an official selection at the Austin Film Festival, among many others, and is currently on the festival circuit. Her debut play *Enough to Let the Light In* premiered in the fall of 2022 at Teatro Vista and Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. She was voted "Best Filmmaker" in the Chicago Reader's 2022 "Best of Chicago" poll. Television acting credits include *The Red Line* (CBS); *Proven Innocent*, *Empire* (FOX); *Chicago Med*, *Chicago P.D.* (NBC); and many more. She is a company member of Jackalope Theatre Company in Chicago, and a proud member of SAG-AFTRA. She is repped by IAG and Zero Gravity Management.

Alexis Roblan

Originally from the rural Oregon coast, Alexis Roblan was raised on dense forests, cold beaches, and *X-Files* internet fan culture, all of which bred in her a dark sense of humor and an acute sense of existential anxiety. She earned her M.F.A. in Dramatic Writing from the University of Southern California, and has written plays about theoretical physics, alien abductions, childhood monsters, centaur fetishes, Russo-American politics, and the shifting nature of reality. Those plays include *Red Emma & the Mad Monk* (*New York Times* Critic's Pick; 6 New York Innovative Theatre Award nominations), *Daughters Of Lot* (Edinburgh Fringe), *You Feel So Far Away Right Now* (Finalist, O'Neill National Playwrights Conference), *The Andrew Play* (Thomas Barbour Playwrights Award), and *Samuel* (Grant Recipient, NYC Women's Fund for Media, Music and Theatre; Finalist, Clubbed Thumb Biennial Commission; "superb" – Helen Shaw, for *Vulture*). Alexis has been supported and produced by theatre companies including Clubbed Thumb, New Georges, Ars Nova, The Bushwick Starr, The Tank, Exquisite Corpse Company, Roundabout Theatre Company, New Perspectives Theatre Company, The Dennis & Victoria Ross Foundation, and more. Credits for the screen include the series *Guidance* (2017) and *Love Daily* (2018 WGA Award nominee for Short Form New Media – Original); and feature horror film *Pasture* (2021).

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. 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

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