

O⁹^{the} Neill

2025 SUMMER SEASON



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O^{the}Neill

Founded in 1964 by George C. White and named in honor of Eugene O'Neill, four-time Pulitzer Prize-winner and America's only playwright to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center has launched some of the most important voices in the American theater. It has revolutionized the way new work is developed.

Programs include the National Playwrights Conference, National Music Theater Conference, National Critics Institute, National Puppetry Conference, Cabaret & Performance Conference, National Theater Institute, and more.

From its campus in Waterford, Connecticut, the O'Neill has been home to more than 1,000 new works for the stage and thousands more emerging artists. Writers, directors, puppeteers, singers, students, and audiences alike take their first steps in exploring, revising, and understanding their work and the potential of the theater they help create. All focus remains on the writer and script: performers work with simply rendered sets with script in hand, revealing for the first time the magic of a new play or musical, puppetry piece, or cabaret act.

The O'Neill is also the recipient of two Tony Awards and in 2015 received the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TIFFANI GAVIN

CHAIR OF THE BOARD
CAROLYN GREENSPAN

WRITING THE NEXT ACT OF
THE AMERICAN THEATER.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome! I am so glad that you've joined us for the O'Neill's 2025 Summer Season.

This year marks the O'Neill's 60th National Playwrights Conference, our 35th National Puppetry Conference and our 20th Young Playwrights Festival. The longevity of these programs, and the others that you'll engage with this summer, reflects a long-held commitment to broadening the cultural landscape through the stories we tell and the people who tell them. Season after season, we nurture fresh and enriching stories, preparing them for success beyond our shore. In the past year, we've seen our plays and musicals premiere off-Broadway and at regional theaters across the country, our cabaret alumni have earned numerous awards and our students have made their way to top graduate programs. It is a testament to the quality of the artistic environment we cultivate and the value of the experience we provide. There is nothing quite as magical as a summer spent at the O'Neill.

I think back to my first summer—even with just a handful of public events, so many of you were with us in the Amp and the Sunken Garden supporting the voices of innovative artists exploring the power of the written word, a soaring melody, or the embodiment of a character. The O'Neill has faced headwinds, our resources have been challenged, and we have lived to fight another day—mount another season—and continue to breathe life into more stories which we are so excited to share with you this summer.

As I embark on my 5th season, I see tremendous potential for growth. Places like the O'Neill and yes, the O'Neill itself, continue to face obstacles, but we persevere. We will continue to push the boundaries of what's possible and stay true to our purpose: "to discover, develop and empower new work, new voices, and creative risk-taking". With your support we will write the next act of the American Theater.

Each year is a chance to experience the O'Neill anew and I hope you will see something this summer that excites you, challenges you, or makes you curious to know more. This is the first step on a long journey for many of these artists; we're happy to have you along for the ride.

To my visionary Artistic Directors, talented staff, dedicated Board of Trustees and all of you: Thank you for another great year!



TIFFANI GAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Welcome, and thank you for being here today!

This summer marks my first summer as Chair of the Board, and I am proud that I have been a member of the O'Neill family for close to 20 years. Whether this is your first time visiting or you have been joining us for decades, I hope that you, as I do, still find each visit to the O'Neill engaging, thought-provoking, and of course, entertaining. I know that I speak for the entire board in saying that we are incredibly appreciative that you've chosen to be a part of this essential organization.

The O'Neill has always strived to meet the artists who come here where they are in their own creative process, and to respond to their needs in support of their work. Naturally, this means that the O'Neill has evolved over the years and now, in our seventh decade, we continue to innovate and expand the ways in which we do our part to advance our country's theater ecosystem. Tiffani, her incredible staff, and our brilliant Artistic Directors are constantly exploring how we can offer the kind of assistance we're known for to artists at all stages of their careers, both during the summer season and beyond, while forging new partnerships that will aid them in this endeavor. I am so excited to see the fruits of those efforts take shape throughout the year ahead.

Places like the O'Neill have been and always will be cornerstones of civic and popular culture - forums for exploration, creative expression, and experimentation, and venues where the tales of our collective culture are nurtured and molded for future generations. Just as the world of theater needs artistic havens like the O'Neill, so does the O'Neill need our audiences. Your presence in the theater, your enthusiasm for the mission, and your financial support are vital to the success of the O'Neill. For that, you have our deepest gratitude.

So here's to another inspiring season of new work in Waterford! I look forward to seeing you at the theater!

Warmly,



CAROLYN GREENSPAN
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

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Ajé Brown	Assistant Company Manager
ry burke	Lighting Supervisor
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Kennedi Roland	NTI Fellow
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Trev Turnbow	Literary Assistant
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Additional credits

Back/Front Cover. *Teeth*, NMTC 2018. Samantha Rhea Parrish, Sumi Yu, Emily Schultheis, Emily Walton, Diana Huey, Sara Kapner, Ashley LaLonde. Photo by Isaac Berliner.

11. *American Dramaturgs* by Joel Schechter. *The Drama Review: TDR*, Vol. 20, No. 2, *American Theatre Issue* (Jun., 1976), pp. 88-92. Published by MIT Press.

12. *Madre de Dios* by Marvin González De León, NPC 2024. Featuring Teresa Avia Lim, Ricardo Vázquez, Max Austen Torrez, and Maria Christina Oliveras. Photo by Emma Brown.

24. *Fountain of You* NMTC 2024. Book & Lyrics by Tasha Gordon-Solmon and Music by Faye Chiao. Featuring Allie Re and Tatiana Wechsler. 38-39. Photos by Emma Brown, Richard Termine, Getty Images, and Roger Pavey Jr. 4th image: *You Are Cordially Invited to the End of the*

World by Keiko Green, NPC 2024. Featuring Joel de la Fuente & Florencia Lozano. Photo by Emma Brown. 6th image: *LIGHTHOUSE*, NMTC 2024. Book, Lyrics & Story by abs wilson, Music & Story by Veronica Mansour. Featuring Elizabeth Ward Land & Farah Alvin

40-41. *The Apiary* by Kate Douglas (NPC 2022). Krysta Rodriguez and Alana Raquel Bowers. *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Jeffrey Hatcher, NPC 2001. Photo by A. Vincent Scarano.

CRAFTING THE NEXT ACT

DRAMATURGY & NEW WORK DEVELOPMENT FOR THE AMERICAN THEATER

by Roger Pavey Jr.

As one of the only major American theaters with an open submission policy, the script selection process for the O'Neill's National Playwrights Conference and National Music Theater Conference is thorough and intensive. This year's record-breaking 1,600 submissions to NPC is a number that has nearly doubled since the Conference's earlier days—a testament to the O'Neill's longstanding platform for supporting new work, contemporary voices, and widespread perspectives.

O'Neill Literary Manager Helena Pennington helms the script submission and multi-round reading and evaluation process for NPC and NMTC yearly. Consisting of over 100 theater makers, dramaturgs, directors, arts administrators and more, the NPC reading team reads every play, cover-to-cover. A unique quality of the O'Neill is that "we aren't a style-driven theater—instead, we're looking for plays with a singularity of perspective, strength of voice, and innate theatricality", says Pennington.

First-round readers look for exactly that, whittling the number of scripts in consideration to about 300 Semifinalists. The second round of adjudicators is comprised of industry-leading professionals whose criteria becomes "more than just 'is this play compelling?' or 'does it have artistic merit?'" says Pennington. "But also, 'Do the needs of the play and playwright align with the resources that we have to offer them?'" The final round, reading from a pool of just 150 incredible pieces, is driven by a small team of O'Neill artistic staff, led by Artistic Director Melia Bensussen, who consider 10-15 plays weekly from December through March. Their focus is twofold: both on identifying artistic excellence, and on the specific ways in which the O'Neill could support each piece. The selection process is very similar for NMTC, which also features a multi-tiered reading process culminating in interviews with a handful of Finalists. Decisions are made by Artistic Director Alex Gemignani.

"No one's work is treated dismissively. There is a great amount of care and respect that goes into the consideration of each piece", says Zeina Salame, an O'Neill dramaturg and Semifinalist script reader for NPC and NMTC since 2022. Salame also notes that considering the "compatibility of the creative process" is a factor in season selection. "It doesn't mean that [all writers, dramaturgs, and O'Neill staff must] work in the same way, but that the ways we work must work well together."

Once the selections are finalized and writers are on board, they are paired with their workshop dramaturg—a foundational pillar of the O'Neill's new work development process.

"When it comes to new plays, a dramaturg is similar to an editor for a novelist", says Carrie Chapter, who has been involved with the O'Neill as a dramaturg,

a literary office staff member, and an NCI alum since 2008. “The dramaturg advocates for the playwright’s greater artistic intention, helping realize the goals of the piece and how to achieve them. They are good listeners and good confidants.”

A dramaturg’s role—at the O’Neill and in the industry at large—varies, depending on what each playwright needs for their show and process. A dramaturg may pose questions that help pique creative curiosity, navigate script revisions, offer suggestions on possible avenues to explore, or provide additional research on a specific element in the piece. According to Pennington, “When it comes to new work, the dramaturg often functions as both an early audience member and collaborative editor. They can articulate—and ideally, help bridge—the distance between the creator’s intention and the effect their work is giving in the moment, with empathy and awareness”.

According to a report on the first five years of the O’Neill’s history by founder George C. White, and corroborated by a scholarly article by Joel Schechter, American dramaturgy had a major genesis right here at the O’Neill. The Conferences sprang from a mission to provide space for writers to gather and collaborate freely. As industry intrigue ramped up in the mid-1960’s, critics and producers were coming into Waterford all the more frequently. White and inaugural NPC Artistic Director Lloyd Richards had to find a way to protect the writers and not hinder their creative expression, or be influenced by commercial filtering themselves. Richards was drawn to the idea of “us[ing] an especially skilled critic as a sort of ombudsman between the director and the dramatist,” stated George C. White in his report on the first five years. “I suggested that the name for this person might be stolen from Bertolt Brecht’s theater and we call them ‘Dramaturgs.’”

This arrangement, in turn, offered writers a concentrated period of development for the work that was not driven by industry influence or critique, but rather by a focused collaboration led by the writer and their goals. This practice was a first step towards the enduring legacy of the O’Neill—and its intensive mission to support theater makers and the development of their work in an incubated environment of creativity, thought, and artistic exploration. Today, dramaturgical support is integrated into our National Puppetry Conference and Young Playwrights Festival, in addition to NPC and NMTC.

The O’Neill campus, overlooking the Long Island Sound, is a singular place to collaborate creatively. “It’s insulated, not isolated. There’s a unique overlap of Conferences and disciplines, and when you are there, you understand yourself as an artist as a part of something”, says Zeina Salame. “A new work playwright can be very vulnerable. The conditions of the O’Neill support relationship-building, and the container of the place itself allows for trust to get built very quickly.” Through walks along the beach or conversations overlooking the ocean at 2am on an exchange between two characters, the whole O’Neill campus is the artists’ home for creating and honing their work.

“The O’Neill allows the creative process to be deeply vulnerable, available, and immersive”, says Carrie Chapter. “With play development having a

greater risk of ending, the O’Neill is the last of its kind in a way; it’s even more of a sanctuary.”

“Playwrights, librettists, and composers are scribes. Whether it’s wildly fictional or based in reality, they are offering us the language, the text, that becomes the work in which we understand the society and the current world around us”, says Salame.

“You get to encounter new work as it’s finding itself”, says Chapter. “And there are some really wonderful plays that may not ever get to a full production. Whether they go on to a full production or not, you can say ‘I saw that at the O’Neill!’, allowing it to get its lifeforce and stage time.”

Being an audience member at the O’Neill means that you get to see theater in its very first stage of development—and often experience the very first time it’s read aloud. “You get to be in the room where it happened”, says Salame. “O’Neill audiences are savvy and often know how their presence in the room helps shape next steps of play. It really matters that the audience is there.



Where the audience laughs, cries, is silent, or shifts in their seat all influences how the play is developed.” What some might deem impossible to stage is not a concern here, and it can be uniquely thrilling for audience members to imagine the potential for a show’s full staging.

The dramaturg’s role during readings and public presentations is to take in everything that happens during the show, and then lead a constructive conversation with the audience in talkbacks following the performance. Here, the dramaturg gathers information beyond ‘what did you like?’, but rather, ‘what did you understand from this specific moment in the show? Or this one?’ In this regard, a talkback at the O’Neill is very different from a talkback at a fully produced show, where the focus is often on what the audience wants to know from the creative team.

“When we lose new work, we lose ourselves”, says Pennington. “What we do is vital to the expansion of the English-language theatrical canon. The thing to remember is that very few of our most esteemed alumni were heavy-hitters their first time at the O’Neill—it was only with dramaturgical care and other institutional connections that made them the next big playwright, the next big composer.”

The enduring legacy of the O’Neill and its commitment to writers would not be possible without our dramaturgs—or without you, the audience. Thank you for supporting new voices, for uplifting new work, and for your continued contribution to crafting the next bold act of the American Theater.

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to the National Playwrights Conference. This is my second year as Artistic Director, and I couldn't be more honored to share with you the work this summer. More than a conference, this is a laboratory for new work, and you, our audience, are an important partner in each play's growth.

This year we received over 1,600 submissions: new plays that have not yet been produced, and whose writers, submitting blindly, come from a range of backgrounds, ages, and experiences. Thanks to a group of dedicated readers and an extraordinary staff, we've read through all these works and selected four plays to develop this summer, as well as two works to "incubate" during the fall and spring on the O'Neill campus.



These six works represent a cross section of our country and our field and celebrate the uniqueness of live theater as an art form. *49 Days* by Haruna Lee, *DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA* by Phanésia Pharel, *The Myth of the Two Marcos* by Tony Meneses, and *The Ingenue* by Eleanor Burgess, will provide a mix of stories and entertainment that will help us know ourselves and our neighbors better. In addition to working with professional creative teams throughout their workshop, they will also receive mentorship and support from this year's Artist in Residence, NPC alum Adam Rapp. While on campus, Rapp will work on his play, *Goats and Monkeys*, ahead of its developmental residency in the fall.

Alexa Derman's *Beauty* and Dominic Finocchiaro's *s(c)e(n)e[n]* will also grow in development thanks to the resources and time provided by the O'Neill.

Thank you for being our partners in developing new work for the American Theater. The urge to make meaning out of our lived experiences is a hallmark of humanity, and these works will enrich our understanding and provide extraordinary theater events while doing so. We are glad to have you along with us for the ride.

MELIA BENSUSSEN
Artistic Director,
National Playwrights Conference

NATIONAL PLAYWRIGHTS CONFERENCE

JUNE 17-JULY 5

49 DAYS • *DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA* •
THE MYTH OF THE TWO MARCOS • *THE INGENUE*

The National Playwrights Conference—the O'Neill's founding program—is a national laboratory offering resources vital to creative risk-taking. Every year, innovative, unproduced works are selected from a pool of 1,000+ submissions to be developed with the support of a professional company of actors, designers, dramaturgs, and directors. For this development, the Conference proudly implements a staged reading process born of the workshop model developed early in the O'Neill's history by its founder, George C. White, and NPC's inaugural Artistic Director, Lloyd Richards. The remaining time in each writer's residency is self-directed—to think, create, and interact with other artists. This year's talented group of writers join a cadre of O'Neill playwright alumni who have reimaged the American theater in fundamental ways, including August Wilson, David Henry Hwang, Wendy Wasserstein, Jeremy O. Harris, Dominique Morisseau, Martyna Majok, and more.

Funding for the National Playwrights Conference is provided by:

The Shubert Foundation
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Charitable Trust
Burry Fredrik Foundation

Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation
Lucille Lortel Foundation
Estate of Thomas J. Aberger
Actors' Equity Foundation

June 17 7pm
June 21 7pm

49 Days

BY HARUNA LEE

About the Show

As their ancestors broadcast a radio show with Japanese pop songs that no living person can hear, three generations of the Nishiyama clan gather in the wake of a family tragedy. Lyrical and overtly theatrical, this bilingual radio play explores what's lost and what's gained when we hold too tightly to our grief—and delves into the unexpected consequences of language, legacy, and what's left unsaid.



Haruna Lee
PLAYWRIGHT

(they/them) is a non-binary Taiwanese/Japanese/American theater maker, screenwriter, educator, and community steward whose work is rooted in liberation and healing. They teach at Yale in the MFA playwriting program. www.harunalee.com

What advice do you give to aspiring playwrights?

"Your writing has a soul, a divine architecture. When you stop listening to what other people want you to write and listen to yourself, this authentic scribe emerges and writing becomes this beautiful, beloved practice you can return to over and over again."

June 18 7pm
June 22 3pm

DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA

BY PHANÉSIA PHAREL

About the Show

FACT: Maria was last seen at her Quinceañera. FACT: The party ended early due to an unknown emergency. FACT: Maria has not responded to any messages in 36 hours. Now, Maria's three best friends must race against the clock to find out what, exactly, happened at her Quince—and bring her home alive—in this comic thriller about secrets, sisterhood, and solving crime.



Phanésia Pharel
PLAYWRIGHT

is a Haitian-American playwright from a dragon fruit farm in Miami. She is the 2025-2027 Playwriting Fellow at Emory University and will make her Off-Broadway debut with *The Waterfall* at WP Theater in Spring of 2026. Commissions include the Atlantic Theater and La Jolla Playhouse. MFA: UC San Diego.

What inspired you to create this piece?

"My best friends inspired the play. While no one went missing, a lot of what happens in this play comes from a truthful place. I believe young women often help each other survive—and I wanted to honor the power of young friendships."

June 24 7pm
June 28 7pm

The Myth of the Two Marcos

BY TONY MENESES

About the Show

When Marco meets Marco in 1997 Albuquerque, an unlikely friendship begins between two boys with the same name but vastly different personalities and outlooks on life. When they discover a mutual love of comic books, the local comic shop becomes a sanctuary for both teens as they're introduced to an Aztec superhero who becomes their guide through a time long forgotten.



Tony Meneses
PLAYWRIGHT

Tony Meneses's plays include *Guadalupe in the Guest Room*, *The Hombres*, *El Borracho*, and *twenty50*. Alum: Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, Ars Nova Play Group, Sundance Retreat at Ucross, Playwrights Realm Fellowship. Development: Berkeley Rep Ground Floor, Denver Center New Play Summit, Old Globe Powers New Voices, Pacific Playwrights Festival. Published by DPS & TRW.

“Why are you drawn to plays as a means of storytelling?”

“There are things you can only do in a play. When I teach, I often try to boil it down to Time and Space. In a play, there are INFINITE things you can do with time and space, and given that one of the themes of this piece is time itself, I was super excited to develop a vocabulary where time could be explored and exploded in all kinds of ways!”

June 25 7pm
June 29 3pm

The Ingenue

BY ELEANOR BURGESS

About the Show

In this fleet-footed riff on Hannah Cowley's 18th-century comedy, *The Belle's Stratagem*, we find our romantic leads in a serious bind. Engaged since childhood, Leticia and Doricort will inherit a fortune upon marriage—unless one of them calls off the wedding, granting the jilted party the full estate. Both use every bit of trickery at their disposal to give the other cold feet in this spirited metatheatrical ode to comedy, the follies of youth, and the theater itself.



Eleanor Burgess
PLAYWRIGHT

Eleanor Burgess's plays have been produced and developed at theaters across America, including Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Rep, Geffen Playhouse, Playwrights Horizons, McCarter Theatre Center, Page 73, and New York Theatre Workshop. She has also written extensively for film and television. Originally from Massachusetts, she studied history at Yale College and Dramatic Writing at NYU/Tisch.

“What are you looking for in developing this piece at the O'Neill?”

“While all of my previous plays have been funny, this is my first time writing an out-and-out comedy—a play whose main purpose is to bring people joy through laughter. Even more so than drama, comedy can't just live on the page: it lives in performance, and in conversation with an audience. I'm thrilled to use this time at the O'Neill to test out different script and performance choices, to figure out ways to get more laughs (and more joy) in per minute.”

NPC FINALISTS

This year, we welcomed a record-breaking 1,600 submissions to the National Playwrights Conference. Here are the 95 outstanding plays selected as Finalists, which make up the top 5% of all pieces submitted for consideration this season.

Round Yon Virgin by Grace Barry
Saturn's Children by Ben Beckley
Wave After Wave (f.k.a. this man i call mi primo) by Benjamin Benne
PRICK by Serena Berman
God's Flesh by Amy Berryman
Jerusalem, Florida by Molly Bicks
In Case Of Bruising by Kamila Boga
Mabel's Mine by Lyndsey Bourne
1999 by Stacey Campbell
Hit Machine by Jonathan Caren
THE WRONGED PARTY by June Carryl
TEN GRAND by Kate Cortesi
The Gulf by Steve Cosson
MY FAMILY WATCHING TELEVISION by Milo Cramer
Episodes by Kallan Dana
Grandmother/Bathtub by Brian Dang
Hiraeth, or when Pluto was a planet by Jayne Deely
Vanessa the Miracle Girl by Maddie Dennis-Yates
Beauty by Alexa Derman
THE NEGROES HAVE RISEN by Maxine Dillon
ÂN CHOI //eat. play. rage. (A don't fuck with the weekend shift play)
 by Carolina Dõ
Golden Record Club by Lisa Dring
friend request. by Jonathan Edmondson
Stoneheart by Georgina Escobar
Boys' Club (No Girls Aloud) by Olivia Facini
High School Dybbuk by Shara Feit
s(c)e(n)e[n] by Dominic Finocchiaro
Ping Pong Play by Kaela Garvin
Wolf/Pack by Samuel Giberga
Your Undecaying Flames by Maximillian Gill
Rise and Beings by Rudi Goblen
Special Correspondent by Jacqueline Goldfinger
You Should Be So Lucky by Alyssa Haddad-Chin
American Realism by Christina Ham
Kin by Gethsemane Herron-Coward
Alien of Extraordinary Ability by Chloe Hung

No Cure by Jake Jeppson
The Red Man by JuCoby Johnson
Here Kitty Kitty by Janielle Kastner
#'s by Chad Kaydo
the fog comes on little cat feet by Amanda Keating
Portrait (holding a mirror) by Georgette Kelly
Kim's Fine Food by Garrett Kim
Don't Go Into the Woods by Frances Koncan
Melt.Punish by James La Bella
Heartwreck by Jerry Lieblich
THE AMAZON by Alex Lin
Provenance by Jennifer Maisel
Afropick by Gloria Majule
Shot List by Eric Marlin
The Nativity Starring Keisha Taylor by Olivia Matthews
RECYCLE, BABY! by Kate McMorran
THE WHITES, a catastrophic comedy by Charlotte Meehan
Best Foreign by Francisco Mendoza
1973 by winter miller
Words We Believe by Rehana Mirza
Paro by elia monte-brown
Tremolo by Regan Moro
PIN. by Sam Mueller
Money Shot by Dhari Noel
Both by Paloma Nozicka
Masters of Fine Arts by A. Rey Pamamat
Caretake of Her by kanishk pandey
this is a face by J.C. Pankratz
Brother Rabbit by Jonathan Payne
'tia pray a sound by a.k. payne
The Committee by Brendan Pelsue
los pecados de iberia by Ricardo Pérez
LABOR by Christina Pumariega
TOWN MEETING by Monica Raymond
Cold War Choir Practice by Ro Reddick
Fear Less by Jackie Reingold
When the Party's Over by Esperanza Rosales Balcarcel
I Know the End by Jan Rosenberg
A Plausible History of Xicotencatl II by Jaymes Sanchez
The Fish by Madeline Sayet
anypercent by Brian Scanlan
God and Girl by Emma Schillage
Six Inches Above the Knee by Sally Seitz
THE JAZMINES: a rage play - and for legal reasons, a parody.
 by Jasmine Sharma

Man Up by kyle smith

MAB: A Horror Play by Hayley Spivey

Rollback by Marissa Stamps

BUNNIES by Caitlin Saylor Stephens

Icky Russ by Dominic Taylor

Tatiana by Danny Tejera

Mercury Makes the Skin Glow by Gaven Trinidad

SPREAD by Jesús Valles

Werewolves: A Play About Young Children & Late Capitalism & Their Caretakers
by Liba Vaynberg

WOOD [a shit show] by Haygen-Brice Walker

The Talking Party by Bailey Williams

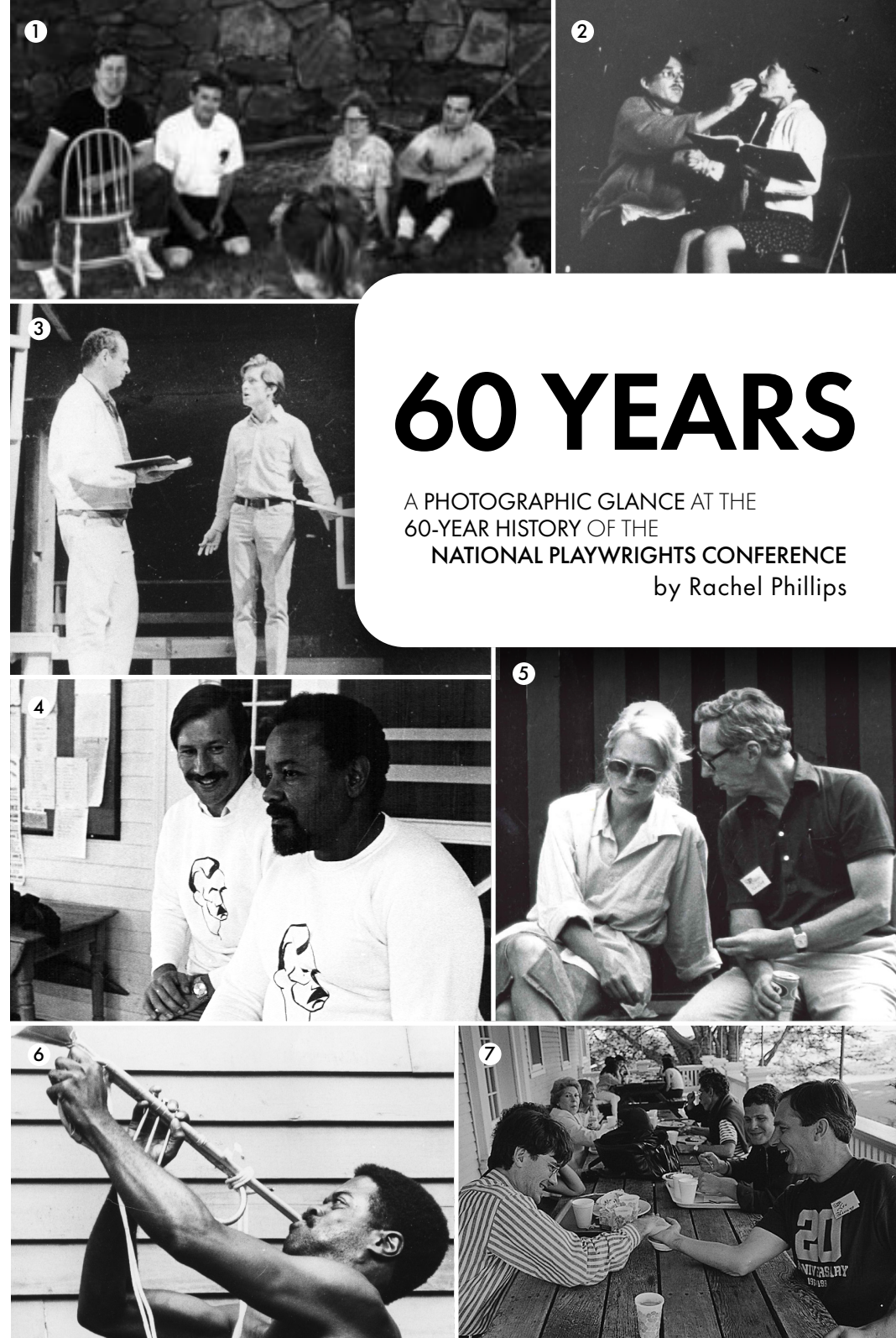
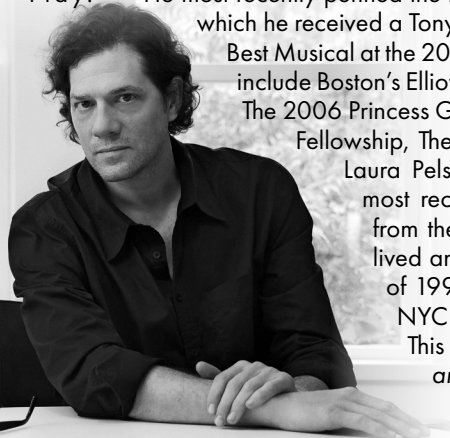
SUMMER 2025 ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

ADAM RAPP

ADAM RAPP is an award-winning playwright and director. He is the author of numerous plays, which include *Nocturne* (American Repertory Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop), *Finer Noble Gases* (26th Humana Festival, Edinburgh Fringe), *Stone Cold Dead Serious* (A.R.T.), *The Metal Children* (The Vineyard), and *Red Light Winter* (Steppenwolf, Barrow Street Theatre), for which he won Chicago's Jeff Award for Best New Work, an OBIE, and was named a finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize. His production of *Finer Noble Gases* received a Fringe First Award from the 2006 Edinburgh Festival, where he was also named Best Newcomer by The List. *The Sound Inside* premiered at the 2018 Williamstown Theatre Festival, and then transferred to Broadway, where it enjoyed a six-month sold-out run at Studio 54. *The Sound Inside* was nominated for six Tony Awards, including Best Play.

He most recently penned the book for the musical, *The Outsiders*, for which he received a Tony Award nomination. *The Outsiders* won Best Musical at the 2024 Tony Awards. His playwriting honors include Boston's Elliot Norton Award, The Helen Merrill Prize, The 2006 Princess Grace Statue, a Lucille Lortel Playwright's Fellowship, The Benjamin H. Danks Award, the PEN/Laura Pels International Foundation Award, and most recently, a 2021 Arts and Letters Award from the Academy of Arts and Letters. He has lived and worked in New York City since May of 1991, and currently splits his time between NYC and upstate New York.

This summer, he will develop his play, *Goats and Monkeys*, alongside the NPC cohort.



60 YEARS

A PHOTOGRAPHIC GLANCE AT THE
60-YEAR HISTORY OF THE
NATIONAL PLAYWRIGHTS CONFERENCE

by Rachel Phillips



PHOTO CAPTIONS

First page

PHOTO 1: O'Neill founder George C. White addresses the attendees at the first National Playwrights Conference. Held in 1965, it included 20 playwrights who gathered to take part in panels with designers, directors, producers, actors, and critics and discuss their relationship with these other disciplines.

PHOTO 2: Peggy Pope, John Guare, and Kay Michaels perform in Guare's *House of Blue Leaves* at the 1966 Conference. This year, the Conference moved from talk to action with two full productions and a number of staged readings.

PHOTO 3: Michael Douglas acts in *Summertime* by Ron Cowen at NPC in 1967. The playwrights deemed the staged readings so successful that they became the focus of the Conference as they continue to be today.

PHOTO 4: George C. White and Lloyd Richards sit on the Hammond Mansion porch in 1969. This was Richards' first summer as Artistic Director of NPC. He helped reform and shape the Conference, serving as Artistic Director until 1999.

PHOTO 5: Meryl Streep and Peter Van Slyck sit in the Amphitheater during Streep's summer as an actress in the Conference in 1975. During those years, it was common for actors to appear in multiple plays; Streep performed in five that year in one of her earliest professional jobs.

PHOTO 6: Howard Rollins Jr. blows the trumpet in August Wilson's *Fences* in 1983. This was Wilson's second year at the Conference, following the inclusion of Ma Rainey's *Black Bottom* the year prior. He would return in 1984, 1986, 1994, and 2002.

PHOTO 7: Playwrights John Patrick Shanley and Lee Blessing settle a friendly argument after lunch on the Sea Porch in 1984. Shanley and Blessing came to the O'Neill through an open submissions process instituted by Lloyd Richards that is still in use today.

Second page

PHOTO 8: Playwright Jeff Wanshell speaks with Edith Oliver during the 1988 National Playwrights Conference. Oliver was a theater critic and ardent supporter of new works who spent 20 years as a dramaturg at the Conference.

PHOTO 9: Cynthia Nixon and Justin McCarthy rehearse *I Have Often Dreamed of Arriving Alone in a Strange Country* by Patricia Cobey in 1992. Many well-known actors performed at the Conference early on in their careers.

PHOTO 10: Artistic Director James Houghton sits with playwright-performer Bill Irwin at the 2003 National Playwrights Conference. Houghton took over for Lloyd Richards in 2000 and led the Conference through 2003.

PHOTO 11: Romi Dias and Jayne Houdyshell perform in Adam Bock's *The Receptionist* at the Conference in 2006. Playwrights may pass through multiple O'Neill programs; Bock is also an alum of the National Theater Institute.

PHOTO 12: Playwright Deborah Zoe Laufer and Artistic Director Wendy C. Goldberg attend a table read for her play, *Leveling Up*, in 2011. Goldberg led NPC from 2005 to 2022 and was the first Artistic Director to direct a play each season.

PHOTO 13: Playwright Martyna Majok attends rehearsal for her play, *Queens*, in 2017. Many playwrights have gone on to win prestigious awards, including Majok, who won the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for her play, *Cost of Living*.

PHOTO 14: People gather in Blue Gene's Pub and raise a glass to toast Celine Song at the pinning for her play, *Endlings*, at the 2018 Conference. The pinning is an O'Neill tradition in which the writer signs a copy of the show program and pins it to the wall.

PHOTO 15: Playwrights and other staff members enjoy a celebration during the 2023 Conference. In addition to working on their pieces, writers spend time in residency at the O'Neill, building community with their fellow writers and other artists.

PHOTO 16: Artistic Director Melia Bensussen gives the curtain speech prior to a reading of *You Are Cordially Invited to the End of the World* by Keiko Green during the 2024 Conference. Bensussen served as Guest Artistic Director in 2023 before being selected from a pool of more than 180 applicants to take on the role full-time in 2024.



THE TURNING • THAT GIRL

The National Music Theater Conference is the nation's premier program for the development of music theater. Each year, NMTC rigorously reviews hundreds of submissions from a national pool before selecting a small number of exciting new works to undergo an intensive development process with leading directors, music directors, dramaturgs, and actors, culminating in public script-in-hand staged readings. In keeping with the ethos of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, the National Music Theater Conference strives to create a supportive, collaborative environment in which emerging and established artists alike are encouraged to explore, experiment, and take risks with their work-in-progress. This year's selections join a long legacy of works that began their lives here in Waterford, including *Avenue Q*, *Teeth*, *In the Heights*, *Violet*, *Nine*, and more.

Funding for the National Music Theater Conference is provided by:

The Shubert Foundation
Bobbie & Loren Theodore
Jerome Robbins Foundation

Rodgers & Hammerstein Foundation
Actors' Equity Foundation

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to the National Music Theater Conference. I am in my eighth year serving as Artistic Director, and it is an immense honor and privilege to hold this position.

Our open submission process consistently garners a rich collection of artists and ideas. Submitting work to the Conference is an enormous act of bravery. The creative limitlessness of writers never ceases to amaze me. This year, after receiving a near record-breaking number of submissions, we've selected two incredible shows that are rich with theatrical spirit, brimming with beautiful music, and ready for the rigorous development process that has made NMTC a national leader in musical theater development.

That Girl (Ari Afsar and Rehana Lew Mirza) and *The Turning* (Zack Zadek and Sammi Cannold) are perfect choices for NMTC. They both embrace the idiosyncratic nature of live theater.

They both celebrate the magical suspended disbelief of characters singing their innermost desires. Pieces like these—that have the ability to touch the deepest part of our humanity, stimulate our intellectual curiosity, and leave us entertained—are the pieces that are begging to be developed at the O'Neill. In turn, they are pieces that will continue to push the art form forward and define what is possible for the future of musical theater.

From our beautiful staff to our deeply insightful pool of readers to you, our beloved audience, NMTC reminds us that real development is essential in order to create impactful and intentional theatrical work. The writers that come to NMTC work relentlessly with their directors, music directors, dramaturgs, and casts to build something unique and powerful, and the NMTC staff is here to shepherd, care for, and protect that work to ensure the writers have the most productive and enriching experience possible.

See musicals. Talk about them, support them, and embrace them. There's nothing like them.

Thank you for coming.

ALEXANDER GEMIGNANI
Artistic Director,
National Music Theater Conference



July 5 3pm
 July 9 7pm
 July 11 7pm

That Girl

MUSIC & LYRICS BY
ARI AFSAR

BOOK BY
REHANA LEW MIRZA

About the Show

It's 1971, and two very different women find themselves in competition over one's longtime wannabe-rockstar boyfriend in a love triangle that will have major consequences for everyone. Thirty years later, their estranged daughters—half-sisters Minnow and Saira—reunite to solve the mystery behind their father's breakthrough hit in this uplifting pop-rock comedy about love, loss, and legacy.

“What inspired you to create this piece?”

“We wanted to tell this story as two mixed women who never get to see sisterhood that crosses cultures and generations. We also wanted to tell the story of important American histories (the Vietnam War and 9/11) from the viewpoint of Americans who don't get their perspectives represented often enough. By using comedy and centering femme relationships in our storytelling, we hope that these layers of history and representation are subconsciously absorbed.”



Ari Afsar MUSIC & LYRICS

Musicals: *I & You* (Lauren Gunderson; McCarter Theatre Center commission), *That Girl* (Rehana Lew Mirza; Berkeley Rep Groundfloor), *Lyle Lyle Crocodile* (Pasek & Paul; Pasadena Playhouse, Sony Original Movie), *Silhouettes* (Jordan Ealey; University of Rochester), *JEANNETTE* (Lauren Gunderson & Jordan Ealey; LMU, TX State, Signature Theatre, O'Neill NMTC, WMPAC). Afsar originated Eliza in Chicago's *Hamilton*, starred in LP's world-premiere of *Bhangin' It/Bhangra Nation*, and starred in Netflix's *Wedding Season*. Awards: Georgia Bogardus Holof Lyricist Award, AAUW Development Grant, Miss California, Top 10 Miss America, American Idol Top 36, Artivism Fellow at BAC, DGF Fellow, NYU MPA Candidate.



Rehana Lew Mirza BOOK

Rehana Lew Mirza's plays/musicals include: *Bhangin' It/Bhangra Nation* (with Sam Willmott and Mike Lew; Birmingham Rep, LP, Orchard Project, Rhinebeck, Springboard; Rodgers Award); *Hatefuck* (First Floor; WP/Colt Coeur); *Soldier X* (Ma-Yi); *Tomorrow, Inshallah* (Living Room; Storyworks/HuffPost commission); *Neighborhood Watch* (NNPN/InterAct commission; Jackalope 2025); and *Barriers* (Desipina, AATC). Awards: Kleban, NYFA, HBO Access, Lilly, TCG; Residencies: Mellon, WP, CCTP, Colt Coeur member. MFA: Columbia; BFA: Tisch. (she/her)

Why are you drawn to musicals as a means of storytelling?

“We love the heart in musicals. For this particular story, sometimes we imagine what it was like for our parents in the 70s. Our heads and our hearts go there so quickly in the creation of this musical.”

July 6 3pm
 July 10 7pm
 July 12 7pm

The . Turning

MUSIC, BOOK, & LYRICS BY
ZACK ZADEK

DEVELOPED WITH
SAMMI CANNOLD

About the Show

In this gripping folk thriller, best friends Gracie and Nora are eager to escape the hustle of LA for a weekend at Oasis—an exclusive wellness retreat hidden among California’s isolated sequoia groves. But as the self-help routines become seductively dangerous, their friendship and courage are put to the test. This electrifying mystery-box musical radiates with a folk sensibility and Americana-infused score as it asks the question: How far would you go to heal?

“Why are you drawn to musicals as a means of storytelling?”

“I’m deeply obsessed with story and, in my opinion, musicals are simply the greatest form of storytelling. Music is a direct line to invoke and share emotion, and the chance to fuse so many different disciplines in service of one cohesive narrative is something that no other medium can compete with. *The Turning* is, at its heart, a story between two best friends getting caught up in something bigger than themselves—and it’s the combination of music and immersive theatricality that will hopefully allow audiences to have an emotional experience alongside our characters.” - Zack



Zack Zadek BOOK, MUSIC, & LYRICS

Zack Zadek is a Brooklyn-based musical theater writer. His musical *Deathless* won the Weston New Musical Award and was produced at Goodspeed Musicals (dir. Tina Landau). Zack is a MacDowell, Yaddo, DGF, Ucross, and VCCA Fellow, and finalist for the Kleban Prize, Fred Ebb Award, and Jonathan Larson Grant. Upcoming musicals include projects for Warner Bros. (with David Auburn), Universal Studios (with Charlie Kaufman & Eva H.D.), XRoads Entertainment (with Steve Koren and Mark O’Keefe), and commissions from Arena Stage (with Emily Feldman), Manhattan Theatre Club (with Liza Birkenmeier), Discovering Broadway, and Ars Nova.



Sammi Cannold CO-DEVELOPER

Sammi Cannold is a Broadway director and filmmaker who is one of Forbes’ “30 Under 30 in Hollywood & Entertainment”, one of Variety’s “10 Broadway Stars to Watch”, a Sundance Institute Fellow in both Feature Film and Theatre, and a Drama Desk Award winner. She’s an alum of Stanford University and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Why are you excited to bring this piece to the O’Neill and what do you hope to accomplish while here?

“Zack and I could not be more elated or honored to be bringing *The Turning* to the O’Neill. We’re greatly looking forward to digging in at the table and iterating in an artist-driven process where we can develop and hone the piece as it approaches the production phase. We’re exceptionally grateful to be working in an environment where we can dramatically explore and take risks. We want to express our immense appreciation to the team at the O’Neill for hosting us and *The Turning*.” - Sammi

NMTC FINALISTS

Out of over 430 submissions of bold, new pieces of music theater, the following 8 were chosen as finalists for consideration in this year's summer conference.

Dignity, Always Dignity

Book by Zachary Fine and Bryce Pinkham
Music and Lyrics by Rona Siddiqui

Falling Forward

Music and Lyrics by Karl Amundson
Book by Emily Fink

Miss Hysteria

Book, Music, and Lyrics by Laura Schein and Ben Zeadman

The Oscar Micheaux Project

Music by Alphonso Horne
Book by Jesse Kearney and Cara Reichel
Lyrics by Jesse Kearney and Peter Mills
Additional Music by Peter Mills

Planet W: A Science-Fiction Musical

Book, Music, and Lyrics by Franco Giacomorra and Matt Coakley
Additional Contribution by Marc David Wright

Sunwatcher

Music by Tidtaya Sinutoke
Book and Lyrics by Isabella Dawis

That Girl

Music and Lyrics by Ari Afsar
Book by Rehana Lew Mirza

The Turning

Book, Music, and Lyrics by Zack Zadek
Developed with Sammi Cannold

STAY UP TO DATE!



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Theater Center



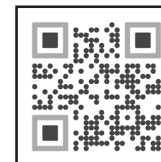
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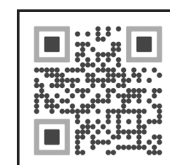
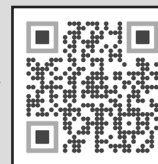


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NATIONAL PUPPETRY CONFERENCE

JUNE 1-15

PUPPETRY PERFORMANCES • VIRTUAL MASTERCLASSES

The National Puppetry Conference provides a unique opportunity for creativity and exploration. Masters in the field of puppetry inspire and nurture participants while sharing their artistry and ingenuity. Each June, participants gather from across the globe to create works that defy the bounds of contemporary theater and the imagination. Puppet artists participate in workshops, rehearsals, masterclasses, and individual critique sessions over the twelve-day conference. In the spirit of founding members Jane Henson; George Latshaw; Richard Termine; Bobbi Nidzgorski; Bart P. Roccoberton, Jr.; and Jim and Margo Rose, the Conference remains dedicated to creating a nurturing and supportive environment for artists to explore performance styles, develop new works of puppetry, and discover innovative techniques and projects that expand the boundaries of puppetry in performance.

Funding for the National Puppetry Conference is provided by:

Cheryl Henson The Jane Henson Foundation and others
Heather Henson Leslee Asch

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 35th Anniversary of the National Puppetry Conference! We are delighted to have you join us for this very special year. I have been with the Conference since the start, first as a Guest Artist, then as Director of the Emerging Artists, and now as Artistic Director since 2002. It has been an honor and a privilege to continue encouraging puppet artists to create and communicate through the visual and kinetic form of the puppet. There is a real joy in helping artists find their own voice and vision. My wonderful staff continually encourages our puppet artists to push beyond their boundaries and develop new works of theater.



This year, we're welcoming Guest Artists from around the country and the world. Alice Laloy will join us from France with a workshop on the "Human Puppet," as will Japan-born New Yorker Maiko Kikuchi with "Bipedal Walking in a Crocodile Skin," Kurt Hunter from Minneapolis with "Marionette Construction," Alice Gootschalk from Germany with "Marionette Performance," and William Wright from Tennessee with "Music Composition for Puppetry." Together with our staff, they round out our exceptionally skilled and talented company. Participants will engage in workshops, rehearsals, masterclasses, and individual critique sessions over the twelve-day Conference—and connect with kindred-spirit puppeteers, too.

We are grateful to—and honor all of—the puppet artists who have helped create our Conference, but especially our founders: Jane Henson, George Latshaw, Richard Termine, Bobbi Nidzgorski, Bart P. Roccoberton, Jr, and Jim and Margo Rose. Without these giants, the Conference would not exist. In the spirit of these founders, we remain dedicated to creating a nurturing and supportive environment for puppet artists. We invite them to explore the extraordinary range and power of the puppet, and we proudly share these explorations with you.

Please enjoy the work that these exceptional artists have developed here, on the grounds of the O'Neill. Thank you for your support of puppetry and puppet artists.

PAM ARCIERO
Artistic Director,
National Puppetry Conference

2025 STRANDS

Pre-Conference

**Writing for Puppets:
A Workshop in Three Acts**
with Liz Hara

**Everything You Wanted to Learn
About Mechs and Then Some!**
with Jim Kroupa

Directing Puppetry
with Noel MacNeal

**Working Group to Create
Puppetry Access in Your
Community!**
with Chamindika Wanduragala

**The Language of Material
and Objects: Movement and
Experimental Puppetry**
with Alice Gottschalk

Main Conference

Marionette Construction
with Kurt Hunter

**Bipedal Walking in
a Crocodile Skin**
with Maiko Kikuchi

Human Puppets
with Alice Laloy

Marionette Performance
with Alice Gottschalk

Music Composition for Puppetry
with William Wright

Emerging Artists
with Richard Termine &
Marsian De Lellis

Resident Company
with Jane Martineau

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Roshina Ratnam



Noel MacNeal



Chamindika
Wanduragala



Liz Hara

35 YEARS OF PUPPETRY

by Emma Brown

Thirty-five years ago, the National Puppetry Conference was launched. But puppetry at the O'Neill didn't start there.

In 1965, Rufus and Margo Rose, founding members of the Conference, worked alongside George White, founder of the O'Neill, and other artists to refurbish what you now know as the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. They hoped to create a safe and welcoming space for learning and performing. And ten years later, in 1975, the Barn Theater was named in honor of Rufus and Margo Rose upon Rufus's passing.

In a first attempt at bringing together puppeteers from around the world, the O'Neill announced the opening of the Institute for Professional Puppetry Arts, a college accredited program, in 1985. A year later, Bart P. Roccoberton Jr.—also one of the Conference co-founders—ran the first year of programming for puppetry as the Institute's director.

When the IPPA closed, Jane Henson—formerly on the Board of Advisors for the IPPA and a Conference founding member—told Roccoberton, "You've proven that puppetry belongs at the O'Neill Center. Here we have direct contact to the playwrights, directors, actors, critics, producers and technicians. What can we do?"

Roccoberton recalls that they “called a meeting at Margo [Rose’s] house and made a decision to try offering a one-week conference with the intention of creating new works for the Puppet Theater.”

A few years later in 1991, participants, puppetry professionals, and guest artists—including Pam Arciero, Cathy Mullen, and Martin P. Robinson—all gathered for the first National Puppetry Conference led by Artistic Director George Latshaw.

“The O’Neill started a community where you come and you learn together, and you create a piece with each famous person,” Bobbi Nidzgorski, another founding member, told us. “And then after the first year, we’re like, wait a minute. We all want to perform our own work—and that’s where all the participant projects started. We really listened to what the community told us they wanted.”

The National Puppetry Conference exhibited the spirit of the O’Neill as participants, teachers, and staff alike adapted the art form to the wants and needs of the community, dedicating their time to supporting new work development.

“Jane Henson had a vision that puppetry should continue to have a home at the O’Neill, taking its rightful place as an integral part of American theater. We considered many possibilities, but ultimately took our inspiration from what makes all the O’Neill conferences so special—their unparalleled development of new work and promotion of dedicated artists,” said Richard Termine, Conference co-founder, photographer, and former Artistic Director (’92-’03).

In 2002, Termine passed the title of Artistic Director to Pam Arciero, who holds it to this day. Arciero continues the process of listening to artists and expanding the program in areas that the community has not fulfilled. “We implemented the process of learning to build a puppet and then learning to perform it by adding the Pre-Conference to the schedule, and expanding the way in which puppets can be used,” said Arciero. “We continue to bring traditional and experimental styles to the Conference and hope to expand the international view in order to push boundaries and experiment.”

Jean Marie Keevins, who joined the staff after being a participant of the Conference herself, is the current Artistic Producer. Keevins, having worked with Jim Rose, told us how “people would ask him about their concern for the future of puppetry. When did he think [puppetry] would die out? And he said, ‘it never has, and I don’t think it ever will.’ And I think that 35 years of the Conference is a testament to that.”



35 YEARS OF PHOTOS
BY **RICHARD TERMINE**



YEAR IN REVIEW

Young Playwrights Festival • National Puppetry Conference • Theatermakers Summer Intensive • National Playwrights Conference • National Critics Institute • National Music Theater Conference • Cabaret & Performance Conference • Beech Party • Henson Residency • Hallow-Gene • Monte Cristo Award • National Theater Institute Semester • Winter Cabaret Series • 2025 Season Announcement



The Apiary (NPC 2022) at 2nd Stage in NYC, 2024. Photo by Joan Marcus.

WRITERS ON WRITING

Featured O'Neill alumni



We Live In Cairo, NMTC 2015



The Apiary, NPC 2022



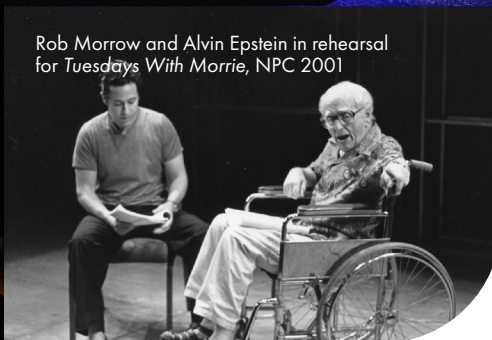
We Live In Cairo writers in rehearsal at the Rose Barn Theater, NMTC 2015



Siluetas (NMTC 2022) at the Power Street Theatre in PA, 2024. Photo by Chris Jordan.



Siluetas, NMTC 2022.



Rob Morrow and Alvin Epstein in rehearsal for *Tuesdays With Morrie*, NPC 2001

KATE DOUGLAS
The Apiary (NPC 2022)

"I wrote this play during lockdown, when I had a felt sense that live theater may never return—so confronting design questions like 'how do we stage the bees?' in real time was both invigorating and challenging. This was my very first professional production, and I am grateful to the O'Neill for priming me for these kinds of production design conversations through robust dramaturgical support. I emerged from NPC with a much stronger script but also a stronger sense of what was essential to me as the writer as I moved quite quickly into a production process. As the script continued to evolve during pre-production and staging to meet the specific needs of this specific production, I leaned heavily on the core values and structural integrity I had built at the O'Neill."

PATRICK LAZOUR
We Live in Cairo (NMTC 2015)

"Showbiz is nuts! And the O'Neill is calm and cool and collected, while also being rigorous, and rich, and rewarding. Believe it or not, the O'Neill was our first EVER experience in musical theater development. We learned what it meant to "share out"—how that is the whole POINT of what we do. Theater's object is the audience and the O'Neill doesn't let you forget that—whether they're rapturously applauding or falling asleep to what you thought was the best song you ever wrote."

ERLINA ORTIZ & ROBI HAGER
Siluetas (NMTC 2022)

On the 2024 Power Street Theatre production:
"The best part of this experience was witnessing the show through the eyes and energy of the incredible Power Street Theatre community. [Our protagonists'] story deeply resonated with PST's audience as many are immigrants and refugees or the children of immigrants and refugees. Hearing the music come to life with an incredible live orchestra made Robi's composer heart very happy. Seeing it come to life really solidified our conviction that the show works and that we should be proud of it. We are really excited to see what the next chapter brings!"

JEFFREY HATCHER
Tuesdays with Morrie (NPC 2001)

"It's terrific having a play last as long as *Tuesdays with Morrie* has. Playwrights are grateful when a script gets one production, but a show that has longevity like this one, and still has an emotional impact on audiences, is a great joy. We spent four days on the workshop at the O'Neill, and we really did experiment with the show. It was much longer at the O'Neill than in its final produced version, and it even had a third character whom we cut after the workshop ended. By the time it was ready for production, the exploration we did at the O'Neill had been incredibly useful. I love the O'Neill. It's a magical place."

O'NEILL ALUMNI PRODUCTIONS

PRODUCED IN 2024-25

The works we've developed have reached every corner of the country and internationally: on Broadway, off-Broadway, the West End, in regional theater circuits, major cities, film and television, educational realms, community theaters, and more. Here are some featured recent productions whose scripts, scores, and librettos started their page-to-stage journey here at the O'Neill—a testament to its wide reach and impact on the American theater landscape.

* NPC ● NMTC + CAB

International

●●●●

<i>Nine</i>	Hope Mill Theatre	Manchester, UK	NMTC '79
<i>Nine</i>	BSC at the Kennedy Center	Washington, DC	NMTC '79
<i>Nine</i>	Short North Stage	Columbus, OH	NMTC '79
<i>Ma Rainey's...</i>	American Players Theatre	Spring Green, WI	NPC '82
<i>Fences</i>	Laguna Playhouse	Laguna Beach, CA	NPC '83
<i>Fences</i>	Trinity Rep	Providence, RI	NPC '83
<i>Joe Turner's...</i>	The Goodman	Chicago, IL	NPC '84
<i>The Piano Lesson</i>	Netflix	International	NPC '86
<i>A Walk in the Woods</i>	Abbey Theatre	Dublin, Ireland	NPC '86
<i>Violet</i>	Montclair State University	Montclair, NJ	NMTC '94
<i>The Wild Party</i>	UNCSA	Winston-Salem, NC	NMTC '97
<i>Fuddy Meers</i>	South Dakota State Univ.	Brookings, SD	NPC '98
<i>Kimberly Akimbo</i> (play)	(Adapted into musical '21)	(Broadway Tour)	NPC '00
<i>Tuesdays With Morrie</i>	Delaware Theatre Company	Wilmington, DE	NPC '01
<i>Avenue Q</i>	Dayton Playhouse	Dayton, OH	NMTC '02
<i>Avenue Q</i>	Music Mountain Theatre	Lambertville, NJ	NMTC '02
<i>Avenue Q</i>	National Theatre Melbourne	Melbourne, Australia	NMTC '02
<i>Avenue Q</i>	West End - Sondheim Theatre	London, UK	NMTC '02
[title of show]	Baldwin Wallace University	Berea, OH	CAB '05
<i>In The Heights</i>	Cleveland Playhouse	Cleveland, OH	NMTC '05
<i>In The Heights</i>	Signature Theatre	Washington, DC	NMTC '05

<i>In The Heights</i>	Sydney Opera House	Sydney, Australia	NMTC '05
<i>In The Heights</i>	Theatre Under The Stars	Houston, TX	NMTC '05
<i>In The Heights</i>	The MUNY	St. Louis, MO	NMTC '05
<i>Ruined</i>	Clark Atlanta University	Atlanta, GA	NPC '06
<i>The Language Archive</i>	Theatre Pro Rata	Minneapolis, MN	NPC '09
<i>The Nether</i>	Renaissance Theaterworks	Milwaukee, WI	NPC '11
<i>Goddess</i>	The Public Theater	NYC, NY	NMTC '13
<i>A Great Wilderness</i>	Generic Theatre	Norfolk, VA	NPC '13
<i>Ugly Lies The Bone</i>	Commonweal Theatre	Lanesboro, MN	NPC '14
<i>We Live in Cairo</i>	New York Theatre Workshop	NYC, NY	NMTC '15
<i>Slave Play</i>	West End - Noel Coward Th.	London, UK	NPC '18
<i>Teeth</i>	Playwrights Horizons	NYC, NY	NMTC '18
<i>Exotic Deadly</i>	San Francisco Playhouse	San Francisco, CA	NPC '21
<i>House of India</i>	The Old Globe	San Diego, CA	NPC '22
<i>Siluetas</i>	Power Street Theatre	Philadelphia, PA	NMTC '22
<i>The Apiary</i>	Second Stage	NYC, NY	NPC '22
<i>You Are Cordially Invited...</i>	Second Stage	NYC, NY	NPC '24
<i>You Are Cordially Invited...</i>	South Coast Repertory	Costa Mesa, CA	NPC '24

In the Heights

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

by Roger Pavey Jr.

Lin-Manuel Miranda was just 19 years old when he began work on *In the Heights* during his Sophomore year of college, after which he brought the promising piece to the O'Neill. This summer marks 20 years since Miranda and Quiara Alegría Hudes gathered at the 2005 National Music Theater Conference to develop *In the Heights*, directed by Tommy Kail.

What came out of that summer was a musical that changed modern theater. Winner of the 2008 Tony Award for Best Original Score, the Grammy for Best Musical Album, and numerous other accolades, *In the Heights* has enjoyed commercial and international success across continents and languages, stage and screen. It continues to be mounted in regional and community theaters across the country every year.

NMTC 2005 helped shape one of the most influential artists of the century at the start of his career. Since then, Miranda has garnered success for his global phenomenon *Hamilton*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and Tonys for Best Score, Book, and Musical. Miranda is also a five-time Grammy winner, and has been attached to a multitude of stage, music, film, and television productions.

Quiara Alegría Hudes—*In the Heights* book writer and 2021 film screenwriter—remains a prolific writer for stage, screen, and beyond. She was recognized as a 2007 Pulitzer Finalist for her play, *Elliot, a Soldier's Fugue*. In 2012, Quiara received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Water by the Spoonful*. Her memoir, *My Broken Language*, was longlisted for the 2021 Carnegie Medal—and her debut novel, *The White Hot*, will be released this fall.

Miranda and his family's ties to the O'Neill have remained strong. In the the 2014 campus restoration, the Lin-Manuel Miranda Studio was dedicated, and the O'Neill honored him at the 2018 Monte Cristo Award in NYC. Moreover, the Miranda Family has made a decade-long commitment to financial assistance for underrepresented students attending our renowned National Theater Institute programs.

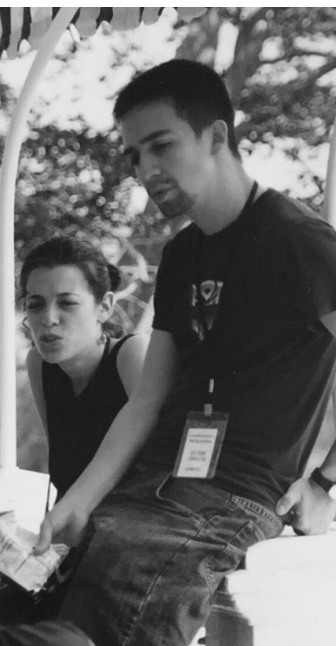
In the Heights holds up as one of the most frequently-produced titles in the O'Neill canon in our 60 years. Its success exemplifies the core of the O'Neill's mission: supporting new voices, new stories, and new work through quality development of great theater. Join us in celebrating Lin, Quiara, Tommy, and the 2005 team of *In the Heights* and its enduring 20-year legacy.



Lin-Manuel Miranda and Tommy Kail at a table read in the Rose Barn



The cast and creative team



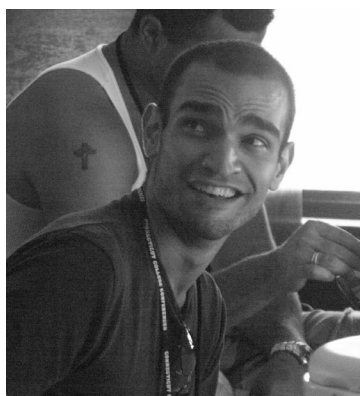
Quiara Alegría Hudes and Lin-Manuel Miranda on the Sea Porch



Alex Lacamoire and Christopher Jackson outside of the White House



The staged reading performance in the Rose Barn



Javier Muñoz



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THE JIM HENSON FOUNDATION PUPPETRY RESIDENCY

Entering its tenth year, the Jim Henson Foundation Puppetry Residency at the O'Neill supports artists working towards the completion of a new piece of puppet theater. Typically spanning 2-3 weeks, this residency offers puppeteers a sanctuary and a laboratory at the O'Neill, which provides ample rehearsal space, housing, and full room and board for all participants. A grant is awarded to the artists by the Henson Foundation to help cover expenses, and the O'Neill's literary staff provides robust dramaturgical support to selected pieces—a unique feature of the residency comparable to the support offered during the National Puppetry Conference and National Playwrights Conference.

Projects are selected for the Henson Residency through an annual open submissions program. Each application undergoes a rigorous evaluation process and review by members of the Henson Foundation and O'Neill artistic staff. Intended to support the final phase of creative work on a piece of puppet theater, projects developed here have premiered at LaMama, HERE Arts Center, 59E59, and more. For more information about the residency, please visit the Henson Foundation website at hensonfoundation.org.





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The Cabaret & Performance Conference, led by Grammy & Emmy Award winner John McDaniel, brings some of the biggest names in cabaret theater to perform at the O’Neill each summer. During its two weeks, it also offers intensive, hands-on artistic guidance and instruction for select up-and-coming performers on the cabaret scene and students, who work with the renowned Conference faculty as well as the many talented guest artists in the Cabaret Fellows and Junior Fellows programs. Previous Conference artists include: Judy Kuhn, Tonya Pinkins, Norm Lewis, Marilyn Maye, Ken Page, Molly Pope, Melissa Manchester, Karen Mason, Christina Bianco, Joyce Breach, Brad Simmons, Matt Baker, Eric Yves Garcia, Mark Hartman, Brian Nash, Natalie Douglas, The Skivvies, Nick Adams, Shirley Jones, Jim Caruso, Billy Stritch, Mimi Hines, Susie Mosher, Betty Buckley, and Tommy Tune.

photo by Isaak Berliner

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Hello and welcome to Cabaret 2025!

My name is John McDaniel and I’m the Artistic Director of the Cabaret & Performance Conference here at the O’Neill. I’m heading into my 13th season here and I absolutely love curating and presenting the series of 10 nightly concerts.

Overall, I shoot for tremendous variety and diversity in what we see and hear. I love presenting up and comers as well as folks who have been a part of the cabaret and concert world for decades!

In addition, I oversee the Cabaret Fellows program, which continues to grow each year, highlighting performers who come from all over to study with us during the Conference. The Junior Fellows program, which consists of high school students, has a brand new leader this year, Jeremiah Downes, who is putting their show together for the very first time. Our adult Fellows also perform on a featured night during the Conference and they are once again under the expert direction of Natalie Douglas and Lennie Watts! Beyond the seven hours of daily classes, the Fellows and Junior Fellows also have the opportunity to see all of the shows, to sing at our open mic nights, and to interact with our visiting guest artists through masterclasses, talkbacks, and workshops. Participating in the Conference is not for the faint of heart!

For a lot of actors and performers, getting onstage with a song and presenting your true and authentic self can be daunting. You are simply unable to hide behind a character but rather are just being and offering yourself. You are conveying the story and the emotions of the song not by pretending, but rather by just being you. It sounds easy, but it can be surprisingly challenging. And when it works and the audience gets to see and experience the authentic person, it can be overwhelmingly beautiful.

I hope you enjoy your time at the Cabaret!

JOHN MCDANIEL
Artistic Director,
Cabaret & Performance Conference



CAB PERFORMANCES



OPENING VARIETY SHOW!

July 16 8pm



AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH EDEN ESPINOSA

July 19 8pm



JOHN LLOYD YOUNG IN CONCERT



STEVE ROSS IN AN EVENING OF COLE PORTER & BEYOND!

July 20 8pm



NATALIE DOUGLAS IN ALL DOLLED UP: THE MUSIC OF DOLLY PARTON

July 22 8pm



LATRICE ROYALE IN TERMS & CONDITIONS (MAY VARY)

July 24 8pm



AN EVENING WITH THE FELLOWS

July 23
7&9pm



THE JUNIOR FELLOWS IN BRIGHT, SHINY, & NEW!

July 25 8pm



KAREN AKERS IN FEELS LIKE HOME

July 26 8pm



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NATIONAL CRITICS INSTITUTE

JUNE 25-JULY 6

The National Critics Institute is the nation's premier summer program for young and mid-career arts critics and cultural journalists. It is a 12-day convening designed to strengthen skills in an increasingly competitive, under-resourced, and fast-paced industry. The workshop makes unique use of the creatives working at the O'Neill to help writers gain insight into specialized areas of the arts, understand arts journalism from all sides, observe first-hand the play development process, and strengthen their understanding of theater and their ability to critique it. Located in a place of great natural beauty, the famously supportive Institute includes workshops on the crafts of reviewing theater, film, performance, and food; discussions of narrative and analysis; insights into the critical process with a faculty composed of America's leading arts critics; explorations of the relationship between critics and social media channels; and studies of best practices and strategies for career development.

LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Yes, there are critics in residence at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. Friendly ones, too.

I'm in my 11th year of running the National Critics Institute, a unique program designed to train and support mid-career cultural journalists. Much of the writing about the arts that you read in your favorite media outlet is likely penned or edited by folks who have spent time with us at the O'Neill.

While they are here, our Fellows discuss everything from the future of the arts to the importance of a well-placed comma. Sad to say, it's the kind of mentoring that has become very hard to find in American newsrooms.

Our program has a long history, reaching back to the earliest days of the O'Neill. I treasure my own long association with this magical place. Here, some of the usual walls come down as artists and journalists ask each other questions and figure out what they have in common and how they can benefit from knowing and understanding each other a little better. All of our Fellows this year are already making major contributions to their fields, dissecting and contextualizing American culture and helping audiences appreciate the work of writers, directors, actors, chefs, filmmakers, designers, and choreographers a little bit more.

I'd be delighted to tell you more about what we do if you see me on campus and buttonhole me. Or chat with one of our fellows and hear something about the person behind the review. We'd love to talk about what excites us.



CHRIS JONES
Director,
National Critics Institute



Funding for the National Critics Institute is provided by:

John S. & James L. Knight Foundation
Foundation of the American Theatre Critics Association The Shubert Foundation

This project is supported by Critical Minded, an initiative to invest in cultural critics of color cofounded by The Nathan Cummings Foundation and The Ford Foundation.

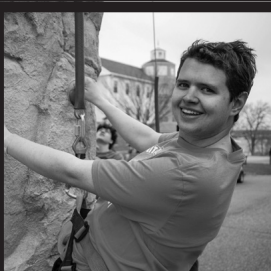


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on the O'Neill Campus

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Founded in 1970, the O'Neill's National Theater Institute provides credit-earning training across multiple theatrical disciplines. The six-week Theatermakers Summer Intensive enables actors, directors, and playwrights to take classes from artists working across disciplines and be in the room as exciting new works are developed in the O'Neill's summer conferences. The program focuses on cultivating constant creativity practice, essential training techniques, high-quality mentorship, and collaborative opportunities. In addition to daily classes, students bring original work to life each week with plays, musicals, and short films— all written, directed, and performed by the ensemble.

Visit NationalTheaterInstitute.org for more information about our programs.

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to Theatermakers—an intensive and unique theater training program for emerging actors, writers, and directors from all over the country and the world. Theatermakers was created as an educational companion to our professional summer conferences to introduce undergraduate and postgraduate artists to the central mission of the O'Neill: developing new work.

Each week, this cohort will collaborate in different configurations to share new plays, musicals, and films with the conference community and the public. It is a rare opportunity for these emerging artists to practice the shaping of new work in real time, with professional mentorship and collaborators that are as determined, creative, and curious as they are. Each week, they observe and learn from the artists in residence here at the O'Neill while witnessing the evolution of the pieces selected for the O'Neill summer. It is a rare opportunity.

Thank you for joining us and supporting these artists and their new work. Each summer our Theatermakers cohort invents new forms, works generously, and redefines our expectations of what theater may be, or what a class can accomplish. We are honored that this summer's cohort chose Theatermakers as their place to create, to learn, to practice, and to collaborate.



Rachel Jett
Artistic Director,
National Theater Institute



The Young Playwrights Festival invites a cohort of students to spend a weekend at the O'Neill with a dedicated creative team—director, dramaturg, and actors—to help them develop their short plays. Students receive a rigorous exploration of their work guided by professional artists as well as a script-in-hand public reading of their new play. With this approach, the young playwrights hone their piece, furthering it from the initial isolation of writing to the collaborative process involved in making their script into a living, breathing play. Additional students are invited as Guest Playwrights to spend the weekend observing the development processes, attending playwriting workshops and rehearsals, and hearing their own scripts read aloud.

Funding for the Young Playwrights Festival is provided by:

Community Foundation
of Eastern Connecticut
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Bodenwein Public Benevolent Foundation
Chelsea Groton Foundation
John Phelan & Cibel Castillo

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

By the time you read this, the 2025 Young Playwrights Festival will have wrapped up its short, but exquisite season. Our 20th anniversary season, mind you.

Our five featured plays dealt variously with:

- the pangs of loneliness after the pandemic;
- the drive to make a name for one's self;
- the desire to commune with the dead and find answers;
- the need to repeat something, even when it's bad for you;
- the tenacity in pursuing the American Dream (if the American Dream were a twice deep-fried pizza with hot dogs and french fries located in a monastery at the peak of Tai Mo Shan in Hong Kong).



Over the course of one weekend, the five Featured Playwrights have their play evolve from the page to the stage with a creative team of actors, directors, and dramaturgs—all, incidentally, alumni of the National Theater Institute. Our sixteen Guest Playwrights get a front row seat to the journey these plays make.

I've always been a fan of process. How does stuff get made? How does an idea become a full-fledged thing? How do plays go from a notion in somebody's head to a fleshed-out, living, breathing performance? When I was growing up, Mister Rogers used to do a series called "How People Make Things" where the viewer would get to see crayons and trumpets and tofu go from inception to completion. To some extent, I'd like to think we offer something similar at YPF.

Each of our five featured YPF plays, each rehearsal room, each creative team is so vastly different, and in every single room such stellar work is being made by people. Discoveries are realized, challenges are overcome, and the collective creativity hums like a machine. An audience gets to see the final results, but our 21 playwrights get to see and experience every facet of a play's evolution. And hopefully, too, theater—in some way—will continue to be a part of their lives.

Enjoy whatever show has brought you to the O'Neill, and here's to hoping we may see you at a future YPF; you'd be very welcome.

Sincerely,

Sophia Chapadjiev
Director of Education & Artistic Director,
Young Playwrights Festival

2025 PLAYS & PARTICIPANTS

Featured Playwrights

Pursuing the American Dream

by Carson Brown

Clark Lane Middle School
8th grade - Waterford, CT

Shadows of Pride

by Tia George
Robert E. Fitch High School
12th grade - Groton, CT

Terrifying Déjà Vu

by Aleena Hasan

Riverdale Country School
9th grade - Bronx, NY

450 Minutes

by Callum Hicks
Saint Ann's School
11th grade - New York, NY

Oni No Mori

by Elsa Ross
Groton Middle School
7th grade - Groton, CT

Guest Playwrights

Ghosts of the Jungle by Henry Bosché; Saint Bernard School, 7th grade - Groton, CT

The Magical Monday by Elara Corriveau; Groton Middle School, 7th grade - Mystic, CT

in the cosmos by Lily Dunham; Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School, 11th grade - New York, NY

Cursed by Kayla Franklin; Old Saybrook Middle School, 7th grade - Old Saybrook, CT

Lost by Angelina Gammone; Clark Lane Middle School, 8th grade - Quaker Hill, CT

Being Seen by Bee Kanofsky; Lehigh Valley Charter High School, 12th grade - Pen Argyl, PA

Rest Their Souls by Basil Lee; Pittsburgh CAPA, 11th grade - Pittsburgh, PA

Chess in the Park by Max Leventon; Choate Rosemary Hall, 12th grade - Greenwich, CT

A Dance Among the Dead by Lorelai Maynard; Clark Lane Middle School,
8th grade - Waterford, CT

Slim by Samantha Olokodana; Clark Lane Middle School, 8th grade - Quaker Hill, CT

Sold Out by Callan Scott; Washington Montessori School, 7th grade - Sharon, CT

The Not List by Summer Stern; Croton Harmon High, 10th grade - Croton on Hudson, NY

To the Top by Rebecca Tsai; Groton Middle School, 7th grade - Groton, CT

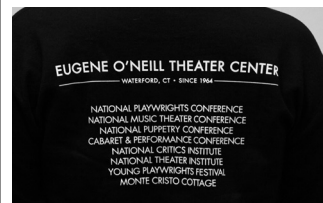
Unseen by Leah Weiser; Walnut Hill School for the Arts, 11th grade - Natick, MA

Ophelia: A Christmas Special by Zixuan Xin; The Lawrenceville School,
11th grade - Lawrenceville, NJ

What We Keep by Chloe Zhao; Trinity School, 11th grade - New York, NY

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THE MICHAEL DOUGLAS MATCH

In 2022, O'Neill Trustee and two-time Oscar winner Michael Douglas honored founder George White with a generous one million dollar challenge. In order to ensure that new voices continue to find their place in the next chapter of the American Theater, all new and increased donations to the O'Neill will be matched dollar-for-dollar.

The list below recognizes those individuals and organizations who have risen to Michael's challenge and invested in the future of the American Theater. For more information on how you can join this momentum, please contact the Development Office.

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COWEN & LIPMAN SOCIETY



The O'Neill is pleased to share that the 1964 Society has been renamed for two longtime members of the O'Neill family: writers and trustees Ron Cowen and Daniel Lipman, in recognition of their commitment of a significant bequest to the O'Neill.

Ron (NPC '67-'69, '72) and Dan (NPC '72) first came to the O'Neill as playwrights during the formative years of the National Playwrights Conference. Cowan's first play, *Summertime*, premiered at the O'Neill in 1967 and was produced the following year at Lincoln Center, where it won the Drama Desk Award. After meeting at the O'Neill in 1972, Ron and Dan began a lifelong personal and professional relationship that would result in the creation of numerous plays, the groundbreaking TV series *Queer as Folk* (U.S.), *Sisters*, and their most important work: *An Early Frost*, which aired on NBC in 1985. It was the first major film to ever address the AIDS epidemic, and they received an Emmy Award and the Peabody Award for their teleplay. Most recently, they wrote the book for *Betty Blue Eyes*, which was produced in London's West End by Sir Cameron Mackintosh and was nominated for the Olivier Award for Best Musical.

"Being at the O'Neill's National Playwrights Conference was a transformative experience for us, as it is for everyone who has ever attended one of their programs. It was where we began as a professional and personal relationship that lasted a lifetime. To say that the O'Neill is significantly responsible for one's life may sound overly "dramatic" — but

in our case, it's true. So it seems fitting to want to give back. To say thank you. And to encourage others whose lives have been touched by the O'Neill to do the same. We would like our legacy not just to be our work, but also to ensure that the O'Neill will continue to provide the opportunities and experience for new artists for a long time to come."

The Cowan & Lipman Society recognizes those individuals who have included a bequest or other type of planned gift for the O'Neill in their estate plans. Members are acknowledged in donor listings and invited to an annual event at the O'Neill. If you have already named the O'Neill in your estate plans, we hope you will let us know by contacting Rob Mooney, Director of External Relations, at 860.443.5378 x 213 or via email at rmooney@theoneill.org.

We would be honored to have you join Ron, Dan, and the following individuals in the Cowan & Lipman Society, and to thank you for a gift that will ensure the endurance of a world-renowned haven for new work and new artists for decades to come.

SOCIETY MEMBERS

*in memoriam

Thomas J. Aberger*
Anne Sullivan Calanquin
Jed Coffin
Jack Gilhooley*
Susan Kelly
Kenneth Kuzmich*

Wendy Kwalwasser
Ron Cowen & Dan Lipman
Lee & David Snyderman
George & Betsy White
Anonymous

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Family Day

June 26

Join us for a pay-what-you-can day of family-friendly crafts and activities. Featuring *Don Quixote Takes New York*, a puppet performance by Loco7.

5:00pm Activities Start
6:30pm Performance



photo by Steven Pisano

beech party²⁰²⁵ sunset on the sound

August 2

Join us in the Sunken Garden in celebrating the culmination of the O'Neill Summer. Featuring unforgettable performances by audience favorites from this year's conferences.

6pm

Learn more at
donate.theoneill.org/beechparty25



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