

THE PUBLIC. **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Else C. Went

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES 2023 EMERGING WRITERS GROUP SPOTLIGHT SERIES

**Free Readings of Full-Length Plays Penned by Playwrights
Nissy Aya, Aya Aziz, Francisca Da Silveira, Katie Đỗ, Ying Ying Li,
Julián Mesri, AriDy Nox, UGBA, and Else C. Went**

February 6, 2023 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced the line-up today for the Emerging Writers Group’s **Spotlight Series**, a collection of invitation-only performances where members of the current cohort present their full-length plays. The staged readings will run from Monday, March 6 through Monday, June 26. A full schedule of performances is included below.

The 2023 Spotlight Series will feature full-length plays and musicals by members of the 2020-2023 Emerging Writers Group: **Nissy Aya, Aya Aziz, Francisca Da Silveira, Katie Đỗ, Ying Ying Li, Julián Mesri, AriDy Nox, UGBA, and Else C. Went**. These early artists began their tenure in the Emerging Writers Group at the beginning of the pandemic. Now, three years later, they will finally have the opportunity to present full-length presentations of their plays.

“The plays in this year’s Spotlight Series feature all the brilliance, love and honesty that has made the 2020-2023 Emerging Writers Group such a joy to have at The Public,” shared The Public’s Associate Director of New Work Development **Jack Phillips Moore**. “I’m so excited for the field to see what these astounding writers have been working on.”

These works are directed and performed by experienced artists from the theatrical community. Admission to the EWG Spotlight Series is free. If interested in attending a reading—or the whole series—please visit the EWG Information Page at publictheater.org and fill out the form to receive an official invitation.

The **Emerging Writers Group** is a component of **The Public Writers Initiative**, a long-term program that provides key support and resources for writers at every stage of their careers. It creates a fertile community and fosters a web of supportive artistic relationships across generations. Time Warner is the Founding Sponsor of the **Emerging Writers Group**. EWG is currently accepting applications for the 2023-2025 cohort. For more information and details on how to apply, visit publictheater.org.

For over 15 years, The Public's **Emerging Writers Group** has brought artists together to create and develop their work in conversation with their peers and The Public Theater community. EWG is a cornerstone of The Public's mission to celebrate and support new generations of storytellers. EWG playwright Ryan J. Haddad is currently represented this season with his play *Dark Disabled Stories*, a co-production with The Bushwick Starr. Previous Public productions by EWG playwrights include Mona Mansour's *The Vagrant Trilogy* (2022) and *Urge for Going* (Public Lab 2011); *Eve's Song* (2018) and *Pretty Hunger* (Public Studio 2017), written by Patricia Lone Lloyd; *Masculinity Max* (Public Studio 2018) by MJ Kaufman; *The Outer Space* (2017) and the Obie Award-winning *No Place to Go* (2012), written by Ethan Lipton; Ricardo Pérez González's *On the Grounds Of Belonging*, presented as part of the Public Studio series in March 2017; Mary Kathryn Nagle's *Manahatta*, which had a Public Studio presentation in 2014; *Detroit '67* (2013), written by Dominique Morisseau; Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' *Neighbors*, presented in Public Lab in February 2010; and Raúl Castillo's *Knives and Other Sharp Objects* in March 2009.

Masks will be required at all presentations for the Emerging Writers Group Spotlight Series.

2023 SPOTLIGHT SERIES SCHEDULE:

Monday, March 6th at 3pm and 7pm

FINDING PARADISE

Written by Aya Aziz (*she/her*)

In this musical cabaret, follow the El-Bayoumi family through a ten-course meal to their wildest dreams, heartbreaks, and new beginnings. When Egyptian immigrant Yousef El-Bayoumi is hospitalized in Queens, his wife Hadia files for Voluntary Departure back to Egypt on behalf of the family. Over an elaborate dinner, Hadia strives to get everyone dreaming about Egypt before she breaks the news.

Monday, March 13th at 3pm and 7pm

DARK-SKIN SUPPORT GROUP

Written by UGBA (*pronoun inclusive*)

Dark-skin Black Americans face disproportionate amounts of violence in relation to their lighter-skin Black siblings. "Dark-Skin Support Group" is a network in which dark-skin Black folks finally have the space to discuss colorism openly and honestly with each other. Watch as our participants navigate this treacherous terrain in the hopes of answering the question, "Can any space in this world truly be safe for dark-skin Black people?"

Monday, March 20th at 3pm and 7pm

THIS COULD BE YOU

Written by Ying Ying Li (*she/her*)

What makes a good mentor? A good mentee? When does mentorship become dangerous? **THIS COULD BE YOU** grabs the warm and fuzzy idea of mentorship by the lapels, lifts it up, slams it down, and collects the dirty change that falls out of its finely lined pockets.

Monday, March 27th at 2pm and 7pm

THE MERRY WIVES OF GRENOBLE

Written by Francisca Da Silveira (*she/her*)

With the arrival of newcomer Jesuína, the Count now has a wife for every day of the week! But her rebellious personality causes dissent among the other wives, shaking up their routine and causing some to finally see the inequity of this unorthodox polygamous marriage. And when Jesuína makes a bold proposal to the other women—kill the Count and flee the Cape Verde islands to enjoy his rich estate in his native France—each woman is forced to reevaluate their relationship to one another, to themselves, and to their home.

Monday, May 8th at 6pm and Tuesday, May 9th at 2pm

INITIATIVE

Written by Else C. Went (*they/she*)

Between first loves and first betrayals, the SAT and D&D, house parties and homecomings, it's a wonder any of us survive high school. **INITIATIVE** is an epic microcosm, charting the fatefully intertwined lives of seven teens' struggle to grow up in and get out of Coastal Podunk, California, at the dawn of the new millennium.

Monday, May 15th at 3pm and 7pm

WHO HURT YOU?

Written by Katie Đõ (*she/her*)

Ellie and Kira are two Vietnamese-American actors who always find themselves in the same audition rooms. As their lives become more intertwined with the same lovers, friends, and opportunities, Ellie's jealousy spirals into a battle with insecurity, mental health, and an epic heartbreak. When fear and coincidence bring Ellie to a life and death situation, her loved ones come together to ask, who hurt you? And who hurt Ellie?

Monday, June 5th at 3pm and 7pm

BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS RUINS MY POOL

Written by Julián Mesri (*he/him*)

The American Dream is a graveyard, and in beautiful Coral Gables, Argentine expat Pamela is haunted by ghosts. One takes the form of her estranged brother, who's arrived in town from Buenos Aires to settle his accounts and who immediately butts heads with her American husband; the other is the ghost of a sixteenth-century friar who haunts her kitchen and swims in her pool. Rich with irony and revelation, **BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS RUINS MY POOL** is a play about the legacy of imperialism and colonialism in America, presented through the domestic strife of one aspirational Latine family.

Monday, June 12th at 3pm and 7pm

BEAN

Written by AriDy Nox (*they/them*)

All Amma wants is to cook her gumbo in peace, but with estranged grandfathers, overbearing mothers, flighty sisters, overly-ambitious best friends, and precocious unborn children plaguing her every move, it's anyone's guess whether or not she will succeed. A investigation of Black motherhood and simple magic, **BEAN** is a fast-paced and hilarious installment in the clearwater triptych, a series of plays that follows the matrilineal line of a the Clearwaters and their mysterious connection to Mother Bayou, a deity of great power and equal danger.

Monday, June 26th at 3pm and 7pm

UGLY

Written by Nissy Aya (*she/ze/we*)

When you got something to say and can't find the words—everyone knows you call 28 Harper. The premier Black Love greeting card company finds its home in a building with an if-you-know-you-know “matchmaking” service, its sweet-tongued receptionist, and a ghostwriter who spends her days battling a menace. **UGLY** asks us to enter their space to be unmade in the face of death, desirability, and disco.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER'S EMERGING WRITERS GROUP:

EMERGING WRITERS GROUP is a program that provides key support and resources for writers at the early stages of their careers. Writers are selected bi-annually and receive a two-year fellowship facilitated by The Public's New Work Development department. EWG meets twice a month for peer feedback on plays in progress as well as special sessions that connect the group to the wider landscape of New York City theater. Writers receive stipends, the opportunity to observe rehearsals for productions at The Public, career development advice from industry professionals, and artistic and professional support from the New Work Development department and Public artistic staff. Members of the group also receive complimentary tickets to Public Theater shows, invited dress rehearsals, and other special events, as well as a supplemental stipend for tickets to productions at other theaters. Bios for the 2020-2023 Emerging Writers Group Cohort members can be found at publictheater.org.

EWG is currently accepting applications for the 2023-2025 cohort. For more information and details on how to apply, visit publictheater.org.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER

THE PUBLIC continues the work of its visionary founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Conceived over 60 years ago as one of the nation's first nonprofit theaters, The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public's wide breadth of programming includes an annual season of new work at its landmark home at Astor Place, Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park, the Mobile Unit touring throughout New York City's five boroughs, Under the Radar, Public Lab, Public Works, Public Shakespeare Initiative, and Joe's Pub. Since premiering *HAIR* in 1967, The Public continues to create the canon of American Theater and is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning musical *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 60 Tony Awards, 184 Obie Awards, 56 Drama Desk Awards, 59 Lortel Awards, 34 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 62 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

The Public Theater stands in honor of the first inhabitants and our ancestors. We acknowledge the land on which The Public and its theaters stand—the original homeland of the Lenape people. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We honor the generations of stewards and we pay our respects to the many diverse indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

The LuEsther T. Mertz Legacy Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

The **Irene Worth Fund for Young Artists** provides funding for the Emerging Writers Group.

Special Thanks to the **Judith Champion New Works Development Fund**.

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