

## THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY LAUNCHES **50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN**

*\$5 Million fund to promote artistic development, enhance infrastructure, and grow endowment as Founding Artistic Director Robert Kelley retires. Announcement includes a \$200,000 commissioning fund for new plays and musicals*

REDWOOD SHORES, CA (21 February 2020) –Last night, supporters of **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** gathered to hear the 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award-winning company and its Board of Trustees announce the launch of its **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign**, a \$5 million fundraising campaign to ensure the future success of the nationally-acclaimed theatre, including commissions for new plays and musicals. Currently celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, TheatreWorks is preparing for unprecedented change as Founding Artistic Director **Robert Kelley** retires at the end of the 2019-20 season, ending what is believed to be the longest current tenure of any LORT (League of Resident Theatres) Artistic Director in the nation. Award-winning director **Tim Bond** will join the company as its new Artistic Director, the second leader in TheatreWorks’s history, initiating a new artistic era for the Silicon Valley-based theatre company. Raising \$1 million per decade of TheatreWorks’s half-century, the **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign** will provide strategic capital investments in both artistic development and infrastructure and will also grow endowed funds for upcoming seasons. With some 75% (\$3.9 million) of the campaign funds already raised, TheatreWorks aims to lock in the full amount by Kelley’s retirement on June 30, 2020, positioning TheatreWorks for a dynamic future under Bond’s leadership.

This exclusive event took place at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley’s Headquarters at the Sobrato Center for Nonprofits. Featuring a sumptuous dinner paired with J. Lohr wines followed by a delicious dessert reception, the campaign’s launch was enjoyed by guests including J. Lohr Co-Owner **Lawrence Lohr** and **Emily Lohr**, former CEO of Applied Materials **Jim Morgan**, former California State Senator **Becky Morgan**, TheatreWorks Executive Director **Phil Santora**

and Founding Artistic Director **Robert Kelley**, major supporters **Constance and Terry Gannon**, and major supporter **Cindi Sears**. Co-hosted by TheatreWorks Trustees **Julie Kaufman** and **Lynn Szekely-Goode**, TheatreWorks Board Chair **Roy Johnson** and TheatreWorks Trustees **Denise Brousseau, Sarah Donaldson, Ciro Giammona, Nancy Ginsburg Stern, Anne Hambly, Rose Hau, Ellice Papp, Barbara Shapiro, Mark Vershel, Kristina Vetter, Holly Ward, and Jane Weston** were in attendance to help usher in this new chapter for the esteemed theatre company.

The **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign** will focus on two areas: The Artistic Growth and Infrastructure Fund as well as The Endowment Fund. The Artistic Growth and Infrastructure Fund will increase TheatreWorks's commissions of new work by both well-known collaborators and new voices as a part of the company's New Works Initiative. TheatreWorks Artistic Associate and Director of New Works **Giovanna Sardelli** announced a \$200,000 commissioning fund to launch five or more new plays and musicals to celebrate the company's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, including the complete commission for Tony Award-nominated composer **Paul Gordon's** *Pride and Prejudice*, which broke box office records in its December 2019 World Premiere production at TheatreWorks. Other upcoming works announced were a new musical by **Min Kahng** (*The Four Immigrants: An American Musical Manga*), a new play by **Jiréh Breon Holder** (*Too Heavy for Your Pocket*), and a new musical collaboration by **The Kilbanes** (*Weightless*) and **Lynn Rosen** (*The Imperialists*). The funding for this portion was kicked off by a generous gift from **Phil Kurjan** and **Noel Butler**.

The playwrights/composers selected are a thrilling collective, whose works have been hits for TheatreWorks and other regional theatres:

**Paul Gordon** received a Tony Award nomination in 2000 for composing the music and lyrics for the acclaimed Broadway musical *Jane Eyre*, seen at TheatreWorks in 2003. Gordon penned the music, lyrics, and book for this season's World Premiere Musical *Pride and Prejudice* (TheatreWorks 2019) and the sensational TheatreWorks hit, *Jane Austen's EMMA* (TheatreWorks 2007 & 2015), and the music and lyrics to the TheatreWorks holiday favorite *Daddy Long Legs* (2010 & 2016). His other credits include writing music and lyrics for *Greetings From Venice Beach* and *The Magnificent Ambersons*. Gordon has written for and collaborated with numerous recording artists, including Bette Midler, Quincy Jones, Alanis Morissette, Smokey Robinson, and Dionne Warwick, has several hit songs to his credit, and is the recipient of nine ASCAP awards for songwriting.

**Min Kahng** is an award-winning Bay Area playwright and composer whose works include *The Four Immigrants: An American Musical Manga*, which debuted in TheatreWorks's 2016 New Works Festival and received a hit production at TheatreWorks in 2017 that won seven San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, including "Entire Production – Bay Area." Kahng's other works include *The Song of the Nightingale*, *Inside Out & Back Again*, and *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. Kahng also wrote the NEA-funded project *Story Explorers*, an original musical for young audiences with autism. Kahng has participated in the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor Summer Lab, and TheatreWorks' New Works Festival. He has been a Guest Artist at Harvard University, Stanford University, UC Berkeley, San Jose State University and The San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Kahng is a Resident Playwright at Playwrights Foundation, a member of Theatre for Young Audiences USA's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Task Force, and a proud member of the Dramatists Guild.

**Jiréh Breon Holder's** play *Too Heavy for Your Pocket* received an extended Off-Broadway run presented by Roundabout Theatre Company and has been produced at theatres across the country. Holder is a recipient of the Laurents/Hatcher Foundation Award and 2016 Edgerton Foundation New Play Award, and was honored with the Fellowship of Southern Writers' 2017 Bryan Foundation Award for Drama. He is a part of the writing team for NBC's hit medical drama "New Amsterdam." Commissioned by The Old Globe Theatre, his play *Shutter Sisters* was seen in The Old Globe's Powers New Voices Festival. Holder's new play ... *What The End Will Be* was commissioned by Roundabout Theatre Company, who will present the World Premiere in June 2020 Off-Broadway.

**The Kilbanes** are a theatrical rock band led by married songwriting duo Kate Kilbane and Dan Moses. Their rock opera *Weightless*, part of the Public Theatre's Under the Radar Festival in January 2019, had its world premiere at Z Space in the spring of 2018 and received the highest rating from the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Their newest piece, *Eddie the Marvelous, Who Will Save the World*, was selected for the O'Neill National Music Conference for 2018. *Eddie* got its start at Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor and was further developed TheatreWorks's 2016 New Works Festival.

**Lynn Rosen's** plays have been produced by TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, SF Playhouse, New Georges, Rivendell Theatre, Women's Project, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Baltimore Centerstage, Studio Theatre, Working Theater, ATL, among others. Her play *The Imperialists* received a reading at the 2019 TheatreWorks New Works Festival. Recent commissions include TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, EST/Sloan, Red Bull Theater. Rosen is a Resident Playwright at New Dramatists, has sold a pilot to Warner Brothers Horizon, and is currently developing a pilot with Milestone TV & Film.

The Artistic Growth and Infrastructure Fund will also enrich TheatreWorks's resources to ensure the company's ongoing quality of artistic achievement. This fund will invest in the company's branding efforts and improve TheatreWorks's infrastructure, including enhancing spaces such as the scene and costume shop as well as improving office and stage technology.

The Endowment Fund will promote TheatreWorks's long term financial stability and provide funding for greater investment in the Silicon Valley-based company's craft and programming, raising the existing endowment funds to \$5 million. As a part of this fund, TheatreWorks will introduce the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund for Artistic Excellence, which will assure that TheatreWorks has the opportunity to attract emerging and renowned artists to its stages, as well as The Robert Kelley Founders Fund, which supports the intersection of theatre and music on TheatreWorks stages.

In his 50<sup>th</sup> and final season at the helm of TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, **Robert Kelley** (TheatreWorks Founding Artistic Director) is TheatreWorks's Founder and has served as artistic head of the company since its inception in 1970. He has directed more than 175 TheatreWorks productions, including many world and regional premieres. In 2003 Kelley was honored with the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle (SFBATCC) Paine Knickerbocker Award for Lifetime Achievement and in 2016 was awarded the Jerry Friedman Lifetime Achievement Award from the SFBATCC. In 2019 Kelley received a TBA Legacy Award. Recently nominated for a 2019 TBA Award for his direction of *Tuck Everlasting*, he received a TBA Award for his direction of *Daddy Long Legs* and SFBATCC Awards for Outstanding Direction for his productions of *Into the Woods*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Rags*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Another Midsummer Night*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Caroline, or Change*.

**Phil Santora** (TheatreWorks Executive Director) joined TheatreWorks in 2007, prior to which he served as Managing Director of Northlight Theatre (Chicago) and Georgia Shakespeare Festival (Atlanta), as well as Development Director for Great Lakes Theatre Festival (Cleveland) and George Street Playhouse (New Brunswick). He holds an MFA in Theatre Administration from the Yale School of Drama and a BA in Drama from Duke University. He has served on boards for organizations including the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, League of Chicago Theatres, Atlanta Coalition of Theatres, and the executive committee of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT).

**Giovanna Sardelli** (TheatreWorks Artistic Associate and Director of New Works) has directed and developed plays throughout the country. Sardelli's directing credits at TheatreWorks include the upcoming production of *They Promised Her the Moon* opening in March 2020, the 2019 production of Pulitzer Prize finalist Rajiv Joseph's *Archduke*, 2018 production of *FINKS*, the 2016 productions of *The Velocity of Autumn* and *Crimes of the Heart*, the 2015 production of Joseph's *The Lake Effect*, the 2013 production of *Somewhere* by Matthew Lopez, and the 2011 World Premiere of Joseph's *The North Pool*. Besides her well-received productions with TheatreWorks, Sardelli also directed the 2018 Obie Award-winning production of Joseph's *Describe the Night*, the Ovation Award-winning production of Joseph's *Guards at the Taj* at the

Geffen Playhouse, the West Coast Premiere of *They Promised Her the Moon* at Old Globe Theatre, and the World Premiere of Theresa Rebeck's *Dead Accounts*. Sardelli has directed 16 productions of Joseph's acclaimed plays, including Joseph's first professional production, *Huck & Holden*, as well the World Premieres for his *Archduke*, *All This Intimacy*, *The Leopard and the Fox*, *The North Pool*, and *Animals Out of Paper* for which she was awarded the Joe A. Callaway Award for Best Direction. She has worked Off-Broadway at many theatres and has directed numerous productions for Dorset Theatre Festival, where she is Resident Director, as well as Actors' Theatre of Louisville, The Old Globe, Hartford Stage, and others. Sardelli has also developed plays at centers around the country including the Sundance Theatre Lab, The O'Neill Theater Center, Playwrights' Center, New York Stage & Film, and Ensemble Studio Theatre. Recently, Sardelli directed the World Premiere of Catya McMullen's *Georgia Mertching is Dead* at Ensemble Studio Theater and the World Premiere of Heidi Armbruster's *Mrs. Christie* at Dorset Theatre Festival.

**Tim Bond** (Artistic Director Designate) will become the second Artistic Director in TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 51-year history when he takes over for the retiring Robert Kelley next season. Bond has served as Artistic Director for Seattle Group Theatre, where he curated the company's nationally recognized MultiCultural Playwrights Festival and was an Associate Artistic Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where he created the FAIR Program cultivating the next generation of diverse theatre artists and administrators. Bond also served as Producing Artistic Director at Syracuse Stage and most recently as full Professor at University of Washington's School of Drama, the last two years as Head of the Professional Actor Training Program. He has helmed a host of award-winning productions at theatres around the globe and served on the national boards of trustees for both Theatre Communications Group and ASSITEJ: The International Association of Theatre for Children and Young Audiences.

Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** is the recipient of the 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award. With over 100,000 patrons per year, the Palo Alto-based theatre company has captured a national reputation for artistic innovation and integrity, often presenting Bay Area theatregoers with their first look at acclaimed musicals, comedies, and

dramas, directed by award-winning local and guest directors, and performed by professional actors cast locally and from across the country.

Media sponsor for TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 2019/2020 season is the San Francisco Chronicle and SFGATE.

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