



**PLAYGROUND ANNOUNCES UPDATED SHOWTIMES
FOR ZOOM PREMIERE PRESENTATION OF
THE RENDERING CYCLE
Now at 5PM PT June 6 & 7, 2020**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (4 June 2020) —In light of curfew orders throughout the Bay Area **PlayGround** has moved the showtime of its **Saturday, June 6** opening night performance of **Genevieve Jessee's *The Rendering Cycle*** to **5pm PT**. The change in time will allow the artists and crew participating in the show from out-of-home locations to comply with local curfews currently in place. Presented in association with producing partners Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Museum of the African Diaspora, African American Art & Culture Complex, and Potrero Hill Neighborhood House as well as Associate Producer **Aldo Billingslea**, and directed by PlayGround company member **Margo Hall**, *The Rendering Cycle* will now receive its Zoom Premiere (a full-length, fully-designed digital presentation) at **5pm PT on Saturday, June 6 and Sunday, June 7** in **PlayGround Zoom Fest**, the nation's largest livestreamed new works festival. For streaming access (\$15) and more information, the public may visit **playground-sf.org/zoomfest** or call **(415) 992-6677**.

"During this moment—sparked by the recent and tragic murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade, and fueled by collective resistance against the ongoing violence Black people have faced for centuries—we are honored and moved to share *The Rendering Cycle* with audiences," says **Leigh Rondon-Davis**, Dramaturg and Assistant Director of *The Rendering Cycle*. "This piece, written by the astounding Genevieve Jessee and directed by the indomitable Margo Hall, centers the experiences of Black people throughout history as we continue to persevere in the face of brutality, apathy, and disenfranchisement, and serves as a much-needed reminder of Black resistance through existence, action, compassion, and love."

The Rendering Cycle by **Genevieve Jessee** is a theatrical journey through 400 years of the African Diaspora, featuring performances by **Cathleen Riddley, Armando McClain, Champagne Hughes**, and **Caitlin Evenson**, and original development by **Lauren Spencer**. In

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the spirit of August Wilson’s *The Pittsburgh Cycle*, ***The Rendering Cycle*** explores the African American experience through ten interwoven short plays depicting a saga of inextricable tradition, trauma and joy across continents and characters ranging from present-day United States to West Africa of a millennium past. Inspired by one of Jessee’s short plays written to commemorate the opening of PlayGround’s Potrero Stage in 2017 (“Walls Come Tumbling Down”), ***The Rendering Cycle*** is the fruition of a June Anne Baker prize and full-length play commission, an award celebrating top new female playwrights, particularly those tackling politically necessary and galvanizing topics (alumni include Lauren Yee, Geetha Reddy, Patricia Cotter, and Rachel Bublitz, among others).

Genevieve Jessee (Playwright) is based jointly in the Bay Area and Puerto Rico. She received her MFA in Playwriting from Boston University. Her work has been staged at PlayGround, The Source Festival, Atlanta Black Theatre Festival, SF Fringe, Those Women Productions, and the Festival de Marseille, France. She is a semi-finalist for the 2019 O’Neill National Playwrights Conference. She has received commissions from PlayGround and Planet Earth Arts and is the recipient of a California Arts Council Artists-in-Communities grant for her work on ***The Rendering Cycle***.

The Rendering Cycle is presented as part of **PlayGround Zoom Fest**, which is streaming new works through **June 14, 2020**. This five-week online event gathers leading voices in American Theatre including **Lauren Yee, Jonathan Spector, Aaron Loeb, Geetha Reddy, Kent Nicholson**, acclaimed actors, theatre journalists, designers, and more from across the country, to present and discuss a panoply of new works and celebrate PlayGround’s quarter-century anniversary. Coordinated under a groundbreaking agreement with SAG-AFTRA, this livestreamed festival will provide paid #FairWage employment for more than 140 actors, all suffering work lost due to the COVID-19 crisis. While many performers have seen their stage and film careers evaporate in recent weeks, and playwrights and designers have lost their income sources while stage productions are put on hold, PlayGround has forged ahead to commission new works and gainfully employ actors and designers from across the country to create content for this unprecedented event.

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PlayGround Zoom Fest transformed PlayGround’s popular Festival of New Works into an online program of more than 30 real-time livestreamed performances, including three fully-produced Zoom Premiere Presentations, as well as readings of new works, films, and roundtables, for more than 50 distinct offerings. Other upcoming events include the Zoom Premiere Presentation of *Best of PlayGround 24* (June 13 & 14), a collection of 10-minute plays developed in the 2019-20 reading series by **Tom Bruett, Melissa Keith, Martha Soukup, Addie Ulrey, Leela Velautham, and Christian Wilburn**; PlayGround’s 12th annual Howard & Lenore Klein Young Playwrights Project (June 12); and a Zoom Town Hall panel (June 8) discussing theatre’s past, present, and future, featuring leading voices of the American Theatre including **Lauren Yee, Lily Janiak, Aaron Loeb, Geetha Reddy, Ruben Grijalva, Rinabeth Apostol, Christian Wilburn, Jeunee Simon, and Diana Burbano**. Advance reservations are required for live-stream and on-demand options (on-demand is available for up to one week after the scheduled performance for pre-registered viewers). For tickets and more information, visit <https://playground-sf.org/zoomfest>.

In tandem with the **PlayGround Zoom Fest** and the 25th Anniversary Celebration, **PlayGround** has also launched a special **25th Anniversary Campaign** with a goal of raising \$250,000 in support of three key priorities, more critical than ever before in light of the current crisis: artist compensation, artistic innovation, and performance facilities (including digital broadcast capabilities and a new pop-up second stage). This multi-year fundraising campaign will enable **PlayGround** to increase its investments in artists and art-making at this key moment when many organizations are pulling back and many artists are unemployed. To date, PlayGround has already received pledges and/or gifts towards this initiative totaling more than \$100,000. For more information about the 25th Anniversary Campaign, contact PlayGround Artistic Director **Jim Kleinmann** at jim@playground-sf.org or call **(415) 992-667**.

PlayGround, the Bay Area’s leading playwright incubator, provides unique development opportunities for the Bay Area’s best new playwrights, including the monthly Monday Night PlayGround staged reading series, annual PlayGround Festival of New Works, full-length play commissions and support for the production of new plays by local playwrights through the New Play Production Fund. To date, PlayGround has supported over 250 local playwrights in the

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development and staging of more than 950 original short plays and 80 new full-length plays, with 5 more commissions currently in development. **PlayGround** also operates Potrero Stage, a state-of-the-art 99-seat black box theatre in San Francisco’s Potrero Hill neighborhood, home to some of the Bay Area’s leading new play developers and producers, including PlayGround, Crowded Fire, Golden Thread, and Playwrights Foundation.

For this special presentation, **PlayGround** has joined with four local Producing Partners with a shared commitment to creating a more equitable and just world through the arts.

PRODUCING PARTNERS

The core mission of the **Lorraine Hansberry Theatre (LHT)** is to create theater arts work by, for, and about African Americans and other people of color. LHT presents plays by African American and multicultural playwrights and provides employment and career building opportunities for actors, directors, designers and technicians from the African American and multicultural communities. LHT makes the work of women playwrights an emphasis every season and produces work that deals with issues of social justice. LHT draws from the cultural and economic resources of the San Francisco Bay Area to enrich and strengthen the Performing Arts by actively seeking and participating in collaborations with Bay Area arts institutions and other related organizations. Founded in San Francisco in 1981 by Stanley E. Williams and Quentin Easter, LHT enjoys one of the most eclectic audiences of any theater in the San Francisco Bay region. LHT has produced more than 140 plays, including West Coast and World Premieres, experimental works, classics in the African-American canon, lively musicals, and poignant socio-political dramas. LHT’s presentations range from the works of Nobel Laureates Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott, and Toni Morrison to Pulitzer Prize-winning writers Charles Fuller, Alice Walker and August Wilson; to large-scale musicals celebrating Duke Ellington, Bessie Smith, Lester Young, Fats Waller, Eubie Blake and others; to award winning dramas by James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, and our namesake Lorraine Hansberry; to pioneering experimental theatre artists Adrienne Kennedy, Ntozake Shange and Maria Irene Fornes, and new works by Robert Alexander, Roger Guenveur Smith, David Rousseve, Prince Gomolvilas, Samm-Art Williams, among others.

Opened in 2005 in San Francisco’s Yerba Buena arts district, **Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD)**, a contemporary art museum, celebrates Black cultures, ignites challenging conversations, and inspires learning through the global lens of the African Diaspora. MoAD is uniquely positioned as one of the few museums in the world focused exclusively on African Diaspora culture and on presenting the rich cultural heritage of the people of Africa and of African descendant cultures all across the globe. Originally called The African American Cultural Institute, MoAD grew out of the research and development process that began in 2002. The new museum was renamed Museum of the African Diaspora to reflect a broadened scope and mission, and incorporated as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization. The architecturally

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stunning space was designed by the nationally-renowned Freelon Group within the St. Regis Museum Tower.

Located in the historic Fillmore/Western Addition neighborhood, the **African American Art & Culture Complex** (AAACC or The Center) is one of the premier Black arts and cultural institutions in the San Francisco/Bay Area. We are one of four cultural centers in the San Francisco Arts Commission’s Neighborhood Arts Program to have a brick and mortar space. The Center provides a wide variety of art and cultural programming for youth, adults and families, including visual, digital, and performance. In addition to programming, AAACC rents affordable events space in our more 34,000 square foot facility. We provide resident art companies with subsidized offices and access to rehearsal, performance, and exhibition space. The resident company list includes some of the most celebrated African American arts and culture organizations in the region. The Center is also home to the 206-seat Buriel Clay Theater which serves as a site for annual theater productions, dance performances, musical concerts, film and video screenings, seminars, and workshops. We also host the Sargent Johnson and Hall of Culture galleries which are dedicated to exhibiting artwork from and about the African Diaspora.

The **Potrero Hill Neighborhood House** (The Nabe) was founded in 1907 and has served the local community ever since. The organization inhabits a 97-year-old Historical Landmark Building (Historical Landmark #86), designed by the renowned Julia Morgan. The Nabe was originally created to help new immigrants living on the Hill and especially those displaced by the 1906 earthquake. Dr. W.E. Parker, Jr., Pastor of Olivet Presbyterian Church at 19th and Missouri Street, responded to the social need by offering English classes for men in 1908 and for women and children soon after. The Nabe incorporated in 1918 under the California Synodical Society of Home Missions. The following year, the revered Julia Morgan was commissioned to design a permanent neighborhood house. The building was completed in 1922 and has since received several additions, including a second building on Carolina Street and two extensions: Fraser Hall and the gymnasium. The Nabe exists to strengthen community life and individual well-being among Potrero Hill and southeast San Francisco residents. Between globalization, technological development, and construction, the Potrero Hill neighborhood, city of San Francisco, and the businesses and people that live here are changing rapidly. The Nabe has developed many strategic partnerships with not only government agencies but also with other community organizations and with companies aimed at doing good to increase security for the children, adults, and families most impacted by these changes. They offer free or very low-fee services to best serve the underrepresented community that seeks our services.

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PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co. lauren@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/PlayGroundZoomFest>

PlayGround welcomes critics to review this bold new work of theatre, to be performed and presented in real time via Zoom live stream, including PlayGround’s approach to this new

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medium. Critics and members of the press may RSVP with the date they would like to stream *The Rendering Cycle* to rsvp@cb-pr.com.