

**THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY  
ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVE  
VOICES OF DEMOCRACY  
ADVOCATING FOR VOTING AND RACIAL JUSTICE**

*Program includes streaming of TheatreWorks hit “Hold These Truths”*

REDWOOD SHORES, CA (28 September 2020) –**TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** will encourage its audiences to “get out the vote” and stand up for racial justice as it launches a new online initiative entitled *Voices of Democracy*. Part of *TheatreWorks from Home*, a virtual stage for the Tony Award-winning theatre while in-person performances are on hold during the pandemic, *Voices of Democracy* will offer digital theatrical experiences that celebrate diverse voices and build a bridge from empathy to action. Presented in the weeks leading up to the 2020 election, the program will feature presentations of poems read by local actors and curated quotes that shine a light on underrepresented American voices speaking out about the timely and pressing issues during this election year. TheatreWorks will collaborate with Bay Area service organizations to provide resources to inspire action and making a difference in local communities. *Voices of Democracy* will also include an interview with Tony Award winner/ TheatreWorks alum **James Monroe Iglehart** (Broadway’s *Aladdin* and *Hamilton*). The initiative will culminate in the streaming of the Jeanne Sakata’s *Hold These Truths*, filmed during the 2018 TheatreWorks production. Starring **Joel de la Fuente** (“Madam Secretary,” “The Man in the High Castle,” “Hemlock Grove”) in the hit production directed by **Lisa Rothe**, *Hold These Truths* shares the story of a Japanese American who passionately defends his Constitutional rights against an unexpected adversary: his own country. *Hold These Truths* will be offered via video streaming from October 6 – November 3, 2020. To purchase streaming access to *Hold These Truths* (sliding scale of \$10-\$100) and learn more about *Voices of Democracy* the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org** or call **(650) 463-1960**.

“TheatreWorks began 50 years ago during a time in our nation’s history of uncertainty and hope for a better world,” says TheatreWorks Artistic Director **Tim Bond**. “Like today, everyday people were marching in the streets, making their voices heard, and demanding

more from their democracy. Great theatre, great art, can provoke thought, provide much-needed different points of view, open hearts, and make us, as the late US Representative John Lewis once said, ‘stand up, speak up, speak out.’ Beginning this fall, we will honor our roots and focus on getting out the vote and standing up for racial justice—two inextricably linked pillars of our democracy. We will present online theatrical experiences designed to elevate, empower, and uplift all in our community. And hopefully, during this time of need, our collective voices can help us build the bridge from empathy to action.”

*Voices of Democracy’s* virtual poem performances will include two readings of poems by Langston Hughes— “I, Too” by TheatreWorks Artistic Director **Tim Bond** and “Let America Be America Again” by Bay Area theatre veteran **Aldo Billingslea**. Actors **Roneet Aliza Rahamim, Aldo Billingslea, Khalia Davis, Jomar Tagatac, Rinabeth Apostol, Steven Flores, Juan Amador, Leigh Rondon-Davis** and **Phil Wong** will collaborate on a reading of Beau Sia’s “Courage Rising.” One final poem will be announced at a later date.

*Hold These Truths* tells the inspiring true story of Gordon Hirabayashi, a Japanese American student who fought internment to a relocation camp during World War II. This fight for freedom celebrates the human spirit as it chronicles Hirabayashi's journey from college in Seattle all the way to the Supreme Court, and eventually to a Presidential Medal of Freedom. Critics lauded *Hold These Truths* as a show which "gives hope that the arc of the moral universe does indeed eventually bend toward justice" (*Los Angeles Times*). Bay Area audiences and critics alike admired TheatreWorks Silicon Valley’s 2018 production, hailing Joel de la Fuente’s performance as “flawlessly focused and dazzlingly versatile” (*The Mercury News*) and deeming *Hold These Truths* “a rallying cry for our own times” (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

As part of *Voices of Democracy*, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley will also team up with Berkeley Repertory Theatre as a broadcast partner for *It Can’t Happen Here*, streamed as a radio play on YouTube Tuesday, October 13 at 5pm PT/8pm ET. TheatreWorks joins a network of leading regional theatres including American Conservatory Theater, Arena Stage, Center Theatre Group, La Jolla Playhouse, Roundabout Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, South Coast Repertory, and many others, to co-present the audio drama, which will be streamed for free to encourage dialogue and motivate citizens to exercise their civic power

and vote. Written in 1935 during the rise of fascism in Europe, Lewis' darkly satirical *It Can't Happen Here* follows the ascent of a demagogue who becomes president of the United States by promising to return the country to greatness. In 2016 Berkeley Rep unveiled a new stage adaptation of Lewis' prescient novel; one week after that production ended, the presidential election roiled our nation. Now, Berkeley Rep revives the show with the same director Lisa Peterson and much of the original cast, but this time as a radio play in four episodes, presented in time for the 2020 presidential election. For more information about *It Can't Happen Here* the public may visit [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org).

Including *Voices of Democracy*, *TheatreWorks from Home* provides audiences access to a variety of new exclusive content. Other initiatives include: *Featured Works*, streaming videos of new material and delightful throwbacks; *We Are TheatreWorks*, spotlighting artists and behind-the-scenes staff members and supporters; *TheatreWorks Unforgettables*, featuring highlights of previous shows and interviews with the company's "unforgettable" artists; *Learning from Home*, an educational outlet providing digital access to the company's works for youth; and *Invest in Our Works*, in which special events and other content are offered to supporters. *New Works from Home* has offered viewers online workshop readings of new works including Suzanne Bradbeer's *Shakespeare in Vegas* and Laurel Ollstein's *Pandora*. In honor of Women's Equality Day and the centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, TheatreWorks partnered up with The Woman's Club of Palo Alto to stream excerpts and songs from *Perfect 36*, a musical detailing the fight for this amendment's ratification and commemorating a pivotal moment in Democracy when white women won the right to vote. The livestreamed presentation is still available to view on YouTube—for more information the public may visit [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org).

**TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** is the recipient of the 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award. Led by Artistic Director **Tim Bond** and Executive Director **Phil Santora**, the Palo Alto-based theatre company serves more than 100,000 patrons per year and 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. The company recently announced its 51<sup>st</sup> season will be postponed until March 2021, in accordance with global efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

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