

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS
RIOUS, RIP-ROARING RIFF ON HITCHCOCK THRILLER

THE 39 STEPS

March 7 – April 20, 2024 (opening night: March 13)
SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE, SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (22 January 2024) — **San Francisco Playhouse** continues its season with *The 39 Steps*, a fast-paced farce that riffs on the Alfred Hitchcock thriller of the same name. Following a mysterious murder, all-action hero Richard Hannay launches on a high-speed chase from a London music hall to Scotland’s highlands, where he must dodge devious spies, woo beautiful bombshells, and attempt to reveal secrets of The 39 Steps, an international spy ring. With inventive stagecraft and masterful performances, four nimble actors play more than 100 characters in this riotous spoof that is equal parts slapstick comedy and film noir thriller. San Francisco Playhouse Producing Director and Co-Founder **Susi Damilano**, who recently directed the Playhouse’s hit production of the whodunit *Clue*, returns to the scene of the crime(s) to stage this rollicking comedy. *The 39 Steps* will perform **March 7 – April 20, 2024** (opening night: *March 13, 2024*) at San Francisco Playhouse, 450 Post Street. For tickets (\$15-\$125) and more information, the public may visit sfplayhouse.org or call the box office at **415-677-9596**.

Comedian and playwright **Patrick Barlow**’s stage adaptation debuted at London’s Tricycle Theatre before transferring to the West End, where it won the Olivier Award for Best New Comedy and ran for nearly a decade. The Roundabout Theatre Company’s Broadway production was nominated for six Tony Awards including Best Play. *The New York Times* named *The 39 Steps* a Critic’s Pick and deemed it “absurdly enjoyable, gleefully theatrical. A perfect soufflé,” while *New York Post* declared it “the most entertaining show on Broadway.”

San Francisco Playhouse has assembled a talented cast of actors to bring this play to life. Recently seen in the Playhouse’s *Chinglish*, **Phil Wong** (he/him) returns as action hero Richard Hannay. Wong was a Guest Artist in the Tony Award recipient National Tour of *Freestyle Love Supreme*, and has appeared onstage at American Conservatory Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, California Shakespeare Theater, ACT Contemporary Theatre, Z Space, Shotgun Players, Hillbarn Theatre, Los Altos Stage Company, Palo Alto Players, and Ray of Light Theatre. He is also the co-founder of Bay Area Theatre Cypher, a collective of local hip-hop theatre artists.

Seen in the Playhouse’s *Jerusalem* and *Period of Adjustment*, **Maggie Mason** returns in the roles of Annabella Schmidt, Pamela, and Margaret. Mason has also performed with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Magic Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Center Repertory Company, San Francisco Mime Troupe, Trinity Repertory Company, San Jose Stage Company, Town Hall Theatre, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Portland Stage, Chautauqua Theater Company, Central Works Theater Company, Hunger and Thirst Theatre, and Pacific Repertory Theatre.

Last seen in the Playhouse’s *Clue*, **Greg Ayers** (he/him) and **Renee Rogoff** (she/her) round out

the cast as clowns, playing dozens of characters. Ayers was also seen in the Playhouse's *Significant Other*, *Our Town*, *in a word*, and *Noises Off*. He is a company member at Ferocious Lotus Theatre Company, where he won the Theatre Bay Area award for Outstanding Performance for *Two Mile Hollow*. He has also appeared onstage at New Conservatory Theatre Center and Aurora Theatre Company. Also featured in the Playhouse's production of *As You Like It*, **Renee Rogoff** (she/her) has appeared onstage at Cutting Ball Theater, Central Works Theater Company, and Those Women Productions. Rogoff received a San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle (SFBATCC) Award for Best Featured Actress for her performance as Hannah in *When We Were Young and Unafraid* at Custom Made Theatre Company. She has performed with Upright Citizens Brigade in New York City and is a standup comedian at Gotham Comedy Club and Broadway Comedy Club.

CREATIVE TEAM:

The 39 Steps features scenic design by **Heather Kenyon**, costume design by **Alice Ruiz**, lighting design by **Derek Duarte**, properties design by **Blue Hephaestus**, wig design by **Laundra Tyme**, dialect coaching by **Kimberly Hill**, intimacy/fight choreography by **Elena Wright**, and sound design by **Dan Holland**. **Sarah Marie Selig** is the stage manager with **Sasha King** as assistant stage manager.

Patrick Barlow (Playwright) is an English actor, comedian, and playwright. His plays include an Olivier Award-nominated adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*, a reframing of Milton's *Comus*, and a spoof of *Ben Hur*. His comedic alter ego "Desmond Olivier Dingle" is the founder, artistic director, and chief executive of the two-man National Theatre of Brent, which has performed on stage, television, and radio since 1980. Barlow has appeared in major motion pictures including *Nanny McPhee*, *Bridget Jones's Diary*, *Notting Hill*, and *Shakespeare in Love*.

Sir Alfred Hitchcock was a celebrated English filmmaker and producer who pioneered many techniques in the suspense and psychological thriller genres. Over a career spanning more than half a century, Hitchcock fashioned for himself a distinctive and recognizable directorial style intended to draw viewers deep into the intrigue onscreen. His stories frequently featured fugitives on the run from the law alongside gorgeous leading ladies, surprising audiences with twist endings and thrilling plots. Hitchcock directed more than fifty feature films in a career spanning six decades. He is most widely celebrated for his films *Vertigo*, *Rear Window*, *North by Northwest*, *Psycho*, *The Birds*, and *To Catch a Thief*. A 2007 poll of film critics in Britain's *Daily Telegraph* declared him "unquestionably the greatest filmmaker to emerge from these islands, Hitchcock did more than any director to shape modern cinema, which would be utterly different without him. His flair was for narrative, cruelly withholding crucial information (from his characters and from us) and engaging the emotions of the audience like no one else."

Susi Damilano (Director, she/her) is co-founder and producing director of the Playhouse. She directed the West Coast Premieres of *Honey Brown Eyes* (SFBATCC nomination), *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Coronado*, *The Mystery Plays*, and *Roulette*; and the World Premieres of *On Clover Road* by Steven Dietz, *From Red to Black* by Rhett Rossi, and *Seven Days* by Daniel Heath in the Sandbox Series. Other directing credits include Playhouse productions of *Clue*, *Groundhog*

Day the Musical, Cabaret, Mary Poppins, Noises Off, She Loves Me, Stage Kiss, Company, Stupid Fucking Bird, Into the Woods, A Behanding in Spokane, Den of Thieves, and Wirehead (SFBATCC nomination). She is a five-time recipient of the SFBATCC Excellence in Theatre Award for Principal Actress in a Play for the Playhouse productions of *Abigail's Party, Harper Regan, Bug, Six Degrees of Separation, and Reckless*. Damilano has also performed leading roles in the Playhouse's *Yoga Play, The Effect, The Roommate, Red Velvet, Tree, Bauer, Abigail's Party, Harper Regan, Coraline, Slasher, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Landscape of the Body, First Person Shooter, Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train, The Crucible, Kimberly Akimbo, Our Town, and The Smell of the Kill*.

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE:

Founded by Bill English and Susi Damilano in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** has been described by *The New York Times* as “a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work around” and deemed “ever adventurous” by *The Mercury News*. Located in the heart of the Union Square Theater District, San Francisco Playhouse is the city's premier Off-Broadway company, an intimate alternative to the larger more traditional Union Square theater fare. The Playhouse provides audiences the opportunity to experience professional theater with top-notch actors and world-class design in a setting where they are close to the action. The company has received multiple awards for overall productions, acting, and design, including the *SF Weekly* Best Theatre Award and the *Bay Guardian's* Best Off-Broadway Theatre Award, as well as three consecutive San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards for Best Entire Production in the Bay Area. *KQED/NPR* recently described the company as “one of the few theaters in the Bay Area that has a mission that actually shows up on stage. Artistic Director Bill English's commitment to empathy as a guiding philosophical and aesthetic force is admirable and by living that mission, fascinating things happen onstage.” The Playhouse is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theater lovers converge to create and experience dramatic works that celebrate the human spirit.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **San Francisco Playhouse** continues its season with *The 39 Steps*, a fast-paced farce that riffs on the Alfred Hitchcock thriller of the same name. Following a mysterious murder, all-action hero Richard Hannay launches on a high-speed chase from a London music hall to Scotland's highlands, where he must dodge devious spies, woo beautiful bombshells, and attempt to reveal secrets of The 39 Steps, an international spy ring. With inventive stagecraft and masterful performances, four nimble actors play more than 100 characters in this riotous spoof that is equal parts slapstick comedy and film noir thriller. San Francisco Playhouse Producing Director and Co-Founder **Susi Damilano**, who recently directed the Playhouse's hit production of the whodunit *Clue*, returns to the scene of the crime(s) with this rollicking comedy.

The 39 Steps

Adapted by Patrick Barlow

From the novel by John Buchan

From the movie of Alfred Hitchcock
Licensed by ITV Global Entertainment Limited
And an original concept by Simon Corble and Nobby Dimon
Directed by Susi Damilano

WHEN: Preview performances: Thursday, March 7 – Tuesday, March 12, 2024
Opening: Wednesday, March 13, 2024
Closing: Saturday, April 20, 2024

SHOWS: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 7pm
Wednesdays: 2pm & 7pm
Fridays: 8pm
Saturdays: 3pm & 8pm
Sundays: 2pm

WHERE: San Francisco Playhouse (450 Post St, San Francisco)

TICKETS: For tickets (\$15-\$125) and more information, the public may visit
<https://www.sfplayhouse.org/sfph/2023-2024-season/the-39-steps/> or call the
box office at **415-677-9596** (*open Tue-Fri, 1:00pm-6:00pm*).

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PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available:
https://cbpr.co/press/sfp_the39steps/