

**THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY
ANNOUNCES 54TH SEASON
INCLUDES TWO WORLD PREMIERE MUSICALS,
THREE REGIONAL PREMIERE PLAYS, HOLIDAY AUSTEN SHOW,
PLUS NEW WORKS FESTIVAL, COMMISSIONS, MORE**
Runs October 2024 through July 2025 in Palo Alto & Mountain View

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA (15 April 2024) — Before a packed audience of patrons and supporters this evening, **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** announced its 54th season—a remarkable lineup of works to be presented October 2024 through July 2025. Unveiled at a public event held at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, TheatreWorks Artistic Director **Giovanna Sardelli** revealed the four plays and two musicals the company will present in its next season, the first works that she has programmed for the Tony Award recipient theatre company since taking the helm last summer. She also unveiled plans for this summer’s New Works Festival, new commissions, and more.

Attendees cheered upon hearing the company’s 2024-25 season lineup will include two World Premiere musicals, both favorites from the company’s 2023 New Works Festival; a Regional Premiere by one of America’s hottest playwrights spotlighting basketball bromance; a tour de force performance exploring a musical genius and Russian royalty; a charming Christmas romantic comedy starring Jane Austen heroines; and a heartfelt Regional Premiere about finding friendship and belonging in a strange land. Four of the season’s productions will be mounted at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, and two will be staged at Palo Alto’s Lucie Stern Theatre. Subscriptions are now available; single tickets will be available in the coming months at **TheatreWorks.org**.

“We are so immensely grateful to TheatreWorks’ vast network of supporters who responded to last year’s Save TheatreWorks Now campaign in full force and provided crucial funding in our time of need,” said TheatreWorks Artistic Director **Giovanna Sardelli**. “It’s thanks to the steadfast dedication of our communities that we can continue developing and staging engaging theatre in the heart of Silicon Valley. This inspired us to explore the theme of being better together onstage. These thrilling plays and musicals center on community—uplifting the power of human connection and how joining together makes us stronger.”

Starting in chronological order, this summer TheatreWorks will present its **21st Annual New Works Festival**, offering Bay Area theatre fans a sneak peek at future theatre hits. Featuring readings of new plays and musicals, TheatreWorks 2024 New Works Festival will be presented **August 9-18, 2024** at Lucie Stern Theatre in Palo Alto. Festival passes are currently available to add on to 2024-25 season subscriptions. Tickets and more information will be available at a later date at **TheatreWorks.org**.

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The company's long commitment to developing new works was further enhanced with the company's announcement of commissions from **Susan Fairbrook Playwright Fund**, established by the late TheatreWorks trustee **Susan Kay Fairbrook**, a lifelong lover of theatre and fierce advocate for new works. Through this fund, TheatreWorks granted commissions to award-winning playwright **Lauren Gunderson**, in-demand playwright/director **Jeffrey Lo**, and playwright **Conrad A. Panganiban**. In addition, TheatreWorks announced the **Susan Fairbrook Core Writers Group**, a program supported by the **Susan Fairbrook Playwright Fund**. Composed of a cohort of eight Bay Area-based writers at various stages in their careers, the **Susan Fairbrook Core Writers Group** offers a year-long residency in which TheatreWorks provides a creative home and institutional support toward the development of eight new works. The eight announced writers include **Min Kahng, Jonathan Spector, Geetha Reddy, Betty Shamieh, Cleavon Smith, Conrad A. Panganiban, Terry Boero, and Grace Hoffman**.

Sardelli then announced that TheatreWorks' 54th season will kick off in the fall with the Regional Premiere of Pulitzer Prize finalist **Rajiv Joseph's *King James*** (October 9 – November 3, 2024). This brilliant buddy comedy brings basketball center stage as superfans Matt and Shawn forge a friendship through their shared love of the Cleveland Cavaliers and star player LeBron James. Spanning 12 years from James' rookie season to NBA championship, tensions mount both on and off the court for the duo in this honest exploration of love, grace, redemption, and the power of a good game to bring people together. Premiering in a co-production between Steppenwolf Theatre Company and Center Theatre Group, ***King James*** performed Off-Broadway at Manhattan Theatre Club. *The New York Times* lauded the play as "a touching examination of male friendship and the powerful social currents beneath it." *TheaterMania* called the play "a must-see. One of the funniest and most moving plays about friendship in years." *The San Diego Union-Tribune* hailed it as "enormously entertaining. A touching and funny story on the game of life and the audience wins every night." **Giovanna Sardelli** directs the TheatreWorks production, continuing a long collaboration with Joseph at TheatreWorks, where she also directed *Archduke*, *The Lake Effect*, and *The North Pool*. She also directed Joseph's Obie Award-winning *Describe the Night* at Atlantic Theatre Company and TheatreWorks' 2014 New Works Festival reading, as well as the World Premiere of *Archduke* at Center Theatre Group and *The Guards at the Taj* at Geffen Playhouse.

For the holidays, TheatreWorks will present ***Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*** (December 4-29, 2024), written by Bay Area playwrights **Lauren Gunderson** and **Margot Melcon**. Following its hit stage adaptations of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Emma*, TheatreWorks returns to the Regency with this heartwarming *Pride and Prejudice* sequel that is perfect for the whole family. This charming romantic comedy full of festive fun stars a different Bennet sister: bookish Mary, who is tired of being in the middle of her sisters' romantic mishaps. A new guest's arrival at Pemberley for the holidays offers Mary the chance to take control of her story. ***Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*** was workshopped at TheatreWorks' Writers Retreat before making its World Premiere at Marin Theatre Company, Round House Theatre, and Northlight Theatre. It has since delighted audiences across the country. *Chicago Sun-Times* deemed it, "Utterly beguiling. A gem—ideal for the holiday season." *The Washington Post* lauded the show as "a gift for Jane Austen fans," while *DC Theater Arts* called it "a charming, confectionary celebration of fan favorite characters. Jane Austen's

humor, playfulness and wit in a warm-spirited holiday theatrical production.” In-demand director/playwright and TheatreWorks Associate Producer of Casting & Literary Management **Jeffrey Lo** directs.

TheatreWorks will ring in 2025 with the return of virtuoso pianist/performer **Hershey Felder** in the Regional Premiere of **Hershey Felder: Rachmaninoff and the Tsar** (January 10 – February 9, 2025). Bringing to life beloved composers in hit productions including *Hershey Felder as George Gershwin Alone*; *Hershey Felder: Chopin in Paris*; *Our Great Tchaikovsky*; *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*; *Hershey Felder as Claude Debussy in A PARIS LOVE STORY*; and *Hershey Felder: Beethoven*, Felder now portrays Sergei Rachmaninoff. In this mesmerizing play full of the Russian composer’s rich romantic melodies, Rachmaninoff remembers his mother country, which he fled during the political turmoil that culminated in the execution of the Tsar Nicholas II. Stepping away from his solo show format, Felder will be joined onstage by **Jonathan Silvestri** as the Tsar in this show that explores the composer’s mysterious relationships with Romanov royalty in a mystical journey.

In the spring, TheatreWorks will present the World Premiere musical **Happy Pleasant Valley: A Senior Sex Scandal Murder Mystery Musical** (March 5-30, 2025) presented in a co-production with **Center Repertory Company**, where it will appear following its TheatreWorks run. This new musical features book, music, and lyrics by Bay Area composer/playwright/lyricist **Min Kahng**, whose *The Four Immigrants: An American Musical Manga* made its World Premiere at TheatreWorks. Set in a senior living community, this lively musical comedy explodes misconceptions about sexuality and aging. An audience favorite at TheatreWorks’ 2023 New Works Festival, this up-to-the-minute work follows vlogger Jade, who becomes enmeshed in solving mysterious murders in her grandmother June’s residence, Happy Pleasant Valley Senior Apartments. Inspired by their favorite crime-solving heroines, Jade and June join forces to track down the perpetrator in this rollicking comedy which was the recipient of TheatreWorks’ Kurjan/Butler Commission. **Happy Pleasant Valley: A Senior Sex Scandal Murder Mystery Musical** will be directed by **Jeffrey Lo**.

The season continues with **The Heart Sellers** (April 2-27, 2025) presented in a co-production with **Aurora Theatre Company** and **Capital Stage**. Written by 2023 Pulitzer Prize finalist **Lloyd Suh** (*The Chinese Lady*, *The Far Country*), this humorous and heartwarming play takes its title from the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, which paved the way for thousands to become U.S. citizens. Set in 1973 during the aftermath of Watergate, **The Heart Sellers** centers on two Asian women navigating their first American Thanksgiving. Starting out as strangers who meet in the grocery store, Luna from the Philippines and Jane from South Korea find common ground in their shared experience, including their often-absent medical resident husbands, missing families and friends back home, and discovering the joys and challenges of life in America. As the women attempt to cook Thanksgiving dinner, they dream of discotheques, Disneyland, and the future. This timely and stunning celebration of the human spirit explores how to build life in a strange new land. **The Heart Sellers** received its World Premiere at Milwaukee Repertory Theater and was also presented by Huntington Theatre Company. *The New York Times* called the play “beautiful” and “politically astute.” *Stage and Cinema* deemed it “fast-paced and entertaining” and “an ode to friendship and the courage of immigrants.” *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* called it “stunning” and *Urban Milwaukee* lauded it as “smartly audacious and stirring theatrical.” *Boston Globe* said “Theater-makers talk often about telling stories that merge the epic and the

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intimate. There aren't many contemporary playwrights better at that tricky balancing act than Suh." Acclaimed director/actor/playwright **Jennifer Chang**, who directed the World Premiere of ***The Heart Sellers*** at Milwaukee Repertory Theater and the West Coast Premiere of Lloyd Suh's *The Far Country* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, reunites with Suh to direct the co-production. The production will open in the fall at Sacramento's **Capital Stage**, followed by a production at Berkeley's **Aurora Theatre Company** before its run at TheatreWorks in the spring.

TheatreWorks will close the season with the World Premiere musical ***5 & Dime*** (June 18 – July 13, 2025). Based on the play and film *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* by Ed Graczyk, this rockin' country musical spotlights the 20th anniversary reunion of a James Dean fan club. As the women catch up and reminisce on the good old days when the *Rebel Without a Cause* actor visited their town, they are joined by a stranger who threatens to unearth deep-seated secrets. With music by **Dan Gillespie Sells** (*Brokeback Mountain, Everybody's Talking About Jamie*), book by **Ashley Robinson** (*Brokeback Mountain, Fall of '94*), and lyrics by actor/activist **Shakina** (NBC's "Connecting," NBC's "Quantum Leap," Hulu's "Difficult People"), ***5 & Dime*** explores community, chosen family, and self-discovery. Bay Area audiences received a sneak peek of this new musical in TheatreWorks' 2023 New Works Festival, where Shakina performed songs in a benefit performance.

In chronological order, the TheatreWorks Silicon Valley 2024/25 season is as follows:

King James

By Rajiv Joseph

Directed by Giovanna Sardelli

Regional Premiere

October 9 – November 3, 2024 (opening night: October 12)

MOUNTAIN VIEW CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Friendship is a slam dunk in this warm, funny, and fulfilling new comedy by Pulitzer Prize nominee Rajiv Joseph. Two very different strangers find common ground at center court in Cleveland, where their mutual devotion to basketball superstar LeBron James sustains a contentious, compassionate bond that becomes more enduring and endearing with each passing season. Sometimes a true teammate can best be found beneath the rim.

Rajiv Joseph (Playwright) is well known to audiences at TheatreWorks, which has presented his works *Archduke* (2019), *The Lake Effect* (World Premiere 2015), *The North Pool* (World Premiere 2011) and *Describe the Night* (seen in TheatreWorks' 2014 New Works Festival before going on to win the 2018 Obie Award for Best New American Play for its production at Atlantic Theatre Company helmed by Giovanna Sardelli). Joseph came to national attention when his celebrated hit *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* became a finalist for the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and received an Outstanding New American Play Award from the National Endowment for the Arts. *The New York Times* described it as a "boldly imagined, harrowing and surprisingly funny drama." The show made its Broadway debut starring Robin Williams in March 2011. His play *Guards at the Taj* was a 2016 Obie Winner for Best New American Play and 2016 Lucille Lortel Winner for Best Play. Other plays include *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, *The Monster at the Door*, *Animals Out of Paper*, and *Mr. Wolf*. Joseph has been awarded artistic grants from the Whiting Foundation, United States Artists, and the Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust.

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Giovanna Sardelli (Director) is TheatreWorks' artistic director. Her many directing credits at TheatreWorks include the West Coast Premiere of *Mrs. Christie* and the World Premiere of *A Distinct Society* in association with Pioneer Theatre Company, as well as *Nan and the Lower Body (World Premiere)*, *They Promised Her the Moon*, Rajiv Joseph's *Archduke*, *The Lake Effect (World Premiere)*, and *The North Pool (World Premiere)*, *FINKS, Somewhere* by Matthew Lopez, and many more. She has directed World Premieres around the country of plays by Rajiv Joseph, Theresa Rebeck, Lynn Rosen, Joe Gilford, Jeff Augustine, Lauren Yee, Zayd Dohrn, Melissa Ross, Lila Rose Kaplan, Matthew Lopez, and Zoe Kazan, among others. Sardelli recently directed "Marvel's Squirrel Girl: The Unbeatable Radio Show!," a podcast series by Marvel Entertainment and Sirius XM.

Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley

Written by Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon

Directed by Jeffrey Lo

December 4-29, 2024 (opening night: December 7)

LUCIE STERN THEATRE, PALO ALTO

Move over Charles Dickens, Jane Austen is here for the holidays. This charming seasonal comedy is a romantic sequel to *Pride and Prejudice*, told with Regency respect but a modern sense and sensibility. As the beloved Bennet sisters gather for carols and confections at the Darcys' Pemberley estate, perennially passed-over sister Mary retreats into her books and fantasies. Will an unexpected guest lead her in an enticing new direction? It's Christmas after all.

Lauren Gunderson (Playwright) is a nationally acclaimed playwright, screenwriter, and short story author. She has long been associated with TheatreWorks, where she initially developed *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*. According to *American Theatre*, she has been one of the most produced playwrights in America since 2015, topping the list thrice. She is a two-time winner of the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award for *I and You* and *The Book of Will*, the winner of the Lanford Wilson Award, the winner of the Otis Guernsey New Voices Award, a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and John Gassner Award for Playwriting, and a recipient of the Mellon Foundation's Residency with Marin Theatre Company. Her play *The Catastrophist* about her husband virologist Nathan Wolfe premiered digitally in January 2021. She co-authored the *Christmas at Pemberley* plays (*Miss Bennet*, *The Wickhams*, and *Georgiana and Kitty*) with Margot Melcon, and *The Half-Life of Marie Curie* premiered Off-Broadway and at Audible.com. Other plays include *Silent Sky* (TheatreWorks 2014), *The Revolutionists*, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, *Ada and the Engine*, *Artemisia*, *Bauer*, and *Emilie: La Marquise du Châtelet Defends Her Life Tonight*. Gunderson is the book writer for musicals *Jeannette*, *The Time Traveler's Wife*, *Sinister*, *Justice*, *Earthrise*, and *Built for This*. She is a board member of The Playwrights Foundation.

Margot Melcon (Playwright) is an artist, arts administrator, and writer who co-wrote the *Christmas at Pemberley* trilogy (*Miss Bennet*, *The Wickhams*, and *Georgiana and Kitty*) with Lauren Gunderson. She was the director of new play development at Marin Theatre Company for seven years, where she dramaturged over 30 productions—including six world premieres—and administered the company's two annual new play prizes and commissioning program. She has developed plays with TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Crowded Fire Theater, Shotgun Players, Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Ground Floor, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The New Harmony Project, and The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis. She currently manages arts and culture grantmaking at the Zellerbach Family Foundation.

Jeffrey Lo (Director) is a Filipino-American playwright and director who helmed TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's productions of *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Language Archive*, *The Santaland Diaries*, and most recently *Tiger Style!* (performing through April 28, 2024 at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts). He is the recipient of the Leigh Weimers Emerging Artist Award, the Emerging Artist Laureate by Arts Council Silicon Valley and Theatre Bay Area Director's TITAN Award. His plays have been produced and workshopped at TheatreWorks, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The BindleStiff Studio, City Lights Theater Company, and The Custom Made Theatre Company. Directing credits include *Chinglish*, *Hold These Truths*, *The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin*, and the upcoming *The Glass Menagerie* at San Francisco Playhouse; *Every Brilliant Thing* and

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Red Bike at Center Repertory Company; *Vietgone* and *The Great Leap* at Capital Stage; *Uncle Vanya* at the Pear Theatre (SFBATCC award for Best Production); and *A Doll's House, Part 2* and *Eurydice* at Palo Alto Players (TBA Awards finalist for Best Direction), and many more.

Hershey Felder: Rachmaninoff and the Tsar

Music by Sergei Rachmaninoff

Book by Hershey Felder

Featuring Jonathan Silvestri

Regional Premiere

January 10 – February 9, 2025 (opening night: January 11)

MOUNTAIN VIEW CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Sergei Rachmaninoff's music is beloved across the world, from his infamous *Prelude* to the glorious *Second Piano Concerto*. Leaving Russia during the 1917 Revolution, he eventually made his home in the U.S., never forgetting the homeland he loved as a young man. In his first ever "two-hander," Hershey Felder brings the composer to life, joined by British-Italian Jonathan Silvestri as Tsar Nicholas II. They weave the haunting story of the Romanov family, and the maestro's relationships with them, into a mystical journey. Felder's past performances at TheatreWorks celebrating Irving Berlin, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, George Gershwin, and Debussy have broken box office records.

Hershey Felder: *American Theatre* has said, "Hershey Felder is in a category all his own." Felder has given performances of his self-created solo productions at some of the world's most prestigious theatres. His shows include *George Gershwin Alone* (Broadway's Helen Hayes Theatre, West End's Duchess Theatre); *Monsieur Chopin*; *Beethoven*; *Maestro* (Leonard Bernstein); *Franz Liszt in Musik*, *Lincoln: An American Story*; *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*; *Our Great Tchaikovsky*; and *A Paris Love Story*. His compositions and recordings include *Aliyah*, *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*; *Fairytale*, a musical; *Les Anges de Paris*, *Suite for Violin and Piano*; *Song Settings*; *Saltimbanques for Piano and Orchestra*; *Etudes Thematiques for Piano*; and *An American Story for Actor and Orchestra*. Felder is the adaptor, director, and designer for the internationally performed play-with-music *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* with Steinway artist Mona Golabek; producer and designer for the musical *Louis and Keely: 'Live' at the Sahara*, directed by Taylor Hackford; and writer and director for *Flying Solo*, featuring opera legend Nathan Gunn. Felder's appearances at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley have smashed box office records, including *Hershey Felder as George Gershwin Alone*, *Hershey Felder: Chopin in Paris*, the regional premieres of *Our Great Tchaikovsky* and *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*, and the World Premieres of *Hershey Felder as Claude Debussy in A PARIS LOVE STORY* and *Hershey Felder: Beethoven*.

British-Italian actor **Jonathan Silvestri** has performed onstage with Actors Temple, Eternal Lines, Vafeio Theatre, and Shakespeare Company Berlin. His film and TV credits include Hershey Felder Productions' *Chopin & Liszt*, as well as *Dakota*, *Eddie & Sunny*, *Blood Oath*, "Gladiator: Back from the Dead," "Impazienti," "Devils," and "The Young Pope."

Happy Pleasant Valley: A Senior Sex Scandal Murder Mystery Musical

Book, Music, and Lyrics by Min Kahng

Directed by Jeffrey Lo

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World Premiere
Co-Production with Center Repertory Company
March 5-30, 2025 (opening night: March 8)
LUCIE STERN THEATRE, PALO ALTO

A risqué romp of a musical for the digital age, this joyful mystery brims with laughter and erupts with infectious song. The fun is ageless in this tale of a Gen Z “influencer” whose tenacious Korean American grandmother has much to teach her about life, sex, and murder in an unforgettable senior citizens’ home. Redefining “active living” in the golden years, this hit from TheatreWorks’ New Works Festival explodes social taboos around aging while celebrating intergenerational connection.

Happy Pleasant Valley: A Senior Sex Scandal Murder Mystery Musical is the recipient of a Kurjan/Butler commission from TheatreWorks Silicon Valley.

Min Kahng (Book, Music & Lyrics) is an award-winning playwright, composer, lyricist, and creative coach whose works include *The Four Immigrants: An American Musical Manga*, which debuted in TheatreWorks’ 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 *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, *Jin vs. The Beach*, *GOLD: The Midas Musical*, and *The Adventures of Honey & Leon*. Kahng is MacDowell Fellow, a Travis Bogard Fellow, and an alumnus of the Playwrights Foundation Resident Initiative, Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s Ground Floor, and Djerassi Resident Artists Program. Kahng is an NEA Grant recipient, a Jonathan Larson Grant finalist, a Richard Rodgers Award finalist, and a Dramatists Guild committee member.

The Heart Sellers

By Lloyd Suh
Directed by Jennifer Chang
Northern California Premiere
Co-Production with Aurora Theatre Company and Capital Stage
April 2-27, 2025 (opening night: April 5)
MOUNTAIN VIEW CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Watergate. Soul Train. Thanksgiving. And a frozen turkey. It’s 1973, shortly after the Hart-Celler Act abolishes immigration quotas in America. Two immigrants, one Filipino, one Korean, meet by chance, strangers in a strange land. Pulitzer Prize finalist Lloyd Suh tells the funny, deeply moving story of two isolated women sharing friendship and hopes for the future as they navigate the backroads of the American Dream. Filled with heart and humor, this timely, touching play explores the paths taken to make a new home.

Named one of “50 to Watch” by The Dramatists Guild, **Lloyd Suh’s** (playwright) plays include *The Heart Sellers*, *The Far Country*, *The Chinese Lady*, *Charles Francis Chan Jr’s Exotic Oriental Murder Mystery*, *Jesus in India*, *The Wong Kids in The Secret of the Space Chupacabra GO!*, and *American Hwangap*. *The Far Country* was a finalist for the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and received an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. His play *The Chinese Lady* was hailed a *New York Times* Critics’ Pick and was nominated for a Drama Desk Award. Suh also won the 2022 Steinberg Playwright Award and was the 2019 winner of the Herb Alpert Award for Theater. His work has been presented by Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Barrington Stage Company, Ma-Yi Theater Company, The National Asian American Theatre Company, and many others.

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Jennifer Chang's (director) directing credits include work with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, East West Players, Round House Theatre, South Coast Repertory, and many others. Signature Theatre's production *King of the Yees*, helmed by Chang, is nominated for three Helen Hayes Awards including Best Production.

5 & Dime

Book by Ashley Robinson

Music by Dan Gillespie Sells

Lyrics by Shakina

Based on *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* by Ed Graczyk

Directed by Giovanna Sardelli

World Premiere

June 18 - July 13, 2025 (opening night: June 21)

MOUNTAIN VIEW CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Set in the 1970s in a ramshackle Texas town, *5 & Dime* follows a group of friends as they celebrate the 20th reunion of their fan club "The Disciples of James Dean." As the women look back fondly at their younger days, the arrival of a stranger threatens to uncover deep-seated truths and unexpected connections. Based on the cult classic Broadway play and feature film *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*, this rockin' country musical is a story about choosing family, creating community, and finding one's way.

Dan Gillespie Sells (Music) is an English singer-songwriter and guitarist. He wrote the music for the Olivier Award-nominated hit musical *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, which was adapted into a film by Amazon Prime Video. Sells wrote the songs for the play adaptation of *Brokeback Mountain*, seen in the West End in 2023. He is the lead vocalist and frontman for the rock group, The Feeling.

Ashley Robinson (Book) is a Brooklyn-based writer/actor who penned the play adaptation of *Brokeback Mountain*, wrote the book for *Fall of '94*, and book and lyrics for *Lockhart*. As an actor, he performed in the West End in *Merrily We Roll* and as the titular role in *Floyd Collins*, as well as appearing onstage at The Old Globe Theatre, Irish Repertory Theatre, TheaterWorks Hartford, Southwark Playhouse, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Signature Theatre in Virginia, Maltz Jupiter Theatre, Lincoln Center Theater, and Roundabout Theatre Company.

Shakina (Lyrics) made television history on NBC's "Connecting" as the first transgender person to play a series regular on a network sitcom, and she is currently a writer and director on NBC's "Quantum Leap." Shakina guest starred in Amazon Prime Video's GLAAD award-winning "Transparent" musical finale, which she helped write and produce, and Hulu's "Difficult People" as the iconic trans truther, Lola. Her play *Chonburi International Hotel and Butterfly Club* premiered on Audible in 2020 in collaboration with Williamstown Theatre Festival and was recognized with a 2021 Drama League Award for Best Audio Theatre Production. She is the founding artistic director of Musical Theatre Factory, where she helped to develop hundreds of new musicals including Michael R. Jackson's Tony and Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Strange Loop* and her own autobiographical glam rock odyssey, *Manifest Pussy*. Recognitions include The Lilly Award for Working Miracles, Theatre Resources Unlimited Humanitarian Award, The Kilroys List, and Logo 30. She is a two-time Drama League fellow and two-time *Out 100* honoree.

Led by Artistic Director **Giovanna Sardelli**, 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. In June 2019, **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** received the Regional Theatre Tony Award, the highest honor bestowed on an American theatre not on Broadway. In June 2020, Founding Artistic Director **Robert**

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Kelley retired after 50 years at the helm of the theatre he founded, ending what is believed to be the longest tenure of an artistic director at a League of Resident Theatres (LORT) theatre.

Since its founding in 1970, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley has become one of the nation's leaders in cultivating and producing new musicals and plays, developing and premiering 73 works by new and veteran artists and 171 Regional Premieres. The company's New Works Festival and Writers' Retreat programs attract authors and composers of national stature (Rajiv Joseph, Stephen Schwartz, Beth Henley, Paul Gordon, Marsha Norman, Henry Krieger, Duncan Sheik, Jules Feiffer, Joe DiPietro, and Andrew Lippa, among many others), providing an artistic home in which America's theatre artists can create new works. In addition, the company has developed scores of works which have gone on to both regional and Off-Broadway productions. It was at TheatreWorks that the 2010 Best Musical Tony Award-winner *Memphis* was first workshopped and received its World Premiere. Stephen Schwartz's musical *The Prince of Egypt*, based on the DreamWorks movie of the same name, also made its World Premiere at TheatreWorks and debuted in London's West End in 2020.

For more information the public can visit **TheatreWorks.org**. Subscriptions are now available and single tickets will be available in the coming months.

Sponsors for TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 2024/25 Season include J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines. Media sponsor for TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 2024/25 season is *San Francisco Chronicle*.

PERFORMANCES: Tues 7:30pm, Wed 2:00pm & 7:30pm,
Thurs/Fri 8:00pm, Sat 2:00pm & 8:00pm, Sun 2:00pm & 7:00pm

WHERE: **TheatreWorks at Lucie Stern Theatre**
1305 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto

TheatreWorks at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts
500 Castro St., Mountain View

TICKETS: For information the public can visit **TheatreWorks.org**. Subscriptions are now available and single tickets will be available in the coming months.

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PHOTOS: For high-res photos, please visit: <https://cbpr.co/press/twseason24-25/>