



**NATIONALLY ACCLAIMED NEW PLAY DEVELOPER  
CELEBRATES THEATREMAKERS  
WITH SIMULTANEOUS EVENTS IN FOUR CITIES  
PLAYGROUND 30TH ANNIVERSARY GALA**

To take place September 16, 2024

San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York City

SAN FRANCISCO, LOS ANGELES, NEW YORK, CHICAGO (18 June 2024) — One of the nation’s oldest and most respected developers of new works for the theatre, **PlayGround** will mark its third decade of incubating new plays by hosting simultaneous parties in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco on Monday, September 16, 2024. The events, which will also be livestreamed, will feature a starry array of playwright alumni, including many of the busiest names in theatre today.

The *PlayGround 30th Anniversary Gala* will celebrate the company’s monumental history of launching over 350 significant new playwrights and over 1,500 new plays onto the national theatre scene, by playwrights including Lauren Yee, Jonathan Spector, Geetha Reddy, Diana Burbano, and Cleavon Smith, among hundreds of others. Highlighting the many accomplishments of its expanding company and prestigious alumni, this celebration comes at a key time as the organization emerges post-pandemic with an expanded national presence and reach. Thanks to PlayGround’s commitment to radical accessibility, the program now offers its signature short play program, Monday Night PlayGround, in four major theatre hubs: the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, with all programs admission-free and simulcast online in a first-in-the-nation partnership with SAG-AFTRA. The company has also forged deeper ties to the San Francisco Bay Area artistic community through a growing suite of locally presented programs at PlayGround’s home theatre, the state-of-the-art Potrero Stage.

*PlayGround's 30th Anniversary Gala* celebrating PlayGround's enduring legacy will be celebrated with 30 distinguished playwright alumni: **Linda Amayo-Hassan, Esther Banegas Gatica, Cass Brayton, Diana Burbano, Patricia Cotter, Bailey Jordan Garcia, Dana Leslie Goldstein, Prince Gomolvilas, Ruben Grijalva, Garret Jon Groenveld, Julianne Jigour, Nina Ki, Molly Olis Krost, Mildred Inez Lewis, Aaron Loeb, Daniel Martinez, Jr., Daniele Nathanson, Evelyn Jean Pine, Ken Prestininzi, Geetha Reddy, Jacob Marx Rice, Carolina Rojas, Jessica June Rowe, Jonathan Spector, Nicki Spencer, Tom Swift, Malachy Walsh, Jennie Webb, Christian Wilburn, and Maury Zeff.** Funds raised will enable PlayGround to create more opportunities for working artists across the country, as well as establish a national network for this country's most promising new voices and their artistic collaborators.

“The 30th Anniversary Gala is an opportunity for PlayGround's hundreds of alumni, fellow artists, and supporters to reunite, celebrate 30 years of PlayGround's role in launching some of the nation's most significant new writers and plays, and help secure PlayGround's future,” said PlayGround Founding Artistic Director **Jim Kleinmann.**

General Admission tickets start at \$300 and include a four-course gourmet meal and entertainment. Host tickets also include recognition on the Host Committee and complimentary concierge service for remote gatherings. Host tickets are \$1,000 (includes two host-level tickets and recognition on the host committee), \$5,000 for a table of eight, and \$10,000 for event sponsors (includes 12 host-level tickets). All proceeds support PlayGround's playwright incubator programs, creating opportunities for new voices nationally. For tickets and more information, visit [playground-sf.org/gala](http://playground-sf.org/gala).

### **ABOUT PLAYGROUND**

**PlayGround** was founded in 1994 by Jim Kleinmann, Brighde Mullins, and Denise Shama, beginning as a professional-academic partnership in residence at San Francisco State University (SFSU) and with initial sponsorship from SFSU's Creative Writing Program. Early participating artists included Prince Gomolvilas, Garret Jon Groenveld, Daniele Nathanson, Sandra Hunter, Colman Domingo, Kent Nicholson, Antigone Trimis, Mary Coleman, and Rhonnie Washington. The fledgling organization moved to Project Artaud and A Traveling Jewish Theatre's new 80-seat black box theatre in 1996, at which time Kleinmann took on sole leadership as PlayGround's founding artistic director.

The company was in residence at Berkeley Repertory Theatre from 2003 until the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and has also presented at the San Francisco Main Library, Freight & Salvage, Zeum, A.C.T.'s Costume Shop, and Thick House, as well as co-producing with such notable Bay Area theatres as San Francisco Playhouse, Shotgun Players, Impact Theatre, San Jose Stage, and Magic Theatre, among others. PlayGround first brought its work to New York City with the 2008 co-production of Garret Jon Groenveld's *Missives*, followed by the 2009 NY International Fringe Festival hit co-production of Aaron Loeb's *Abraham Lincoln's Big Gay Dance Party*, 2013 NY International Fringe Festival co-production of Katie May's *Manic Pixie Dream Girl*. PlayGround celebrated its 25th anniversary with a one-night program of original short musicals at NYC's Theatre Row in 2019.

PlayGround's first ongoing regional expansion came in 2012 with the launch of PlayGround-LA at West Hollywood's Zephyr Theatre. In 2018, PlayGround-LA relocated to Hollywood's Broadwater Theaters (home of Sacred Fools Theater Company), where the company continues to present its Monday Night series. PlayGround expanded to NYC in 2021 and Chicago in 2022, with in-person performances (and simulcasts) beginning in the Spring of 2023, at NYC's Producers Club and Chicago's Theater Wit, respectively.

Over its 30 year history, PlayGround has grown into a leading national playwright incubator and theatre community hub, providing unique development opportunities for the Bay Area's and, more recently, Los Angeles', New York's, and Chicago's best new playwrights through innovative programs such as the monthly Monday Night PlayGround staged reading series, annual PlayGround Festival of New Works, full-length play commissions, playwright residencies and production support through the New Play Production Fund.

To date, PlayGround has developed and staged more than 1,500 original short plays through Monday Night PlayGround and the PlayGround Festival. PlayGround has also commissioned and/or developed several hundred new full-length plays by PlayGround alumni through its Commissioning Initiative, Playwrights Residency and Alumni Programs and, through the innovative New Play Production Fund, has directly facilitated the premiere of 40 full-length plays at theatres of every size, including many that have gone on to NYC and other major theater communities across the country.

In 2017, PlayGround launched Potrero Stage: PlayGround Center for New Plays, a 99-seat state-of-the-art performance venue to serve as a shared community resource for dozens of local companies and hundreds of artists. New programs in residence at Potrero Stage like the Free-Play Festival, Solo Performance Festival, and Innovator Incubator provide opportunities for local and national artists to self-determine and showcase their work in San Francisco at little to no cost.

More than 350 early-career playwrights have gotten their start at PlayGround, including Lauren Yee, Jonathan Spector, Geetha Reddy, and Cleavon Smith, helping to expand and deepen the canon of American Theatre. PlayGround's alumni have gone on to win local, national, and international honors for their short and full-length work, including recognition at the Steinberg Awards, Glickman Awards, O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, and New York International Fringe Festival, among others. PlayGround serves one of the largest theatre artist networks in the nation, connecting hundreds of Bay Area, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York artists in support of a common vision: the development of bold and diverse new voices and new works.

This work has not gone unnoticed. PlayGround has received numerous awards, including Playwrights Foundation's Inaugural New Play Champion Award, San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle's Paine Knickerbocker Award for ongoing contributions to Bay Area theatre, and American Theater Wing's National Theater Grant. In 2016, Artistic Director Jim Kleinmann was recognized by Theatre Bay Area as one of the Bay Area's top 40 leaders. Three of PlayGround's commissioned plays have won the San Francisco Bay Area Critics Circle award for Best New Play, and three have had subsequent productions in NYC. Four of the past five Will Glickman Award winners for best new play are PlayGround alumni. When other theatre companies think of producing new work, PlayGround artists are often their first call. As a result of PlayGround's strong leadership, planning, and a willingness to take bold risks with high payoff, the new play ecosystem has been utterly transformed by PlayGround. For more information, visit [playground-sf.org](http://playground-sf.org).

## **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** One of the nation's oldest and most respected developers of new works for the theatre, **PlayGround** will mark its third decade of incubating new plays by hosting simultaneous parties in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco on Monday, September 16, 2024. The events, which will also be livestreamed, will feature a starry array of playwright alumni, including many of the busiest names in theatre today. The *PlayGround 30th Anniversary Gala* will celebrate the company's monumental history of launching over 350 significant new playwrights and over 1,500 new plays onto the national theatre scene, by playwrights including Lauren Yee, Jonathan Spector, Geetha Reddy, Diana Burbano, and Cleavon Smith, among hundreds of others.

**WHERE:** **The Verdi Club, 2424 Mariposa St, San Francisco, CA 94110**  
**Rossoblu, 1124 San Julian St, Los Angeles, CA 90015**  
**Carmine's Italian Restaurant, 2450 Broadway, New York, NY 10024**  
**Osteria Via Stato, 620 N State St, Chicago, IL 60654**

**WHEN:** 5pm PT / 7pm CT / 8pm ET, September 16, 2024

**TICKETS:** General Admission tickets start at \$300. Host tickets are \$1,000 (includes two host-level tickets and recognition on the host committee). Table Hosts are \$5,000 (includes a table of eight plus recognition on the host committee). Event Hosts are \$10,000 (includes up to 12 host-level tickets plus recognition on the host committee). For more information about *PlayGround's 30th Anniversary Gala* call 415-992-6677 or visit [playground-sf.org/gala](http://playground-sf.org/gala)

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**PRESS:** Contact Courtney Heimbeck, CBCO Public Relations & Marketing  
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**PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos can be found here: [cbpr.co/press/PlayGround30](http://cbpr.co/press/PlayGround30)