

San Francisco Playhouse presents
NON-PLAYER CHARACTER
A SANDBOX SERIES WORLD PREMIERE
By **Walt McGough**
Directed by **Lauren English**

Press Opening: **Thursday, February 15th at 7pm**

Performances: February 7 – March 3, 2018

Thu 7pm / Fri 8pm / Sat 3pm and 8pm

Preview Performances: Feb 7 – 10 at 8pm; Feb 14 at 7pm

PRESENTED AT **THE CREATIVITY THEATER** AT YERBA BUENA GARDENS

SAN FRANCISCO (January 2018) — San Francisco Playhouse (Artistic Director **Bill English**; Producing Director **Susi Damilano**) announced casting for the first show of its 2017-18 Sandbox Series of World Premieres—***Non-Player Character*** by Walt McGough. Lauren English will direct the world premiere production, which will be staged at the Creativity Theater at Yerba Buena Gardens.

Aspiring video game designer Katja and her longtime friend Trent are an unstoppable team against animated monsters in the virtual underworlds of SpearLight, an online role-playing game. But after a humiliating falling-out, Trent marshals an army of internet trolls to wage real-life war against her. Inspired by the real-life Gamergate controversy, *Non-Player Character* is a timely, comic, and poignant theatrical exploration of the games we play—and who's winning.

"When we first saw *Non-Player Character* two summers ago at the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, we were attracted to the collision of technology with an ageless human story," said Artistic Director Bill English. "But given the recent focus on sexual harassment, it now seems more timely than ever."

The cast of ***Non-Player Character*** will feature Dean Koya, Charisse Loriaux*, Tyler McKenna*, Devin O'Brien*, Emily Radosevich, and Annemaria Rajala*.

Walt McGough (Playwright) is a Boston-based playwright (by way of Pittsburgh and Chicago). In Boston, he has held fellowships with both the Huntington and New Repertory Theatre Companies, and was a finalist for the 2016 Dramatists Guild Lanford Wilson Award. His plays include *Pattern of Life*, which was named Best New Play by the Independent Reviewers of New England, and *The Farm*, *Priscilla Dreams the Answer*, and *Paper City Phoenix*, all of which received Best New Play IRNE nominations. Other plays

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE

Non-Player Character

include *Chalk*, *Dante Dies!! (And Then Things Get Weird)*, *The Haberdasher!*, and *Non-Player Character*. He has worked around the country with companies such as The Lark, the Huntington, New Rep, the Kennedy Center, NNPN, Boston Playwrights Theatre, Fresh Ink, Sideshow, Orfeo Group, Nu Sass Productions, Chicago Dramatists, and Argos. In 2015, his play *Advice for Astronauts* was selected as the winner of the Milken Playwriting Prize. He has served on the staff at SpeakEasy Stage Company in Boston and Chicago Dramatists, and is a founding ensemble member of Chicago's Sideshow Theatre Company. He holds a BA from the University of Virginia, and an MFA in playwriting from Boston University.

The **Sandbox Series** is San Francisco Playhouse's new works program. The Playhouse's commitment to new works in the Sandbox Series has been honored by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Theatre Wing. Designed to bridge the gap between staged readings and Mainstage productions, the program combines top-notch directors and actors with limited design elements, allowing new voices in American theater to be heard while reducing the theatre's financial risk for full production at this stage of a play's development. The series has achieved significant critical and commercial milestones: Sandbox plays have won two Will Glickman Awards in the past three years; the Sandbox smash hit *Ideation* recently completed a successful Off-Broadway engagement in New York City; and George Brant's *Grounded* went on to international acclaim after its Sandbox premiere.

**Actors appear courtesy of Actors' Equity Association*

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: Aspiring video game designer Katja and her longtime friend Trent are an unstoppable team against animated monsters in the virtual underworlds of SpearLight, an online role-playing game. But after a humiliating falling-out, Trent marshals an army of internet trolls to wage real-life war against her. Inspired by the real-life Gamergate controversy, *Non-Player Character* is a timely, comic, and poignant theatrical exploration of the games we play—and who's winning.

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WHERE: **The Creativity Theater** – 221 4th Street, San Francisco CA 94103.

TICKETS: For tickets (\$20-\$125) or more information, the public may contact the San Francisco Playhouse box office at 415-677-9596, or <https://www.sfplayhouse.org/sfph/2017-2018-season/non-player-character/>