

San Francisco Playhouse Announces

Songs for a New World

On-demand video stream premieres December 12, 2020

Music and Lyrics by **Jason Robert Brown**
Original Orchestration by **Brian Besterman** and **Jason Robert Brown**
Directed by **Bill English**
Music Direction by **Dave Dobrusky**
Choreography by **Nicole Helfer**

Premieres Saturday, December 12th at 7:00 P.M. PST

Virtual Opening Night Gala begins at 6:30 P.M. PST

Presented as an on-demand video stream

SAN FRANCISCO (November 2020) — San Francisco Playhouse (Artistic Director **Bill English**; Producing Director **Susi Damilano**) announced they will present *Songs for a New World* by Jason Robert Brown as the third show of their 2020/21 Season. The on-demand video production will take the place of the previously announced *From Blues to Broadway*, airing December 12 - December 31, 2020. **Bill English** will direct the Playhouse production, with music direction by **Dave Dobrusky** and choreography by **Nicole Helfer**.

The first musical from Tony Award winner Jason Robert Brown (*Parade*, *Bridges of Madison County*), *Songs for a New World* is a moving collection of powerful songs that examines life, love and the choices that we make. The cast features **John Paul Gonzalez**, **Cate Hayman**, **Rodney Earl Jackson Jr.**, and **Katrina Lauren McGraw**. All actors appear courtesy of Actors' Equity Association.

Access to the performance will be provided to subscribers and single ticket buyers as an on-demand video stream from December 12th through December 31st, 2020. Tickets (\$15 - \$100) and subscriptions (\$200 - \$300) are now available.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Jason Robert Brown is the ultimate multi-hyphenate – an equally skilled composer, lyricist, conductor, arranger, orchestrator, director and performer – best known for his dazzling scores to several of the most renowned musicals of our time, including the generation-defining *The Last Five Years*, his debut song

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cycle *Songs for a New World*, and the seminal *Parade*, for which he won the 1999 Tony Award for Best Score.

Jason Robert Brown has been hailed as “one of Broadway’s smartest and most sophisticated songwriters since Stephen Sondheim” (Philadelphia Inquirer), and his “extraordinary, jubilant theater music” (Chicago Tribune) has been heard all over the world, whether in one of the hundreds of productions of his musicals every year or in his own incendiary live performances. The New York Times refers to Jason as “a leading member of a new generation of composers who embody high hopes for the American musical.” Jason’s score for *The Bridges of Madison County*, a musical adapted with Marsha Norman from the bestselling novel, received two Tony Awards (for Best Score and Orchestrations). *Honeymoon In Vegas*, based on Andrew Bergman’s film, opened on Broadway in 2015 following a triumphant production at Paper Mill Playhouse. A film version of his epochal Off-Broadway musical *The Last Five Years* was released in 2015, starring Anna Kendrick and Jeremy Jordan and directed by Richard LaGravenese. His major musicals as composer and lyricist include: *13*, written with Robert Horn and Dan Elish, which opened on Broadway in 2008 and was subsequently directed by the composer for its West End premiere in 2012; *The Last Five Years*, which was cited as one of Time Magazine’s 10 Best of 2001 and won Drama Desk Awards for Best Music and Best Lyrics (and was later directed by the composer in its record-breaking Off-Broadway run at Second Stage Theatre in 2013); *Parade*, written with Alfred Uhry and directed by Harold Prince, which won both the Drama Desk and New York Drama Critics’ Circle Awards for Best New Musical, as well as garnering Jason the Tony Award for Original Score; and *Songs for a New World*, a theatrical song cycle directed by Daisy Prince, which has since been seen in hundreds of productions around the world since its 1995 Off-Broadway debut, including a celebrated revival at New York’s City Center in the summer of 2018. *Parade* was also the subject of a major revival directed by Rob Ashford, first at London’s Donmar Warehouse and then at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. Jason conducted his orchestral adaptation of E.B. White’s novel *The Trumpet of the Swan* with the National Symphony Orchestra, and recorded the score for PS Classics. Future projects include a new chamber musical created with Daisy Prince and Jonathan Marc Sherman called *The Connector*; an adaptation of Lilian Lee’s *Farewell My Concubine*, created with Kenneth Lin and Moisés Kaufman; and a collaboration with Billy Crystal, Amanda Green, Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel on a musical of *Mr. Saturday Night*. Jason is the winner of the 2018 Louis Auchincloss Prize, the 2002 Kleban Award for Outstanding Lyrics and the 1996 Gilman & Gonzalez-Falla Foundation Award for Musical Theatre. Jason’s songs, including the cabaret standard “Stars and the Moon,” have been performed and recorded by Ariana Grande, Audra McDonald, Kristin Chenoweth, Billy Porter, Betty Buckley, Renée Fleming, Jon Hendricks and many others, and his song “Someone To Fall Back On” was featured in the Walden Media film, *Bandslam*.

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As a soloist or with his band The Caucasian Rhythm Kings, Jason has performed concerts around the world. For the past four years (and ongoing), his monthly sold-out performances at New York's SubCulture have featured many of the music and theater world's most extraordinary performers. His newest collection, "How We React and How We Recover", was released in June 2018 on Ghostlight Records. His previous solo album, "Wearing Someone Else's Clothes", was named one of Amazon.com's best of 2005, and is available from Sh-K-Boom Records. Jason's 2012 concert with Anika Noni Rose was broadcast on PBS, and he was the featured soloist for a live episode of *Friday Night Is Music Night*, broadcast live from the London Palladium and featuring the BBC Concert Orchestra. His collaboration with singer Lauren Kennedy, "Songs of Jason Robert Brown", is available on PS Classics. Jason is also the composer of the incidental music for the Broadway revival of *You Can't Take It With You*, David Lindsay-Abaire's *Kimberly Akimbo* and *Fuddy Meers*, and Kenneth Lonergan's *The Waverly Gallery*, and he was a Tony Award nominee for his contributions to the score of *Urban Cowboy the Musical*. He has also contributed music to the hit Nickelodeon television series, *The Wonder Pets* as well as *Sesame Street*. Jason spent ten years teaching at the USC School of Dramatic Arts, and has also taught at Harvard University, Princeton University and Emerson College.

For the musical *Prince of Broadway*, a celebration of the career of his mentor Harold Prince, Jason was the musical supervisor and arranger. Other New York credits as conductor and arranger include *Urban Cowboy the Musical* on Broadway; *Dinah Was*, off-Broadway and on national tour; *When Pigs Fly* off-Broadway; William Finn's *A New Brain* at Lincoln Center Theater; the 1992 tribute to Stephen Sondheim at Carnegie Hall (recorded by RCA Victor); Yoko Ono's *New York Rock*, at the WPA Theatre; and Michael John LaChiusa's *The Petrified Princ*" at the Public Theatre. Jason orchestrated Andrew Lipka's *John and Jen*, Off-Broadway at Lamb's Theatre. Additionally, Jason served as the orchestrator and arranger of Charles Strouse and Lee Adams's score for a proposed musical of *Star Wars*. Jason has conducted and created arrangements and orchestrations for Liza Minnelli, John Pizzarelli, and Michael Feinstein, among many others.

Jason studied composition at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., with Samuel Adler, Christopher Rouse, and Joseph Schwantner. He lives with his wife, composer Georgia Stitt, and their daughters in New York City. Jason is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild and the American Federation of Musicians Local 802. Visit him on the web at www.jasonrobertbrown.com.

ABOUT 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"

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and deemed “ever adventurous” by the Bay Area News Group. 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. San Francisco 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 Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards for Best Entire Production in the Bay Area (2016-2018). KQED/NPR recently described the company: “San Francisco Playhouse is 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.” **San Francisco 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

THE MUSICAL: *Songs for a New World*

Music and Lyrics by **Jason Robert Brown**

Original Orchestration by **Brian Besterman** and **Jason Robert Brown**

Directed by **Bill English**

Musical direction by **Dave Dobrusky**

Choreography by **Nicole Helfer**

It's about one moment. It's about hitting the wall and having to make a choice... or take a stand... or turn around and go back. These are the stories and characters of today, the *Songs for a New World*. The first musical from Tony Award winner, Jason Robert Brown (*Parade*, *Bridges of Madison County*), this moving collection of powerful songs examines life, love and the choices that we make.

Brown transports his audience from the deck of a 1492 Spanish sailing ship to a ledge, 57 stories above Fifth Avenue, to meet a startling array of characters that range from a young man who has determined that basketball is his ticket out of the ghetto to a woman whose dream of marrying rich nabs her the man of her dreams... and a soulless marriage.

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THE CAST: John Paul Gonzalez
 Cate Hayman
 Rodney Earl Jackson Jr.
 Katrina Lauren McGraw

WHEN: On demand December 12 at 7:00 P.M. PST through December 31, 2020 at 11:59
 P.M. PST
 Virtual Opening Night Gala: December 12, 2020 at 6:30 P.M. PST

WHERE: Streaming video at [sfplayhouse.org](https://www.sfplayhouse.org) (tickets required)

TICKETS: For tickets (\$15 - \$100) or more information, the public may contact the San
 Francisco Playhouse box office at 415-677-9596, or online at
 <https://www.sfplayhouse.org/sfph/2020-2021-season/songs-for-a-new-world/>