

## SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES 2021-2022 SEASON

***First full in-person season since COVID-19 pandemic to feature  
THE GREAT KHAN, TWELFTH NIGHT, HEROES OF THE FOURTH TURNING,  
THE PAPER DREAMS OF HARRY CHIN, WATER BY THE SPOONFUL, and  
FOLLIES***

SAN FRANCISCO (July 11, 2021) — San Francisco Playhouse (Artistic Director **Bill English**; Producing Director **Susi Damilano**) announced today the six plays that will comprise its **2021/22 Season**. In announcing their first full in-person season since the COVID-19 pandemic shut down production in March 2020, the company reasserted its commitment to producing bold, challenging, and uplifting plays and musicals for the Bay Area community.

“We feel passionately that coming at this moment in American history, our 19th Season may well be our most important,” said Bill English, Artistic Director. “We will joyfully collaborate with artists who speak from widely unique perspectives on universal themes that generate greater empathy and compassion. It is in this spirit that we present our 2021/22 Season, which spans from a world premiere to the San Francisco professional premiere of a Sondheim classic. This season focuses on plays that show us the light at the end of the tunnel, that help us believe that hope and redemption are within our reach.”

### **Mainstage**

**The San Francisco Playhouse 2021/22 Season** will begin with the World Premiere of ***The Great Khan*** by veteran Bay Area playwright and actor Michael Gene Sullivan, followed by Kwame Kwei-Armah and Shaina Taub’s musical adaptation of Shakespeare’s ***Twelfth Night***. The new year will begin with ***Heroes of the Fourth Turning***, Will Arbery’s critically acclaimed red-state rumination, followed by Jessica Huang’s ***The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin***, based on the true story of an immigrant who skirted the Chinese Exclusion Act, and Quira Alegría Hudes’s Pulitzer Prize-winning drama ***Water by the Spoonful***. The season will close with Stephen Sondheim and James Goldman’s legendary musical ***Follies***, which was originally planned for the Playhouse’s pandemic-shortened 2019/20 Season.

### **THE GREAT KHAN**

World Premiere

By **Michael Gene Sullivan**

Directed by **Darryl V. Jones**

Co-produced with the **San Francisco Mime Troupe**

**October 13 – November 13, 2021**

**Press Opening: Wednesday, October 20, 2021**

Jayden, an African American teenager, just wants to be his game-playing, nerdy self. But after he saves a girl, Ant, from a sexual assault, he and his mother are forced to move to keep him safe from the boys who attacked her. While Jayden debates with himself if he should toughen up, Ant tries to reject the tough

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Black girl persona she has adopted. Both are trying to figure out how to define themselves in a culture that insists on seeing them as forever dangerous. Oh, and then Genghis Khan shows up.

## **TWELFTH NIGHT**

A musical adaptation of **William Shakespeare's** *Twelfth Night*

Conceived by **Kwame Kwei-Armah** and **Shaina Taub**

Music and lyrics by **Shaina Taub**

Directed by **Susi Damilano**

Music Direction by **Dave Dobrusky**

Choreography by **Nicole Helfer**

**November 24, 2021 – January 15, 2022**

**Press Opening: Wednesday, December 1, 2021**

Named one of the best theatrical productions of 2018 by Time, The Hollywood Reporter and The Washington Post, *Twelfth Night* is a rousing contemporary musical adaptation of Shakespeare's classic romantic comedy about mistaken identity and self-discovery. On the twelfth day of Christmas, shipwrecked Viola washes up on the shores of Illyria, disguises herself as a man, is sent to court a countess and falls hard for a Duke. As she navigates the gender confusion in all her roles, she finds her true self and true love in the process. Featuring an original jazz-funk score by Shaina Taub, *Twelfth Night* is a soulful shake-up of a Shakespearean classic.

## **HEROES OF THE FOURTH TURNING**

By **Will Arbery**

Directed by **Bill English**

**January 26 – March 5, 2022**

**Press Opening: Wednesday, February 2, 2022**

Seven years ago, Teresa, Kevin, Justin, and Emily graduated from a Catholic college in Wyoming. Now, they're back for a backyard reunion to toast their mentor, Gina. As the four friends catch up, their celebration spirals into spiritual chaos, clashing politics, and furious debate. Called "a red-state unicorn" by The New York Times and a Pulitzer finalist, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* speaks to the heart of a country at war with itself.

## **THE PAPER DREAMS OF HARRY CHIN**

By **Jessica Huang**

**March 16 – April 23, 2022**

**Press Opening: Wednesday, March 23, 2022**

During the Chinese Exclusion Act, Harry Chin, a Chinese national, entered the U.S. by buying forged documentation. Like other "Paper Sons," Harry lived the rest of his life keeping secrets – even from his daughter. Told through the eyes of a middle-aged Chin, *The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin* reveals the complicated loves and regrets of this Chinese immigrant. Through dreamlike leaps of time and space and with the powerful assistance of ghosts, the story of the Chin family reveals the personal and political repercussions of making group of people "illegal."

## **WATER BY THE SPOONFUL**

By **Quiara Alegria Hudes**

**May 4 – June 18, 2022**

**Press Opening: Wednesday, May 11, 2022**

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Somewhere in Philadelphia, Elliot has returned from Iraq and is working at Subway while trying to jump-start his acting career. Scattered throughout the world in chat rooms, recovering addicts keep each other alive, hour by hour, day by day. In this surging drama by Quiara Alegria Hudes (*In the Heights*), the boundaries of family and community are stretched across continents and cyberspace as birth families splinter and online families collide. Winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, *Water by the Spoonful* is a heartfelt meditation on lives on the brink of redemption.

### **FOLLIES**

Musical Revival

Book by **James Goldman**; Music and Lyrics by **Stephen Sondheim**

Produced Originally on Broadway by **Harold Prince**

Orchestrations by **Jonathan Tunick**

Directed by **Bill English**

Music Direction by **Dave Dobrusky**

Choreography by **Nicole Helfer**

**June 29 – September 10, 2022**

**Press Opening: Wednesday, July 6, 2022**

It's 1971, and theatrical impresario Dimitri Weissmann is hosting a reunion of ex-Follies performers in his crumbling theatre, about to be demolished to make room for a parking lot. The artists gather for one last time, reminiscing about the past and contemplating their future, before the theater dims its lights for good. This legendary masterpiece creates a half dozen great roles for middle-aged women, whose fabulous talents have outlasted the industry's interest in them. Surreal, sophisticated, compelling, heart wrenching and epic in scope, *Follies* uses the musical theatre as a metaphor for the collapse of American innocence and naiveté.

### ***New Works Program***

San Francisco Playhouse's **Zoomlet** series will continue in 2021. The series, which was a smash hit with audiences during and after the COVID-19 lockdown, spotlights director-driven short plays read by professional actors, giving live stream viewers a behind-the-scenes look at what it's like to attend a first rehearsal. The Playhouse's award-winning **Sandbox Series of World Premieres** will remain on intermission and return in a future season.

### **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 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

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experience dramatic works that celebrate the human spirit.

#### **Ticket Information**

Season Subscriptions are available immediately online at [www.sfplayhouse.org](http://www.sfplayhouse.org), or by calling the box office at 415-677-9596. Packages range from \$175 to \$450 for Premium Orchestra seating, with savings averaging over 40% off single ticket rates. Single Tickets will go on sale to the public on August 1, 2021.