

**San Francisco Playhouse and the San Francisco Mime Troupe
announce casting for
*The Great Khan***

**By Michael Gene Sullivan
Directed by Darryl V. Jones
A National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere**

Previews begin October 13, 2021

Press Opening Wednesday, October 20 at 7:00 P.M.

In-person performances October 13 – November 13, 2021

On-demand video production available to view October 16 – November 13, 2021

Note: Video stream is not intended for consideration in press reviews

SAN FRANCISCO (September 14, 2021) — San Francisco Playhouse (Artistic Director **Bill English**; Producing Director **Susi Damilano**) and the San Francisco Mime Troupe announced casting for ***The Great Khan*** by **Michael Gene Sullivan**, directed by **Darryl V. Jones**. The play, a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere, is co-produced by San Francisco Playhouse and the San Francisco Mime Troupe and presented at the Playhouse's Mainstage at 450 Post Street.

The cast features **Velina Brown***, **Jamella Cross***, **Leon Jones**, **Kina Kantor***, **Adam KuveNiemann**, and **Brian Rivera***.

"As we searched the world for a play to open our 19th Season that would look unblinking into the face of racism and shed light on the maelstrom of our splintered nation, we needed look no further than Bay Area legend Michael Gene Sullivan," said Bill English, Artistic Director. "That he embraces such troubling issues by taking us on an odyssey across millennia with wit and laughter, feels like a miracle we desperately need."

"I wanted to write a drama about growing up Black in a 'Land of the Free' founded by slaveowners, but I also wanted to write a comedy about someone struggling to squeeze into a stereotypical mold created by those that hate them," said playwright Michael Gene Sullivan. "Luckily Genghis Khan showed up to save me."

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

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who attacked her. While Jayden debates with himself if he should toughen up, Ant tries to reject the tough 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.

In-person tickets (\$30-\$100) are now available. Tickets for the on-demand video stream (\$15 - \$100) will be valid throughout the show's run.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Michael Gene Sullivan is award-winning playwright, director, and actor based in San Francisco. Michael's plays have been produced and performed at theaters throughout the United States, and in Greece, England, Scotland, Spain, Columbia, Ukraine, The Netherlands, Argentina, Canada, Mexico, as well as at the Melbourne International Arts Festival (Australia), the International Festival of Verbal Art (Berlin), The Spoleto Festival, (Italy), and The Hong Kong Arts Festival.

Michael is Resident Playwright for the Tony and OBIE award-winning (and despite its name never, ever silent) San Francisco Mime Troupe, where he has written or co-written over 20 plays, including *Tales of the Resistance*, *Freedomland*, *Schooled*, *Red State*, *Posibilidad*, *Making A Killing*, and *1600 Transylvania Avenue*. He was also a Resident Playwright for the Playwrights Foundation, and was awarded a 2017 artist residency at the Djerassi Arts Center. Michael's non-Mime Troupe plays include the award-winning all-woman political farce *Recipe*, *A Red Carol*, his critically-acclaimed one person show, *Did Anyone Ever Tell You-You Look Like Huey P. Newton?*, and his stage adaptation of George Orwell's *1984*, which opened at Los Angeles' Actors' Gang Theatre under the direction of Academy Award winning actor Tim Robbins. *1984* has since been produced nationally (most recently at the Alley Theatre in Houston and national tour with New York's Aquila Theatre) and in 14 countries around the world, translated into 5 languages, and is published in the United States, Canada, and Spain. www.michaelgenesullivan.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" 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

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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.

About the San Francisco Mime Troupe

The always radical, never-ever, silent Tony and OBIE award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe is a democratically run, multi-ethnic, multi-generational, multi-cultural, gender-balanced theater of social justice that by its very existence sustains a vision of community governance of, by, and for The People. For over 60 years The Troupe has created and produced theater with a working-class analysis of the events that shape our society, used theatre to expose social and economic injustice, and to demand revolutionary change on behalf of working people. The San Francisco Mime Troupe has performed across the country, off-Broadway, at the Kennedy Center, and at theatre festivals around the world, but to reach the broadest possible audience most of our shows are presented at a price every worker can afford, at a place they can all attend: free, and in the parks. (Or, for the two pandemic summers, as radio plays!) www.sfmt.org

*Actors appear courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the U.S.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

THE PLAY:

The Great Khan

A National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere

By Michael Gene Sullivan

Directed by Darryl V. Jones

Co-produced with the San Francisco Mime Troupe

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 Black girl

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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. *The Great Khan* is a National New Play Network rolling world premiere.

THE CAST: **Velina Brown*** as Crystal
Jamella Cross* as Ant
Leon Jones as Jayden
Kina Kantor* as Gao-Ming
Adam KuveNiemann as Mr. Adams
Brian Rivera* as Temujin

WHEN: In-person performances: October 13 – November 13, 2021
Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:00 P.M., Fridays at 8:00 P.M., Saturdays at 3:00 and 8:00 P.M., Sundays at 2:00 P.M.
On-demand video stream: October 16 – November 13, 2021 (tickets valid throughout the run)

WHERE: San Francisco Playhouse
450 Post St., San Francisco CA 94102
-AND-
Streaming video at [sfplayhouse.org](https://www.sfplayhouse.org) (tickets required)

TICKETS: For tickets 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/2021-2022-season/the-great-khan/>