

San Francisco Playhouse announces casting for *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

In-person performances November 24, 2021 – January 15, 2022

Press Opening Wednesday, December 1 at 7:00 P.M.

On-demand video production available to view December 1, 2021 – January 15, 2022

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

SAN FRANCISCO (October 28, 2021) — San Francisco Playhouse (Artistic Director **Bill English**; Producing Director **Susi Damilano**) announced casting for *Twelfth Night*, Shaina Taub and Kwame Kwei-Armah's musical adaptation of William Shakespeare's romantic comedy. The musical will run on the San Francisco Playhouse Mainstage from November 24, 2021 through January 15, 2022. Susi Damilano will direct, with music direction by Dave Dobrusky and choreography by Nicole Helfer.

The cast features **Tasi Alabastro**, **Caleb Haven Draper**, **Amanda Farbstein***, **Sean Fenton***, **Sophia Introna***, **Bear Manescalchi**, **Amanda Le Nguyen**, **Sam Paley**, **Tiana Paulding**, **Jon-David Randle***, **Cathleen Riddley***, **Atticus Shaindlin***, **Loreigna Sinclair***, **Michael Gene Sullivan***, and **Jamie Zee**.

"In the nineteen seasons since we started San Francisco Playhouse, this will be our first Shakespeare play," said Bill English, Artistic Director. "Kwame Kwei-Armah and Shaina Taub have taken the bard's romantic comedy, transformed it into an exhilarating musical, and catapulted it into a moment that is both contemporary and timeless, making it a perfect workout for our Empathy Gym. As the Illyrians so resoundingly sing: 'If we open our hearts to each other's beat, what a better world it could be.'"

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.

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Twelfth Night was originally commissioned and produced by The Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director). The musical debuted as part of the company's Public Works program in 2016 and was presented as part of the free Shakespeare in the Park program in 2018, where it was met with universal critical acclaim, with Time, The Hollywood Reporter, and The Washington Post naming it one of the best theatrical productions of the year. The San Francisco Playhouse production marks the musical's Bay Area premiere.

In-person tickets (\$30-\$100) and video tickets (\$15-\$100) are now available.

About the Creators

Kwame Kwei-Armah is British actor, playwright, director and broadcaster. In 2018 he was made Artistic Director of the Young Vic, where he has directed *Twelfth Night* and *Tree*. From 2011 to 2018 he was previously the Artistic Director of Baltimore Center Stage where he directed: *Jazz*, *Marley*, *One Night in Miami*, *Amadeus*, *Dance of the Holy Ghosts*, *The Mountaintop*; *An Enemy of the People*, *The Whipping Man* and *Things of Dry Hours*. Other work as a director includes: *Tree* (Manchester International Festival), *Twelfth Night*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Detroit'67* (Public Theatre, New York), *The Liquid Plain* (Signature Theatre, New York and Oregon Shakespeare Festival), *Porgy and Bess* (Baltimore Symphony Orchestra) the Olivier Nominated *One night in Miami* for Best New Play 2016 (Donmar Warehouse) and *One Love* (Birmingham Repertory Theatre). As a playwright his credits include *Tree* (Manchester International Festival, Young Vic), *One Love* (Birmingham Repertory Theatre), *Beneath's Place* (Baltimore Center Stage) *Elmina's Kitchen*, *Fix Up*, *Statement of Regret* (National Theatre) *Let There Be Love* and *Seize the Day* (Tricycle Theatre). Kwame was Artistic Director for the Festival of Black arts and Culture, Senegal, in 2010. He conceived and directed the opening ceremony at Senghor National stadium. He was an Associate Director of the Donmar Warehouse and has served on the boards of the National Theatre, Tricycle Theatre, and Theatre Communications Group. Kwame was the Chancellor of the University of the Arts London from 2010 to 2015, and in 2012 was awarded an OBE for Services to Drama. In 2012, 2013 and 2014 Kwame was named Best Director in City Paper's Best of Baltimore Awards and in 2015 was nominated for the prestigious Stage Directors and Choreographers Zelda Fichandler Award for Best Regional Artistic Director. In 2016 he was awarded the Urban Visionary Award alongside House Representative Elijah Cummings by the Center for Urban Families for his work in the Baltimore community. In 2019 he was the Chair of the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting. Kwame is a patron of Ballet Black and a visiting fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford University.

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Shaina Taub: Raised in the green mountains of Vermont, Shaina Taub is a New York-based songwriter and performer. She has won the Jonathan Larson Grant, the Fred Ebb Award and the Billie Burke Ziegfeld Award and has an ongoing concert residency at Joe's Pub. Taub has starred in her musical adaptations of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* at the Public Theater's Delacorte in Central Park, commissioned for their groundbreaking Public Works initiative. She's currently writing a musical about the American women's suffrage movement and she's writing lyrics for the upcoming musical of *The Devil Wears Prada*, with music by Sir Elton John. Taub's work was featured in Lincoln Center's American Songbook concert series and she recently made her Carnegie Hall debut performing her music with the New York Pops. She wrote songs for and co-starred in Bill Irwin and David Shiner's *Old Hats*, directed by Tina Landau at the Signature Theatre and A.C.T. She earned a Lucille Lortel Award nomination as Mary in the off-Broadway run of *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*, and appeared in the original cast of *Hadestown* at New York Theatre Workshop. Her songs have been performed by Audra McDonald and Sutton Foster, and she wrote the theme song for Julie Andrews' Netflix series *Julie's Greenroom*, performed by Sara Bareilles. Her two albums, *Visitors* and *Die Happy* are available at www.shainataub.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 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.

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

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

THE MUSICAL: ***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

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.

THE CAST: **Tasi Alabastro** as Fabian/Ensemble

Caleb Haven Draper as Andrew

Amanda Farbstein as Ensemble

Sean Fenton as Orsino

Sophia Introna as Viola

Bear Manescalchi as Sebastian

Amanda Le Nguyen as Ensemble

Sam Paley as Feste

Tiana Paulding as Ensemble

Jon-David Randle as Antonio/Ensemble

Cathleen Riddley as Maria

Atticus Shaindlin as Malvolio

Loreigna Sinclair as Olivia

Michael Gene Sullivan as Toby

Jamie Zee as Illyrian Officiant/Ensemble

WHEN: In-person performances: November 24, 2021 – January 15, 2022

Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:00 P.M., Fridays at 8:00 P.M., Saturdays at 3:00

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and 8:00 P.M., Sundays at 2:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M.

Holiday performance times and dates may vary. Please visit the San Francisco Playhouse website for the full calendar of performances.

On-demand video stream: December 1, 2021 – January 15, 2022 (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/twelfth-night/>