THE GREAT KHAN

BY MICHAEL GENE SULLIVAN
DIRECTED BY DARRYL V. JONES
A musical adaptation of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE’S TWELFTH NIGHT

HEROES OF THE FOURTH TURNING
JAN 26 – MAR 5, 2022
BY WILL ARBERY
A Pulitzer finalist, Heroes of the Fourth Turning speaks to the heart of a country at war with itself.

WATER BY THE SPOONFUL
MAR 16 – APR 23, 2022
BY QUIARA ALEGRIÁ HUDES
A heartfelt meditation on lives on the brink of redemption, and winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

THE PAPER DREAMS OF HARRY CHIN
MAY 4 – JUNE 18, 2022
BY JESSICA HUANG
A gripping drama based on the true story of an immigrant who skirted the Chinese Exclusion Act.

FOLLIES
JUNE 30 - SEP 10, 2022
BOOK BY JAMES GOLDMAN
MUSIC & LYRICS BY STEPHEN SONDHEIM
Winner of seven Tony Awards and perhaps the greatest musical ever.
FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The concept of “teenager” only became part of the public consciousness in post-WWII times. Prior to that, there was little consideration that young people aged thirteen to eighteen merited any kind of special attention, nor were they thought to have needs that deserved unique consideration.

As time has passed since those falsely “idyllic” fifties, at least in the US, being a teenager has become more and more fraught with complexity and challenges from the fracturing of the family and the onset of readily available drugs to the pummeling of negative news and the raising of the nuclear doomsday axe. Multiply those challenges exponentially by adding the challenges young Black teens face in a culture where they are viewed as de facto suspects, and we can only imagine the maze of obstacles they must navigate to reach adulthood intact.

Fortunately, as we face a strenuous workout in the empathy gym with the teens in The Great Khan, we are blessed to be in the company of Michael Gene Sullivan, who in addition to his great skills as an actor and playwright, has both been and raised a young Black teen. Generously offering his gracious hand, he leads us through that dangerous world. More commonly than not these days, teens are being raised by a single parent, or being shuttled between serial single parents who have their hands full making ends meet, and who operate in families where there are few extended family or cultural systems in place to support them, fewer churches, youth programs, community organizations.

Luckily, from Michael’s fertile imagination, springs a male mentor to fill the void in young Jayden’s life. In a bolt of imagination, Genghis Khan – himself oppressed and imprisoned for being the “other” in his youth and a maligned victim of Asian stereotyping for centuries, who triumphed against impossible odds to become a compassionate leader to his people – appears through the magic of theatre to guide Jayden towards a more illuminated future. We, blessed to be along for the ride and are reminded how essential is mentoring, how criminal are the racist fictions generated by our white-centric distortion of history, and how courageous and honorable are the struggles of our young teens of color as they navigate their way through the “mindfields” that have been laid in their path.

Bill English
artistic director
SCENES FROM
THE GREAT KHAN
FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Orwell said “He who controls the Present controls the Past, and he who controls the Past controls the Future.” In other words you can never let some jerks who hate you write your history, because that history will determine who your kids will think they can be. (Orwell didn’t say that last part, but I bet he thought it.)

First, I know The Great Khan is an unusual play. Sure, as a examination of racial oppression in the United States it may not be uncommon, and as a show about Black teens trying to define themselves in a nation that has already defined them as potential criminals at best and runaway slaves at worst, it’s not unique. As a play about who gets to write history it’s entering a less trodden area, and as seriously comedic social commentary it’s getting rare.

Then Genghis Khan shows up. Seriously. Genghis Khan.

As the father of a Black teen I’ve had to struggle with how and when to give my son “The Talk.” Not the talk about the birds and the bees, but the talk every Black parent has to give: the one about how much this country fears and despises them. It’s heartbreaking to see that light of innocence dim in their eyes, but it’s that talk that can save their lives. Black parents cannot protect their children from a nation poised to strike them down at any moment, but we do what we can to help them not become twisted into a shape designed by those who cannot, will not see the fullness of their beauty.

We, all of us, are more than this society can see, but for Black kids how others stereotype them is life-or-death.

So, you may wonder... comedy? If this is such a serious subject what’s with the funny? My wife always says comedy is a way to get people to relax, to see their shared humanity, to let their guard down, and that’s when you can crack their heads open, and stick some hard truths in there. It’s a disgusting mental image, but you get the point. The world needs to change, and we need to use all the tools we can to make this a better, fairer, more just world for our children. We all use different tools to achieve this revolutionary change, and mine is comedy.

So, three teens, two Black, one Asian American – one trying to hide from a frightening world, one wanting to be a kid just a little bit longer, one dealing with parental expectations – all of them have to decide: will they swim against the tide, fight to define themselves, or will they float with the current of a culture that wants them to drown?

Grown-ups, struggling against stereotypes of their own – of them and by them - act like they know what they are and have all the answers because that’s what all grown-ups are supposed to do. Do they? Do any of us? Then Genghis Khan shows up.

Michael Gene Sullivan
playwright
PRODUCERS
Clay Foundation - West
executive producer
Cynthia + David Bogolub
The Ronald Whittier
Family Foundation
The Tournesol Project
executive producers
Linda Brewer
William J. Gregory
Michael Levy
+ Michael Golden
Nancy Thompson
+ Andy Kerr
William O’Keeffe
associate producers

ARTISTIC UNDERWRITERS
David Madfes
+ Judith Leash
scenic design
Louis Parnell
+ Jeff Wincek
costume design
Suzanne Cross
+ John Simpson
lighting design

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE
and executive producer
CLAY FOUNDATION - WEST present
a co-production with
THE SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE
a NATIONAL NEW PLAY NETWORK
rolling world premiere

THE GREAT KHAN
by Michael Gene Sullivan

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

Originally produced by San Francisco Playhouse, San Francisco, California.
Bill English, Artistic Director | Susi Damilano, Producing Director

Developed with the support of Playwrights Foundation, San Francisco.
Jessica Bird Beza, Artistic Director

CREATIVE TEAM
Director ......................................................... Darryl V. Jones
Scenic Designer ............................................. Richard Olmsted^
Costume Designer ......................................... Kathleen Qiu
Lighting Designer .......................................... Kurt Landisman^
Sound Designer ............................................ Anton Doty
Projections Designer ..................................... Teddy Hulsker
Properties Designer ..................................... April Ballesteros
Stage Manager .............................................. Vanessa Hill
Assistant to the Director ................................. Tyler Jeffreys
Assistant Costume Designer ....................... Marisely Cortes Fonseca
Production Assistant ................................. Kamaria Atiba

* Member of Actors’ Equity Association. This theater operates under an agreement with Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.
^ Member of United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.

PERFORMANCE DATES: October 13 to November 13, 2021
SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE, 450 Post Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

The performance lasts approximately two hours.
There is one intermission.

Please note the location of all exits and turn off your electronic devices.
Please respect the audience and the performers on stage. Photographing, videotaping, or recording this production is strictly prohibited.
Food and drink are not permitted in the auditorium at this time.
PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager .............................................. Angela Knutson
Assistant Production Manager ............................ Elizabeth Newton
Technical Director .................................................. Zach Sigman
Assistant Technical Director .............................. Tish Leung
Master Electrician ........................................... Andrea Schwartz
Electrician ......................................................... Kamaria Atiba
Sound Engineer ............................................... Anton Hedman
Wardrobe Assistant ........................................ Stephanie Dittbern
Scenic Artists .................................................... Heather Kenyon
                                               Tish Leung
COVID Compliance Officers .............................. Stephanie Dittbern
                                               Danika Ingraham
                                               Angela Knutson

SPECIAL THANKS: Actors’ Equity Association and the staff of the Kensington Park Hotel.

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MISSION

Our mission is to share stories that uplift spirits, deepen self-awareness, and nurture compassionate community.

Our theater is an Empathy Gym where we come to practice our powers of compassion. Here, safe in the dark, we can risk sharing in the lives of the characters. We feel what they feel, fear what they fear, and love what they love, and as we walk through our doors we take with us greater powers of understanding to make our community a better place, one play at a time.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather belongs to the Ohlone people of past, present and future, whose homelands extend from Big Sur to the San Francisco Bay Area. We recognize that every member of the Bay Area community has, and continues to benefit from, the use and occupation of this land. We recognize that the Ohlone people are alive and flourishing members of the Bay Area communities today. We are grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and learn on their land.

Please visit sfplayhouse.org/edi for more information.

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COMPANY STAFF
SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE

Founder & Artistic Director ........................................... Bill English
Founder & Producing Director ..................................... Susi Damilano
Production Manager .................................................. Angela Knutson
General Manager ..................................................... Danika Ingraham
Marketing Director .................................................... Donny Gilliland
Technical Director ....................................................... Zach Sigman
Individual Gifts Manager ........................................ Tiiu Eva Rebane
Associate Director of Development ......................... Gelareh Esfahlanl
Grants Coordinator ................................................... Marie-Claire Erdynast
Assistant Technical Director ....................................... Tish Leung
Casting Director ......................................................... Laura Espino
Marketing & Casting Associate, EDI Lead ............. Wera von Wulfen
Assistant Production Manager ......................... Elizabeth Newton
Associate Artistic Director ........................................ Marie-Claire Erdynast
Business Operations Associate ......................... Elizabeth Newton
Rising Stars Coordinator ...................................... Lindsay Sporleder
Box Office Manager .................................................. Alexia Stanioles
Front of House Manager ............................................... Sheila Devitt
Front of House Associates ........................................ Ada May

Jim McCunn
Quensella Miller

Box Office Associate ................................................ Kyziah Shavers
Concessions Associates ........................................... Michael Cazares
Victoria Leung

COVID Compliance Officers ................................. Sheila Devitt
Stephanie Dittbern
Kelli Elliot
Danika Ingraham
Angela Knutson
Ada May
Quensella Miller
Alexia Stanioles

Resident Playwright ................................................... Aaron Loeb
Production Photography .......................................... Jessica Palopoli
Trailer Producer ......................................................... Shawn LaFrance
Publicist ................................................................. Brian McWilliams
Key Art Designer ......................................................... Lena Semenkova

THE SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE

General Manager & Collective Member ..................... Ellen Callas
Booking Coordinator & Tour Manager .................... Marissa Ellison
Production Stage Manager ........................................ Karen Runk
Publicist ................................................................. Lawrence Helman
Bookkeeper ............................................................. Morris Older
Development Consultant .......................................... Season Korchin
IT & Web Programmer ........................................... Adan Gonzalez

SOME LOVERS | CONCEPT RECORDING
Burt Bacharach and Steven Sater mix and match over twenty Broadway stars in songs of love and its foibles. (broadwayrecords.com)
CAST

**VELINA BROWN**

*CRYSTAL*

Velina is pleased to return to the Playhouse after acting here in *Company* and *Abraham Lincoln’s Big Gay Dance Party* (Best of Fringe at the New York International Fringe Festival), for which she received a San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle award. Velina is also a director, singer, songwriter, and collective member of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. She has worked with American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, Theatre Rhinoceros, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, New Conservatory Theatre Center, Shotgun Players, Central Works Theater Company, Symmetry Theatre Company, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Word for Word, and Denver Center for the Performing Arts Theatre Company, as well as in film and television. Velina writes a monthly advice column titled *The Business of Show Biz* for Theatre Bay Area, named after her coaching practice. velinabrown.com

**JAMELLA CROSS**

*ANT*

Jamella has worked with Bay Area Children’s Theatre, Magic Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Marin Shakespeare Company, Oakland Theater Project, Virago Theatre Company, and Berkeley Playhouse. She feels very blessed to be on the Playhouse stage for the second time after her virtual debut here in *hieroglyph*. Jamella hopes you enjoy this stimulating piece.

**LEON JONES**

*JAYDEN*

Leon is honored make his Playhouse debut. He is committed to creating space for other BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ artists on stage and screen. Leon began his professional career playing Macduff’s Son in *Macbeth* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre with Frances McDormand and Conleth Hill. He attended Oakland School for the Arts, studying acting and musical theatre. Recent acting credits include Young Man in *Begin the Beguine* (Oakland Theater Project), Marcellus in *The Music Man* (Throckmorton Theatre), the roles of Damascus and Demeter in *...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi*, the Watchmen’s Friend in *The Oresteia*, the Player King in *Hamlet*, and Curly in *Rising* (Oakland School for the Arts), and the title role in *Hamlet* (Marin Shakespeare Company). In addition to acting, Leon is an emerging producer, director, and writer who recently received an award from Regina Taylor for his short film *Through My Mind*. He currently serves as founding executive director for Youth Uproar Theatre Company and education director of Marin Shakespeare Company.

@theleonjones | leonjonesjr.com

**KINA KANTOR**

*GAO-MING*

Kina is beyond thrilled to join the Playhouse again, having returned to the Bay Area after living another existence as a cellist abroad. Selected acting credits include Letter Writer #2 in *Tiny Beautiful Things* and understudy for Vanessa in *Significant Other* (San Francisco Playhouse), understudy for Leiko in *The Great Wave* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), Murasaki Shikibu in *Unrivaled* (Boston Court Pasadena), and Nancy Wake (aka Madame Andrée) in *Madame Andrée* (Stage to Screen). Kina is company member of the Actor’s Reading Collective (ARC).

**ADAM KUVENIEMANN**

*MR. ADAMS*

Adam is making his debut with the Playhouse. Other credits include *Exit Strategy* (Aurora Theatre Company), *Arcadia* (Shotgun Players), *The Gentleman Caller* (New Conservatory Theatre Center), and understudying for *Angels in America* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Adam is also co-host of the podcast *Green Eggs...and Man?* in which he gives a very serious close-read analysis of a children’s book, one page at a time. Adam sends his love to Panayiota and Katerina “Welcome to the world, Baby Kate!”

adamkuvenieman.com

**BRIAN RIVERA**

*TEMUJIN*

Brian most recently performed on stage over a year ago in *Translating Selena* with Campo Santo. Bay Area credits include *Major Barbara* and the US premiere of *The Orphan of Zhao* (American Conservatory Theater), *Yellowjackets* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), and *Hamlet and American Night* (California Shakespeare Theater). Brian can currently be heard in *Tales of the Resistance*, a series of radio play episodes (San Francisco Mime Troupe) and online in *The Machine Stops* (Word for Word Performing Arts)
Arts Company). Brian is a proud member of Campo Santo, Word for Word Performing Arts Company, Actors’ Equity Association, and SAG/AFTRA. @brianmrivera

AUTHOR

MICHAEL GENE SULLIVAN
PLAYWRIGHT

Michael is an award-winning playwright, director, and actor based in San Francisco. His plays have been produced and performed at theatres 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 in Australia, the International Festival of Verbal Art in Berlin, The Spoleto Festival in Italy, and the Hong Kong Arts Festival. Michael has served as artistic director at Lorraine Hansberry Theatre for two years. Recent directing credits include The Devil’s Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith (Center REPerty Company) and Kill Move Paradise (Shotgun Players and Lorraine Hansberry Theatre). He directed Detroit ’67 and The Royale (San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle award) for Aurora Theatre Company. Other directing credits include the Off-Broadway production and national tour of We Are Your Sisters (AUDELCO Award for production), A View from the Bridge (Theatre Lobby Award for direction), Spunk (Helen Hayes Award nomination), The Minneola Twins (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company), and The Brothers Size (Theatre Rhinoceros). West Coast directing credits include the premieres of Follow Me to Nellie’s by Dominique Morisseau and Xitigone by Nambi Kelley. Darryl was directing associate at Arena Stage where he co-produced the new play program and choreographed Candide and Dance of Death. He is an active member of Actors’ Equity Association and was featured in the The Rime of the Ancient Mariner at Word for Word Performing Arts Company. In 2017 he was a TBA Award finalist for outstanding supporting actor in the original production of Priscilla Queen of the Desert at Theatre Rhinoceros. Darryl earned a BM in vocal performance from the Catholic University of America and an MFA in directing from Boston University.

CREATIVE TEAM

DARRYL V. JONES
DIRECTOR

Darryl is professor of theatre at California State University, East Bay and adjunct faculty in the MFA Program at American Conservatory Theater. He served as acting artistic director at Lorraine Hansberry Theatre for two years. Recent directing credits include the Tony and Obie award-winning, all-woman political farce Recipe, A Red Carol, his critically-acclaimed one-person production Did Anyone Ever Tell You - You Look Like Huey P. Newton?, and the stage adaptation of 1984 by George Orwell, which opened at The Actors’ Gang Theatre Company in Los Angeles under the direction of Academy Award winner Tim Robbins. 1984 has since been produced nationally (most recently at the Alley Theatre in Houston and national tour with Aquila Theatre of New York), in fourteen countries around the world, translated into five languages, and has been published in the United States, Canada, and Spain. michaelgenesullivan.com

KAMARIA ATIBA
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT, ELECTRICIAN

Kamaria was a stage management intern and production assistant at the Playhouse for Non-Player Character, An Entomologist’s Love Story, and Groundhog Day the Musical and assistant stage manager for King of the Yees. She previously served as stage manager for Cradle Will Rock and Mamma Mia! (City College of San Francisco), Tomfoolery (Shelton Theater), and Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (Multi Ethnic Theater). Most recently, Kamaria worked on the Playhouse productions of Starting Here, Starting Now and The Song of Summer.

APRIL BALLESTROS
PROPERTIES DESIGNER

April has been in the Bay Area theatre scene for years, both on and off the stage with San Francisco Playhouse, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, and Theatre Culture, and is a familia member with Latinx Mafia. She is an actor, director, theatre educator, stage manager, and properties designer, as well as being the associate artistic director at Theatre Culture and artistic learning and development associate at California Shakespeare Theater. April recently directed staged readings of Memoria Del Silencio for Latinx Mafia and La Lechuza for Theatre Culture. With every project, she hopes to empower and uplift BIPOC voices and their stories with the intention of enriching the look and the content of the American theatre. April earned a BA in theatre arts from California State University, East Bay and is a proud Chicana from East Los Angeles where her family still resides.

ANTON DOTY
SOUND DESIGNER

Anton is a sound designer, audio engineer, and music producer who hails from San Francisco. Along with his musical collaborations with multi-platinum, Grammy-winning
producers, artists, and songwriters, Anton works as a sound designer for one of the country’s leading podcast networks, building soundscapes and editing music for some of the most popular narrative horror and true crime podcasts in the world. He recorded and mixed vocal performances for major media projects like the upcoming films *Minions: The Rise of Gru* and *King Richard*, and the video game *Call of Duty - Black Ops: Cold War*. His theatrical credits include *Single Black Female*, directed by Aejay Mitchel and produced by Darryl V. Jones, and *Intimate Apparel*, directed by Jan Hunter at the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre.

**VANESSA HILL**  
**STAGE MANAGER**

Vanessa is a Bay Area stage manager with a BA in theatre arts from the School of Theatre and Dance at San Francisco State University. Through the pandemic, she stayed connected to the arts and worked on a few virtual productions, proving “the show will always go on,” but is more than excited to return to the stage in her first production with the Playhouse. Recent stage management credits include *Twelfth Night* (African-American Shakespeare Company), *Intimate Apparel* (Lorraine Hansberry Theatre), *Funeral Games* (Bread & Butter Theatre), and *The Niceties and Kill Move Paradise* (Shotgun Players). Vanessa is forever grateful for all her friends and family who constantly support her throughout every endeavor she chooses.

**TEDDY HULSKER**  
**PROJECTIONS DESIGNER**

Teddy is a Bay Area multidisciplinary theatre artist specializing in sound and projection design. Recent design credits include *Art* (San Francisco Playhouse), *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (Word for Word Performing Arts Company), *Eureka Day* (Aurora Theatre Company), and *Love* (Marin Theatre Company). He received the Landisman Fellowship for Emerging Designer in 2012 and has received San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle awards for sound design for *Warplay* (New Conservatory Theatre Center) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Ray of Light Theatre), and for projection design for *Sunday in the Park with George* (San Francisco Playhouse). In addition to theatre design work, Teddy has created original installations and performances in San Francisco, Oakland, Berlin, New York, Detroit, and Los Angeles. He also runs after school Dungeons and Dragons camps for children, teens, and families.

**PRONOUNS: HE | HIM | HIS**

**TYLER JEFFREYS**  
**ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR**

Tyler is excited to work behind the scenes at the Playhouse. The theatre is one of her favorite topics to cover for the website *Theatrius* where she writes theatre reviews. Tyler theorizes that the lessons of theatre training can be applied to everyday life to enhance mental wellness. Her fitness brand, Spinally Free, tests this theory while blending fitness and wellness with theatre techniques. The quarantine fostered her directorial debut with the devised online trilogy *What Had Happened Was...* and *US in the U.S.* Recent performances include *Much Ado About Nothing* in reality-television style (Plethos Productions), *Lampito* in *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes, and *The Late Wedding* by Christopher Chen (Pear Theatre). Tyler thanks Darryl V. Jones and Yahweh the Creator for their support.

@ty.anough

**RICHARD OLMSTED**  
**SCENIC DESIGNER**

Richard is very pleased to work with the Playhouse for the first time. He has designed numerous productions with Darryl V. Jones including *The Devil’s Music: The Life and Times of Besse Smith* (Center REPertory Company) and *Detroit ’67* and *The Royale* (Aurora Theatre Company). He has designed other world premieres, including *Eureka Day and Partition* (Aurora Theatre Company), *See Under: Love and God’s Donkey* (Traveling Jewish Theatre), lighting for *Love is a Dream House in Lorin* by Marcus Gardley and *This World in a Woman’s Hands* (Shotgun Players), *Santos and Santos* by Octavio Solis (Thick Description), *Hillary and Soon-Yi Shop for Ties* (Magic Theatre), *Apertura Modotti* (Brava Theater Center), and *Let My Enemy Live Long!* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Richard teaches stage design at California State University, East Bay, and lives with his wife Evelyn in Oakland.

olmstedsenic.com
KATHLEEN QIU
COSTUME DESIGNER
Kathleen is an artist and costume designer based in Los Angeles who is thrilled to be making theatre once again. Previously at the Playhouse, she designed The Fit and You Mean to Do Me Harm in the Sandbox Series. Other Bay Area credits include How to Transcend a Happy Marriage and Passion (Custom Made Theatre Co.), Orfeo ed Euridice (West Edge Opera), Sweat (Pear Theatre), Where the Mountain Meets the Moon (Bay Area Children’s Theatre), An Invitation Out and Universal Robots (Quantum Dragon Theatre), Two Mile Hollow (Ferocious Lotus Theatre Company), and Hickorydickory and Shoggoths on the Veldt (Dragon Productions).
kathleenq.com | @kat.jiq

PRODUCTION TEAM

STEPHANIE DITTBERN
WARDROBE ASSISTANT, COVID COMPLIANCE OFFICER
Stephanie has designed properties and costumes for the Playhouse, and for The Breadbox, Cutting Ball Theater, EXIT Theatre, Custom Made Theatre Co. Favorite credits include costumes for Vampire Christmas (EXIT Theatre), and properties for Timon of Athens (Cutting Ball Theater), Isaac’s Eye, Kurt Vonnegut’s Mother Night, and Tinderella: the modern musical (Custom Made Theatre Co.), and A White Girl’s Guide to International Terrorism and The Daughters (Sandbox Series at San Francisco Playhouse). She has been kicking it at the Playhouse as wardrobe assistant since 2015, occasionally moonlighting as a production assistant as she did on Seared, La Cage aux Follies, and Sunday in the Park with George. Stephanie earned an AS in theatre costume from Cañada College and a BA in theatre design and technology from Plymouth State University.

PRONOUNS: SHE | HER | HERS

ANTON HEDMAN
SOUND ENGINEER
Anton was born and raised in the Bay Area. He is the owner of Hedman Sound and the general manager of Sound Productions. Anton has worked at the Playhouse since 2014. Credits elsewhere include Jerry Springer: The Opera, LIZZIE, The Silence, and Jesus Christ Superstar (Victoria Theatre), Assassins, Woyzeck, and Black Rider (Shotgun Players), and projects at Pier 39, Eureka Theatre, Brava Theater Center, Cape Fear Regional Theatre in Fayetteville, and La MaMa E.T.C. in New York. He thanks his family and friends for their support and the cast and crew of this production for their hard work and talent. Anton feels “blessed to make a living in the arts!” hedmansound.com

HEATHER KENYON*
SCENIC ARTIST
Heather is a Bay Area scenic designer and lighting designer. Previous Playhouse lighting designs include Songs for a New World, I Was Right Here, Art, and The Fit. Heather worked on the sets for the Playhouse productions of The Fit, Washed Up on the Potomac, Born in East Berlin, Sunday in the Park with George, King of the Yees, and Art. Other set design credits include Ti-Jean and His Brothers (MFA Program at American Conservatory Theater), American Hero and Cloud 9 (Custom Made Theatre Co.), and Thoroughly Modern Millie and A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder (South Bay Musical Theatre). She has also worked with TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Aurora Theatre Company, Ballet San José, CMT San José, and WVLO Musical Theatre Company. Heather earned an MFA in scenic design from San Francisco State University and is a proud member of United Scenic Artists 829. heatherkenyon.net

PRONOUNS: SHE | HER | HERS

ANGELA KNUTSON
PRODUCTION MANAGER, COVID COMPLIANCE OFFICER
Angela is excited to be in her twelfth season with the Playhouse. She has recently taken on a production management position overlooking the new world of filmed productions and is so grateful for all the opportunities the Playhouse has opened up for her. Angela also works closely with the Westlake School for the Performing Arts, where she discovered her love of performing arts.

PRONOUNS: SHE | HER | HERS

TISH LEUNG
SCENIC ARTIST, ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Tish has been building productions for Bay Area theatre companies since 2001. This is her seventh season as the assistant technical director at the Playhouse. Tish is also the technical director for the Sandbox Series. In the strange new ventures of pandemic theatre, she is also pulling out some previous experiences with Independent film and video crews as well as photography.

ELIZABETH NEWTON
ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER
Elizabeth is originally from Chico and works as assistant production manager and operations associate at the Playhouse. She graduated from Saint Mary’s College with degrees in accounting and technical theatre and served as stage manager on many productions there including her personal favorites, Twelfth Night and Cabaret. She worked as a production assistant on Elevada at Shotgun Players and stage manager on Born in East Berlin for the Sandbox Series at the Playhouse. Most recently, Elizabeth worked on Shoot Me When... and (hieroglyph) on the Playhouse mainstage. She is very excited to share this experience with the cast and crew.
Andrea Schwartiz
Master Electrician
Andrea is thrilled to be in her fourth season as the master electrician at the Playhouse. She is also master electrician for the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco and a lighting designer around the Bay Area. Andrea is proud to call the Playhouse her home.

Pronouns: She | Her | Hers

Zach Sigman
Technical Director
Zach has been technical director at the Playhouse since 2014, starting with Promises, Promises. He has been a part of the Bay Area theatre community since the early 1990s and has worked for many theatre companies, including San Jose Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Opera San Jose, and Lamplighters Music Theatre. Zach lives in San Lorenzo with his wonderful wife, Shannon Sigman.

San Francisco Playhouse

Susi Damilano
Founder, Producing Director
Susi is co-founder and producing director of the Playhouse. She is a five-time recipient of the Excellence in Theatre Award for Principal Actress in a Play from the Critics Circle for the Playhouse in San Francisco Bay Area Theatre. Susi is co-founder and producing director of the Playhouse since 2014, starting with Promises, Promises. She has also performed leading roles of Separation, and Reckless. Susi also has performed leading roles here in Yoga Play, The Effect, The Roommate, Red Velvet, Tree, Bauer, Abigail’s Party, Harper Regan, Bug, Six Degrees of Separation, and Reckless. Susi has also performed leading roles here in Yoga Play, The Effect, The Roommate, Red Velvet, Tree, Bauer, Abigail’s Party, Harper Regan, Coraline, Slasher, One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, Landscape of the Body, First Person Shooter, Jesus Hopped the ‘A’ Train, The Crucible, Kimberly Akimbo, Our Town, and The Smell of the Kill. Directing credits include Playhouse productions of Groundhog Day the Musical, Cabaret, Mary Poppins, Noises Off, She Loves Me, Stage Kiss, Company, Stupid Fucking Bird, Into the Woods, A Behanding in Spokane, Den of Thieves, and Wirehead (SFBATCC nomination), the West Coast premieres of Honey Brown Eyes (SFBATCC nomination), Dead Man’s Cell Phone, Coronado, The Mystery Plays, and Roulette, and the world premieres of On Clover Road by Steven Dietz, From Red to Black by Rhett Rossi, and Seven Days by Daniel Heath in the Sandbox Series.

Pronouns: She | Her | Hers

Bill English
Founder, Artistic Director
Bill English is the co-founder and artistic director of the Playhouse. In fifteen years with Susi Damilano, he has guided its growth from a bare-bones storefront to the second-largest nonprofit theatre company in San Francisco. Bill designed our first theater space at 536 Sutter Street and personally reconfigured our current space from a barn-like 700-seat hall into the current gracious and intimate 199-seat venue. Along the way, he has served as director, actor, scenic designer, and sound designer, winning San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle nominations or awards in each of those categories. Bill is also an accomplished musician and builder. Milestone accomplishments include bringing Pulitzer Prize-winner Stephen Adly Guirgis to the Bay Area by directing three of his plays, commissioning twelve playwrights beyond readings. There is also a commitment to nurturing new playwrights — is dedicated to nurturing new playwrights beyond readings. There is also a commitment to more in-depth work beyond readings. There is also a commitment to more in-depth work beyond readings. There is also a commitment to more in-depth work beyond readings. There is also a commitment to more in-depth work beyond readings. There is also a commitment to more in-depth work beyond readings. There is also a commitment to more in-depth work beyond readings. There is also a commitment to more in-depth work beyond readings. There is also a commitment to more in-depth work beyond readings. There is also a commitment to more in-depth work beyond readings.

San Francisco Playhouse

was founded in 2003 and is the only mid-sized professional theatre company in downtown San Francisco, an intimate alternative to the larger, more traditional theaters. Presenting a diverse range of plays and musicals, the Playhouse produces new works as well as reimagined classics, “making the edgy accessible and the accessible edgy.” Its bold San Francisco Playhouse Sandbox Series – the only subscription series in the Bay Area devoted solely to presenting world premiers – is dedicated to nurturing new playwrights beyond readings. There is also a commitment to more in-depth work through individual commissions, including plays by Theresa Rebeck, Steve Yockey, Christopher Chen, Lauren Gunderson, and Aaron Loeb.

The Playhouse has developed, presented, and transferred three world premieres to New York. Gunderson’s Bauer and Loeb’s Ideation opened Off-Broadway, and Loeb’s Abraham Lincoln’s Big, Gay Dance Party won the best of New York International Fringe Festival. Their commitment to new works in the phrase “the empathy gym” and it drives everything at the Playhouse.

Danika Ingraham
General Manager, Covid Compliance Officer
Danika is an artist and passionate advocate for inclusion and diversity in the performing arts. She takes pride in helping to shape organizational cultures where all people feel valued and seen. In previous managerial roles, she has established inclusive practices in the workplace and instituted policies to ensure the safety of all staff members. She has worn many hats including producing, budget management, theater tech, and everything in between. Danika recently became a certified COVID Compliance Officer to oversee and implement the safety program at the Playhouse.

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San Francisco Playhouse Sandbox Series has been honored by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Theatre Wing. The Playhouse secured their two highest-profile commissions to date: Seared by Theresa Rebeck, which opened the 2016-2017 Mainstage Season and was nominated for ten San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle awards, and You Mean to Do Me Harm by Christopher Chen, winner of the Lanford Wilson Award from the Dramatists Guild of America in 2016. Works developed by the Playhouse have gone on to receive regional and national acclaim. Yockey’s Pluto – a Playhouse commission – was named a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere. The Playhouse commission – was produced at the Public Theater, George Brant’s Grounded – a Playhouse premiere – was produced at the Public Theater starring Anne Hathaway and directed by Julie Taymor in 2015, and Loeb’s Abraham Lincoln’s Big, Gay Dance Party has received productions from Birmingham to Off-Broadway. sfplayhouse.org

THE SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE

ELLEN CALLAS
GENERAL MANAGER, COLLECTIVE MEMBER

Ellen is a native Chicagoan who cut her teeth on Second City. In 1976, she co-founded Hit and Run Theater, a political sketch comedy troupe that toured rural northern California for many years. Since joining the San Francisco Mime Troupe in 1986, Ellen has worked as a writer on Ripped Van Winkle, Secrets in the Sand, Rats, Back to Normal, Escape from Cyberia, Revenger Rat, Soul Suckers, Eating It, 1600 Transylvania Ave, Doing Good, and Posibilidad, an actor in Rats, director of Making a Killing, and production, company, and stage manager for various productions including the international collaboration and Asian tour of Big Wind. She also served as company manager for the long running production of Angels in America: Parts I & II at American Conservatory Theater. Ellen is committed to mentoring future activist artists and from its beginning has been an enthusiastic teacher and occasional project director for the twenty-four-year-old Youth Theater Project at the Mime Troupe. She credits her ability as an improviser for helping to navigate the rocky road of nonprofit political theatre.

MARISSE ELLISON
BOOKING COORDINATOR, TOUR MANAGER

Marissa was born and raised in Wisconsin and has been a lover of theatre since her debut as an orphan in Annie in the third grade. Her relationship with the Troupe began in the summer of 2017, when she spent her summer as a workshop student. Marissa graduated with a BA in theatre performance from Marquette University. Since then, she has performed in the Bay Area with Ross Valley Players and Landmark Musical Theatre. Marissa is always excited to spend time at the Mime Troupe and be involved with such passionate theatre professionals!

KAREN RUNK
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Karen moved to San Francisco with the intention of only staying for a few months. Two decades later she is still here! This is largely due to the talented folks at the Troupe, and thanks to Golden Thread Productions where she is a resident artist, but mostly due to rent control! Karen first experienced the Troupe as stage manager for two 1997 youth projects, Revenger Rat Meets the Merchant of Death and Inside Out, after which she ran screaming into the arms of the Magic Theatre and there she stayed, contently for two years. The Troupe then wooed her back for their 1999 summer production City for Sale. Still under the wooing spell of the Troup, Karen has stage managed a plethora of summer productions and has only managed to escape, successfully, one full summer back in 2002, when she worked with San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. However, Karen is plotting a daring escape...

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 theatre of social justice that by its very existence sustains a vision of community governance of, by, and for The People. For over sixty years, The Troupe has created and produced theatre with a working-class analysis of the events that shape our society, used theatre to expose social and economic injustice, and demanded 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 productions 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!) sfmto.org

ACTORS’ EQUITY ASSOCIATION

was founded in 1913. It is the US labor union that represents more than 50,000 actors and stage managers. Equity seeks to foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages and working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Actors’ Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. actorsequity.org
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