

# ALMANAC

#01

A literary magazine from **Playwrights Horizons**

2021



# 50 YEARS AND COUNTING

As we celebrate 50 years of Playwrights Horizons, we are looking back at our past and ahead to our future. Throughout our history, we have been steadfast in our commitment to supporting artists who use their unique voices to tell our collective story. Even in these trying times, that dedication has never wavered.

Your support helps us encourage artists to keep creating the thought-provoking and important new work we love – both digitally and, when it is safe to be together, in our theater.

As we look to the next 50 years, your contributions allow us to champion and uplift our artistic community. We hope you will join us by making a donation. Donate now by texting **PH50FOR50** to **44-321** or visiting **[phnyc.org/donate](https://phnyc.org/donate)**.

We can't do it without you. Thank you for your continued support.

**Playwrights Horizons**

# ALMANAC

*Almanac* is a literary magazine from Playwrights Horizons. Established in 2020, at a time of pandemic and protest, *Almanac* is a new kind of publication – one in which a theater and the artists who comprise it come together to take stock of contemporary politics, culture, and playwriting. Through plays, essays, interviews, poems, and visual art, *Almanac* charts the coordinates of the present day, as measured by thinkers and makers whose work lives both on and beyond the stage.

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# CONTRIBUTORS

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**BRITTANY K. ALLEN** is a Brooklyn-based writer and performer. Her play *Redwood* (Kilroys List 2017 and 2020) received its world premiere at Portland Center Stage in fall 2019, and will appear in upcoming seasons at the Jungle Theater in Minneapolis and Ensemble Studio Theatre in New York.

**WILL ARBERY** is from Texas + Wyoming + seven sisters. His play *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, produced at Playwrights Horizons, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and the winner of an Obie and Lortel. He's the recipient of a Whiting Award. Other plays include *Plano* and *Evanston Salt Costs Climbing*.

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**AGNES BORINSKY** is a writer based in Los Angeles. She has written many plays, including, *Brief Chronicle*, *Books 6-8*, available from 3 Hole Press. Her YA novel, *Sasha Masha*, came out this fall.

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**IMAN CHILDS** is an arts administrator, content creator, and Fulbright alumna with a background in film. She is currently a Producer and Editor at Playwrights Horizons.

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**MIA CHUNG**'s most recent play *Catch as Catch Can* is rescheduled to premiere in the 2021-22 season at Steppenwolf. Page 73 produced the play's world premiere in NYC in Fall 2018.

**FRANCES YA-CHU COWHIG** is an internationally produced playwright whose work has been staged in the United Kingdom at the Royal Shakespeare Company, Hampstead Theatre, the National Theatre, Trafalgar Studios 2 [West End], and the Unicorn Theatre. In the United States her work has been staged at venues that include the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Manhattan Theater Club, and the Goodman Theatre.

**LISA DONADIO** is the Associate Casting Director at Playwrights Horizons and an avid jewelry designer.

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**ADAM GREENFIELD** joined the staff of Playwrights Horizons in 2007, first as Literary Manager, and then as Director of New Play Development and Associate Artistic Director. In July 2020, he assumed the role of Artistic Director.

**DAVE HARRIS** is a writer from West Philly, and currently the Tow Playwright in Residence at Roundabout. His plays will be seen at Playwrights Horizons, Center Theatre Group, and Roundabout in the vague future.



# CONTRIBUTORS

**ZORA HOWARD** is the author of several plays, including *STEW* (2020 Drama League nominee for Outstanding Play), *BUST*, and *AtGN*. In 2020, her film *Premature* opened in theaters following its world premiere at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. She is the 2020–2021 Van Lier New Voices Fellow at the Lark.

**JAMES IJAMES** is a playwright and performer in Philadelphia, PA. He's a Whiting and Kesselring Prize winner and Pew Fellow. James is also an Associate Professor of Theater at Villanova University and a Co-Artistic Director at the Wilma Theater.

**C.A. JOHNSON** is a playwright and New Orleans native now based in Brooklyn, NY. Most recently, her play *ALL THE NATALIE PORTMANS* was produced at MCC Theater.

**HANSOL JUNG** is a US-based playwright from South Korea. Recent works include *Wild Goose Dreams*, *Cardboard Piano*, and *Wolf Play*.

**RAJA FEATHER KELLY** is an Obie-winning choreographer, a director, and founder/artistic director of dance, theatre, and media company the feath3r theory. Raja has choreographed extensively for Off-Broadway theatre in New York City. Frequent collaborators include: Lileana Blain-Cruz, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Sarah Benson, and Michael R. Jackson.

**SYLVIA KHOURY** is a French and Lebanese playwright based in New York City. The set of her play, *Selling Kabul*, has lived in the Peter Jay Sharp Theater at Playwrights Horizons for close to one year. She is completing her medical studies at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

**ALISON KOCH** is the inaugural Digital Content Producer at Playwrights Horizons, responsible for implementing new and innovative uses of digital media and technology to enhance and reimagine the theatrical experience for its audiences. (She's also a proud new mom!)

**ANGELA LEWIS** is an African-American actress, currently based in Los Angeles. She is in her fourth season as a series regular on FX's hit show, *Snowfall*, created by the late John Singleton.

**CRAIG LUCAS** is a playwright, screenwriter, librettist, director of theater and film, and a member of the Dramatists Guild, Director's Guild, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, Writers Guild of America, and Democratic Socialists of America. He received the Excellence in Literature Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

**ARNULFO MALDONADO** is a set and costume designer in theater and opera. He recently received the 2020 Obie for Sustained Excellence in Set Design, as well as a Special Citation Obie as part of the Creative Team of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Strange Loop* by Michael R. Jackson.

Actor/Producer **J. MALLORY McCREE** is a native of Detroit, MI. J. attended Rutgers University, earning a BFA from Mason Gross School of the Arts. Some of McCree's most notable roles include: Sekou Bah on Season 6 of *Homeland*; Charlie on *Quantico*; and Cole in Marvel's *The Defenders*. Other prominent projects include *Show Me A Hero* (HBO), *The Last Ship*, *From Nowhere* (SXSW 2016 Audience Award Winner), and *Who Are We Now* (TIFF). J. is currently starring on Freeform's hit series *Good Trouble*.

In the late 60s, **BOB MOSS** directed a number of plays at the Edward Albee Playwrights Unit. In 1970 he took over the running of the Unit until it closed in 1970. At that point he was invited to continue working with new playwrights at the West Side YWCA, which became Playwrights Horizons. He moved his operation to West 42nd Street in 1975 and the rest is history.

**RODRIGO MUÑOZ** is a New York-based costume designer originally from Mexico City. He is one of the co-founders, along with Cha See and Kimie Nishikawa, of See Lighting Foundation, a grassroots organization committed to supporting immigrant theater artists during the global pandemic.

**ROBERT O'HARA** has received the NAACP Best Play and Best Director Award, the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding New Play, two Obies, and the Herb Alpert Award. Broadway: *Slave Play*. Off-Broadway: *Slave Play*, *In the Continuum*, *The Brother/Sister Plays (Part 2)*, *Wild with Happy*, *Bella: An American Tall Tale*, *Mankind*, *Bootycandy*, and *Insurrection: Holding History*.

**LIBBY PETERSON** is the Manager of Student Affairs at Playwrights Horizons Theater School. She is also a facilitator, teaching artist, and freelance producer. Libby has an MFA from Yale School of Drama and a BA from Southern Oregon University.

**HEATHER RAFFO** is an award-winning actress and playwright whose seminal works focus on the intimate and epic relationship between her Iraqi and American identities. Her new anthology, *Heather Raffo's Iraq Plays: The Things That Can't Be Said* comes out in early 2021.

# CONTRIBUTORS

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**TIM SANFORD** is the Outgoing Artistic Director of Playwrights Horizons, for which he served as Literary Resident, Literary Manager, and Associate Artistic Director from 1984 to 1995, then as Artistic Director from 1996 to 2020. Tim is an alumnus of the TCG Board of Directors and was honored with Obie and Lucille Lortel awards for Lifetime Achievement in 2020. He has a PhD in Dramatic Criticism from Stanford University.

**DON SCARDINO** has directed off and on Broadway and in motion pictures and television, winning two Emmy awards, the Producers Guild Award, and the Obie award. He was Artistic Director at Playwrights Horizons from 1991 to 1995.

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**MAY TREUHAFT-ALI** is a playwright and the Literary Fellow at Playwrights Horizons. She is also a Writing Fellow at The Playwrights Realm and an alumna of Clubbed Thumb's Early-Career Writers' Group. She has dramaturged at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Haven Theatre, Ars Nova ANT Fest, and Adventure Theatre MTC.

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**LIBBY ZAMBRANO** is the Human Resources Manager for Playwrights Horizons, and has an extensive background in nonprofit business operations, performing arts, and venue management.

**DAVID ZINN** designs scenery and costumes for the theater. His work for Playwrights Horizons includes *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *The Flick*, *The Big Meal*, *Hir*, *Completeness*, *Placebo*, and *For Peter Pan On Her 70th Birthday*.

# FROM THE EDITOR

This is *Almanac*, an unexpected foray into writing and publishing by a theater that, for the time being, has gone dark. When our stages on 42nd Street suddenly emptied, we felt called to gather in other ways: not just to gather our thoughts but, if possible, to gather together. As Agnes Borinsky reminds us in her essay, the theater has long served as a site of gathering in both these senses. Bereft of such sites, we thought, let *Almanac* be our new meeting place, a forum for assembly and an occasion, too, to sort out and sift through the vagaries of this time.

Historically, almanacs have brought order to the labors of farmers, sailors, and astronomers. In lists and tables and calendars, almanacs mark lunations and eclipses, tides high and low, migrations north and south. “When you’re lost at sea, trying to chart a course,” Adam Greenfield notes, “there’s something that can really come in handy: an almanac.” After all, its purpose is practical – which is to say, predictive. These handbooks attempt to anticipate, to forecast, to offer guidance in advance. Like ancient sibyls – or like data analytics – they peer a little ways ahead and report what’s there, drawing, always, from deep stores of memory.

Like its namesake, then, *Almanac* aims to be of use to practitioners, not by collating dates and statistics but by cataloguing information of a different sort: the feeling of a month, the texture of a moment. In order to introduce our audiences – now, our readers – to the fullest expression of this project, we are devoting our inaugural issue to time and temporality. In the pages ahead, you will encounter accounts of these days as they pass and have passed, chronicles of yesterday and prophecies for tomorrow. Our authors – directors and designers, actors and administrators, dramaturgs and playwrights, creators and critics – variously engage or evince time itself, its patterns as well as its ruptures. Their contributions fill three loose sections, “Pasts,” “Nows,” and “Futures,” which reflect our thinking of *Almanac* as an offering to our future selves, a time capsule of the present, and, eventually, a record of the past.

Many thanks to Play-PerView for gifting us the means to commission over two dozen artists; to Adam Greenfield and Kyle Sircus for their wholehearted championship and endless wisdom; to Carol Fishman and Jenna Ready for their generous partnership; to Karl Baker Olson, Iman Childs, Alison Koch, Billy McEntee, and Lizzie Stern, our editorial team, for their insight and care; and to Jordan Best, our graphic designer, for his vision, which elevated us all.

Thanks are due, too, to our intrepid contributors, who shared their words and images, their truths and visions, with us this summer and fall without guarantees, really, of what might result. It is my great hope that – in clearing this space for discussion and debate under the auspices of an institution but with encouragement to think widely and wildly – we have honored their trust.

Final thanks are due to you, our readers. We’re so grateful you’re here.



Ashley Chang