

## THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES COMPLETE CASTING FOR NEW YORK PREMIERE OF *MOJADA*

Written by Luis Alfaro  
Directed by Chay Yew

### Performances Begin July 2 with a Joseph Papp Free Preview

May 23, 2019 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced complete casting today for the New York premiere of the play *MOJADA*, written by MacArthur Genius Award-winning playwright **Luis Alfaro** and directed by Obie Award-winning director **Chay Yew**. *MOJADA* will begin previews on Tuesday, July 2 with a Joseph Papp Free Preview performance in The Public's LuEsther Hall. A bold new telling of a story as old as tragedy itself, *MOJADA* runs through Sunday, August 11, with an official press opening on Wednesday, July 17.

The complete cast of *MOJADA* features **Vanessa Aspillaga** (*Luisa*), **Alex Hernandez** (*Jason*), **Ada Maris** (*Pilar*), **Benjamin Luis McCracken** (*Acan*), **Socorro Santiago** (*Tita*), and **Sabina Zúñiga Varela** (*Medea*).

"I am so moved by the abundance of Latinx talent living and working in New York," said playwright **Luis Alfaro**. "As I work to reset this *Medea* in the vibrant community of Queens, where Mexicans have been the largest growing population in the city, I'm thrilled by this extraordinary company of actors and to be working with my longtime colleagues at The Public who are beautifully committed to creating an authentic representation of the world of the play and bringing an immediacy to the issue of immigration."

MacArthur Genius Award-winning playwright Luis Alfaro returns with the New York premiere of his stirring drama about love, immigration, and sacrifice, inspired by the Ancient Greek story of *Medea*. Helmed by Chay Yew, this play masterfully combines ancient storytelling with the most pressing issues facing our country today, following a young Mexican mother who gives up everything to bring her son to America, only to find America demands even more. Alfaro and Yew's last collaboration, *Oedipus El Rey*, an electrifying take on the Greek tragedy *Oedipus Rex*, premiered at The Public in the fall of 2017.

"Of the several authentically American narratives, one of the most powerful is immigration. With his intimate lyrical epic *MOJADA*, Luis Alfaro has given visibility and voice to this hot-button national issue currently dividing our nation today," said director **Chay Yew**. "Luis has created an opportunity for us to dialogue meaningfully, and to experience the humanity of Mexican undocumented workers who risk their lives to find sanctuary in these united states."

The new play features scenic design by Arnulfo Maldonado; costume design by Haydee Zelideth; lighting design by David Weiner; sound design by Mikhail Fiksel; projection design by Stephan Mazurek; and fight direction by UnkleDave's Fight-House.

**LUIS ALFARO** (*Playwright*). Alfaro's play *Oedipus El Rey* was previously produced at The Public in 2017. Regional productions include *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Victory Gardens Theater, Getty Villa), *Delano* (Magic Theatre), and *St. Jude* (Kirk Douglas Theatre, South Coast Rep). Alfaro was the Andrew S. Mellon Playwright-in-Residence at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (2013–19) and has received a MacArthur Genius Grant, PEN America/Laura Pels International Foundation for Theater Award for a Master American Dramatist, United States Artist Fellowship, Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow, and Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for *Mojada*. Alfaro is a Professor at University of Southern California (USC) and a Playwrights Ensemble Member at Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago. He is published in over 25 anthologies.

**CHAY YEW** (*Director*) has directed *Oedipus El Rey*, *Durango*, *Ameriville*, and *Low* at The Public. Off-Broadway credits include *A Cool Dip in the Barren Saharan Crick* (Playwrights Horizons), *The Architecture of Loss* (NYTW), *Draw the Circle* (Rattlestick), *Where Did We Sit on the Bus?* (Ensemble Studio Theatre), *My Mañana Comes* (Playwrights Realm), *The House of Bernarda Alba* (NAATCO), and *Last of the Suns* (Ma-Yi). Yew has directed at the Goodman Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Rep, Mark Taper Forum, ACT, The Kennedy Center, Woolly Mammoth, Seattle Rep, Huntington Theatre Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Denver Center Theatre, Portland Center Stage, South Coast Rep, Cornerstone, East West Players, etc. Opera credits include *Ainadamar* (Tanglewood, Los Angeles Philharmonic) and *Rage d'Amours* (Tanglewood). Awards include an Obie Award for Direction. Yew is the Artistic Director of Victory Gardens Theater.

**VANESSA ASPILLAGA** (*Luisa*) has appeared at The Public in *As You Like It*. Her Broadway credits include *Anna in the Tropics*. She has appeared Off-Broadway at Atlantic Theater Company, Roundabout, Signature, Lincoln Center, Rattlestick, Primary Stages, Women's Project, INTAR, LAByrinth, BAM, La MaMa, and NYTW. Her film credits include *Hustlers*, *Trick*, *The Subject*, *Detours*, *Gun Hill Road*, *Morning Glory*, *Love and Other Drugs*, *Petty Crimes*, *Pyrite*, and *Stringer*. Her TV appearances include "Madam Secretary," "High Maintenance," "Search Party," "Blue Bloods," "Falling Water," "The Jim Gaffigan Show," "Flesh and Bone," "Nurse Jackie," "The Good Wife," "Elementary," "Law & Order: SVU," and "Law & Order."

**ALEX HERNANDEZ** (*Jason*) has appeared at The Public in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare in the Park) and *Richard III* (Mobile Unit). His Off-Broadway credits include *Peter and the Starcatcher* (New World Stages) and *Kingdom Come* (Roundabout Underground). His regional credits include *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Actors Theatre of Louisville, Dallas Theater Center), *Time Alone* (Belle Reve), *Hamlet* (Seven Stages Shakespeare Company), and *Life of Galileo* (Cleveland Playhouse). His films include *Bloodshot* (upcoming) and *Millie and the Lords*. He has appeared on TV in "UnREAL," "Hemlock Grove," "The Son," and "Black Box," among others. His interactive credits include *Mafia III*.

**ADA MARIS** (*Pilar*) has appeared at The Public in *Bang Bang Blues*. Her Off-Broadway credits include *In a Pig's Valise*. Her TV credits include "Mayans MC," "Star Trek Enterprise," "The Brothers Garcia," and "Nurses." Her one-woman performance pieces include *I Wanna Be an American*, *Life Upon the Wicked Stage*, and *Listen to Your Mother*.

**BENJAMIN LUIS McCracken** (*Acan*) was born in Guatemala and raised in New York City. He looks forward to beginning eighth grade at The Computer School this fall and is a proud pre-professional student at Ballet Academy East. He has attended acting classes at The New Group and a playwriting workshop at Writopia. His film and TV credits include *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, "The Path," "Sesame Street," and the web series "Slime!"

**SOCORRO SANTIAGO** (*Tita*) has appeared at The Public in *Unfinished Women* and *Women Without Men*. Santiago's Broadway credits include *The Bacchae*. Her Off-Broadway credits include *Adoration of an Old Woman*, *Kingdom*, *L'illusion*, and *Romeo & Juliet*. She has appeared regionally in *Mojada* (Jeff Award), *Boleros For the Disenchanted* (IRNE nomination), *Another Word For Beauty*, *Trojan Women*, *A Doll's House Part 2*, and *Small Mouth Sounds* (National tour). Her TV credits include "Mozart in the Jungle," "Seven Seconds," "Blue Bloods," "Law & Order," and "All My Children" (ALMA award). Her films include *Devil's Advocate*, *All Good Things*, and *Widows* (director Steve McQueen).

**SABINA ZÚÑIGA VARELA** (*Medea*). Her regional credits include Culture Clash's *Bordertown Now* (Pasadena Playhouse); *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles* (OSF, Getty Villa, Theatre @ Boston Court, LA Drama Critics Circle Award); *Tenth Muse, The Heart of Robin Hood* (OSF); *You Never Can Tell* (Cal Shakes); *Native Gardens* (Cincinnati Playhouse); Culture Clash's *Chavez Ravine* (CTG Kirk Douglas Theatre, LA Ovation Award); *Oedipus El Rey, A Christmas Carol* (Dallas Theater Center); *Bruja* (Magic Theatre); and *El Nogalar* (The Fountain Theatre). She has appeared on TV in "American Crime" and "Snowfall."

## **ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:**

**THE PUBLIC** is theater of, by, and for all people. Artist-driven, radically inclusive, and fundamentally democratic, The Public continues the work of its visionary founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Conceived over 60 years ago as one of the nation's first nonprofit theaters, The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public's wide breadth of programming includes an annual season of new work at its landmark home at Astor Place, Free Shakespeare in the Park at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park, The Mobile Unit touring throughout New York City's five boroughs, Public Forum, Under the Radar, Public Studio, Public Works, Public Shakespeare Initiative, and Joe's Pub. Since premiering *HAIR* in 1967, The Public continues to create the canon of American Theater and is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning musical *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 59 Tony Awards, 178 Obie Awards, 53 Drama Desk Awards, 56 Lortel Awards, 34 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org)

## **TICKET INFORMATION**

**MOJADA** will begin previews on Tuesday, July 2 with a Joseph Papp Free Preview performance in The Public's LuEsther Hall. **MOJADA** runs through Sunday, August 11, with an official press opening on Wednesday, July 17.

Continuing The Public's mission to make great theater accessible to all, the Joseph Papp Free Preview Initiative will continue this summer; free tickets to the first preview on Tuesday, July 2 will be available beginning June 26 via TodayTix digital lottery, and on July 2 via the lottery in the lobby of The Public Theater at Astor Place, with entries starting at 11 a.m. and winners drawn at 12 p.m. (noon).

Public Theater Partner, Public Supporter, and Member tickets are available now. Full price tickets, starting at \$65, can be accessed by calling **(212) 967-7555**, visiting [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org), or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street.

The open captioning performance will be at **2:00 p.m.** on **Saturday, July 20**. The audio described performance will be at **2:00 p.m.** on **Saturday, July 27**.

The performance schedule is Tuesday through Friday at 8:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. (*There is no 8:00 p.m. performance on Thursday, July 4. There is no 2:00 p.m. performance on Saturday, July 6.*)

The Library at The Public is open nightly for food and drink, beginning at 5:30 p.m., and Joe's Pub at The Public continues to offer some of the best music in the city. For more information, visit [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org).

# # #