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Al Sierra

HEADSHOTS

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES 2025 EMERGING WRITERS GROUP SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Free Readings of Full-Length Plays Penned by Playwrights

Karina Billini, Tommy Endter, Jesse Jae Hoon, Humaira Iqbal,
Celeste Jennings, Nina Ki, Gloria Oladipo, Valen-Marie Santos,
Amita Sharma, and Al Sierra

March 25, 2025 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced the line-up today for the **Emerging Writers Group's Spotlight Series**, a collection of free performances where members of the current cohort present their full-length plays. The staged readings will run from Monday, April 21 through Tuesday, May 20. A full schedule of performances is included below.

The 2025 Spotlight Series will feature full-length plays by members of the 2023-2025 Emerging Writers Group: **Karina Billini, Tommy Endter, Jesse Jae Hoon, Humaira Iqbal, Celeste Jennings, Nina Ki, Gloria Oladipo, Valen-Marie Santos, Amita Sharma, and Al Sierra.**

"The 2023-2025 Emerging Writers Group, and the plays presented in this year's EWG Spotlight Series, represent a proud moment in pursuit of The Public's mission," shared The Public's Associate Director of New Work Development **Jack Phillips Moore**. "These 10 astonishing writers have written epics that span the globe and the vastness of human identity, modern myths that speak enormous truths, and stories of hope, love, and doom. This cohort's members, through two years of fellowship and bold work, are dazzlingly varied in form and subject, but unite to affirm that the future of theater is bright and breathtaking."

These works are directed and performed by experienced artists from the theatrical community. Admission to the EWG Spotlight Series is free. If interested in attending a reading—or the whole series—please visit the 2023-2025 EWG Spotlight Series page at publictheater.org to RSVP.

The **Emerging Writers Group** is a fellowship at The Public Theater for playwrights and other generative artists at the early stages of their professional careers. For over 15 years, **Emerging Writers Group** has brought artists together to create and develop their work in conversation with their peers and The Public Theater community. EWG is a cornerstone of The Public's mission to celebrate and support new generations of storytellers.

The Public has produced and continues to produce full productions by EWG playwrights, including the upcoming *Initiative* by Else Went, and *The Seat of Our Pants* by Ethan Lipton, both a part of The Public's 2025-26 Season. Previous Public productions by EWG playwrights include *Manahatta* by Mary Kathryn Nagle (2023); *Dark Disabled Stories* by Ryan J. Haddad (2023); *The Vagrant Trilogy* by Mona Mansour (2022) and *Urge for Going* by Mona Mansour (Public Lab 2011); *Eve's Song* by Patricia Ione Lloyd (2018) and *Pretty Hunger* by Patricia Ione Lloyd (Public Studio 2017); *Masculinity Max* by MJ Kaufman (Public Studio 2018); *The Outer Space* (2017) and the Obie Award-winning *No Place to Go* by Ethan Lipton (2012); and more.

Alumni of the Emerging Writers Group have had their theatrical work produced on and off Broadway and around the globe, and have also contributed greatly to the film, television, and publishing industries. These talented artists have won and been nominated for countless awards, including Tony, Obie, Lortel, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Emmy, and Academy Awards; MacArthur "Genius" Grants; and the Pulitzer Prize. Outside of The Public, some notable EWG alumni productions include *Appropriate* by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, winner of the 2024 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play; *On the Grounds of Belonging* by Ricardo Perez Gonzalez, produced by Long Wharf Theatre; *Endlings* by Academy Award-nominated Celine Song, produced by New York Theatre Workshop; and more. Read more highlights of alumni accomplishments at publictheater.org.

2025 SPOTLIGHT SERIES SCHEDULE:

Monday, April 21 at 1:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

SAVED, PART ONE: THE GIRL AND THE SKY

By Jesse Jae Hoon

SAVED, PART ONE: THE GIRL AND THE SKY is the first play in a two-part drama about the South Korean adoption industry, from its Cold War origins to its transformation into a lucrative business empire built by systemic fraud and negligence. Three epic stories spanning six decades across Oregon; Washington D.C.; Vermont; Seoul; and Jeju Island, **SAVED** explores what happens when we kill the parents and raise the children.

Tuesday, April 22, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

BEIGE IN AMERICA

By Humaira Iqbal (she/her)

"Beige," a young optimistic woman from London, has arrived in New York City, where she hopes her deepest dreams will thrive. Over the span of three years hustling in the big city, "Beige" will meet people who profoundly change her future and leave her questioning who she is—for better or worse. This modern-day immigration story challenges stereotypes of colorism and classism and explores what it means to be truly free.

Monday, April 28, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

THE TRAGEDY OF KESHAWN, LAST PRINCE OF EAST FLATBUSH; OR, THE DELETERIOUS EFFECTS OF WHITENESS ON A YOUNG BLACK MALE

By Al Sierra (*he/they*)

Keyshawn Bien-Aime is a college-bound, first generation, Haitian-American honor student from Brooklyn filled with a world of ambition and promise—but he soon realizes that his dream school might actually be a nightmare. Absorbed into the backdrop of an idyllic Ivy League university and the “whitest frat on campus,” Keyshawn finds himself struggling not only to maintain his grades, but the deepest parts of himself too.

Tuesday, April 29, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

RAVAGE

By Nina Ki (*xe/she/they*)

Yuli, a self-described teenage vampire hunter, moves from California to New York after what she believes was a run-in with a powerful vampire, who has kidnapped her sister. As Yuli learns to open up again, she is haunted by visions of her sister and embarks on a quest to seek revenge—only to instead come face-to-face with the fractured remnants of her past.

Monday, May 5, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

APPLE BOTTOM

By Karina Billini

Brazilian Butt Lifts are sweeping the wallets of the women in Miami, and the staff at the post-BBL recovery house, Apple Bottom Spa, hopes to ride on this wave. When a humble childhood neighbor and a high-strung Blackfishing social media influencer arrive post-surgery, the women who run Apple Bottom struggle to keep both patients and the house afloat. An intimate examination of female-to-female caregiving, body dysmorphia, and what it means when the brown/Black female body is both ostracized and commodified.

Tuesday, May 6, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

BIRTH OF A MOTHER

By Amita Sharma

Amita is reckoning with the overwhelm and spill of emotions that accompany new motherhood, rendering her broken and powerless. That is, until she discovers the power—and other women—that she has carried all along. A coming-of-age story through parenthood, **BIRTH OF A MOTHER** is a bold, brutally honest, and divine journey through motherhood and ancestry.

Monday, May 12, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

INTO YOUR HANDS

By Tommy Endter

The world never stops ending, and neither do we. After a six-year-long stay in a psychiatric ward, Kenneth Grey has finally returned home to their reservation in La Ronge, Saskatchewan. Now living with and working for the parents of their lifelong friend, Zanj, Kenny, and the other denizens of Alexandria Trading Post must navigate the trepidations of love, trust, and the power of secrets, as a trickster spirit sets their sights upon the store, and those within. **INTO YOUR HANDS** is the story of this spiritual battleground and the cycles it is victim to.

Tuesday, May 13, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

PERREO

By Valen-Marie Santos

When aspiring reggaetonera Vicki suddenly goes viral, she begins to see stardom before her. With her bestie Yesica and skeptical cousin Alicia along for the ride, Vicki's journey unfolds amid the heat of a Miami summer and pulse of the infectious dembow rhythm. But who gets to claim an ever-changing and ever-blending culture? And what will Vicki have to sacrifice to claim what's hers?

Monday, May 19, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

THE CARE AND KEEPING OF SCHIZOPHRENIA (AND OTHER DEMONS)

By Gloria Oladipo

Charity has just turned 25 and plans to move to California with her 41-year-old girlfriend, despite her family being in shambles after her brother's mental health emergency. But Charity is visited by an obnoxious, bossy Sleep Demon who demands Charity "deal with her shit." An absurdist, humorist romp, **THE CARE AND KEEPING OF SCHIZOPHRENIA (AND OTHER DEMONS)** asks: can Charity take control of the pressures bearing down on her or will she succumb to the waves?

Tuesday, May 20, 1:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

POTLIQKA

By Celeste Jennings

POTLIQKA is a three-act epic about Black history in the Antebellum South, spanning from 1790–1820, following James Hemmings, the founding father of soul food; a southern family—Esther, Freeman, and Missy (based on young Malinda Russell, the first Black woman to publish a cookbook in 1866); and Abina Kisi, Yawo Abayie, and Ama Nanny, a family who remembers the Middle Passage and their stolen Ghanaian culture. It's a story of love, loss, and freedom, told one plate at a time.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER'S EMERGING WRITERS GROUP:

The **EMERGING WRITERS GROUP** (EWG) is a two-year fellowship at The Public Theater for playwrights and other generative artists in the early stages of their careers. For over 15 years, this cornerstone program has fulfilled The Public's mission to nurture new generations of storytellers. Selected bi-annually, fellows meet twice monthly to share works in progress and receive peer feedback. The program connects participants to New York City's theater landscape through special sessions including industry panels, director networking, financial guidance, and workshops with professional playwrights. Fellows receive stipends, opportunities to observe Public Theater rehearsals, career development guidance from industry professionals, and ongoing support from the New Work Development department and artistic staff. Bios for the 2023-2025 Emerging Writers Group Cohort members can be found at publictheater.org.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

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 Lab, 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 musicals *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, and *Hell's Kitchen* by Alicia Keys and Kristoffer Diaz. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 64 Tony Awards, 195 Obie Awards, 62 Drama Desk Awards, 61 Lortel Awards, 36 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 70 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

The Public Theater stands in honor of the first people and our ancestors. We acknowledge the land on which The Public and its theaters stand—the original homeland of the Lenape people—and the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We honor the generations of stewards, and we pay our respects to the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

Generous support provided by the **Irene Worth Fund for Young Artists**.

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