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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Eugene O'Neill Theater Center announces**  
**2020 Summer Season**  
**Puppetry, Musicals, Plays, & Cabaret**

**Online season supporting over 230 artists**  
**Featuring 16 free events, open to the public**

**Waterford, CT** – The **Eugene O'Neill Theater Center** announced today the 2020 summer season which will be held entirely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this new medium, the [mission & values](#) of the O'Neill – as the Launchpad of American Theater – remain vibrant and vital. The **National Puppetry Conference, National Music Theater Conference, National Playwrights Conference, Cabaret & Performance Conference, National Critics Institute, and National Theater Institute** all continue this summer, supporting over 230 exciting new artists, voices, and work. The O'Neill also celebrates that 16 free events in its 56th season will be available to artists, audiences, and supporters across the nation.

*"For the first time, the O'Neill's summer season will unfold entirely online." shares CEO/Producer **Preston Whiteway**. "For the safety of our staff, artists, students, and audiences we know that this is the best course of action for our 56th Season. I'm inspired by the innovation taking place within our institution as we move online together and the mission and values of the O'Neill – as the Launchpad of American theater – remain vibrant and vital. Each of our programs continue to support exciting new artists, voices, and work. This summer also marks my final one leading this special institution. It has been a privilege of a lifetime to be part of the story here. The O'Neill's future is bright."*

Along with this announcement of its 2020 Summer Season, the O'Neill also shares: *"National actions have continually dehumanized, abused, and ignored the lives of our fellow humans. Our neighbors, collaborators, students, family members, and friends are impacted daily by these acts of systemic racism, and the work of the Black Lives Matter Movement shines a vital light on these acts. As an institution, we must commit more of our resources to educate and engage our staff and audiences towards building anti-racist, inclusive, and empathetic spaces for all. Specific details of this plan are forthcoming and will be made public. We pledge to uphold our mission as the Launchpad of American Theater; to uplift artists of color and produce stories reflecting the entirety of human experience in American culture. We stand with artists grappling with the anguish, compassion, violence, and unrest occurring in daily life. We believe their experiences and voices are vital to the future of American theater."*

## **National Puppetry Conference**

Pam Arciero, *Artistic Director*

The National Puppetry Conference welcomes artists from around the globe to explore the range and power of the puppet, with workshops in puppet and mechanism building, writing, performance, marionettes, and more. Sensitive to the financial constraints of the community, the O'Neill has created a lower-cost 2020 Conference, with scholarship support for all participants. For the past 30 years, the Conference has thrived with a rigorous and varied schedule, which is emulated in the reimagined week of programming from June 8-12. Artists leading Conference intensives this summer include: five-time Emmy Award-winner **Tim McKeon** (*Writing for Puppets and People*), **Jim "Nappy" Napolitano** (*Cyber Shadow Puppets*), **Edwin Salas** (*Making Political Puppet Art*), **Jim Rose** and **Kurt Hunter** (*Marionette Construction*), **Alice Gottschalk** (*Movement and Experimental Puppetry*), and **Jean Marie Keevins** (*Participant Project: The Solo Show Challenge*).

**JOIN US!** In celebration of the 30th Conference, we are thrilled to offer the public a chance to take part in our five-part **master class series** featuring world-renowned puppetry artists. [Single tickets](#) (\$40) and [5-Class Passes](#) (\$125) are now on-sale. Each conversation will take place on Zoom from 2:00 - 3:00pm EST.

Monday, June 8 - **Ronnie Burkett (Canada)**

Tuesday, June 9 - ***Creativity and Compassion* with Yael Rasooly (Israel)**

Wednesday, June 10 - ***Mech Talk* with Jim Kroupa (USA)**

Thursday, June 11 - ***The ABC's for the Successful Puppeteer* with Bernd Ogrodnik (Iceland)**

Friday, June 12 - **Fabrizio Montecchi (Italy)**

**JOIN US! *Puppets in the Pub*** presented by Blue Gene's Pub and hosted by Tyler Bunch and Jonathan Little. Experience a virtual take on the beloved Puppetry Open Mics. Free, and open to the public, [rsvp required](#).

**Tuesday, June 9**, held online 9-10pm

**Thursday, June 11**, held online 9-10pm

Artistic Director **Pam Arciero** shares this about her 18th season: *"The National Puppetry Conference has always been an evolving and growing forum. As we begin our 30th season, we are happily anticipating a new and exciting format. We are looking forward to seeing new and innovative works of Puppetry take shape with us this summer. Join us online for international master classes and the beloved Pub open-mic nights!"*

## **National Music Theater Conference**

**Alexander Gemignani**, *Artistic Director*

Since its founding in 1978, the National Music Theater Conference has developed more than 128 new musicals, including early works of award-winning writers and composers such as Lin-Manuel Miranda, Tom Kitt, Michael R. Jackson, Kirsten Childs, Andrew Lippa, Tan Dun, Robert Lopez, Duncan Sheik, Adam Gwon, Steven Sater, Kristen Anderson-Lopez, Maury Yeston, and Jeanine Tesori. Selected from 360 submissions, the following new musicals will receive direct monetary and developmental support, mentorship, and - along with four additional writing teams also in the 2020 finalist round - maintain finalist eligibility to be considered for further development in the 2021 season:

### ***Azul Otra Vez [Blue, Revisited]***

Book by **Melis Aker & Tatiana Pandiani**

Music by **Jancinta Clusellas**

Lyrics by **Jacinta Clusellas & Rubén Darío**

### ***Two Nights and Three Days***

Book, Music, & Lyrics by **Kim Jinyoung & Marcus Perkins**

**JOIN US! NMTC Alumni Happy Hour**, hosted by **Alexander Gemignani** provides an opportunity to reconnect with NMTC writing teams past and present. Free, and open to the public, [rsvp required](#).

6/18/20 6pm - **NMTC 2018 Reunion**

**Anna Jacobs & Michael R. Jackson** (*Teeth*)

**Kate Kilbane & Dan Moses** (*Eddie the Marvelous, Who Will Save the World*)

*Additional artists to be announced.*

6/25/20 6pm - **NMTC 2019 Reunion**

**Benjamin Velez & Aryanna Garber** (*Borderline*)

**Ari Afsar & Lauren Gunderson** (*Jeannette*)

**Hansol Jung & Brian Quijada** (*Undesirables*)

NMTC Artistic Director **Alexander Gemignani** shares this about his third season: "*The two musicals we've chosen serve as a beautiful reminder of how innovative and necessary the art form of music theater can be. I am thrilled that the O'Neill will be supporting these pieces on their journey and cannot wait to welcome these five visionary writers into the NMTC family.*"

## **National Playwrights Conference**

**Wendy C. Goldberg**, *Artistic Director*

Since 1964, NPC has developed more than 750 new plays, including early works of award-winning writers such as Lee Blessing, Adam Bock, Kia Corthron, Christopher Durang, John Guare, Quiara Alegria Hudes, Samuel D. Hunter, David Henry Hwang, David Lindsay-Abaire, Martyna Majok, Dominique Morisseau, Lynn Nottage, Robert O'Hara, Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, Wendy Wasserstein, August Wilson, and Lanford Wilson. The O'Neill's founding program will support four new works this summer season by a broad mix of new, mid-career, and established writers. Each play will receive direct monetary and developmental support. Additionally, designers **Emily Auciello, Reza Behjat, Raquel Davis, Matt Hubbs, Anne Kennedy, Brian Lilienthal, Lawrence E. Moten III, M. Florian Staab** will all contribute to the Dream Design process. The four selected plays were chosen from 1,546 received through the O'Neill's open submissions process. The following new plays will and (along with 59 additional writing teams also in the 2020 finalist round) maintain finalist eligibility to be considered for further development in the 2021 season:

***Beacon*** by **Kirstin Greenidge**

Dramaturg **Kristin Leahey**

***...but you could've held my hand*** by **JuCoby Johnson**

Director: **Lileana Blain-Cruz**

***visiting hours*** by **Arika Larson**

Director: **Robert O'Hara**

***Kidnapping Jane Doe*** by **David Zheng**

Director: **Raelle Myrick Hodges**

**JOIN US! NPC Alumni Happy Hour**, hosted by **Wendy C. Goldberg** provides an opportunity to reconnect with prominent O'Neill writers and designers. Free, and open to the public, [rsvp required](#).

7/7/20 6pm - **NPC Alumni Happy Hour: Pulitzer Prize-winners**  
**Quiara Alegria Hudes, David Henry Hwang, & Michael R. Jackson**

7/14/20 6pm - **NPC Alumni Happy Hour: Design Studio**  
**Rachel Hauck, Arnulfo Maldonado, Lawrence E. Moten III**

NPC Artistic Director **Wendy C. Goldberg** shares this about her 16th season: "*There's never been a more important moment to support artists and storytellers. I am excited to work with these four playwrights and our team of collaborators in a virtual development conference.*"

## **Cabaret & Performance Conference**

**John McDaniel**, *Artistic Director*

The Conference continues to provide valuable development and performance training for select Cabaret Fellows (up-and-coming performers on the cabaret scene). The reimagined course of study for our Cabaret Fellows program still includes top professionals from around the globe led by Grammy & Emmy Award-winning artistic director **John McDaniel**. Master teachers include international singing star **Barb Jungr**, multi-award winning performer **Natalie Douglas**, featuring master classes by Tony Award-winner **Betty Buckley** and MAC president **Lennie Watts**. Returning music directors include award-winners **Tracy Stark**, **Mark Hartman**, and **Brian Nash**. The 5-day program, held online August 3-7, includes daily classes exploring every aspect of performance: song selection, preparation, one on one work with music directors, individual coachings, class presentation, show development, venue selection, marketing, and more. Alumni of the program have gone on to perform at major venues from coast to coast, utilizing the lasting relationships cultivated at the O'Neill.

The 2020 Junior Fellows program, for middle and high school students, takes on the music of Kenny Loggins through the medium of music videos, under the mentorship of **Brad Simmons** and **Michael Holland**. [O'Neill Members](#) receive exclusive access to the 2020 Cabaret Junior Fellows virtual performance,

### **JOIN US!** Monday, August 3 at 8pm ***An Evening with John McDaniel & Brad Simmons***

O'Neill favorites John & Brad team up for a unique Cabaret event which includes some new songs as well as some best-loved tunes. Join us online for the fun which will include a special mystery guest! Free, and open to the public, [rsvp required](#).

**JOIN US!** *Cabaret Happy Hours* presented by Blue Gene's Pub. Free, and open to the public, [rsvp required](#).

Tuesday, August 4 at 6pm with music director **Mark Hartman**

Wednesday, August 5 at 6pm with music director **Tracy Stark**

Thursday, August 6 at 6pm with music director **Brian Nash**

Artistic Director **John McDaniel** shares this about his eighth season: *We are happy to offer a virtual performance course with an all-star faculty for our Cabaret Fellows and Junior Fellows. There will also be some fun, interactive Pub Happy Hours for us all. I hope you will join us!*

[Atlantic Broadband](#) is the premier sponsor of the 2020 Cabaret & Performance Conference.

## **National Critics Institute**

**Chris Jones**, *Director*

America's only boot camp for arts writers, NCI 2020 will offer a 5-day online intensive July 6-10 designed for writers and critics looking to strengthen their skills in an increasingly competitive and fast-paced industry. Including seminars, technique classes, masterclasses, writing workshops, covering the fields of theater, film, television, food, dining, and music. Helmed by **Chris Jones**, critic and columnist at the *Chicago Tribune*, NCI has a world-class faculty of journalists, critics, and arts writers. Full-tuition scholarships are provided to each selected fellow. There will be no charge for anyone who attends, and it is our intention, upon mutual agreement, that fellows who complete NCI 2020 online will be offered a position to return for NCI 2021 on-campus, for two weeks, with full financial support.

## **National Theater Institute - Theatermakers Summer Intensive**

**Rachel Jett**, *Artistic Director*

From the O'Neill's flagship educational program the National Theater Institute, The Theatermakers Summer Intensive trains students in a credit-earning curriculum of acting, directing, and playwriting. A modified four-week Theatermakers program will utilize NTI's unique distance-learning approach, with the core mission remaining the same: constant practice, essential training, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities that yield original work. Transitioning online allows for classes to support work in a variety of mediums, providing additional skills and professional development tuned to virtual theater making, filmmaking, podcasts, and devising.

2020 Faculty includes: **David Auburn** (*Proof*), **Melia Bensussen** (*Hartford Stage*), **Michael Berresse** (*The Cher Show*, *[Title of Show]*), **Susan Blackwell** (*[Title of Show]*), **Lileana Blain-Cruz** (*Fefu & Her Friends*), **Oliver Butler** (*What the Constitution Means to Me*), **Rachel Chavkin** (*The Great Comet*, *Hadestown*), **Jeremy Cohen** (Playwrights Center), **Donna Di Novelli**, **Colman Domingo** (*Selma*, *If Beale Street Could Talk*), **Sarah Einspanier** (*Lunch Bunch*), **Julie Foh**, **Alexander Gemignani** (*Hamilton*, *West Side Story*), **Maria Goyanes** (*Woolly Mammoth*), **Jennifer Haley** (*The Nether*), **Jeremy O. Harris** (*Slave Play*, *Daddy*), **Jessi Hill**, **Samuel D. Hunter** (*The Whale*, *A Bright New Boise*), **Tom Kitt** (*Next to Normal*, *If/Then*, *Jagged Little Pill*), **Forrest McClendon** (*Scottsboro Boys*, *Seven Guitars*), **Lindsay Mendez** (*All Rise*, *Carousel*), **Dominique Morisseau** (*Ain't Too Proud*, *Pipeline*), **Matt Newton**, **Robert O'Hara** (*Bootycandy*, *Slave Play*), **Karen Olivo** (*Moulin Rouge*, *In the Heights*), **Ren Santiago** (*The Siblings Play*), **Charly Evon Simpson** (*Behind The Sheet*), **Stephen Sondheim** (*Into the Woods*, *Company*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday in the Park with George*), **Josh Wilder**, **Roy Alexander Weise**, **Malik Work**, **The Debate Society** (*The Light Years*, *Jacuzzi*), and the Artistic Directors of each of the O'Neill's professional Conferences.

Artistic Director **Rachel Jett** shares this about the summer session: "After talking with all of the incoming students over the past few months, I am really looking forward to working with this particular group of people in July. Already their determination and dedication to the craft of theatermaking is shining through! I'm so excited for them to be in conversation with our stellar faculty and guest artists."

## **National Directors Fellowship**

**Wendy C. Goldberg**, *Director*

The National Directors Fellowship fast-tracks the professional experience of emerging stage directors and propels the advancement of new plays. 5 directors will soon be selected and begin the 18-month program of hands-on, practical experience connecting early-career directors to a vast network of new writers, expanding access to professional support services, and providing laboratory-like environments for observation and experimentation. A joint initiative of the O'Neill, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, National New Play Network, and Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation, NDF equips tomorrow's stage directors with the skills, knowledge, and network to advance new play development and production around the country.

## **Administrative & Technical Observerships**

New for the 2020 Summer Season, 15 emerging artists, technicians, and administrators, from across the country will have the opportunity to learn about professional theater and new work development through a robust observership program in collaboration with the O'Neill's professional programs.

## **JOIN US! Artistic Director Sunday Series**

Over the course of six Sundays, join each of our Artistic Directors for in-depth conversations and Q&A's. Learn about all things puppetry, musicals, plays, cabaret, arts journalism, education, and more! Free, and open to the public, [rsvp required](#).

June 7 at 7pm - **Pam Arcerio**, National Puppetry Conference

June 14 at 7pm - **Wendy C. Goldberg**, National Playwrights Conference

June 21 at 7pm - **Rachel Jett**, National Theater Institute

June 28 at 7pm - **Alexander Gemignani**, National Music Theater Conference

July 5 at 7pm - **Chris Jones**, National Critics Institute

August 2 at 7pm - **John McDaniel**, Cabaret & Performance Conference

## **Membership**

The O'Neill relies on its Members to keep its programs strong, providing critical support for the creation of new theater, and participating in the development process. Please consider becoming a member today! You'll receive opportunities to engage with the artists whose work you're making possible.

2020 member exclusives include: discounts on master class tickets and Gene's General Store merchandise; exclusive access to the 2020 Cabaret Junior Fellows virtual performance; complimentary admission to Puppetry master classes; invitations to an NMTC Jam Session, to audit a National Critics Institute class, or NPC Dream Design Sessions; and more. 2020 members will also have their membership extended through the end of the 2021 Summer Season!

For more information or to become a member today, contact the Development Office at 860.443.5378 x 288 or via email at [development@theoneill.org](mailto:development@theoneill.org).

**The 2020 Summer Season is made possible by:** The Shubert Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, Burry Fredrik Foundation, Connecticut Office for the Arts, Geraldine Stutz Trust, The Jane Henson Foundation, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Critical Minded—an initiative to invest in cultural critics of color co-founded by The Nathan Cummings Foundation and the Ford Foundation, The Edward and Mary Lord Foundation, Dramatist Play Service, Foundation of the American Theatre Critics Association, The Rodgers & Hammerstein Foundation, Actors' Equity Foundation, The Kitchings Family Foundation, Maximilian E. and Marion O. Hoffman Foundation, Electronic Theatre Controls Inc., and the support of individual O'Neill donors.

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**About the O'Neill:** The Launchpad of the American theater, the O'Neill is the country's preeminent organization dedicated to the development of new works and new voices for the American theater. Founded in 1964, and named in honor of Eugene O'Neill, four-time Pulitzer Prize-winner and America's only playwright to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, the O'Neill has been home to more than 1,000 new works for the stage and thousands more emerging artists. Scores of projects developed at the O'Neill have gone on to full production at theaters around the world. O'Neill programs include the National Playwrights Conference, National Music Theater Conference, National Critics Institute, National Puppetry Conference, Cabaret & Performance Conference, and National Theater Institute – which offers six credit-earning undergraduate training programs. In addition, the O'Neill owns and operates the Monte Cristo Cottage as a museum open to the public. The O'Neill is the recipient of two Tony Awards and the National Medal of Arts.