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Eugene O'Neill Theater Center announces
57TH SUMMER SEASON
A hybrid season with a return to live performances
Selections for prestigious national programs announced

Artists include: REED BIRNEY, BETTY BUCKLEY, CARLA CHING, PING CHONG, THE DOO WOP PROJECT, GEORGINA ESCOBAR, ROBI HAGER, DAVE HARRIS, SAMUEL D. HUNTER, AMY JO JACKSON, MICHAEL R. JACKSON, BETH LEAVEL, L MORGAN LEE, TELLY LEUNG, MERVYN MILLAR, KATHRYN MULLEN, FAITH PRINCE, and more!

Waterford, CT – The **Eugene O'Neill Theater Center** announces the 2021 summer season, the first under the leadership of Executive Director Tiffani Gavin, which will be held in a hybrid format – both online and in-person. Support for artists, a welcoming environment for imaginative discovery and celebration, and the safety of our community are at the forefront of this #ONeillSummer.

The **National Puppetry Conference**, **National Music Theater Conference**, **National Playwrights Conference**, **Cabaret & Performance Conference**, **National Critics Institute**, and **National Theater Institute** all continue, supporting hundreds of exciting new artists, voices, and work through a mixture of virtual and in-person artistic and educational experiences. The season includes 14 free events and eight online events which will be available to artists, audiences, and supporters across the nation. Throughout these programs the [mission & values](#) of the O'Neill remain vibrant and vital.

*"I'm excited for my first O'Neill Summer and to share our 57th Summer Season with artists and audiences near and far" shares Executive Director **Tiffani Gavin**. "The O'Neill's 2021 summer season will be a hybrid season with artists developing new work both in-person and online across the nation (and in 10 countries). The artists selected across our programs are bold, brilliant, and eager to share their talents. I'm grateful to our visionary artistic directors and hardworking staff, and encourage all those looking for the most inspiring new talents in American theater to join us this summer – online or on-campus."*

All information at: www.theoneill.org/summer

NATIONAL MUSIC THEATER CONFERENCE
Alexander Gemignani, *Artistic Director*

Since its founding in 1978, the National Music Theater Conference has developed more than 130 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. Utilizing a hybrid model, the 2021 Conference will focus on collaboration and development through on-campus writer residencies, community building, and mentorship with top professionals across the industry. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, staged readings will not be held. Selected from 289 submissions, the following new musicals will receive direct monetary and developmental support:

Hatchetation

Book, Music, & Lyrics by Amy Jo Jackson

In 1900, Kansas is a Dry state – but it looks pretty Wet from where Temperance activist Carry Nation is sitting. Rather than enforce the state's Prohibition Amendment, government officials are flouting the laws and skimming off the top. Gawd appears one night to show Carry what she needs to do – pick up some friggin bricks and break those big bad bottles herself. She gains notoriety, supporters, and a Very Important Hatchet, all of which aid in her fight to bring Temperance to the masses – whether they like it or not. **Amy Jo Jackson** is a writer/performer based in NYC. 2019 recipient of the Denovan Fellowship in Cabaret for *The Brass Menagerie*, which was nominated for a Broadway World Award in Best Musical Comedy Cabaret. Amy Jo is also an accomplished actor, dialect coach, and a fixture in NYC nightlife.

Little Duende

Book & Lyrics by Georgina Escobar

Music & Lyrics by Robi Hager

In the land of Elflán, life and beauty flourish. We meet Adelita, an adventurous and curious young elf eager to find what lies beyond the horizon. When the evil spirit of La Mancha kidnaps her mother and destroys her home, Adelita is forced to travel north to the land of the Hadaseñas in hopes of being reunited with her again. Using fairy tales and mythological themes, Little Duende comments on real-world matters as it explores the border crisis, dual citizenship, and the consequences of a dark family secret. **Georgina Escobar** is a Mexican playwright from the borderlands. A MacDowell Fellow, Djerassi Artists and recipient of the DarrNational Award, her work has made the Kilroy's List and been seen or workshopped at INTAR, Clubbed Thumb, Lincoln Center, Milagro, Aurora Theatre, Bushwick Starr, and Two Rivers, among others. **Robi Hager** has appeared in several Broadway shows, including *Spring Awakening*. Songs "Quiero Soñar" and "Maduros," written with Alex McCabe, can be heard in films *Top Five* and *Can You Ever Forgive Me*. Robi is the composer of LGBTQ musical *Basic Witches* and *Silueta*, a musical commissioned by Power Street Theatre Co.

"I am elated to welcome two incredibly engaging and exciting new musicals to the 2021 National Music Theater Conference" shares NMTC Artistic Director **Alexander Gemignani**. "These two musicals and their respective writing teams are the kinds of works and artists that define what NMTC is all about: undeniable talent, redefining what a musical can do, and fostering work for artists who have long gone underrepresented. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with Amy Jo, Georgina, and Robi at the O'Neill this summer."

Creative teams will be announced at a later date.

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, Lanford Wilson, and Jeremy O. Harris (whose 2018 NPC play *Slave Play* is nominated for a record-breaking 12 Tony Awards this year). Utilizing a hybrid model, the 2021 Conference will focus on collaboration and development through on-campus writer residencies, community building, and mentorship with top professionals across the industry. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, staged readings will not be held. These four plays were selected from 1,216 received through the O'Neill's open submissions process:

Affinity Lunch Minutes

by Nick Malakhov

*Ben and Jasmine are the only two Black teachers at Penn Valley, a liberal, private Quaker school. Jasmine is passionate and boundary pushing, while Ben has worked his way up the ranks at the school to be Diversity Dean, thanks to his "agreeable" nature. A racially-charged discipline decision ignites a divide at the school and in Jasmine and Ben's collegial relationship. **Nick Malakhov** (he/him/his) is a Boston-based Dominican/Ukrainian playwright and educator. Full-length work includes *Seeing Eye*, *A Picture of Two Boys*, *Grit*, and *Emergency Contact*. He has developed or presented work with Victory Gardens, Fresh Ink Theatre, Mirrorbox Theatre, Skylight Theatre, Abingdon Theatre, Theatre Rhino, and others.*

EXOTIC DEADLY: Or The MSG Play

by Keiko Green

*It's 1999, and Ami is an awkward, Japanese American highschooler whose world comes crashing down with a terrible discovery: her family is responsible for manufacturing MSG, the poison spice getting all the kids hooked! Meanwhile, a cool new girl, Exotic Deadly, arrives from Japan, and she's not playing by the rules. In this time-traveling adventure, Ami vows to save the world from MSG and realizes what she's capable of, if she could just get off the ocean floor... **Keiko Green** is a half-Japanese playwright, performer, and MFA Playwriting candidate at UCSD ('22). Her plays have been developed and/or produced by ACT Theatre, the Kennedy Center, National New Play Network, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and the Playwrights Realm.*

Revenge Porn, or The Story of a Body

by Carla Ching

*When Kat Chan's ex-husband posts revenge porn of her online and tags everyone she knows, she has to wrestle with a choice: be humane to someone she used to love or take him out in a very public way? A play about public shaming, ownership of women's bodies and images, and the earthquakes that come from dissolving a marriage. **Carla Ching's** plays include *Nomad Motel* (NPC '15, Atlantic Theater Company, NNPN Rolling World Premiere), *Fast Company* (South Coast Rep, EST), and *The Two Kids That Blow Shit Up* (Theatre Mu, Artists at Play). Former Artistic Director, 2g. New Dramatist. Founding member of The Kilroys. Co-recipient of the Horton Foote Playwriting Award.*

Watch Me
by Dave Harris

How can I get over slavery if I can't even get over my ex? Watch Me takes place in the subconscious void of an interracial couple in a reckoning with ancestry, love, and Black Jesus. **Dave Harris** is a writer from West Philly. He is the Tow Playwright-in-Residence at Roundabout Theatre Company. His play TAMBO & BONES will be produced at Playwrights Horizons and Center Theatre Group, and his play EXCEPTION TO THE RULE will be produced at Roundabout whenever theatre allows.

"It gives me hope to bring these four storytellers to the National Playwrights Conference and invest in the development of these plays, artists, and our theatrical future" shares NPC Artistic Director **Wendy C. Goldberg**. *"NPC 2021 represents some of the most exciting voices writing today. I'm thrilled to be able to work with these playwrights and support their powerful new plays through in-person opportunities this summer."*

Creative teams will be announced at a later date.

CABARET & PERFORMANCE CONFERENCE

John McDaniel, *Artistic Director*

The Cabaret & Performance Conference will present seven shows under the stars **August 5-14** in the O'Neill's iconic Amphitheater. Open to the public, this re-imagined programming in a COVID-responsible environment will bring headliners in solo performances as well as feature our Cabaret Fellows and Junior Fellows in singular evenings of entertainment. Masks and social distancing are required. Tickets go on sale to members July 16 and the general public on July 29.

OPENING NIGHT

Welcome back for our first night of the Conference with our Grammy & Emmy Award-winning Artistic Director **John McDaniel**, our Junior Fellows director **Brad Simmons**, & returning Master Artist Teacher **Lennie Watts**. Lots of songs and laughs are in store, along with a great deal of gratitude to be back singing together at the O'Neill. Thursday, August 5.

NATALIE DOUGLAS: A VERY SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO SAMMY DAVIS JR.

Join Cabaret legend and Birdland Hall of Fame's **Natalie Douglas** for this extraordinary tribute. Natalie is one of our Master Artist Teachers, and tonight she celebrates the career and songs of the one and only Sammy Davis Jr. Do not miss this unique, tuneful, and moving show! Friday, August 6.

TELLY LEUNG: IN CONCERT

Telly Leung comes to the O'Neill for one night only, having appeared in 10 Broadway shows including starring roles in *Aladdin* and *Rent* as well as *Godspell*, *In Transit*, and *Allegiance*. Audiences also may recognize him from TV's *Glee*. Telly Leung is sure to grab your heart and delight your ears in this solo concert. Saturday, August 7.

BIG SHOT! JUNIOR FELLOWS SING BILLY JOEL

Under the direction of **Brad Simmons** & **Michael Holland**, the Junior Fellows have cooked up some excellent and well-known tunes from America's five-time Grammy Award-winning songwriter Billy Joel in a show that will electrify the amphitheater! 2021 Junior Fellows include **Evan Anderson**, **Christopher-David Caraballo**, **Chloé Kolbenheyer**, **Hugo Lehrach**, **Makayla O'Connor**, **Erich Phelps**, **Spencer Stanley**, **Arielle Sussman**, and **Maggie Welch**. Tuesday, August 10.

AN EVENING WITH THE CABARET FELLOWS

The 2021 Fellows are in the spotlight as they strut their stuff with all the knowledge they've been soaking up throughout the Conference under the mentorship of **Natalie Douglas, Lennie Watts, John McDaniel, Barb Jungr, Faith Prince,** and **Betty Buckley**. Join us for an evening of music featuring new arrangements created just for them by music directors **Tracy Stark** and **Mark Hartman**. 2021 Fellows include: **Vita Drew, Matt Gittins, Mark Propst, Randy Taylor, Melissa Rostkoski,** and **Peggy Schwartz**. Wednesday, August 11.

AN EVENING WITH BETH LEAVEL

One of New York's most beloved stars, Tony Award-winner **Beth Leavel** is a veteran of 13 Broadway musicals. You may remember her from *The Prom, Elf, Bandstand,* or *The Drowsy Chaperone*. This special O'Neill appearance is not to be missed! Friday, August 13.

THE FAREWELL SHOW

It's always a sell-out show and for good reason. All the Conference artists come together to bid you adieu. This year, we have a special guest performer from the Obie-winning *A Strange Loop* and the upcoming *The Danish Girl*, it's the marvelous **L Morgan Lee**! Saturday, August 14.

"We are so excited to step back onto the stage this summer!" shares CAB Artistic Director **John McDaniel**. *"I'm delighted to present an array of talent over seven nights of the 2021 Cabaret & Performance Conference as well to welcome Fellows and Junior Fellows who will study with us morning, noon, and night. O'Neill favorites Natalie Douglas, Brad Simmons, and Lennie Watts will dazzle and charm us, and I'm so pleased to welcome newcomers Telly Leung, Beth Leavel, and L Morgan Lee to our seaside oasis —where the stars come out under the stars!"*

BLUE GENE'S PUB Join us for weekends at Blue Gene's Pub! The Pub opens for the season on Saturday, **June 12**. Enjoy a drink and small bites from our full-service bar in the iconic log cabin and reconnect with your friends on the Pub's expansive patio and lawn with views of Long Island Sound.

New for 2021! Open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday with food trucks every weekend, happy hour specials, live music featuring local musicians, brunch-style specialty cocktails on Sundays, and even more outdoor seating on our spacious grounds! The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center is a COVID-responsible campus. Masks and social distancing are required indoors and while ordering. Your patronage of Blue Gene's Pub helps support the O'Neill's educational and artistic development programs. Follow @BlueGenesPub for updates.

Summer Kick-off

Saturday, June 12 5pm

Music by Evie Joy, Food by Roadside Rob

Enjoy a free drink with your COVID-19 vaccine card.

Blue Gene's Brunch

Sundays 12-5pm

Join us for specialty brunch cocktails and "buy one Mimosa, get your next half off."

Featuring Food Trucks: Munchies, Par 4, El Bori, K's Cart, Captain Scott's Lobster, and more!

Pride Celebration

Saturday, June 26 5pm-midnight
Music by **DJ Cookie Policy**, Food by Munchies

Live Music Every Friday Night in July:

Ben Freiert (July 2)

FrankenPhil (July 9)

Azalea Drive (July 16)

Chris Gregor - *CAB Junior Fellow Alum* (July 23)

Dave Alves (July 30)

Featuring Food Trucks: Brick City Burgers, Luigi's Pizza Risto, Captain Scott's Lobster, Backyard Smokers, El Bori, and more!

GARDEN GATHERINGS New for 2021! Join us for casual concerts featuring solo performances from O'Neill alumni in a COVID-responsible environment. Bring your beach blankets and chairs to a dedicated and distanced circle on the grass in the Sunken Garden. Each low-priced ticket provides space for up to six members of a household or bubble to enjoy an afternoon concert overlooking the Long Island Sound. We're excited to welcome back past O'Neill artists to share their talents in a new way! Join us at 4pm on Sundays **June 13, June 20, July 11, & July 18**. Garden opens at 3pm for entry. Sponsored by Beer'd Brewing Co. Concessions available. No outside alcoholic beverages are permitted. Masks and social distancing are required. [Tickets on sale now.](#)

Sunday, June 13 at 4pm - **Michael R. Jackson** (NMTC '18) with pianist Sean Cameron

Sunday, June 20 at 4pm - Performer to be announced

Sunday, July 11 at 4pm - **Rebecca Hart** (NPC '10, NMTC '11) & **The Wrong Band**

Sunday, July 18 at 4pm - **Satya Chávez** (NMTC '19) & **Esco Jouléy** (NMTC '19)

SATURDAY SPOTLIGHT New for 2021! Join us for four free on-campus events shining a light on unique features of our acclaimed national conferences through storytelling, interviews, and demonstrations. Saturdays **June 26, July 10, July 24, & August 7**. Masks and social distancing required. [RSVP NOW](#)

Saturday, June 26 at 6pm- NMTC: The Evolution of a Song

Listen and learn as the National Music Theater Conference's Artistic Director **Alexander Gemignani**, writer **Amy Jo Jackson** (NMTC '21), and arranger **Pearl Rhein** discuss the evolution of a song from an impulse to draft to performance.

Saturday, July 10 at 6pm- The NPC Effect

A look at how the O'Neill's development process leads to production and influences the American theater. Join National Playwright Conference artists **Carla Ching**, **Lawrence E Moten III**, **Reed Birney**, and **Samuel D. Hunter** in a conversation moderated by NPC Artistic Director **Wendy C. Goldberg**.

Saturday, July 24 at 6pm- PUP: Bonnie Duncan presents *Squirrel Stole My Underpants*

National Puppetry Conference alumnus **Bonnie Duncan** brings *Squirrel Stole My Underpants*, a 35-minute adventure tale for families, to the amphitheater. Join us for a show

and talkback, hosted by PUP Artistic Director **Pam Arciero**. Using rod puppets, hand puppets, and object manipulation, she brings to life an unordinary world. Blending puppetry, dance, and physical theater, the performance explores that delicate time in childhood when you desperately want to be a grown-up but still need your blanket to make you feel safe.

Saturday, August 7 at 6pm- NCI: Back on Broadway

National Critics Institute Director and *Chicago Tribune* critic and columnist **Chris Jones**, joined by leading critics and Broadway personalities, will take us behind-the-scenes to look at the impact the past 18 months have had on Broadway as well as chart the course for recovery for the theater industry at large.

BEECH PARTY Join us Saturday, **July 31** under the tent in the Sunken Garden. This festive summer fundraiser will feature cocktails, live entertainment from **The Doo Wop Project**, and an unparalleled view of Long Island Sound during a sunset seated dinner. [Tickets on sale now.](#)

The Doo Wop Project begins at the beginning, tracing the evolution of Doo Wop from the classic sound of five guys singing tight harmonies on a street corner to the biggest hits on the radio today. The Doo Wop Project will take you on a journey featuring foundational tunes from the Crests, Belmonts and Flamingos through the vocal artistry of Smokey Robinson, The Temptations, and The Four Seasons all the way to DooWopified versions of modern hits from Michael Jackson, Jason Mraz, Maroon 5, and Sam Smith. Featuring stars of Broadway's smash hits *Jersey Boys*, *Motown: The Musical*, and *A Bronx Tale*, the Doo Wop Project brings unparalleled authenticity of sound and vocal excellence to recreate-and in some cases entirely reimagine-some of the greatest music in American pop and rock history! We're excited to welcome back O'Neill alumnus **Charl Brown** (NMTC '19)!

Previously announced programming:

NATIONAL PUPPETRY CONFERENCE MASTER CLASSES The National Puppetry Conference, under the leadership of **Pam Arciero**, will be held virtually June 6-11 with puppeteers from all over the globe. We are delighted to offer the opportunity for you to join the Conference from your home as well! Join us every afternoon for a 5-part master class series with world-renowned puppetry artists. Purchase all [5 classes](#) (held daily June 7-11) and save \$15/per class. Each conversation will take place on Zoom from 2- 3pm EST. The link to join the event will be sent daily by 1pm EST. New for 2021! Ticket holders will also have access to a recording of the class on-demand, viewable throughout the month. [Tickets are on-sale now.](#)

Monday, June 7 - **Kathryn Mullen** (USA/Bermuda)

Tuesday, June 8 - **Ping Chong** (USA)

Wednesday, June 9 - **Mervyn Millar** (England)

Thursday, June 10 - **François Delarozière** - La Machine (France)

Friday, June 11 - **Chia-yin Cheng** - Lizé Puppet Colony (Taiwan)

PUPPETS IN THE PUB hosted by Tyler Bunch and Jonathan Little is back for another season! Experience our virtual take on the beloved Puppetry Open Mics. Free and open to the public. [RSVP Now.](#)

Monday, **June 7**, held online 9-10pm EST
Wednesday, **June 9**, held online 9-10pm EST
Friday, **June 11**, held online 10-11pm EST

TECHNICAL THEATER TRAINING PROGRAM New for 2021! Join the Technical Theater Training Program, a 10-class online program designed to support college-aged/early career Audio, Lighting, and Stage Management professionals. Led by Jeff Sherwood & Jacob Montgomery (Audio), Rebecca Brill Weitz & Ellie Simonett (Lighting), and Imani Champion (Stage Management), this program will feature technical theater master classes with guest speakers as well as dedicated breakout time with a professional currently working in your chosen track. The live-taught classes will be held online Tuesdays & Thursdays June 22 - July 22 from 7-9pm EST. [APPLY BY JUNE 11.](#)

NATIONAL CRITICS INSTITUTE America's only boot camp for arts writers, NCI 2021 will offer a virtual 6-day online intensive July 5-10. One of the O'Neill's oldest programs, NCI is an intensive professional workshop designed for arts writers and critics (in fields such as theater, dance, film, music and food) looking to strengthen and diversify their skills in an increasingly competitive and fast-paced industry. Director Chris Jones, critic and columnist at the *Chicago Tribune* and Associate Director, Naveen Kumar, head America's leading boot camp for arts journalism, offering an intensive course of study for writers of diverse experience levels.

NATIONAL THEATER INSTITUTE Theatermakers Summer Intensive trains 26 students in a credit-earning curriculum of acting, directing, and playwriting. The four-week program focuses on: cultivating constant creativity practice, essential training techniques, high-quality mentorship, and collaborative opportunities that yield original work. Our students join all the 2021 Summer Season artists gathered at the O'Neill with a shared passion for creating new work for the stage. Due to COVID-19, Theatermakers performances will not be open to the public this season.

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. 2021 member exclusives include: discounts on tickets and Gene's General Store merchandise; complimentary admission to Puppetry master classes, Beech Party, and Garden Gatherings; exclusive access to the Cabaret and Performance Conference; invitations to special member events, NPC Dream Design Sessions; audit the National Critics Institute, and more. [Learn more](#) and become a member. **Member Appreciation Day is Friday, July 16.**

COVID-RESPONSIBLE CAMPUS The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center is a COVID-responsible campus. New London County, CT has done a strong job to mitigate the COVID cases and transmission rates, and we remain committed to ensuring that a positive trend for our region continues. Health and safety protocols are enforced for all individuals on campus, including wearing masks indoors and at performances regardless of vaccination status. Participants and ticket holders will receive detailed information and guidelines prior to their arrival on campus.

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The 2021 Summer Season is made possible by: The Shubert Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Burry Fredrik Foundation, Connecticut Office for the Arts, Geraldine Stutz Trust, The Jane Henson Foundation, The Jerome Robbins Foundation, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Nan H. Altmayer Charitable Trust, The Rodgers & Hammerstein Foundation, Actors' Equity Foundation, Frederic R. Coudert Foundation, The Kitchings Family Foundation, The Sustainable Arts Foundation, 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.