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THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES 2020-2022 EMERGING WRITERS GROUP

10 Playwrights Chosen
From More Than 550 Applicants

Nissy Aya, Aya Aziz, Francisca Da Silveira, Katie Do,
Timothy DuWhite, Ying Ying Li, Julián Mesri, AriDy Nox,
Jacob Marx Rice, and Else Went



Nissy Aya



Aya Aziz



Francisca Da Silveira



Katie Do



Timothy DuWhite



Ying Ying Li



Julián Mesri



AriDy Nox



Jacob Marx Rice



Else Went

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July 1, 2020 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced today the 10 new playwrights for the **2020-2022 Emerging Writers Group**. Now in its eighth cycle, the **Emerging Writers Group** is an ongoing initiative that targets playwrights at the earliest stages of their career, creating an artistic home and offering support and resources for a remarkable group of up-and-coming playwrights. Selected from more than 550 applicants, the 2020-2022 Emerging Writers are **Nissy Aya, Aya Aziz, Francisca Da Silveira, Katie Do, Timothy DuWhite, Ying Ying Li, Julián Mesri, AriDy Nox, Jacob Marx Rice, and Else Went**.

“These 10 incredible artists represent the future of our field. Many are multihyphenate artists, and each possesses a unique voice and entryway into their artistic practice, from poetry to community organizing. We couldn’t be happier to welcome them to EWG,” said New Work Development’s **Jesse Cameron Alick, Gabe Lozada, Jack Phillips Moore, and Cat Rodríguez** in a joint statement. “Though the communal

space we build together will need to be digital for the time being, we look forward to the next two years' worth of fellowship and art-making with these brilliant humans."

Over the past 11 years, The Public's **Emerging Writers Group** has nurtured numerous playwrights who have gone on to have their plays staged at The Public and elsewhere around the country. Previous Public productions by EWG playwrights include *Eve's Song* presented in 2018 and *Pretty Hunger* in Public Studio 2017 written by Patricia Lone Lloyd; MJ Kaufman's *Masculinity Max* in Public Studio 2018; *The Outer Space* (2017) and the Obie Award-winning *No Place to Go* (2012) written by Ethan Lipton; Ricardo Pérez González's *On the Grounds of Belonging* presented in Public Studio 2017; Christina Gorman's *Fidelis* in Public Studio 2015; *Manahatta* by Mary Kathryn Nagle in Public Studio 2014; *Detroit '67* (2013) written by Dominique Morisseau; Mona Mansour's *Urge For Going* presented in The Public Lab 2011 and *The Vagrant Trilogy*, originally scheduled for Spring 2020; Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' *Neighbors* in 2010; and Raúl Castillo's *Knives and Other Sharp Objects* in 2009.

Writers are selected biennially and receive a two-year fellowship at The Public, which includes a stipend. Staged readings of works by Emerging Writers Group members are presented in the Spotlight Series at The Public. The playwrights also participate in a bi-weekly writers group led by The Public's New Work Development department and master classes led by established playwrights. Additionally, they have a chance to observe rehearsals for productions at The Public, receive career development advice from mid-career and established writers, and receive artistic and professional support from the New Work Development department and Public artistic staff. Members of the group also receive complimentary tickets to Public Theater shows, invited dress rehearsals, and other special events, as well as a supplemental stipend for tickets to productions at other theaters.

2020-2022 EMERGING WRITERS GROUP BIOS:

NISSY AYA (Nissy; she/ze/we) is a Black girl from the Bronx. She and all her younger selves tell stories and tall tales. While helping others do the same. They lead workshops, too. As a facilitator and cultural worker, we believe in the transformative nature of storytelling, placing those most affected by oppressive systems in the center, and examining how we move forward through healing justice and afrofuturist frameworks. Our creative work reflects those notions while exploring the lines between history and memory, detailing both the absence and presence of love, and giving all the life (and then some *three snaps*) to Black Femmes. Nissy's work has been developed with the support of The Lark, SPACE on Ryder Farm, Pipeline Theatre, Lambda Literary, The Hearth, and New York Stage and Film. Nissy is a Brigade member with Brown Girl Recovery and core facilitator with artEquity.

AYA AZIZ (she/her) is a writer, performer, and music producer from New York. Her musical *Eh Dah? Questions for my Father*, for which she wrote book, music, and lyrics, produced a sold-out run in New York Theatre Workshop's 2019 "Next Door" series. An earlier iteration of the show, then a one-woman musical, ran at the New York Musical Festival (NYMF) in 2016, where it won awards for Most Outstanding Book and Most Outstanding Individual Performance. Aziz is a 2020 NYFA grant recipient and is currently working on her album. Notable concert credits include Signature Theatre, Cherry Lane, NAMT, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Joe's Pub, NYMF, and Disney's Women of Broadway. Aziz has also made music for film, most recently *Ask for Jane* (2019 winner of Best Feature at the Big Apple Film Festival). You can listen to her single "Rapids" on all streaming platforms.

FRANCISCA DA SILVEIRA (she/her) is a Cape Verdean-American playwright and dramaturg. She received a BFA in Dramatic Writing from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and a MSc in Playwriting from the University of Edinburgh. In 2018, she made ArtsBoston's list of 10 Contemporary Black Playwrights You Should Know. She has been a finalist for SpeakEasy Stage's 2018 and 2019 Boston Project Residency and SPACE on Ryder Farm's 2020 Creative Residency, and was a semi-finalist for the Dennis & Victoria Ross 2018 Playwrights Program, Papatango's 2019 New Play Prize, and Theatre503's 2019 International Playwriting Award. Her work has also been developed with the Traverse Theatre Scotland, Fresh Ink Theatre, Flat Earth Theatre, The Fire This Time Festival, and Company One Theatre, where she was previously a company dramaturg and Literary Manager. She is currently the

Assistant Literary Director at Geva Theatre Centre in Rochester and serves as an At-Large Ambassador with the National New Play Network.

KATIE DO (she/her) is a Vietnamese-American writer and actor. Her plays include *love you long time (already)*, *The Yellow Ranger Play*, and *Manic*. She is currently a member of The Public's Emerging Writers Group (2020-2022). Do was also a finalist for the Greenhouse Residency at SPACE on Ryder Farm (2020 & 2021). She is a graduate from Rutgers' Mason Gross School of the Arts with a BFA in Acting. Acting credits include: *To All the Boys I Loved Before 3*, "Manifest," "Mrs. Fletcher," and *The God Committee*.

TIMOTHY DUWHITE (he/they) is a Black/queer poet, actor, and activist based out of Brooklyn, NY. His essays and poetry can be found in *The Rumpus*, *The Root*, *Afropunk*, *Black Youth Project*, *The Griot*, and elsewhere. In the summer of 2018, DuWhite debuted his one-man show *Neptune* as the headliner for Dixon Place's annual "Hot Festival." Following rave reviews and sold-out performances, *Neptune* was then restaged as the 2019 kick-off event for Brooklyn Museum's acclaimed "1st Saturday" series. DuWhite is an alumnus of The Public Theater's #BARS program, the brainchild of actors/writers Daveed Diggs and Rafael Casal. DuWhite is the Senior Editor at RaceBaitr.com, Program Director at NY Writers Coalition, and is represented by Abrams Artist Agency for Acting.

YING YING LI (she/her) is a writer and performer. Her plays include *Dance Moms* (semi-finalist for the 2020 Premiere Play Festival, The Tank Writers Group), *mh*, *Nectarine Girl*, *Mimi and Derrick on the Highline*, *Doctor Mao*, and *Baskin Robbins at a Mall*. Her work has been developed or seen at The Tank, Rule of 7x7, Decent Theatre, Yes Noise, The Brick, and on the High Line. As a performer, her theater credits include: *Usual Girls* (Signature Theatre/Columbia University MFA Workshop), *Incident at Hidden Temple* (Pan Asian, Off-Broadway), and *i wrote on ur wall and now i regret it* (Wild Project). Selected television and feature film appearances: Marvel's "Iron Fist," Steven Soderbergh's "The Knick" (seasons 1-2), and a co-leading role in Vladan Nikolic's *Allure*. Her humor writing and videos have appeared in publications such as the *New York Times*, *BuzzFeed*, *Wired*, *MSN*, *Lifehacker*, *Men's Health*, and *Mental Floss*.

JULIÁN MESRI (he/him) is a New York-based Argentinean-American writer and composer who makes multilingual plays and musicals in the U.S. and around the world. Recent productions include *Immersion* (Ingenio Festival at Milagro Theater, BAPF Semi-Finalist), *The Gauchos Americanos* (Teatro Extranjero, Buenos Aires), and the upcoming musical *Telo*. Other work includes music directing/arranging *Songs About Trains* with Radical Evolution, composing music for The Public Theater's Mobile Unit presentation of Pablo Neruda's *Romeo y Julieta*, and a new commissioned musical for young audiences, *The Adventures of Snow White*, to tour China in 2021. Mesri has been an Emerging Artist of Color Fellow at NYTW, a Van Lier fellow at Repertorio Español, and the recipient of an ASCAP Scholarship. His adaptation of *Fuenteovejuna* received the HOLA Outstanding Production award. As a translator, he has worked for both the Lark U.S./Mexico Exchange and PEN World Voices. He received his MFA in Playwriting from Columbia University and is a 2020 Sokoloff Arts Creative Fellow.

ARIDY NOX (she/they) is a multi-disciplinary black femme storyteller and social activist with a variety of forward-thinking creative works under her/their belt including the sci-fi operetta *Project Tiresias* (2018), the ancestral reckoning play *A Walless Church* (2019), the Afrofuturist ecopocalypse musical *Metropolis* (2019), and many others. Nox creates out of the vehement belief that creating a future in which marginalized peoples are free requires a radical imagination. Their tales are offerings intended to function as small parts of an ancient, expansive, awe-inspiring tradition of world-shaping, created by and for black femmes. As a graduate of the Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program at Tisch School of the Performing Arts at NYU and a beneficiary of the Emerging Writers Group at The Public Theater, she has been inordinately privileged to share the workings of her imagination among a vast array of inspiring and supportive artists of various radical backgrounds throughout the city.

JACOB MARX RICE (he/him) is a playwright/screenwriter based in Queens, New York. His plays have been produced and developed at The Flea Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Eugene O'Neill

Theatre Center, The New Ohio, Atlantic Theatre Stage 2, and others. His plays have won the Jean Kennedy Smith Playwriting Award from the Kennedy Center (*The Suicidal Comedies*), the Faculty Award from NYU/Tisch (*A Brief List of Everyone Who Died*), an EST/Sloan Commission (*Binding Energy*), and the Excellence in Playwriting Award at the NY Fringe Festival (*Chemistry*). Rice was the 2017 Playwright Observer at the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference and is a proud member of the Leadership Team of The Shelter, a New York-based theater company that provides a home for all theater artists.

ELSE WENT (they/she) is a trans identified playwright, whose work has been developed through: fellowships at The MacDowell Colony, Playwrights Realm, Trans Theatre Lab @ WP & The Public, and Living Room Theatre; commissions from Weston Playhouse, Florida Studio Theatre, and Parity Productions; residencies from Stillwright and Barn Arts Collective; and productions with The Tank and The Brick. Their queer epic *Initiative* was made a semifinalist in the '20 O'Neill Conference, and their verse play *Courage! To the Field!* was a semifinalist for the Shakespeare's New Contemporaries project at ASC. Their writing has been anthologized in *The Dionysian*, *Vivace*, and *Written on the Body*. Else is co-founder and playwright of The Renovatlonists, and also serves variously as a sound designer.

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 and *Girl From the North Country*. 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, 55 Drama Desk Awards, 58 Lortel Awards, 34 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

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