

# Rita & Burton Goldberg MFA Playwriting Program at Hunter College

## 2021-22 Newsletter

### Overview

This year we saw the return of in-person learning, live theater, and the joyous reopening of the Baker Theater Building! It's been wonderful to see the hallways of Baker bustling with creative activity once again.

We welcomed a new, thrilling class of MFA Playwrights for a rigorous, artistically-fulfilling fall semester. Our first-year students studied with David Adjmi (*Marie Antoinette*, *Stunning*) whose memoir *Lot Six* was released last year to critical acclaim. Adjmi is currently developing a new play *Stereophonic* with music by Arcade Fire's Will Butler. Our second-year students studied with Lloyd Suh (2020 Horton Foote Prize Winner) whose play *The Chinese Lady* was produced at The Public Theatre earlier this year. This spring, we welcomed instructors Maria Striar (Artistic Director, *Clubbed Thumb*) as well as Mia Chung, whose play *Out of Time* premiered at The Public this February. Chung's play *Catch as Catch Can* will be produced at Playwrights Horizons next season.

We would like to offer a tremendous thanks to the late Rita Goldberg and her family, as well as Hunter's Theatre Advisory Board, for their generosity and fierce support of this program. We hope to see you in the Baker Building or at the Loewe soon!



*First-year students Diana Ly, Ian Robles, Lauren Holmes, Phillip Christian Smith, and Chad Kaydo with Program Director Christine Scarfuto.*

# STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS

Our Hunter MFA Playwriting students and alumni have had an extraordinary year. This NYC theater season saw world-premiere productions by many recent graduates, including: *Sandblasted* by Charly Evon-Simpson ('17) at the Vineyard Theatre, *Man Cave* by John Caswell Jr. ('20) at Page 73, and *Notes on Killing Seven Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Board Members* by Mara Vélez Meléndez ('19) at Soho Rep. Caswell's play *Wet Brain*, a 2019 Relentless Award Finalist, will be produced in Playwrights Horizons' 2022-23 season. Additionally, Liz Appel's ('21) play *Bells Like Hooves* was featured in the Roundabout Underground Reading Series, and Liqing Xu's ('21) play *Yellow Dream\$* had a reading in the 2022 Judith Champion New Voices Series at Second Stage. Xu ('21) was also awarded the 2022-23 Many Voices Fellowship from the Playwrights Center. Finally, Lindsey Ferrentino ('13) will adapt and direct her play *Amy and the Orphans* into a feature film for Netflix.

Current student Jamie Rubenstein's ('22) play *Ruth and Lydia* is a finalist for the Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition, and Garrett Zuercher's ('22) play *Hard Places* won the 2021 Jean Kennedy Smith Playwriting Award from the Kennedy Center. Phillip Christian Smith's ('23) play *We Can't Breathe* had a reading with the Atlantic Acting School this past January. Additionally, Diana Ly ('23) was accepted into the prestigious Universal Pictures Writing Program.

## MASTER CLASSES

In addition to their coursework, our students took a number of master classes over this past year. These intensive workshops are meant to give students a depth charge of creative inspiration. In the fall, students took master classes with Daniel Alexander Jones (*Black Light, Duat*) and Lauren Yee (*Cambodian Rock Band, The Great Leap*). We also held a two-day workshop on pitching and writing a television pilot with Sheila Callaghan (*Shameless*). In the spring, we welcomed 2022 Yale's Windham-Campbell Prize winner Sharon Bridgforth and Lisa D'Amour (*Ocean Filibuster, Airline Highway, Detroit*) for artistically invigorating workshops.

# 2022 HUNTER MFA PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL

The capstone project of the MFA Playwriting program is a week-long play development workshop culminating in a public, industry-attended presentation. Our 2022 Hunter MFA Playwrights Festival will be held May 9-13 at 4:00pm in the Frederick Loewe Theatre (119 East 68th Street, New York, NY 10065). This year's writers will be collaborating with a fantastic group of professional directors, including Lisa Peterson (Obie and Lortel Award, *An Iliad*), Kedian Keohan (*Rags Parkland Sings Songs of the Future, Singlet*), Jackson Gay (*These Paper Bullets, Transfers, Insurgents*), Miranda Cornell (Yale Cabaret, *Kim Loo Gets a Redo*) and Caitlin Ryan O'Connell (*The Bushwick Starr, Ars Nova, Clubbed Thumb*).

For more information and to RSVP, [CLICK HERE](#).

## 2022 HUNTER MFA PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL

READINGS OF NEW PLAYS BY:

JESSE JAE HOON

ZOË LASDEN-LYMAN

MAYA LAWSON

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