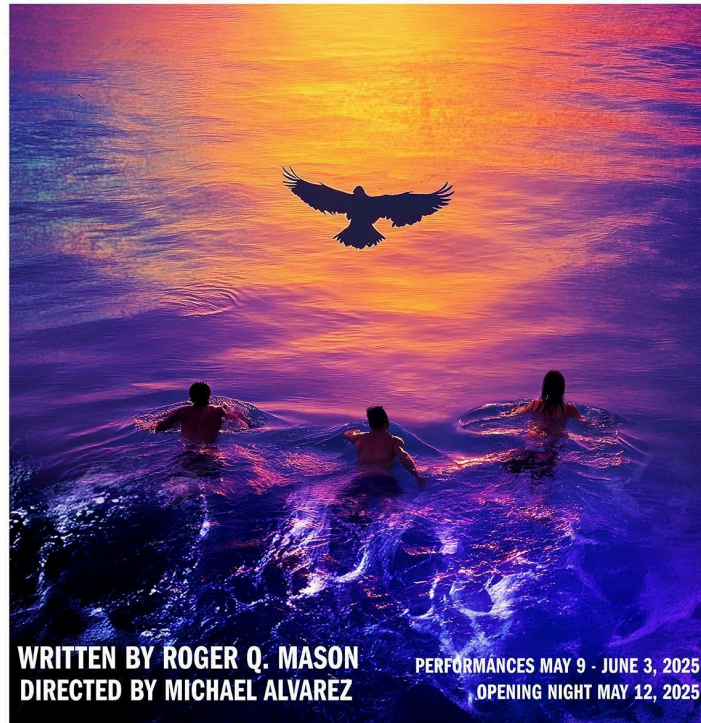


OUTSIDE IN THEATRE

CALIFORNIA STORY



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LACC THEATRE ACADEMY

presented at Los Angeles City College's El Caminito Theatre

CALIFORNIA STORY

Written by Roger Q Mason

Directed by Michael Alvarez

Produced by

OUTSIDE IN THEATRE

Performances May 9 - June 3, 2025

Opening Night May 12, 2025

In Partnership with LACC Theatre Academy

Scenic & Video Designer: Salmah Beydoun
Lighting Designer: Martha Carter
Sound Designer: Levi Manners
Composer: David Gonzalez
Costume Designer: Karen Boyer
Choreographer: Joey Navarrete-Medina
Intimacy & Fight Director: Celina Lee Surniak
Casting Director: Candido Cornejo
Dialect Coach: Noelle Rodriguez
Stage Manager: Christa Troester

Cast (in order of appearance)

LEGENDARY CHILDREN:

Child #1 - Morgan Danielle Day

Child #2 - Gracie Cartier

Child #3 - Aphrodite Armstrong

ISADORA/MEXICAN WOMAN: Camila Arteché

JOHN/WHITE MAN: Sawyer Shine

PIO PICO/MEXICAN SALESMAN #1: Peter Mendoza

ANDRES/MEXICAN SALESMAN #2: Davi Santos

Dramaturg: Mona Heinze

Assistant Stage Manager: Grace Wilkerson

Production Manager: Ursula Collins-Laine

Associate Producer & Props Designer: Andrea Lopez

Scenic Construction: Set Up, LLC

Master Electrician: Johnny Garafalo

Video Programming & Mapping: Nat Nicholas

Video Board Operator: Hera Kang

Deck Crew: Leo Paz, Dan Stevens, Jerrel Milan, Spencer

Scenic Build Crew: Alan Tollefson, Belynda Gonzales, Victoria Gaspar, Courtney Cecil, Kayla Gozun, JiHui Ji, Luca Lennon

Graphic Design: Michelle Hanzelova

WARNING: This performance contains strobing lights, full frontal nudity, gun shots, blood and sexual content with strong language.

SPECIAL THANKS: Dana Story & Industry Loft, Raney Kennedy, Omar Madkour, Sara Orozco, Derek Hecker, Mona Heinze

EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS to the faculty, staff and students of The Academy at LACC. Rebecca Kessin, Maureen Weiss, Chie Saito-Blendermann, Johnny G, Monte, Vern and Department Chair Eddie Bledsoe. Thank you for giving this production a home!

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE:

My Dear Audience,

At the heart of *California Story* is a tale of loyalty - loyalty to one's family, to one's principles and traditions, to oneself. When we waver from that loyalty, compromise our integrity for advancement, we falter.

I've made my career off of trusted relationships with people who have stood by me, fostered my work, buttressed my artistic impulses, found a home in their hearts for me when it wasn't always popular or fashionable to do so. Michael Alvarez has been one such person. We met almost ten years ago while dreaming of this play. It is a bond that has sustained, energized and emboldened us for all of this time. And now here we are - the world premiere of *California Story*.

We wouldn't be here without other folks who dare to dream as boldly as we do. Enter Jessica Hanna, whom I've known since I first moved back to Los Angeles in the height of the last recession, looking for artistic homes for my work. We bonded over a mutual appreciation for the power of the word and the transportative power of live performance.

These folks have been bedrocks to my career, and I am exhilarated that we get to dream together here and now, with you.

Sincerely,
Roger Q. Mason

DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

California Story is a mythic tale about power, destruction, survival, and ultimately, rebirth.

The narrative centers around individuals fighting to survive in a broken society. As they strive for upward mobility, they must make a significant personal sacrifice, relinquishing something fundamental to their identity or values. The core of the story lies in their eventual confrontation with the profound consequences of these choices.

It is my hope that this tale prompts a deep reflection in audiences, encouraging them to consider

their own life journey. What sacrifices, both conscious and unconscious, have they made to navigate and integrate into the world around them? What aspects of their true selves might have been compromised, lost, or silenced in their pursuit of progress and belonging? *Ultimately, what price are we, as individuals and as a society, truly willing to pay for advancement?*

Through an epically queer fantastical lens, the piece critically examines and reflects upon our present moment. It's remarkable, and perhaps sobering, that over the ten years Roger and I have been envisioning and developing this work, its immediacy, relevance, and necessity have only grown more apparent. It seems that hardly a day passes without headlines that eerily mirror the core themes we explore within *California Story*. This confluence of art and life positions the piece as a powerful call for global healing and a renewed focus on our collective well-being, rather than solely on individual gain.

A pivotal line from Act Two, spoken by the Pio Pico, encapsulates the driving force behind our creative endeavor: *"My survival is my resistance."* This line not only underscores our drive for bringing this work to life at this particular moment but also highlights the critical and ongoing need for art that actively elevates the voices and perspectives of queer, trans, and BIPOC artists. For us, as creators from these communities, this creative work is not simply a choice; it is a fundamental necessity, a powerful declaration that we will not be silenced, marginalized, or forgotten in the narratives that shape our world.

Bios:



Aphrodite Armstrong (Legendary Child #3) is an actress, writer, and comedian based in Los Angeles. She stars in the upcoming mob thriller *Ponyboi* (dir. Esteban Arango), which premiered at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival in the U.S. Dramatic Competition. She received the 2022 SXSW Special Jury Prize for Outstanding Performances for *West by God* (dir. Scott Lazer), which premiered at Berlinale. Her debut play *Superfake* was read at Company of Angels and will be presented at WOW Café Theatre in New York this fall. Her newest play, *Savannah*, will have a reading this July at Greenway Court Theatre in LA. As a comedian, she regularly performs at clubs across Los Angeles. Aphrodite is a graduate of the University of North

Carolina School of the Arts' Drama program and an alumna of Upright Citizens Brigade Los Angeles. Insta: @aphroditearmstrong



Camila Arteché (Mexican Woman/Isadora) is a Cuban actress and host known for her work in film and television. She has starred in films such as *Sergio & Serguéi* and *El Acompañante* (both on Amazon Prime), earning international recognition. Camila won the Latin ACE Award in New York for Best Supporting Actress and has also received honors from the Hollywood North Film Awards, MLC Awards, and the Rome International Movie Awards. On Cuban television, she became a household name as the host of the popular reality show *Bailando en Cuba*. In 2021, she made her English-language debut in the short film *Un Pequeño Corte* (HBO Max), where she also served as associate producer. The project was awarded Best Short Film of the Year at Miami's Film Gate Interactive. In 2023, she appeared in the Telemundo telenovela *Juego de Mentiras*, and she is

currently part of the main cast of the upcoming mini-series Coolie (in post-production).



Gracie Cartier (Legendary Child #2) a proud Philly Girl who is a former Emmy Nominated celebrity hairstylist now turned actor, model, performer, and host of her show “What’s the Jeuge” with Plus Life’s Media. Platform receiving the Barbra Gittings Award for Excellence in LGBT Media. Gracie has appeared in films “GoodRich, Disciple, Greatest Hits” and “Book of Queer” series portraying Marsha P. Johnson. With appearances in “Beyoncé Renaissance & Cowboy Carter tour visuals”. Now breaking into theater for the very first time in “California Story”. A pillar in the LGBTQ+ community, 2021’s “OUT 100”, LA’s Nightlife Diva and Icon in the Ballroom community. Advocating for Trans Equality with the LGBT center Advisory

Board. Gracie’s mission is to authentically combine her creative and artistic passions along with embodying her truth, knowledge and understanding of overcoming life’s adversities to serve as a greater purpose inspiring others in her own unique and fabulous way.



Morgan Danielle Day (Legendary Child #1) Hailing from Baltimore, MD. Morgan Danielle Day is an actress/dancer/writer and spoken word artist based in Los Angeles, CA. She is currently nominated for a Helen Hayes award for Outstanding Lead Performer in a Play. Theatre credits include: *Is God Is* at Constellation Theatre, *Harvey and Jump* at Everyman Theatre, *Underneath the Freeways of Los Angeles* at Eco theatre. *The Hendrix Project* directed by Roger Guinevere Smith at The Public Theatre in New York City, Scotland’s Edinburgh Fringe Festival playing the lead role of “Betty” in *Gunshot Medley*, and *Boney M* performed in Lagos Nigeria etc. TV credits include Tyler Perry’s *All The Queens Men*, ALLBLK’s *Goon Squad*, TV One’s *For My Man*, *I Met My Murderer Online*, Tubi’s *Black Excellence*,

Amazon Prime’s *The Council*, and Signal 23’s *Merry Christmas Well Maybe*. Morgan has done voice over looping for series such as *Blackish*, *Grownish*, *AP Bio*, and *Modern Family*. She holds a MFA in Acting from CalArts, BFA in Theatre from Marymount Manhattan College and is a graduate of the Baltimore School for the Arts. Morgan is a proud educator, theatre teacher and member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. She would like to thank God for her many blessings, her fiancé Byron, friends, family and of course her wonderful parents Wanda and Derrick Camper for all of their love and support!



Peter Mendoza (Mexican Salesman #1/Pio Pico) was born and raised in East Los Angeles. He studied theatre, stage combat, and dance at East Los Angeles College. Theatre: Center Theatre Group: Oscar in *Sweat* (Mark Taper Forum), Elliot in *Elliot*, A Soldiers Fugue (Kirk Douglas Theatre), Oedipus in *Oedipus El Rey* (Kirk Douglas Theatre, Digital Stage). Other Theatre: Satan in *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*; Rolling through East LA (Cholavision Prod.), Jason in *Mojada: A Medea* in

Los Angeles (The Rep. Theatre of St. Louis), Belyaev in *Three Days in the Country*, Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, Florizel in *The Winters Tale* (Antaeus Theatre Company), Rafael in *La Piedra Oscura*, Don Carlos in *Los Empeños de una Casa*, Paco in *Salon Mexico*, Don Juan Tenorio in *El Burlador de Sevilla* (Bilingual Foundation of the Arts). Television: Perry Mason (HBO), From Scratch (Netflix), Shooter (USA), NCIS (CBS), Snowfall (FX), Casual (HULU), On My Block (Netflix). Film: *Dead Bullet*, *Nathan's Kingdom*, *Parasites*, *Tecato*, *Hello to Never*.



Davi Santos (Mexican Salesman #2/Andres) was born in Rio de Janeiro and was raised in New York City. He started attending The Professional Performing Arts School at 11 and continued to LaGuardia Performing Arts Highschool. He was a series regular on Good Sam (CBS), Tell Me A Story (CBS), and the Power Rangers (Nickelodeon) and a guest on Don't Trust the B- (ABC), Law And Order: True Crime (NBC), and Will & Grace (NBC) among others. Films include Something Like Summer, 47 Meters Down: Uncaged, Polaroid, America Adrift, and Father of Lies. On stage, he has appeared in Mr. Parker (Theatre One), Afterlight (The Cherry Lane), Lythgoe's Cinderella (Pasadena Playhouse) and is pleased to reunite with director Michael Alvarez since collaborating on Trouble (The Signature).

He is also the motion and voice capture artist for characters in the videogame franchises Battlefield (Electronic Arts), Call of Duty (Activision), and Mafia (Take Two Interactive).

@davi_santos



Sawyer Shine (White Man/John) Born and raised in the Bay Area, Sawyer Shine is a proud Californian. His love for the outdoors and the arts shaped his identity. Growing up in a place of stark social contrasts, theater became his voice, his refuge, and ultimately his purpose. After training at the Conservatory Theatre Ensemble and earning a BFA in Acting from California Institute of the Arts, Sawyer guest starred in the cable western series "Elkhorn." He starred in the independent feature "Bad Generation" directed by Tanner Novotny. And he is currently producing the film "Deadbeat," in which he writes and stars. He continues to pursue a career driven by curiosity, resilience, and a deep passion for connection through performance. @sawyer_shine

Roger Q. Mason (Playwright) (they/them) is an award-winning writer, performer and educator who satirizes and revises history to disrupt the biases that separate rather than unite us. Their playwriting has appeared on Broadway; Off/Off-Off-Broadway; and regionally. Their recent productions have garnered five Barrymore Award nominations in Philadelphia, a Jeff Award Recommendation in Chicago and the San Francisco Chronicle's prestigious Datebook Pick. Mason's World Premiere of Lavender Men was lauded by the Los Angeles Times as "evoking the mingled visions of Suzan-Lori Parks, Jeremy O. Harris and Michael R. Jackson." They received 2024's Playwrights' Center McKnight National Playwright Commission, the inaugural Dramatists Guild Foundation Catalyst Grant Award, a Hermitage Residency, a Lucille Lortel commission, a Kilroys List nod, and the Chuck Rowland Pioneer Award. Mason is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, and an alum of the Ma-Yi's Writing Lab, Page 73's Interstate 73 Writers Group, the Fire This Time Festival, and Primary Stages Writing Cohort. They currently produce a memoir/cooking segment on Instagram called Cooking with Q: A Playwright's Guide to Telling My Truth. Previously, they co-hosted the podcast Sister Roger's Gayborhood and hosted This Way Out Radio's Queerly Yours: Portraits in Courage. As an educator, Mason has served as a mentor for Lambda Literary, Workshop Theatre, the Marsha P. Johnson Institute's Starship Fellowship, the New Visions Fellowship and the Shay Foundation Fellowship. They are currently on faculty at CalArts. Mason holds degrees from Princeton University, Middlebury College, and Northwestern University. Instagram: @rogerq.mason

Michael Alvarez (Director) Michael is a Latinx interdisciplinary and international theatre director, creator, and visual artist. He has been a Directing Fellow at New York Theatre

Workshop, a Drama League Directing Fellow, and a Director with the Civilians R&D Group, amongst others. He has directed and created work in New York, London, Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Eastern Europe, and at such institutions as Her Majesty's Theatre in the West End, Arcola Theatre, London's Institute of Contemporary Arts, National Theatre of Slovenia, New York Theatre Workshop, Serenbe Playhouse and made performance art pieces at the British Museum. He is the founding Artistic Director of The Muse Collective and is Assistant Professor of Directing and Interdisciplinary Performance at UNCSA. Most recently, he directed Julius Caesar at Catskill Mountain Shakespeare. Member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab. Education: Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and California Institute of the Arts. www.Michael-Alvarez.com

Salmah Beydoun (Scenic & Video Designer) is a scenic artist, architect, and motion graphics designer based in Mexico City and Los Angeles. Her work spans theater, choreography, and installation, with a focus on crafting collaborative spaces that provoke visual dialogue. In addition to her performance design practice, she thrives as a motion graphics designer and 3D artist in multidisciplinary media. Her designs have been featured at venues such as RedCat (Los Angeles), Studio Teatr (Warsaw), Mandeville Gallery (San Diego), Centro Cultural del Bosque (Mexico City), and the Grotowski Institute (Wroclaw). Salmah holds a degree in Architecture from UNAM and an MFA in Scenic Design from CalArts. Since 2015, she has contributed to numerous productions, including *Così Fan Tutte*, *Carmen*, and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. She is co-founder of Berenjena, a Mexican theater and publishing collective. Her honors include the 2019 Princess Grace Award, the OPERA America 2025 Tobin Prize, and 2nd place at World Stage Design 2022.

Karen Boyer (Costume Designer) Karen Boyer designs and builds costumes for theater, dance, and film. Past and recent collaborators include choreographers Catherine Galasso, Faye Driscoll, Sidra Bell, Abigail Levine, Sarah Dahnke, nicHi douglas, Katy Pyle, and Sunny Hitt; Opera Columbus, Fresh Squeezed Opera, and theater makers Yangtze Rep, the New Wild, Object Collection, harunalee, and Target Margin Theater. BFA: Maryland Institute College of Art, MFA: NYU Tisch. karenrachelboyer.com.

Martha Carter (Lighting Designer), a Los Angeles-based lighting designer, obtained her MFA in Design from the University of California at Irvine and holds the Head of Design and Associate Professor position at California State University Long Beach. She extends her creative reach nationally and internationally, with her portfolio spanning diverse performances—opera, dance, theater, and live events—fostering positive community impact through collaborative ventures. Notably, Martha assumes principal design roles with ReBorn Dance Interactive and Kirros Dance Company, alongside regular collaborations with the Long Beach Ballet. Recent highlights include "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" at Dallas Theatre Center, "The Hope Theory" at The Geffen Playhouse, premieres at prestigious venues like The Public Theatre's Under the Radar Festival and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Other recent works include "She Loves Me," "Candide," and "A Little Night Music" at Madison Opera, and "Mamma Mia," "Footloose," and "Evita" at Teatro Anayansi in Panama City, Panama. www.marthacarterdesigns.com

David Gonzalez (Composer) is a Los Angeles-based composer and audio producer whose work spans film, television, theater, and podcasts. A graduate of Berklee College of Music, he has scored a wide range of projects, including the feature film *Working Man*, the short film *Birdwatching* starring Amanda Seyfried, and the Emmy-winning series *Break A Hip*, featuring

Allison Janney. His additional music has appeared in shows like *Switched at Birth* and *How I Met Your Mother*. David made his theatrical debut with *Lavender Men*, written by Roger Q. Mason and directed by Lovell Holder, first scoring the stage production and later adapting the music for its film version. He brings a cinematic perspective to each project, with a focus on emotional clarity and storytelling. David is thrilled to be part of *California Story* and grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with this creative team.

Andrea Lopez (Associate Producer & Prop Designer) is a bilingual multi-hyphenated theatre artist. A Proud Chicana, Nepantlera, who believes the arts should be accessible to all, restricted to none – Teatro para todos. A Director - Playwright - Stage Manager - Dramaturg - Prop Designer - Producer specializing in community-based theatre. She's grateful and elated to make her Outside In Theatre debut! Thank you, Jess. She's grateful for the opportunity to be part of this beautiful production with such incredibly talented artists, but even more grateful for your attendance to witness it tonight. Thank you. Recent collaborations include: *The Last Play by Rickerby Hinds* (ASM) with Latino Theatre Co, *Aqui Es Tu Casa* (Stage Manager) with Teatro del Pueblo, *The Red Rose LA* (ASM) at LATC's Encuentro '24, iambic lab: *Heaven of Invention* (Associate Artistic Director) and *As You Like It* (ASM) with Indie Shakes Free Shakespeare Festival. *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Failure: A Love Story*, and *Kentucky* (Prop Design) at Pomona College, The Wayward Artist, The Fountain Theatre, The Wallis Annenberg Center.

Levi Manners (he/him) (Sound Designer) is a DC based sound designer and engineer. Previously located in the Central Coast, he is excited to be back in California working again! When not in the theatre, Levi enjoys paddle boarding (or just being around water), admiring architecture, and harassing his cat. Hear more at www.MannersSound.com

Joey Navarette-Medina (Na-Me) (Choreographer) is a queer Mexican American dance artist, choreographer, and movement director based in Los Angeles. With an MFA in Dance from UCI and a BFA from CSULB, Joey's practice is rooted in storytelling, somatic awareness, and lived experience. Their work spans concert dance, theater, and commercial projects, including *The Barn-Musicals* and music videos for artists like Justin Timberlake and Young Miko. Joey has performed in works by Bill T. Jones and collaborated alongside artists like Doug Varone and Primera Generación Dance Collective. As a teacher, Joey has worked with students from high school to college and older adults, blending technical rigor with care and curiosity. Most recently, Joey served as choreographer and movement director for *California Story* by Roger Q. Mason, directed by Michael Alvarez. Joey is grateful to Roger for the recommendation and to Michael for the trust and creative collaboration.

Noelle Dominique Rodriguez (Dialect Coach) is a vibrant, expressive, and playful Xicana actor, artist, and voice teacher whose work channels her passion for performance into revitalizing language and culture through clowning, wordplay, and storytelling. Trained in London (MFA in Linklater Teaching Practice [Voice and Theatre Arts], Rose Bruford College), she is a Designated Linklater Voice Teacher and draws deep inspiration from her East LA roots and ancestral homelands on both sides of the border (Mexico/USA). Noelle is on a continuous journey of learning her native languages and understanding decolonization of herself through theater. She has coached actors in productions including *Passage*, *Lost Girl*, *Iphigenia Among the Taurians*, and *Water by the Spoonful*, and has performed with East West Players, the SheLA Festival, and her own work in London. She helps actors connect with their bodies, voices, and emotional landscapes. Noelle is dedicated to creating brave, supportive spaces where individuals can explore their identities, express themselves, and connect with their cultural

heritage. She is currently developing a one-woman show exploring language, identity, and joy.

Celina Lee Surniak -she/her- (Intimacy & Fight Director) is an LA based Stunt/Intimacy Coordinator and Fight/Intimacy Director. Recent credits of hers include: "Don't Touch My Hair"/"The Very Best People"/"Arrowhead" (IAMA Theatre Co.); "Yerma"/"Muse of Fire" (Foolish Production Co.); "Wolf at the Door" (PCPA); "Happy Fall" (Rogue Artists Ens.); "A Doll's House"/"A Midsummer Night's Dream"/"Romeo and Juliet"/"Macbeth" (House of Bards Theatre Co.); "Cyrano de Bergerac"/"Titus Andronicus"/"Romeo and Juliet"/"Bold Stroke for a Husband" (Island Shakespeare Festival); "BARE: A Pop Opera"/"The Guy Who Didn't Like Musicals"/"Spring Awakening", and much more. With over a decade of experience, she specializes in safety and empowerment within volatile content. Certified in trauma-informed care, she is also a Crisis Advocate for survivors of SA and DV, offering real-time crisis support in Los Angeles. Break legs to the cast and crew!

Christa Troester (she/her) (Stage Manager) is a Los Angeles-based theatrical professional with a focus in stage management and lighting. For the past three years, she has been a regular presence at REDCAT, where she supports bold, innovative performance work. Christa is excited to help bring *California Story* to life — a new piece that explores the state's past, present, and potential future — and is proud to contribute to storytelling that connects deeply with the place she calls home.

Jessica Hanna (Producer) is a Los Angeles based Director, Producer & Space Maker. She is founding Producing Artistic Director of Outside In Theatre, a member of The Kilroys and was Chair of SITI Company's Board of Directors (2019-2023). Her focus has been on new play development. More recently she produced Kacie Roger's I SELL WINDOWS for Outside In Theatre and at Assembly Studio Theatre at Edinburgh Festival Fringe. She directed and produced Justin Elizabeth Sayre's LOTTIE PLACETT TOOK A HATCHET at The Cavern Club, The Los Angeles LGBT Center and Assembly Roxy Upstairs at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. She was a producer on Sara Lyons' THIS EMANCIPATION THING at REDCAT. She is thrilled to be working on CALIFAS TRILOGY as both producer of CALIFORNIA STORY and JUANA MARIA, as well as directing HIDE AND HIDE at Skylight Theatre (see all 3 plays in the trilogy this month!). She has been a supporter of Roger Q Mason's work since 2015 when she produced a reading of their play THE WHITE DRESS at Bootleg Theatre, where she was Co-Founder and Managing & Producing Director, producing all of the theatre at Bootleg from 2006 through 2018. www.JessQueen.com for more info.

Outside In Theatre is a new non-profit theatre in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. An evolving force in equitable and transformative storytelling. Through multi-platform theatrical experiences, we create art that speaks to our intersectional communities. We have a focus on new work, both Scripted and Unscripted, developing new plays as well as creating improvised stories that will lift up the voices of the Global Majority, Queer, Disabled and other traditionally marginalized groups and their allies. We live at the intersection of Live & Digital performance, with infrastructure for cameras and streaming that will create greater access to the work of local artists. We believe in making Brave Spaces for All, building the world we want to see by producing daring, dynamic, and authentic untold stories by unheard voices. Outside In Theatre is building the world we want to see by creating, producing and supporting daring, dynamic, and authentic untold stories by unheard voices. www.outsideintheatre.org

Co-Founders Daniel Blinkoff & Tamlyn Tomita

Producing Artistic Director Jessica Hanna

Managing Director Maisha A. Sebastiany

Associate Artistic Director Paul Hungerford

General Manager & Creative Producer Matthew Pitner

Technical Director Arlo Sanders

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