

News Release

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PRESS CONTACT: April Culver, Marketing & Press Manager ~ 415.694.6156 ~ april@nctcsf.org

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NEW CONSERVATORY THEATRE CENTER CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY WITH EXHILARATING NEW SEASON, INCLUDING THREE WORLD PREMIERES

WORLD PREMIERE STAGE ADAPTATION OF HARRISON DAVID RIVERS' CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED *INTERLUDE*
A RELATABLE EXAMINATION OF LOVE AND SEX IN *PLOT POINTS IN OUR SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT* BY MIRANDA ROSE HALL
MARTIN SHERMAN'S SWEEPING TALE OF A MAY-DECEMBER ROMANCE, *GENTLY DOWN THE STREAM*
WORLD PREMIERE OF DIPIKA GUHA'S COMING OF AGE TRAVELOGUE, *GETTING THERE*
ROLLING WORLD PREMIERE OF A CONTEMPORARY QUEER FANTASIA , *PREP PLAY, OR BLUE PARACHUTE* BY YILONG LIU
COLMAN DOMINGO'S TWISTED AND TOUCHING FAMILY DRAMEDY, *DOT*
A MELODIOUS 40TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IN THE FORM OF A MUSICAL REVUE, *ENCORE*

San Francisco, CA (June 17, 2021) – **New Conservatory Theatre Center** is honored to celebrate 40 years of serving the Bay Area LGBTQ+ community, and its long-awaited return to live performances with a captivating 21-22 Season of two World Premieres, one Rolling World Premiere, one Regional Premiere, two West Coast Premieres, and a special musical celebration waiting in the wings.

In the 40 years since Founder and Artistic Director Ed Decker opened the doors of NCTC, the sole mission of the organization has been to give back, to effect personal & societal growth, and bring enlightenment and change for youth and artists. From humble beginnings at San Francisco's First Unitarian Church in 1981, NCTC has grown into a pillar of the local LGBTQ+ community, starting YouthAware, the nation's first theatre program to develop/present AIDS education productions for youth in 1986, and launching New Voices/New Work (formerly the New Play Development Lab), to expand the canon of LGBTQ-themed plays in 2002. As news of NCTC's work within the community grew, Decker began to see local and international acclaim, receiving the STOP AIDS award in 1995 and being honored as a Local Hero by KQED in 2011. In 2020, NCTC was named a Legacy Business by the City of San Francisco for its significant impact on the history and culture of the neighborhood.

While NCTC has seen immense growth and success in these 40 years, there is still much work to be done. The past year has been a time of activity and introspection around the issue of racial equity in the Bay Area theatre community, and in our theatrical home. With this in mind, NCTC is renewing its commitment to promote a broad spectrum of LGBTQ+, Queer BIPOC, Gender Diverse and Allied experiences and to continue to expand our efforts to welcome all into the NCTC family. To deepen and enrich relationships within the local Queer BIPOC community, **NCTC will regularly highlight Queer BIPOC**

organizations on web and social channels and offer them free tickets to all NCTC performances.

Additionally, NCTC will continue the Pay-What-You-Wish ticket program which allows guests to see any preview performance at a price that works for their budget because we believe theatre should be accessible to all.

On stage, NCTC will reflect the vibrant Bay Area community through an **equitable balance of work written, directed, performed, taught and designed by BIPOC artisans**. Every performance at NCTC will now begin with a land acknowledgement to the Ramaytush Ohlone Peoples, the original inhabitants of the land NCTC stands on, and there will be donation opportunities to Indigenous organizations throughout the season. The Youth Conservatory and YouthAware programs will also continue their commitment to **centering Queer and BIPOC storytelling through play development, hiring, and casting in youth productions**.

THE 2021-22 SEASON

“We’re celebrating NCTC’s 40th birthday by highlighting our queer and allied communities with a diverse array of playwrights and performers, exceptional transformative tales, and the type of groundbreaking theatre you have come to expect from us.” says Ed Decker. “This is the time to conjure the transformative powers of theatre to help us reflect, learn, and reimagine how to be the very best we can be.”

Opening this benchmark season in October is the stage adaptation of **Harrison David Rivers’** gripping reflection of a gay Black man’s experience during the transformative events of 2020, *Interlude*. Jesse Howard’s life looks nothing like it used to. Forced by a national pandemic to return to his childhood home in Kansas with his Conservative parents, he finds himself standing still for the first time. As Jesse battles his writer’s block in a country that no longer feels like home, his mother struggles to reach out to the son she never really knew. Adapted from NCTC’s recent critically-acclaimed audio drama, *Interlude* is a personal and tender snapshot of one man’s search for connection. As state restrictions ease, artist and audience safety is still NCTC’s top priority. In light of that, this is a small cast of just two people and will be presented in the larger Decker theatre.

Harrison David Rivers is the winner of the 2018 Relentless Award for *The Bandaged Place*. His other plays include *When Last We Flew* (GLAAD Media Award), *Sweet* (AUDELCO nomination), *Where Storms Are Born* (Berkshire Theatre Award nomination, Edgerton Foundation New Play Award), *This Bitter Earth* (NCTC World Premiere, MN Theatre Award for Exceptional New Work, Lavender Magazine citation for Outstanding New Playwriting), *Five Points* (MN Theatre Award for Exceptional New Work, BroadwayWorld Minneapolis Award for Best New Work, Lavender Magazine citation for Outstanding New Playwriting), and *Broadbend, Arkansas* (Broadway Black’s Antonyo Award nomination for Best Book of a Musical, Times Square Chronicles citation for Best New Off-Broadway Musical and Outstanding Book of a Musical). Harrison was named a Runner-up for the 2018 Artist of the Year by the Star Tribune and a 2017 Artist of the Year by City Pages.

November brings a “deeply revelatory” (*New York Stage Review*) story of love and sex to the NCTC stage with the regional premiere of **Miranda Rose Hall’s** trans love story, *Plot Points in Our Sexual Development*. Sex is complicated. Especially if you’ve got a history. When their relationship hits a breaking point, Theo and Cecily look back at their awkward-messy-tender-wonderful-heartbreaking pasts to

understand the meaning of true intimacy. There's no holding back in this provocative exploration of gender, sex, and the risks of being vulnerable with the one you love. Staged in the round in the Walker theatre, *Plot Points in Our Sexual Development* is sure to be a uniquely intimate theatrical experience.

Miranda Rose Hall's plays include *The Hour of Great Mercy* (2019 Craig Noel Award for Outstanding New Play), and *Bulgaria! Revolt!*. Hall is currently under commission from LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater, Yale Repertory Theater, and Trinity Repertory Company. She has developed her work with Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, The Playwright's Realm, New York Theater Workshop, Baltimore Center Stage, Woolly Mammoth, NNPN, The Kennedy Center, Orlando Shakespeare Theater, EnGarde Arts, Provincetown Theater, Two River Theater, and the Orchard Project.

This December, infamous playwright **Martin Sherman** makes his NCTC debut with his "tender, funny and unconventional romance" (*Variety*) in ***Gently Down the Stream***. Beau has spent decades of his life trying to blend into a world that told him to be invisible. Enter Rufus, who lives his life openly and becomes fascinated with the much older Beau. When these two very different men fall into a whirlwind romance, they're left to navigate a relationship neither expect, but both depend on. Spanning over a decade, *Gently Down the Stream* is a bittersweet, brilliantly funny romance about being a gay man in the 21st century and finding love along the way.

Martin Sherman is an acclaimed dramatist and screenwriter best known for his 20 stage plays which have been produced in over 55 countries. He rose to fame in 1979 with the groundbreaking Pulitzer Prize-nominated play *Bent* (Tony nominee for Best Play and Dramatists Guild's Hull-Warriner Award in 1980), which explores the persecution of homosexuals during the Holocaust. *Bent* has been produced in 35 countries, been adapted into a major motion picture in 1997, and was voted one of the NT2000 One Hundred Plays of the Century. His other plays include *Messiah*, *When She Danced*, *A Madhouse in Goa*, *Some Sunny Day* and *Rose* (Laurence Olivier Award nominee for Best New Play in 2000) and the book for *The Boy From Oz*, a musical based on Peter Allen's life and career, earning him a second Tony nomination. Sherman's screenplays include *The Summer House*, *Alive and Kicking*, *Bent*, *Callas Forever* and *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*.

Next up, NCTC is thrilled to present the world premiere of **Dipika Guha's** coming of age travelogue ***Getting There***, commissioned as part of the New Voices/New Work program. Kai and Julie came to Paris to see the sights, enjoy the food, and maybe learn something about themselves. After a falling out sends them on separate paths, Kai is pulled into an affair with a sophisticated older married couple, while Julie encounters an enigmatic woman deep in a war against herself. Twenty-four hours later, none of these five women are the same. Full of surprises and serendipity, *Getting There* is an intergenerational meditation on love, aging and solitude.

Dipika Guha is an LA based, Calcutta-born playwright raised in Russia, India and the United Kingdom. Her plays include *Yoga Play*, *The Art of Gaman* (Relentless Award semifinalist) and *Unreliable*. Recent commissions include *Azaan*, a play for Oregon Symphony, *In Braunau* for Playwrights Horizons Theatre School, and contributions to *You Across From Me* (Humana, Actors Theatre of Louisville). Guha is currently under commission from South Coast Rep, Manhattan Theatre Club and Barrington Stage. For television, she's written for projects in development at AMC the series *Sneaky Pete* & currently writes for *Black Monday* on Showtime.

March brings love, laughter and utter chaos in the form of **Colman Domingo's** "uproariously funny" (*New York Times*) twisted and touching family dramedy, ***Dot***. The Shealys are barely holding it together. Matriarch Dotty is struggling to hold onto her memory, eldest daughter Shelly is looking for an escape route, golden child Donnie and his husband are constantly bickering, and the baby of the family, Averie, has gone from viral sensation to a discount store cashier. Back in their West Philly home for the holidays, one thing's for sure: the only way they're getting through this is together. Now being adapted for television as *West Philly, Baby* on AMC Networks, *Dot* is a loving look at the ties that bind - and drive us crazy.

Colman Domingo is a Tony, Olivier, Drama Desk, and Drama League Award nominated actor, director, writer and producer. As a writer, his plays and musicals include *Wild with Happy, A Boy and His Soul* (2010 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Solo Show, GLAAD Media Award), the Tony Award-nominated Broadway musical *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, and Geffen Playhouse's groundbreaking musical *Light's Out: Nat King Cole*. His plays have been produced by The Public Theater, Vineyard, La Jolla Playhouse, Humana Festival of New American Plays, New York Stage and Film, A.C.T, The Tricycle Theater in London, Brisbane Powerhouse in Australia, among others.

In April, NCTC welcomes the return of rising star playwright **Yilong Liu** with the rolling world premiere of a touching and quirky adventure through time, ***PrEP Play, or Blue Parachute***. What if you had the chance to rewrite history? Erik's world is thrown into free-fall when he's pulled into a wondrously bizarre time-traveling journey by Agent 701 (aka his now-sentient PrEP pill). Landing in the AIDs epidemic of the 80s, Erik finds himself in a race against history to save a life lost decades ago. From award-winning playwright Yilong Liu comes a contemporary queer fantasia that examines the ghosts of our past and the hopes for our future.

Yilong Liu is a New York-based bilingual playwright and screenwriter. He grew up in China and received his MFA from University of Hawai'i. He is a Kennedy Center Paula Vogel Playwriting Award winner and a Lambda Literary Award winner. Currently, he is under commissions from Audible's Emerging Playwrights Fund and EST/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project. A proud member of Ensemble Studio Theatre's Obie Award-winning playwrights group Youngblood, a Core Writer at Playwrights Center, and a two-time resident of SPACE on Ryder Farm. His works include *The Book of Mountains and Seas* (Kennedy Center Paul Stephen Lim Playwriting Award, New Conservatory Theatre Center), *June is The First Fall* (Kumu Kahua Theatre, Yangtze Rep/New Ohio Theatre, Original Works Publishing), *Joker* (Po'okela Award, Kumu Kahua Theatre, FringeNYC, National Queer Theatre), and *Good Enemy* (Audible, Ojai Playwrights Festival). Recently, Liu received the LAMBDA Literary Award for LGBTQ Drama for *The Book of Mountains and Seas*, an NCTC world premiere that was forced to close after its first performance due to COVID-19 closures.

Finally, NCTC celebrates turning 40 and fabulous with ***Encore***, a magically melodious cabaret of iconic numbers culled from a songbook of over 50 musical productions that have lit up the NCTC stage. Featuring hit songs from blockbuster mega-musicals and hidden gems from indie darlings, *Encore* is sure to be the birthday party of the season.

Musical Director **Joe Wicht** is a San Francisco-based composer and arranger whose focus is cabaret and chamber musicals. For NCTC, he appeared in the first production of *Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly* in 2003, then served as Musical Director for the revival production in 2019. For Feinstein's, Wicht teamed

up with Allen Sawyer to create concert versions of *Hair*, *Mame*, and *Hello, Dolly!* Wicht has worked extensively with local cabaret performer Katya Smirnoff-Skyy, and has served as MD for local performers Darlene Popovic, Johnny Orenberg, Katrina McGraw, and Tom Reardon. As a composer, Wicht collaborates with lyricist Scott Hayes on specialty cabaret numbers. Wicht's song cycle, *Trinity*, features over 75 songs, several of which were featured in concert at St. Ignatius in May, 2021. As best as he can recollect, Wicht has been involved with 9 musicals at NCTC, including one where he was dressed as a banana. He has been a house pianist at Martuni's for the past 13 years, an honorary grand marshall at SF Pride, was sainted by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence in 2006, and received a *Bay Area Reporter* Bestie Award for Best LGBT Musician in 2018.

As always, subscribers get the best seats at the best prices. There are four ways to join as a subscriber for the 21-22 Season including the **full-season subscription package**, **four show sampler**, the **weekday six ticket flex pass**- offering all the benefits of a season subscription with the flexibility to use six tickets on any weekday performance and the **anytime six ticket flex pass** - the most flexible package, offering the benefits of a season subscription, with the flexibility to use six tickets for any performance. Subscriber benefits include huge savings on ticket prices, access to the best seats, free and easy ticket exchanges, 40% off guest tickets, savings on non-subscription shows and much more. Subscriptions are now available at nctcsf.org/subscribe or by calling the Box Office at **415.861.8972**.

New Conservatory Theatre Center has been San Francisco's premier LGBTQ+ and Allied performing arts institution and **progressive arts education conservatory** since 1981. NCTC is renowned for its diverse range of **innovative, high-quality productions**, touring productions and **shows for young audiences**; its foundational anti-bullying work with youth and educators through **YouthAware**; and its commitment to developing **new plays** to continue expanding the canon of queer and allied dramatic work.

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Interlude

By Harrison David Rivers

October 8 - November 7, 2021

Opening Night: October 16, 2021

Plot Points in Our Sexual Development

By Miranda Rose Hall

November 12 - December 19, 2021

Opening Night: November 20, 2021

Gently Down the Stream

By Martin Sherman

December 3, 2021- January 9, 2022

Opening Night: December 11, 2021

Getting There

By Dipika Guha

January 14 - February 20, 2022

Opening Night: January 22, 2022

Dot

By Colman Domingo

March 4 - April 3, 2022

Opening Night: March 12, 2022

PrEP Play, or Blue Parachute

By Yilong Liu

April 1 - May 8, 2022

Opening Night: April 9, 2022

Encore

A Cabaret Performance

Curated by Ed Decker, Dennis Lickteig, and Joe Wicht

May 13 - June 12, 2022

Opening Night: May 21, 2022