

PLAYWRIGHTS'  
CENTER

IN THE LAB

# VAPOR TRAIL

By **Ken Urban**

DECEMBER 18, 2020



# VAPOR TRAIL

by **Ken Urban**

Director

**Knud Adams\*\***

Design Consultant

**Christian Frederickson**

Design Consultant

**Daniel Kluger**

Apprentice Stage Manager

**Roshni Desai**

Workshop Producer

**Hayley Finn**

Associate Workshop Producer

**Julia Brown**

"I was inspired to think about how grief might bring strangers together; how it's something you can share with a stranger, not with someone who knows you. The play had a workshop right before life shut down. Audience members commented the play might work as a 'radio play.' Since the shutdown, I've been thinking about ways to bring this play to life during our current state of quarantine. I plan to use my workshop as an opportunity to imagine what a 21st-century audio play might sound like, and to get deeper into the story of Bennett and Leslie."

—Ken Urban

Actors

**April Matthis\*** / Leslie

**Maulik Pancholy\*** / Bennett

\*Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, the Playwrights' Center, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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## UP NEXT

### GETTING THERE

by **Dipika Guha**

Wednesday, Jan 13 at 6:00 pm CST

### CELL SURFACE

by **Dominic Taylor**

Friday, Jan 22 at 7:00 pm CST

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# AN INTERVIEW WITH KEN URBAN BY HAYLEY FINN

**Hayley Finn:** I want to talk about your play, *Vapor Trail*, which will be in our new series *In The Lab*, where playwrights experiment with form, and particularly at this time when we have to rethink what theatre is. I'm curious about *Vapor Trail* and how you thought about it as an audio play, when you thought about it as an audio play, and what you're hoping to achieve?

**Ken Urban:** I wrote the first draft of *Vapor Trail* in January 2020. I was inspired by a memoir about a music journalist who had an infant child who was killed in a freak accident in New York City and about the process of grieving after he and his wife lost their firstborn. I had read that in the Fall and then I started to think about a play around similar issues. And so, in January—I usually tend to write the first drafts of a play quickly because I feel like it's good to get it sort of all-out—so I think in about four days I wrote the first draft of *Vapor Trail*.

We did a closed reading of it at New Dramatists, where I'm a member playwright. I brought in two actors to hear the play out loud and a director to hear their response and to see what was there; to see if there was something there that was worth pursuing. As with all of my plays, I initially heard the play more than I saw it, so there weren't stage directions. I was really focused on just the voice of these two actors.

From there, I had a chance to do a workshop of the play at MIT where we brought two actors to campus. Knud Adams came on board as the director. And we spent the week workshopping this script. And as we kept working on it, it became clear how important the voices were.

One of the perks about MIT is there's just a lot of gear and technology always around, even in the theatre department. So Knud spoke with Josh Higgason and Christian Frederickson, our lighting/projection design and sound design instructors respectively. We body-miked the actors. Knud had the idea to keep the lights really, really low and just have these single lights on the actors' faces so when the audience was watching the workshop, all they saw was their faces. They were amplified so the actors could speak really quietly. What we found was when the actors pushed more into a theatrical performance quality, it lost the intimacy of the

writing. And because the play is really about the very intimate experience that these two people have—this gay man who's lost his husband and this woman who rediscovered her life as a beekeeper in Hudson, New York but has had her own experience with tragedy—that when we kept it really intimate and small and personal, that's when the play soared.

As luck would have it, this workshop happened the weekend before the shutdown, so the first weekend of March. We did a Playwrights' Center model where we do two readings with some rehearsal between the readings. I've always found that really helpful. So we had a presentation on Friday, rehearsal on Saturday, and a second presentation on Saturday.

I remember the morning of the first presentation. I had an emergency faculty meeting where they were like, "Any events that happen this weekend on campus can't have any more than 50 people." Remember when we used to think that would be safe. [chuckles] And so, we had to tape off a bunch of seats in the black box theater where we were doing the workshop. And, I think Knud would agree with this, we both just had our heads—like we were working and we were just in it and I was like, "Yeah, COVID." I wasn't fully present to the extent of what was happening.

Then Saturday, we did the second presentation, and a couple of audience members came up to me and they were really moved. There was an audience member who had broken down into tears. A colleague came up to me and said, "This would make an amazing audio drama, radio drama. You should really think about that." And I said, "Oh thank you, I'll really think about it."

By Monday morning we learned that MIT was closing and by the time I got back to New York all my meetings we canceled. A week had passed and life had changed forever, so I put the play away. It's always good to put a play away after a workshop so you're not obsessing about it too much. But it was funny. You write something quickly and you don't have a chance to kind of overthink it. So it felt really new and I didn't quite know what to make of the thing. I was surprised when people responded so well to it mainly because it's like I wrote this thing very quickly. So when the

Playwrights' Center put out the call in April or May of the Spring—I kept thinking about those comments; about wanting to imagine the play as an audio experience.

Before I'd even heard from you guys, I reached out to Daniel Kluger, a composer, sound designer, and arranger who's a friend of mine. We'd been working on music together. He's been helping me with my band's new release. He was like, "I want to read that play. I want to read that play." Which is weird because designers don't usually ask to read things. It's hard to actually get them to read it. But he read it and he was like, "I think this would be a really good narrative podcast." And in my mind, narrative podcasts, audio plays, they're all the same thing. I guess it sounds bougier to call it a podcast than to call it an audio play or a radio play, but in my mind, they're all genuinely the same genre. So that got my brain really thinking about it and Christian, who had worked on it at MIT, and Knud thought that would be a really fun thing to do. And then as luck would have it, the Playwrights' Center called me in August and said, "Yeah, we're interested in including this in the *In The Lab* series." And so it felt like a perfect way to put it to the test. And so that's what we're doing.

I'm planning on doing a deep dive into this script to revise it and really use Daniel, Christian, and Knud as dramaturgs to help me understand how this will eventually work as an audio piece that's exclusive to that art form, while also holding onto the other draft of the script as something for whenever we have stage productions again.

The thing that interests me about audio plays right now is that I feel like a lot of us are spending time trying to walk outside as much as we can before the weather gets too bad, or we're listening to things at home. I think that there's a way this story could really work as an intimate experience. It feels new to me; something I haven't done before. It all feels very exciting, but also it makes me a little nervous just because doing something new is always hard. It's hard to do something new especially as you get farther along in the teeth. Is that the expression?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



**Ken Urban's** (playwright) plays include *A Guide For The Homesick* (Huntington Theatre Company; West End), *The Remains* (Studio Theatre), *Sense Of An Ending* (59E59 Theatres; London's Theatre 503), *Nibbler* (The Amoralists), *The Correspondent* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater), *The Awake* (59E59 Theatres; First Floor Theater), and *The Happy Sad* (Public Theatre/Summer Play Festival).

Awards include Weissberger Playwriting Award, EST/Alfred P. Sloan Commission, New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, the Independent Reviewers of New England's Award for Best New Script, Headlands Artist Residency, Dramatist Guild Fellowship, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Fellowship, and MacDowell Colony Fellowships. Ken wrote the screenplay for the feature-film adaptation of *The Happy Sad*. His plays are published by Dramatists Play Service. He leads the band Occurrence and teaches dramatic writing at MIT.



**Knud Adams\*\*** (director) is a NYC-based director of innovative new plays. His recent productions include *The Headlands* (Christopher Chen, LCT3), *Paris* (Eboni Booth, The Atlantic), *Notes on My Mother's Decline* (Andy Bragen, Play Co.), *Tin Cat Shoes* (Trish Harnetiaux, Clubbed Thumb), *Marie and Bruce* (Wallace Shawn, JACK), *The Workshop* (Torrey Townsend, Soft Focus), and *Asshole*

(Justin Kuritzkes, JACK). When it's safe, he looks forward to directing rescheduled productions with The Atlantic, Roundabout, Clubbed Thumb, and JACK. [www.knudadams.com](http://www.knudadams.com)



**Roshni Desai** (apprentice stage manager) is a recent University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program graduate, currently residing in Minneapolis, Minnesota. They are a fierce believer in theater as a way to connect communities, especially marginalized ones. Roshni also works at Project Success as a Program Coordinator and loves getting to work with

students and is very passionate about helping young people obtain the skills and tools to make their dreams happen.



**Christian Fredrickson** (sound design consultant) is a violist, composer, and sound designer who specializes in live music performance for theater and dance. He has worked at a long list of theaters in New York City, notably the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Classic Stage Company, La MaMa, and Playwrights' Horizons as well as regional theaters around the U.S. He teaches design at the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, MA. [www.christianfrederickson.com](http://www.christianfrederickson.com)



**Daniel Kluger** (sound design consultant) is a Tony and Grammy-nominated composer, music producer, and sound designer based in New York. Recent work includes *The Sound Inside* (dir. David Cromer, starring Mary Louise Parker), *Sea Wall/A Life* (dir. Carrie Cracknell, starring Jake Gyllenhaal), the Broadway revival of *Marvin's Room* (dir. Anne Kauffman, starring Janeane Garofalo & Lili Taylor)

and the world premiere of *Significant Other* (dir. Trip Cullman, starring Gideon Glick), and Daniel Fish's visionary revival of *Oklahoma!* for which Kluger created entirely new and idiomatic orchestrations of this classic score for traditional bluegrass instruments – he was nominated for a Best Orchestrations Tony Award and Best Musical Theater Album Grammy Award. [www.danielkluger.com](http://www.danielkluger.com)



**April Matthis\*\*** (Leslie) is an Obie Award winning actor and company member of Elevator Repair Service. Off-Broadway: *Toni Stone* (Roundabout); *Fairview*, *LEAR* (Soho Rep); *Signature Plays—Funnyhouse of a Negro* (Signature Theatre); *IOWA*, *Antlia Pneumatica* (Playwrights Horizons); *On the Levee* (LCT3). With ERS: *The Sound & the Fury*; *Fondly*, *Collette*

*Richland* (NYTW); *Measure for Measure* (The Public); *Everyone's Fine with Virginia Woolf* (Abrons Art Center); *GATZ* (Perth Festival). Regional: *Little Bunny Foo Foo* (Actors Theater of Louisville), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Yale Rep). TV: "Instinct" (CBS), "New Amsterdam" (NBC). Film: *Black Card* (HBO, Showtime), *Fugitive Dreams* (FantasiaFest, Austin Film Festival)



**Maulik Pancholy\*** (Bennett) previously appeared in Ken Urban's *The Remains*, *The Awake*, and *The Happy Sad*. Broadway credits include *It's Only a Play* and the Tony-nominated production of *Grand Horizons*. Off-Broadway includes playing opposite Ed Harris in *Good for Otto*. His television work spans major roles on hit shows "30 Rock," "Weeds," and "Whitney" and lead voice roles on

the animated series "Phineas and Ferb" and "Sanjay and Craig." His debut novel, *The Best at It*, was named a 2020 Stonewall Honor Book. He served on President Barack Obama's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and is the co-founder of the anti-bullying nonprofit [ActToChange.org](http://ActToChange.org)



**Actors' Equity Association** ("Equity"), founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 51,000 professional Actors and Stage Managers. Equity fosters the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages, improving working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Actors' Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. #EquityWorks

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The Director is a member of the **STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY**, a national theatrical labor union.

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Meghan Kreidler as Volina in Betty Shamieh's *Malvolio*, during the February 2020 Ruth Easton New Play Series. Photo by Paula Keller

## AN INTERVIEW WITH KEN URBAN (*continued*)

**HF:** [laughs] Long in the tooth?

**KU:** Long in the tooth, that's what I was trying to say. [laughs]. As I've gotten longer in my tooth—

**HF:** I don't think that that's you Ken. That just is not you.

**KU:** I feel it's harder to do something new, right, because it feels like... yeah. So this feels like a new thing to explore. And for the first time, bringing my music, my band, and what we do, into the theatrical experience that I make. I've usually kept those things pretty separate and this is the first time—there's a song that I wrote with my bandmates that's in the play that plays an important dramatic role in the story. And so all of that feels pretty new and exciting to tackle.

**HF:** So, to confirm, you've never written an audio play?

**KU:** I dipped my toe in before, but this is the full swim.

**HF:** I like that metaphor. The thing I want to ask you next, and you touched on this a bit, is in addition to being a playwright, you're a musician and you have a band. You talked about how you think of things aurally first. So I'm curious to know as you have written this play, as you move forward, what you are seeing as the relationship between music and score and this piece, in addition to the song that you mentioned as part of it?

**KU:** Yeah. I think of my scripts as the score, right? They're helping the actors tell the story and convey the emotion, and so that's the score that I write. And this is the first time where I'm getting the chance to work with sound designers and composers on how another score is helping to do that work. Usually, in a production, the sound designer, if you're lucky, comes to maybe the first or second rehearsal, and then comes back around tech; basically, tech is your first chance to play with sound.

The In The Lab workshop is my ideal which is that we're doing that creation at the same time and having those conversations. Building sound

takes a long time so we won't do that much building during this workshop, but we'll know what's there and what's needed.

When you have actors on stage you can communicate or convey this is the location that this is happening in. But with an audio play or a narrative podcast, you need the sound to help communicate right away to a listener that, we're outside, oh, we're in someone's home, oh we're by a nest of bees, the hive. Those things are all work that the language can do but needs to be supplemented and supported by sound.

There are three storytellers right now—there's the director, myself as the playwright, and then Daniel in collaboration with Christian—who are all telling the same story; who are all on the same page but are finding different ways to do it alongside the actors. And we're really, really lucky to have these two amazing actors who I've worked with; April Matthis and Maulik Pancholy. It's really exciting; the ideal rehearsal processes, right?

Everybody's working together and everybody's focused on something. That is a real gift because normally everybody's attention is on different things. The way American theatre works is that there's not always just time to experiment and fail, and so I feel like part of what's exciting about the Playwrights' Center workshop is that we've built in time to experiment and fail. We're spreading it over two weeks which will be really ideal for me as the writer to kind of play a bit and see what comes out of it. At the same time, we have this really clear goal of making this audio version of the play.

What's also exciting—it's that designers have a different way of talking than directors, or playwrights, or actors in terms of how they see a story. And it will be great to have that in the room; to learn if the sound is doing this work. Can peel back some of the language because we don't need it, right? And that maybe we don't have to make that decision during rehearsal or even during recording because of the joys of editing. [laughs] In a way, I've always been slightly envious about film and television. You have the ability to go back and be like, that's the take. When I'm recording my vocalists, I keep notes about each take and these different takes are the ones we're gonna edit together. That we can actually finally do that in a kind of theatrical context.

# AN INTERVIEW WITH KEN URBAN *(continued)*

There's a way that you feel sometimes in tech and previews that you have to make these decisions. It's already a stressful time. And sometimes stress can, you know, make you make good decisions, but sometimes it can make you make not great decisions, or decisions where you're just like, "Okay I don't know if I'm going to figure out the answer to this before opening, so let's just go with a solution that feels the easiest, or the one that feels the most known." With this, I feel like we can try different things. And it's a different way—the director and I and the sound designers and the composers—there's a different way that we can think about the final product of this, and that feels exciting.

**HF:** One of the things you and I have talked about is the text and how you think it might evolve. Do you have any specific questions for the text as you're entering this process?

**KU:** I want to take away all the frames and get to the heart of the thing faster because I feel like the ideal listening experience for a story like this is 45-50 minutes, which is different than theatrical time. I think in theatre time, this play could be 80 minutes. But I think in terms of it as a listening experience, I feel like just under an hour—that's the prime experience of listening to something. Listening to something is a lot of work. right. You can listen to music as a distraction in the background, but this is not that. This is something that's requiring your mind to work and think about the images: to track who's speaking; what their relationship is; where they are; to make a picture in your mind's eye of what you're listening to. The good news is that that means the storytelling can happen faster, but you also have to keep the audience hooked. So my current thought is the script should now start with Bennet and Leslie's first meeting at the farmer's market. And maybe some of the stuff that's in the script now before that meeting could appear as a flashback.

But some of the things that are easier to do in a stage production, like actors playing multiple characters and switching in and out of the narrator versus being in the scene, I think it's harder to do when it's just audio. And there's a desire in me to make it feel really immediate. So those are some of the things I'm thinking about the script; how to make it really immediate and engaging so you can keep that audience hooked in that experience for the 45-50 minutes they spend with Bennet and Leslie.

And, like all good writers, I don't want to give away the ending, I feel like there should be something surprising in how their relationship ends, how the story ends, and how their relationship evolves.

When you have too much time to work on a script, sometimes you build elaborate frames around the story. I want to strip all that away and really focus on the story of these two people, and make it feel as immediate and as visceral as possible.

**HF:** With that in mind, this piece has the potential to be quite emotional. One of the themes is loneliness, right, and isolation. I'm curious, as so many people are experiencing that currently if that's on your mind as a point of reference? Do you think it will resonate in a new way considering our current state?

**KU:** Yes. I think especially where the play ends, it will feel really different than it did in March 2020 than it will in December 2020. I think we're all grieving right now. Think about all the anxiety and depression that we've been tamping down just to get through our day. And this is a play about people who can't tap that down anymore. They can't keep it inside and they have to let it out. And I think, especially now that we're entering the holiday season and looking towards the new year, there'll be a lot of news to celebrate, but there'll still be a lot of grief and trauma to process.

I don't think it's an overstatement to say that I feel like, for the last four years, we've all been suffering from various forms of PTSD, of feeling really traumatized at a national level. And that's not gonna go away. I don't know if it ever goes away, that feeling, right? When my great-grandmother from Poland died, they found stashes of money hidden all around her house. She lived through the Great Depression so she never got over the fact that you can't trust the banks and your money might disappear. So they found wads of cash rolled up; clean bills that she clearly got from the bank and put it in an envelope and stuck under the mattress in the guest room or in the basement. There are ways that we will carry the trauma around for our entire lives. And I think that is in essence what *Vapor Trail* is about. But at the same time, how that experience can bring strangers together in a really unexpected intimate way.

For me, I think theatre is at its best when it's responding to the moment but in a way that feels universal. So by being very specific, you can also tell a story that a lot of people can identify with. I don't think this is a play that just, you know, bisexuals and beekeepers will be interested in [laughs] but that actually the story of Leslie and Bennet is a kind of national story in a way that I didn't know when I was writing the first draft of the play last January. And in a way, I don't want to know that when I'm revising the play. I just want to keep focusing on the story. And my hope is that it will have resonances for people that will expand beyond even once there is an end to quarantine. There will be an end to COVID or at least the fear that COVID is a death sentence, or you know, in the same way, that people have a different relationship to HIV now than when I was growing up as a kid in Philadelphia in the '80s and early '90s. It's good to be aware of that trauma, but as a writer, I have to put that in a box, put it away, and just keep focusing on telling this story. And then let the audience put all of that stuff into the play when they watch it.

That's how identification and empathy work. I can't control that. People are gonna bring that identification and emotion to this story and they're gonna find their way into it even if to me, I'm like, "Oh, that's not what this play is about at all." But that doesn't matter. That's the great thing. That's the thing that's such a joy about being a playwright is that people have a very different experience of that.

**HF:** That's great. And so my final question for you is what your next steps will be after this workshop?

**KU:** Well we're very lucky that MIT has generously funded a way for us to record this as a finished, really nice, bespoke audio piece. In the new year, we will be recording virtually at MIT. We'll be working with the same cast. Knud, Daniel, Christian and I will come together and we'll finish the work that we started at the Playwrights' Center. So it feels nice because we've got December. We have a chance to process what kind of comes out of the Playwrights' Center, and then early in the new year we have a chance to record with Malik and April, our two actors, and really kind of finish the work that we do at the Center. And then hopefully following that, we'll find some partners to help us bring it out into the world.

## INTERVIEW *(continued)*

In a strange way, it feels like when you make an album, you never know—I mean you hope that people will like it, people will listen to it and people will respond to it, but you don't really know. But in the end, you have to be like, we made this thing, and these 12 songs feel really great and really right, and so we're proud of this thing.

I'm trying to connect to that impulse with my playwriting career more because I think you can get into a cycle where you're suddenly all about, "Well we did this and now you have to do this, and you have to be accepted at this theater, and you have to do this." It starts to feel like you're always living for the next thing and never living in the moment, never feeling like, "Oh man, we made this cool thing. We made this really great production." You just start thinking about the next thing. I'm trying to live more in the moment.

We hope that a partner theatre or theatres will come on board and want to include the final version of Vapor Trail in their season. But another part of me is like, "Wow! How cool is it that we get to do this thing at the Playwrights' Center in December, and then we get to do it again for the finished version." So I'm trying to live in that kind of happiness because I think if we come out of the pandemic and everything just goes back to how it was before, that'll be a real missed opportunity. And I feel like, yes there's been some great reckonings in theaters [laughs] but there's also such a desire for things to return to as they were.

I don't know if a Christmas Carol-based economy is the best way forward for the American theatre. I mean, I get that it is a seller and you just can count on it. But I don't know if that's the best way to think about our industry and our art form. And so I think I'm trying to do that at a micro level, to be like, "Hey, I'm going to make this really cool thing that will mean a lot to me and the people that are involved in it, and hopefully it'll mean a lot to the people that listen at the Playwrights' Center and the people that hear it afterward when we finish it. We get to do this cool thing. Let's just enjoy that and not worry so much about the next thing."

**HF:** Thank you.

## ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION

Building on our sold-out Public Discussion series from past seasons, *Artists in Conversation* offers a uniquely intimate look at playwrights and their process. Unlike the Center's many scripted events throughout the year, these conversations offer audiences a chance to connect directly with writers, hearing artists' thoughts on craft, the field, and the world through their own unfiltered words. Past conversations have featured acclaimed theater artists, including Migdalia Cruz, Lisa D'Amour, Daniel Alexander Jones, José Rivera, and Paula Vogel, among others.

Specific participants, topics, and other dates will be announced throughout the year. Stay tuned!

Meiyin Wang, Producing Director at The Ronald O. Perelman Performing Arts Center joins Philip Bither, McGuire Director and Senior Curator, Performing Arts at Walker Art Center for a sold-out Public Discussion. Photo by Josh Olson

**VAPOR TRAIL**  
by Ken Urban  
Dec 18, 2020

**CELL SURFACE**  
by Dominic Taylor  
Jan 22, 2021

**TOMORROW  
WILL BE SUNDAY**  
by Heather Raffo

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Jerome Fellow Tylie Shider teaches Playwriting II at Augsburg University. Photo Paula Keller

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Social justice is at the heart of the Playwrights' Center's work. We strive for it by actively supporting equitable theater-making practices that shift the paradigm, uplifting unheard stories and sharing them with the world. With your support, the Center can provide the greatest diversity of artists with the time, tools, and space to tell their truths and reshape audiences' perspectives.

**Make a gift and amplify vital storytellers today! [pwcenter.org/donate](https://pwcenter.org/donate)**

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# THEATER BEGINS HERE

"Stories give us chances to see ourselves and what we could hope to be."

—2020–21 Jerome Fellow, Candrice Jones

**We start with the storytellers.  
The playwrights.  
The artists.**

As we continue to meet the challenges of these times, the Playwrights' Center seeks to reimagine what is possible in theater; both in this moment and beyond. Throughout our 2020–21 Season we are intensifying our efforts, investing even more deeply in creative process, arts education, and access to opportunity. We are working to amplify unheard voices and promote equitable spaces, allowing for the greatest diversity of artists to make plays around the world. Through additional fellowships and increased public programming, we are creating new channels of support for thousands of writers—from paid opportunities that will sustain playwrights and theatermakers, to expanded educational resources that will enhance online learning tools and connect university students from around the world. We are inspiring a whole new generation of theater artists. It begins here.

**Join us!**

## OUR MISSION

Playwrights' Center sustains, develops, and advocates for playwrights and their work to realize their full artistic potential.

## OUR VISION

Through the practice of inclusive theater-making, Playwrights' Center fosters engagement towards an equitable, empathetic, and boundlessly imaginative world.

## OUR VALUES

### **Centering Artists**

We believe in the crucial role that playwrights and theatermakers play in witnessing the past, illuminating the present, and dreaming us forward. Our work is grounded in the needs, desires, and sustainability of the artists we support, prioritizing long-term artistic relationships.

### **Adaptability**

We recognize that playwriting processes are as diverse as the human beings pursuing them. We evolve our perspectives, practices, resources, and partnerships in order to stay relevant and responsive to artists' needs.

### **Equity**

We continually interrogate our relationship to the word Equity. We support artists across all spectrums, with an emphasis on underrepresented and under-supported voices. We aim to uproot systemic inequities that inhibit creativity and focus on building new systems that center meaningful financial compensation. We understand this work to be intersectional and long-term, grounded in relationships and evolving anti-racist practices.

### **Inclusivity + Accessibility**

We proactively engage and welcome people of all abilities, ages, cultures, ethnicities, genders, incomes, races, religions, and sexual orientations. We intentionally engage artists locally, nationally, and internationally, working across a multitude of processes and aesthetics.

### **Advocacy**

We fight for a theater field in which playwrights and theatermakers not only survive but thrive. We are committed to modeling how institutions can authentically support the art of storytelling, and connect artists' work to audiences around the globe.