

PRESS RELEASE

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DATE: June 7, 2019

STUDIO THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2019-2020 SEASON MAIN SERIES DIRECTORS AND STUDIO X PROGRAMMING

- Studio X productions include the return of comedian Daniel Kitson and the world premiere of *Aspen Ideas* by Abe Koogler, directed by Les Waters
- Main Series directors include Studio Associate Artistic Director Matt Torney, Psalmayene 24, and the DC debuts of Desdemona Chiang and Awoye Timpo

Studio Theatre rounds out its 2019-2020 season with the **announcement of its Studio X productions**—characteristically edgier, immersive offerings which include cult-favorite monologist **Daniel Kitson** with his latest project, *Keep.*, and the **Studio-commissioned world premiere of Abe Koogler’s *Aspen Ideas***. Created with the support of Studio R&D, the theatre’s incubator for new plays, *Aspen Ideas* probes the nature of ideas conceived by the wealthy and elite to solve the world’s ills. Kitson famously made his DC debut at Studio Theatre in 2017, his first time outside of New York and a rare US engagement. He returns with a meditation on accumulation, material possessions, and the value we assign to them.

“*Keep.*, which welcomes the singular monologist Daniel Kitson back to Studio Theatre, and *Aspen Ideas*, a world premiere play by Abe Koogler commissioned by Studio, represent different strains of Studio X,” says the theatre’s Artistic Director **David Muse**. “Daniel’s work, the latest in a long line of distinctive solo performances at Studio, is funny and odd and truly wonderful. Abe is a writer I’ve admired for some time—his dialogue is pitch-perfect and his play is sharply observed and genuinely unnerving; a great fit for us.”

These productions join a Main Series season that opens with *Doubt: A Parable*, the incisive look at abuse and authority in the Catholic Church by John Patrick Shanley and starring DC theatre treasure Sarah Marshall; the US premiere of ascendant playwright Anchuli Felicia King and her corporate comedy *White Pearl*; the return of playwright Dominique Morisseau with *Pipeline*; the riveting 2019 Lucille Lortel Award-winning play *Pass Over* by Antoinette Nwandu; and Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori’s Tony-winning musical *Fun Home*.

Studio is also excited to announce directors for its Main Series productions. The theatre’s Associate Artistic Director **Matt Torney** opens the season at the helm of *Doubt: A Parable*. **Desdemona Chiang** and **Awoye Timpo** make their DC directorial debuts with *White Pearl* and

Pipeline, respectively. **Psalmayene 24** directs Nwandu's searing *Pass Over*. Studio's **David Muse** will direct the finale production of Studio's 2019-2020 season, *Fun Home* (previously announced).

STUDIO X

The work of Studio X is purposefully eclectic, encompassing plays enhanced by particularly intimate or immersive stagings, presented work, and some of Studio's world premiere projects.

Keep.

written and performed by **Daniel Kitson**

November 19 – December 1, 2019

Mead Theatre

“Monologist extraordinaire—unconditionally engaged and engaging”

—*New York Times*

“A play about memory, loneliness, relationships, regret and the act of storytelling itself, particularly its collateral effect on the supporting characters.”

—*Chortle*

A new show about how much past the present can usefully contain. About rigor and generosity. About postcards and hair pins and a certificate from Harry Ramsden's in Blackpool. About how long it takes to stop noticing where you are. About the compromise of a full life and the burden of a full heart and how it's impossible to know where looking back will lead. About the task of being who we are without denying who we've been. About the importance of regret and the possibility of hope and the delusional idea of starting again. About all the books I've never read and all the jam I've ever eaten and the bags of torn tickets and the drawers of empty pens and the inevitable sadness of ever holding on to anything.

About, in short, the stuff in my house and the thoughts in my head.

Aspen Ideas

by **Abe Koogler**

Directed by **Les Waters**

World Premiere

June 24 – August 23, 2020

Milton Theatre

supported by **Studio R&D**, Studio Theatre's new works initiative

“Mr. Koogler observes the nuances of unequal relationship[s] with delicacy... never strikes a false or strained note.”

—*New York Times* (about *Kill Floor*)

Anne and Rob struggled through their artistic 20s, inherited wealth in their 30s, and are spending their affluent late-40s in a life of parties and philanthropy and *ideas*. Irresistible, paradigm-shaping ideas. So when they meet a mysterious young couple promising a grand theory that will explain all the world's problems, Anne and Rob don't ask many questions—they just want to continue the conversation, all the way to the cliffs of the Colorado mountains. This Studio

commission is a fast-paced and darkly comedic thriller about the poisonous appeal of believing that the best ideas win, and that winners know best.

SEASON ARTIST BIOS

John Patrick Shanley is from the Bronx. His plays include *The Portuguese Kid*, *Prodigal Son*, *Outside Mullingar* (Tony Award nomination), *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, *Savage in Limbo*, *Four Dogs and a Bone*, *Dirty Story*, and *Beggars in the House of Plenty*. His theatrical work is performed extensively around the world. For his play *Doubt: A Parable*, he received both the Tony Award and the Pulitzer Prize. In the arena of screenwriting he has nine films to his credit, most recently *Doubt* with Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams, and Viola Davis. *Doubt*, directed by John, was nominated for five Academy Awards, including Best Adapted Screenplay. Other films include *Five Corners* (Special Jury Prize, Barcelona), *Alive*, *Joe Versus the Volcano* (which he also directed), and *Live from Baghdad* for HBO (Emmy nomination). For his script of *Moonstruck*, he received both the Writers Guild of America Award and an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. In 2009, The Writers Guild of America awarded him the Lifetime Achievement in Writing.

Anchuli Felicia King is a multidisciplinary artist of Australian-Thai descent who works primarily in live theatre. Felicia will have her professional playwriting debut with two world premiere plays in 2019. *White Pearl* to be performed at London's renowned Royal Court Theatre in May, directed by Nana Dakin. *White Pearl* will have its Australian debut at Sydney Theatre Company in October 2019 and its US premiere at Studio Theatre. Felicia's play *Golden Shield* will premiere in August at Melbourne Theatre Company. Her play *Slaughterhouse* was selected as part of Melbourne Theatre Company's Cyber Electric 2018 readings. Currently based in New York, Felicia has worked as a writer, dramaturg, sound designer, projection designer, and creative consultant with a wide range of companies, including Punchdrunk, PlayCo, Roundabout Theatre, 59E59, Ars Nova, the Obie Awards, The Builders Association, Ensemble Studio Theatre (EST), and Red Bull Theater. Felicia explores linguistic hybrids, digital cultures, and issues of global urgency, and is a member of EST's Youngblood Group, Ars Nova's Play Group, and Roundabout's Space Jam Program. Areas of interest include emerging technologies, 2D animation, VFX and projection design, music production, and writing for performance. Felicia works globally with companies such as Playwriting Australia (Sydney), Yellow Earth Theatre (London), House of North (Berlin), and SHIFT Festival (Shanghai).

Dominique Morisseau is the author of *The Detroit Project (A 3-Play Cycle)*, *Skeleton Crew* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Paradise Blue* (Signature Theatre), and *Detroit '67* (Public Theater, Classical Theatre of Harlem, and the National Black Theatre). Additional plays include *Pipeline* (Lincoln Center Theater), *Sunset Baby* (LAByrinth Theatre), *Blood at the Root* (National Black Theatre), and *Follow Me to Nellie's* (Premiere Stages). She is also the book writer on the new musical *Ain't Too Proud – The Life and Times of the Temptations* (Broadway/Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Dominique is an alumna of The Public Theater Emerging Writer's Group, Women's Project Lab, and Lark Playwrights Workshop, and has developed work at Sundance Lab, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference. Her work has been commissioned by Steppenwolf Theatre, Women's Project, South Coast Repertory, People's Light and Theatre, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Penumbra Theatre. She most recently served as Co-Producer on the Showtime series *Shameless*. Awards include: the Spirit of Detroit Award, PoNY Fellowship, Sky-Cooper Prize, TEER Trailblazer Award, Steinberg

Playwright Award, Audelco Awards, NBFT August Wilson Playwriting Award, Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama, Obie Award, Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellowship, and being named one of *Variety's* Women of Impact (2017-18).

Antoinette Nwandu is a New York-based playwright, who was born and raised in Los Angeles. Her play *Pass Over* received its New York debut at LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater. A filmed version of the Jeff Award-winning Steppenwolf Theatre production, directed by Spike Lee, premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival and at SXSW, and is currently streaming on Amazon Prime. Victory Gardens produced the world premiere of her play *Breach: a manifesto on race in america through the eyes of a black girl recovering from self-hate* in February 2018. Antoinette is a MacDowell Fellow, a Dramatists Guild Fellow, and an Ars Nova Play Group alum. Honors include the 2018 Whiting Award, the 2017 Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, the Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award, the Negro Ensemble Company's Douglas Turner Ward Prize, a Literary Fellowship at the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, and spots on the 2016 and 2017 Kilroys lists. Her work has been supported by the Sundance Theatre Lab, Space on Ryder Farm, Ignition Fest, the Cherry Lane Mentor Project, the Kennedy Center, Page73, PlayPenn, Southern Rep Theatre, The Flea Theater, Naked Angels, Fire This Time, and The Movement Theatre Company. Antoinette has a bachelor's degree in English, magna cum laude, from Harvard College; an MS from The University of Edinburgh; and an MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Antoinette is a writer on the second season of Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It* for Netflix, and is under commission from Echo Theater Company, Colt Coeur, Ars Nova, and Audible.

Lisa Kron is a writer and performer whose work has been widely produced in New York, regionally, and internationally. Her plays include *Well*, *2.5 Minute Ride*, and *The Ver**zon Play*. She wrote the book and lyrics for the musical *Fun Home* (with music by composer Jeanine Tesori), winner of five Tony Awards, including Best Musical. Lisa and Jeanine were the first all-woman team to ever receive a Tony for best score. As an actor, Lisa was most recently seen as Mrs. Mi-Tzu and Mrs. Yang in The Foundry Theatre's acclaimed production of *Good Person of Szechuan* (Lortel Award, Outstanding Featured Actress). Honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Doris Duke Performing Artists Award, and the Cal Arts/Alpert Award. She is a proud founding member of the Obie- and Bessie Award-winning collaborative theater company The Five Lesbian Brothers. Lisa currently serves as Secretary of the Dramatists Guild Council and on the boards of the MacDowell Colony and The Lilly Awards.

Jeanine Tesori has written a diverse catalog for Broadway, opera, film, and television. Her Broadway musicals include *Fun Home* (2015 Tony Award Winner, Pulitzer Prize finalist); *Violet; Caroline, or Change; Shrek the Musical; Thoroughly Modern Millie; Twelfth Night* (LCT); and John Guare's *A Free Man of Color*. Her Off Broadway credits include *Mother Courage* (starring Meryl Streep) at The Public Theater/Shakespeare in the Park. She has received five Tony nominations, three Obie Awards, and three Drama Desk Awards. The hallmarks of her work have been described as "close-to-the-surface emotion, structural rigor and rhythmic drive." Her operas include *The Lion, the Unicorn and Me; Blizzard on Marblehead Neck* (MET/LCT Opera/Theater and Glimmerglass opera commission); and her upcoming collaboration with Tazewell Thompson, *Blue*, which was commissioned for The Glimmerglass Festival and will premiere there next season. She wrote the musical featured in the 2016 revival of *Gilmore Girls* and has also written special material for artists, such as "The Girl in 14G" for Kristin Chenoweth. She has been featured in the documentaries *Show Business* and *Theater of War*.

Jeanine became the founding Artistic Director of a new concert series at New York City Center called Encores! Off-Center, for which she has helmed seasons joined by artists such as Stephen Sondheim, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Randy Newman, William Finn, Alan Menken, Renée Elise Goldsberry, Sutton Foster, and Jonathan Groff. After producing four seasons of Off-Center concerts, she took one of those concerts, *Sunday in the Park with George* (starring Jake Gyllenhaal), to Broadway where she produced the 2017 revival, with Ambassador Theater Group and Riva Marker. She was the recording producer for *Sunday* as well as the Original Cast Recordings of *Violet; Caroline, or Change; Shrek; and Twelfth Night*. A lecturer in music at Yale and on faculty at Columbia University, Jeanine has spoken and taught at universities and programs all over the country. She is the founding Creative Director of the non-profit A BroaderWay, an arts empowerment program for young women. She was given the Einhorn Mentorship Award by Primary Stages for her exceptional work with young artists.

Daniel Kitson is a stand-up comedian and “monologist extraordinaire” (*New York Times*). He has written and performed numerous works for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, including *Something*, which received the Perrier Comedy Award; *Stories for the Wobbly Hearted*, which received the Scotsman Fringe First Award; and *C-90*, for which Kitson was awarded The Stage Acting Award for Best Solo Show and a Fringe First. His shows *C-90, It’s The Fireworks Talking, Daniel Kitson Will Be Drinking Tea and Blowing Minds, Where Once Was Wonder*, and *After the Beginning Before the End* have toured Europe and Australia. In Australia, Kitson received the Barry Award for *It’s The Fireworks Talking* and the Argus Angel Award for *C-90*. Kitson has brought several shows to St. Ann’s Warehouse in the US, including *The Interminable Suicide of Gregory Church* in 2011; *It’s Always Right Now, Until it’s Later* in 2012; *Analog.Ue* in 2013; and *Mouse* in 2016. His first and only DC performance to date was at Studio Theatre.

Abe Koogler’s plays include *Kill Floor*, which premiered at Lincoln Center Theatre, *Fulfillment Center*, which premiered at Manhattan Theatre Club; *Blue Skies Process*; and *Advance Man*. Abe received a 2018 Obie Award for Playwriting, the Kennedy Center’s Paula Vogel Award, and the Williamstown Theatre Festival’s Weissberger New Play Award. He was a Michener Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin and is an alum of Juilliard’s Playwrights Program. He teaches playwriting workshops at Primary Stages.

Obie Award winner **Les Waters** has directed Anne Washburn and Dave Malloy’s *Little Bunny Foo Foo*, Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas’s *Recent Alien Abductions*, William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Sarah Ruhl’s *For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday*, Anne Washburn’s *10 Out Of 12*, Charles Mee’s *The Glory of the World*, Rebecca Gilman’s *Luna Gale*, Naomi Iizuka’s *At the Vanishing Point*, Lucas Hnath’s *The Christians*, Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*, Will Eno’s *Gnit*, Todd Almond’s *Girlfriend*, and Eugene O’Neill’s *Long Day’s Journey into the Night*. Waters also previously directed *Big Love* by Charles Mee at the Humana Festival in 2000, and the site-specific production of Naomi Iizuka’s *At the Vanishing Point* at the 2004 Humana Festival. From 2003 to 2011, he served as associate artistic director at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. In the last 10 years, his shows have ranked among the year’s best in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Time Out New York*, *Time Magazine*, *The Guardian*, and *USA Today*. His productions have been seen in New York at Playwrights Horizons, Signature Theatre Company, The Public Theater, Second Stage Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Connelly Theater, Clubbed Thumb, and Soho Rep., and regionally at theatres such as the Mark Taper Forum, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the Goodman Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, and American Repertory Theater. In 2009, he made his Broadway debut with *In*

The Next Room (or The Vibrator Play). He led the M.F.A. directing program at University of California, San Diego from 1995 to 2003.

The 2019-2020 season will be **Matt Torney**'s fourth as Associate Artistic Director at Studio Theatre, where he has previously directed *Translations*, *The Hard Problem*, *MotherStruck!*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Jumpers for Goalposts* (nominated for two Helen Hayes Awards, including Best Ensemble), *The New Electric Ballroom*, and *The Walworth Farce* (nominated for two Helen Hayes Awards). Prior to his work at Studio, Matt served as the Director of Programming for Origin Theatre in New York, an Off Broadway company that specializes in European new writing. His New York credits include *Stop the Tempo* and *Tiny Dynamite* (Origin Theatre, Drama Desk Award nominee), *The Twelfth Labor* (Loading Dock), *The Dudleys* (Theatre for the New City), *The Angel of History* (HERE Arts), and *Three Sisters* and *A Bright Room Called Day* (Atlantic Theatre School). Regional credits include *Sherlock Holmes and the Crucifer of Blood* and *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* (Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre), and *Improbable Frequency* (Solas Nua, Helen Hayes Award nominee for Best Choreography). International credits include *Digging for Fire* and *Plaza Suite* (Rough Magic, National Tour), *Angola* (workshop at the Abbey Theatre), *Paisley and Me* (Grand Opera House, Belfast), *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Making Strange, Irish Theatre Award nominee for Best Director), and *Woyzeck* (Rough Magic, Best Production nominee at the Dublin Fringe Festival). Originally from Belfast, Matt holds an MFA from Columbia University.

Desdemona Chiang is a stage director based in Seattle, WA and Ashland, OR, and is co-founder of Azeotrope (Seattle). Her directing credits include the Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Baltimore Center Stage, California Shakespeare Theater, Seattle Rep, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, ACT Theatre, American Shakespeare Center, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Heritage Theatre Festival, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Seattle Public Theater, Shotgun Players, Crowded Fire Theater, Azeotrope, Impact Theatre Company, Playwrights Foundation, Golden Thread Productions, Washington Ensemble Theatre, One Minute Play Festival, Ohio Northern University, University of Washington, and Cornish College of the Arts. Her assistant directing and dramaturgy credits include work at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PlayMakers Repertory Company, ACT Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Arizona Theatre Company, Intiman Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Magic Theatre, TheatreWorks, and Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre. She is an Intersection for the Arts Triangle Lab Artist-Investigator and an adjunct faculty member at Cornish College of the Arts. Her awards and honors include the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise, the Gregory Award for Outstanding Direction, a Stage Directors and Choreographers Society Sir John Gielgud Fellowship, a Drama League Directing Fellowship, and she is a Young Leader of Color (Theatre Communications Group). She is affiliated with Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab and Directors Lab West. She earned a BA at the University of California, Berkeley and an MFA in directing from the University of Washington School of Drama.

Awoye Timpo's Off Broadway directing credits include *Good Grief* at Vineyard Theatre, *The Revolving Cycles Truly and Steadily Roll'd* at The Playwrights Realm, and *The Homecoming Queen* at Atlantic Theater Company. Regionally she has directed *Everybody Black* at Actors Theatre of Louisville and *Paradise Blue* at Long Wharf Theatre. Additional credits include *Carnaval* at the National Black Theater; *Sister Son/ji* at the Billie Holiday Theatre; *The Vanished* (site-specific); *Skeleton Crew* at Chester Theatre Company; and *Ndebele Funeral* at 59E59,

Edinburgh Festival/Summerhall, and South African tour. She is a producer for CLASSIX, a series exploring classic plays by Black playwrights.

Psalmayene 24 is an award-winning director, playwright, and actor. Directing credits include *Native Son* by Nambi E. Kelley at Mosaic Theater Company, *Words Become Flesh* (recipient of five 2017 Helen Hayes Awards, including Outstanding Direction of a Play) by Marc Bamuthi Joseph at Theater Alliance, and *The Shipment* by Young Jean Lee at Forum Theatre. He has received commissions from the African Continuum Theatre Company, Arena Stage, Imagination Stage, The Kennedy Center, Theater Alliance, Solas Nua, and Mosaic Theater Company. His one man play, *Free Jujube Brown!*, is published in the anthology, *Plays from the Boom Box Galaxy: Theater from the Hip-Hop Generation* (TCG).

David Muse is soon to be in his tenth season as Artistic Director of Studio Theatre, where he has directed *The Children, The Remains, The Effect, The Father, Constellations, Chimerica, Murder Ballad, Belleville, Cock, Tribes, The Real Thing, An Iliad, Dirt, Bachelorette, The Habit of Art, Venus in Fur, Circle Mirror Transformation, reasons to be pretty, Blackbird, Frozen,* and *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow*. Previously, he was Associate Artistic Director of the Shakespeare Theatre Company, where he directed seven productions, including *Henry V, Julius Caesar, Coriolanus, King Charles III* (a co-production with ACT Theatre and Seattle Rep), and *Richard III*. Other directing projects include *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* (Arena Stage), *The Bluest Eye* (Theatre Alliance), and Patrick Page's *Swansong* (New York Summer Play Festival). He has helped to develop new work at numerous theatres, including New York Theatre Workshop, Geva Theatre Center, Arena Stage, New Dramatists, and the Kennedy Center. David has taught acting and directing at Georgetown, Yale, and the Shakespeare Theatre Company's Academy of Classical Acting. A nine-time Helen Hayes Award nominee for Outstanding Direction, he is a recipient of the DC Mayor's Arts Award for Outstanding Emerging Artist and the National Theatre Conference Emerging Artist Award. David is a graduate of Yale University and the Yale School of Drama.

STUDIO THEATRE

Studio Theatre is Washington's premier venue for contemporary theatre, "where local audiences will find today's edgiest playwrights" (*Variety*). One of the most respected mid-sized theatres in the country, Studio produces exceptional contemporary drama in deliberately intimate spaces. Drawing inspiration from great ensembles—where people work together with a spirit of generosity and professional rigor—Studio brings characteristic thoughtfulness and daring to its work onstage and off, through its new work incubator and engagement, education, and workforce training initiatives. Studio serves nearly 75,000 people each year, including more than 1,000 youth and young adults through community engagement initiatives. Founded in 1978, the quality of Studio's work has been recognized by sustained community support, as well as 70 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in professional theatre.

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