

PRESS RELEASE

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WIDENING THE TENT: THEATRE LEADERS WENDY C. GOLDBERG, IDRIS GOODWIN, BRIAN QUIJADA ON THE POWER OF EMBRACING DIFFERENT CULTURAL IDENTITIES, NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT

Studio Theatre and Artist in Residence Psalmayene 24 will convene theatre leaders **Wendy C. Goldberg**, **Idris Goodwin**, and **Brian Quijada** for their next virtual **Psalm's Salons** event on **November 20, 2020** at **5 p.m.** to reflect on expanding inclusivity in American Theatre. The panel will discuss how their own unique cultural identities (Jewish, Black, and Latinx respectively) have been powerful influences in their personal and professional journeys, their long history of collaborating together, and their hope and vision for the field.

Additionally, the program will continue to highlight local Black-owned restaurants and community members by welcoming its first food writer, local blogger and influencer **Anela Malik** of **@feedthemalik**, who will talk about creating her compendium of Black-owned restaurants in DC and covering the city's evolving food scene.

Events are free and streamed live on Studio Theatre's [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages.

Psalm's Salons are an online gathering space to highlight the work of creatives, signal-boost local and Black-owned businesses, kick back to live music, and promote a sense of community. Each broadcast, **DJ Nick tha 1da** spins live music, sampling from the Library of Congress Citizen DJ tool.

"Wendy, Idris, and Brian are not only three important voices in American theatre, but they also share a special friendship with each other and have collaborated together on multiple occasions. Wendy directed the heralded world premiere production of Idris' beautiful breakthrough play, *How We Got On*, and Brian was one of the stars of that production. I can't wait to discuss new play development, hip-hop, and the state of our world with these three charismatic artists," said emcee **Psalmayene 24**.

Psalm's Salons are supported by a capacity building grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's (DDCF) Building Demand for the Arts program. The program funds artists and arts institutions working to forge long-lasting relationships with diverse audiences. Studio, working with Psalm, has committed to expand on its efforts to forge meaningful connections with African American millennial audiences in DC. The grant funds engagement efforts through the 2020-2021 season.

DDCF's Building Demand for the Arts program supports organizations and artists in joint efforts to ignite interest and engagement in jazz, theatre, and contemporary dance. This program is predicated on the beliefs that artists are key connectors to communities, and that artists and organizations can work together in imaginative new ways to attract and engage audiences. These grants also promote deeper partnerships, longer relationships, and new kinds of conversation and cooperation between organizations and artists.

About the Artists

Psalmayene 24 (host) is an award-winning director, playwright, and actor. Directing credits include *Native Son* by Nambi E. Kelley at Mosaic Theater Company, *Word Becomes 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).

Nick "tha 1da" Hernandez's (DJ/Sound Design) recent work includes: *The Hip-Hop Children's Trilogy* with playwright Psalmayene 24 (Imagination Stage); *Fences* (Ford's Theatre); *Native Son* and *Les Deux Noir* (Mosaic Theater); *Word Becomes Flesh* (Helen Hayes Award, Outstanding Production) at Theater Alliance; *Long Way Down* and *Darius & Twig* (Kennedy Center); and *Havana Hop* and *All the Way Live* with sibling Paige Hernandez (Discovery Theater). Additionally, Nick has produced for Hot 97 FM, Red Bull Big Tune, Netflix, DC Public Library system, and Smithsonian Associates.

Wendy C. Goldberg has spent 20 years leading the foremost programs in the development, direction, and the production of new works for the American Theater. As Artistic Director of the National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center for 16 seasons, under Goldberg's tenure, the O'Neill was awarded the 2010 Regional Tony Award, the first play development and education organization to receive this honor, as well as the 2016 National Medal of Arts from the White House. Wendy's work as Artistic Director is featured in the book *The O'Neill: The Transformation of Modern American Theater*, published by Yale University Press. She is the first woman to lead the conference in its 50 year history. Wendy served as the Chair of Jury for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama in 2020, and as a member of the jury for the Pulitzer Prize in 2019. This past season, projects under Wendy's leadership were represented on Broadway (Jeremy O Harris's *Slave Play*), Off Broadway (Celine Song's *Endlings* at New York Theatre Workshop), and London (Mike Lew's *Teenage Dick* at the Donmar Warehouse).

In addition to leading The O'Neill to national prominence, Wendy has established herself as one of the leading directors in this country and contributors to the directing field, having served for 13 years on the Executive Board of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC) and founding and leading the National Directors Fellowship, now in its sixth year. Credits include five productions for Arena Stage; five productions for The Denver Center; three productions for Actors Theatre of Louisville; five productions for Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, where she is an Associate Artist; three productions for The Guthrie; and productions for The Goodman, Signature Theatre, Center Stage, Alliance Theatre, Playmakers Rep, and Paper Mill Playhouse, among others.

In 2019, Wendy founded TheFrontOffice, a theatrical and media development company, after serving as a performance director for Rockstar Games. In 2017, Wendy was hired to help direct the worldwide phenomenon, *Red Dead Redemption 2*, the largest open world video game in the history of gaming and the best opening weekend for an entertainment product in the history of entertainment. She is in active development for *On The Rise*, about the rising stars of junior tennis with LeBron James's media company, SpringHill.

Wendy leads The National Directors Fellowship, a collaboration with The Kennedy Center, Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation, and the National New Play Network funded by the Doris Duke Foundation. Now in its sixth year, the program has exceeded all expectations, and has advanced the careers of 24 stage directors. The new cohort of four directors just began in the program. Wendy was awarded two SDC "Standout Theatrical Moment of the Year Awards" for the program's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

As Artistic Associate at Arena Stage for five seasons, Wendy helped to create the theatre's new play initiatives and led them from their inception through 2005. *American Theatre* has described her as “one of the most promising theater artists working today.”

She is an honors graduate of the University of Michigan (BA) and holds a MFA in Directing from UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television, where she received the distinguished alumni award in 2014.

Across two decades **Idris Goodwin** has forged a multi-faceted career as an award-winning playwright, Break Beat poet, director, educator, and organizer.

Idris is the newly appointed Director of The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, where he formerly taught in the department of Theatre and Dance and was voted Teacher of the Year in 2015.

His critically acclaimed plays, including *And In This Corner Cassius Clay*, *How We Got On*, and *Hype Man: A Break Beat Play*, are widely produced across the country. He's been honored to receive developmental support from institutions like The Kennedy Center, The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center National Playwrights Conference, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, and The Playwrights' Center.

In addition to the recently released poetry collection *Can I Kick It?*, he's had several publications from Haymarket Books, including *Inauguration*, co-written with nico wilkinson, *Human Highlight: Ode To Dominique Wilkins*, and the play, *This Is Modern Art*, co-written with Kevin Coval. He's appeared on HBO's *Def Poetry*, *Sesame Street*, NPR, BBC Radio, and the Discovery Channel.

Passionate about cultivating new audiences in the arts, Idris served two seasons as Producing Artistic Director at StageOne Family Theatre in Louisville, KY. He actively serves on both the advisory boards of Theatre for Young Audiences USA and Childrens Theatre Foundation of America.

A catalyst for culture, Idris uses his full creative powers to galvanize people to the community square. He is a creative voice for change, impassioned by art for social good.

Brian Quijada is an actor, playwright, composer, and Artistic Director of The WildWind Performance Lab at Texas Tech University. Brian has spent most of his career acting in Off Broadway and regional theatres including The Public Theater, Roundabout Theatre Company, Playwrights Realm, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Victory Gardens, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. As a playwright/composer, Brian's plays and musicals have been developed at Pittsburgh CLO's Spark Festival, Victory Garden's Ignition Festival, Ars Nova's ANT Fest, New York Stage and Film's Powerhouse Festival, The Kennedy Center's Page-to-Stage, and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Musical Theatre Conference. Commissioning institutions include 1st Stage, Seattle Rep, A.R.T., and The Kennedy Center.

His play *Kid Prince and Pablo* recently received its World Premiere at The Kennedy Center Fall of 2019. His critically acclaimed, Jeff Award-winning, Drama Desk-nominated show, *Where Did We Sit in the Bus?*, has toured all over the country.

As an educator, Brian has taught solo performance, social justice, verse writing, digital music, and devised theatrical looping master classes at Carnegie Mellon University, Point Park University, The University of New Mexico, Western Washington University, Hunter College, Carlow University, Slippery Rock University, Los Medanos College, and The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival regions 7 and Region 3.

Brian is a proud member of The Ensemble Studio Theatre.

Anela Malik is a food blogger and advocate based in Washington, DC. Anela is best known for her work highlighting Black-owned restaurants and creating a comprehensive directory of local, Black-owned restaurants open during the COVID-19 crisis. She also highlights the work of marginalized food folks on her blog, feedthemaalik.com, and has been featured in numerous local publications, including *The Washington Post*.

ABOUT 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 72 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in professional theatre.

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