

WISH
YOU
WERE
HERE

STUDIO



FRIENDS,

I write this note six months to the day after the U.S. and Israel launched massive airstrikes on Iran. The conflict continues to dominate headlines, and the ordinary people of Iran continue to bear the consequences of a war they did not choose, caught between the actions of foreign powers and their own government.

The conflict in Iran makes this production of *Wish You Were Here* feel especially potent right now, but it also allows the play to serve as an important counterpoint to the news stories we read every day. Its first scene is set almost 50 years ago, placing us at a historical remove from current events. And, quite deliberately, it focuses not on governments or geopolitical forces, but on people trying to live their lives while history happens around them.

Playwright Sanaz Toossi writes intimate, funny plays which insist that Iranian and Middle Eastern people get portrayed not primarily as victims, immigrants, political symbols, or representatives of a culture, but as ordinary, complicated human beings. That doesn't sound like a radical act, but the limited repertoire of stories that Western audiences see about Middle Eastern people makes it one. The women in this play aren't uniformly oppressed or empowered—they're funny, horny, petty, loving, contradictory people. The play isn't an educational tour of the Iranian Revolution that expects its characters to explain Islam, Iranian politics, or Iranian customs to us. Instead, Toossi let us see the Iran that our newsfeeds omit—the Iran of friendship, family, sex, parties, arguments, laughter, disappointment, and everyday life.

Studio's 2026-2027 season is the final one I'll oversee as Artistic Director, and I've chosen to kick it off with three playwrights who have been an important part of my tenure here: Toossi (*English*), James Ijames (*Fat Ham* and *Good Bones*), and Joshua Harmon (*Admissions* and *Bad Jews*). *Wish You Were Here* is directed by another artist who is deeply intertwined with my time at Studio. Sivan Battat started her post-college career here in 2015, joining us for a season as our Artistic Apprentice. I hired her after that as my Associate Director on a multi-city production of *King Charles III*, and we spent three months working together in San Francisco, Seattle, and DC. Sivan's career has since taken off, and I feel lucky and proud to have her return to Studio as a director for the third time during my last season.

Not everyone working on this production is a familiar face—in fact, its entire cast and three of its four designers are making their Studio debuts. They have filled our halls with laughter and energy, and I'm pleased to share the fruits of their collective artistry with you.

Thanks for joining us to kick off another season of provocation, laughter, and tears. We're glad you're here.

Yours,

David Muse
Artistic Director

DRAMATURG'S NOTE:

Scan to read
more about
Sanaz Toossi's
sharp humor and
project to bring
Iranian women's
friendships and
full lives to
the stage.



STUDIO THEATRE

DAVID MUSE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**REBECCA ENDE
LICHTENBERG**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

WISH YOU WERE HERE

BY
SANAZ TOOSI

DIRECTED BY
SIVAN BATTAT

Wish You Were Here is presented by arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., a Concord Theatricals company.
www.concordtheatricals.com

Playwrights Horizons, Inc. New York City produced the World Premiere of *Wish You Were Here* in 2022.

Wish You Were Here was produced by the Williamstown Theatre Festival (Mandy Greenfield, Artistic Director) in collaboration with Audible, released April 2021.

Wish You Were Here is the recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award.

SET DESIGNER
OMID AKBARI

COSTUME DESIGNER
SHAHRAZAD MAZAHARI

LIGHTING DESIGNER
NIC VINCENT

SOUND DESIGNER
KENNY NEAL

PROJECTION DESIGN
DOAA OUF

DRAMATURG
ADRIEN-ALICE HANSEL

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
JOHN KEITH HALL*

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION
JEFFERY MARTIN

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
RHIANNON SANDERS

CASTING
KATJA ZAROLINSKI, CSA

SDC The Director and/or Choreographer is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.



The scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA829 of the IATSE.

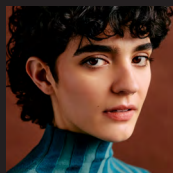
*This Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theaters and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

UNDERWRITTEN BY

**ALBERT LAUBER &
CRAIG HOFFMAN**

TERESA & DAN SCHWARTZ

CAST



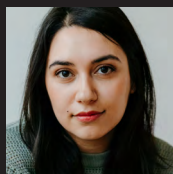
NAZANIN
ELLEN NIKBAKHT*



SALME
LAYAN ELWAZANI*



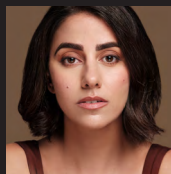
ZARI
ELLENA ESHRAGHI*



SHIDEH
SHADEE VOSSOUGH*



RANA
ARI DERAMBAKSH*



NEW FRIEND
EGE YALCINBAS

UNDERSTUDIES

NAZANIN, SHIDEH, AND RANA
EGE YALCINBAS

SALME, ZARI, AND NEW FRIEND
KATIE GANEM

SETTING

Living rooms in Karaj, Iran from 1978 to 1991



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PLAYWRIGHT



SANAZ TOOSSI is an Iranian-American playwright and the winner of the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Her plays include *English*, which was nominated for 5 Tony Awards (Broadway: Roundabout's Todd Haimes Theater; Off Broadway: co-production Atlantic Theater Company/ Roundabout Theatre Company/The Wallis Annenberg); and *Wish You Were Here* (Playwrights Horizons; Williamstown/Audible). She is currently under commission at Atlantic Theater Company, Roundabout Theatre Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Manhattan Theatre Club, and South Coast Repertory. Sanaz was the 2019 P73 Playwriting Fellow and a recipient of the Steinberg Playwright Award, the Horton Foote Award, Hull-Warriner Prize, Outer Critics Circle Award, and in 2023, the recipient of the Best New American Play Obie Award. Recent TV credits include *Adults* (FX). MFA: NYU Tisch. *Zan, Zendegi, Azadi*.

DIRECTOR



SIVAN BATTAT (she/they) is a theatre director and cultural organizer. Sivan began their career here at Studio Theatre, as an Artistic Apprentice. Recent credits include *Problems Between Sisters* and *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* at Studio Theatre, *In the Amazon Warehouse Parking Lot* at Playwrights Horizons, *Empty Ride* at The Old Globe, *Wish You Were Here* at Yale Repertory Theatre, *Layalina* at Goodman Theatre, *Angels in America* at NYU Tisch Grad Acting, *Coexistence My Ass* at Edinburgh Fringe, and assistant directing the Broadway production of *Trouble in Mind*. Sivan has developed work with companies including Roundabout Theatre Company, Park Avenue Armory, New York Theatre Workshop, Atlantic Theater Company, Ars Nova, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, New Georges, New York Stage and Film, Cape Cod Theatre Project, Long Wharf Theatre, MCC Theater, page 73, and more. Fellowships include Roundabout Directing Fellow, Drama League Directing Fellow, TCG Rising Leaders of Color, and The Workshop, centering the work of JOCISM (Jews of Color, Jewish-Indigenous, Sephardi & Mizrahi) artists & culture-makers. Sivanbattat.com

ACTORS

ELLEN NIKBAKHT (Nazanin) is making their Studio Theatre debut. Their Off Broadway credits include *No Singing in the Navy* (Playwrights Horizons). Select regional credits include *La Cage aux Folles* (Pasadena Playhouse), *Love All* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Into the Woods* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), and *Fun Home* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre). Their television credits include *Best Medicine* (FOX) and *Margo's Got Money Troubles* (Apple TV). They hold an MFA from UC San Diego. On social media @koochoooloooo.

LAYAN ELWAZANI (Salme)'s Broadway and national tour credits include *The Band's Visit*. Her Off Broadway credits include *Cold War Choir Practice* (MCC Theater), *Titans* (Clubbed Thumb), and *The Antiquities* (Playwrights Horizons). Select regional credits include *Noura* (Guthrie Theater), *We Live in Cairo* (American Repertory Theater), and *The Antiquities* (Goodman Theater). Layan is a writer and solo artist. She is a two-time Brown Arts Institute artist grant recipient for her solo show *Ten Days Ago*, a semi-autobiographical, fully neurodivergent realization of a Palestinian legacy in modern-day America. Her television credits include *The Code* (CBS) and *Furious* (Hulu). Her MFA in Acting is from Brown/Trinity. LayanElwazani.com.

ELLENA ESHRAGHI (Zari) is an actor, writer, and filmmaker. Her theatre credits include *Hound Dog* (Ars Nova), *Erastes* (wild project), *The Mall The Mall The Mall* (The Tank), *Refugee Rhapsody* (Contemporary American Theater Festival), and *Wish You Were Here* (Yale Repertory Theatre). Her film credits include *Mean Girls* (2024). She is currently in post-production for her film *My Least Favorite Shape*. ellenaeshraghi.com. On social media @ellenaesh.

SHADEE VOSSOUGH (Shideh) is an actor and improviser. Her theater credits include the Broadway production of *English* (Roundabout Theatre Company, understudy). Regional

credits include *English* (Goodman Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Alley Theatre, and Denver Center for the Performing Arts [Henry Award for Outstanding Production of a Play]).

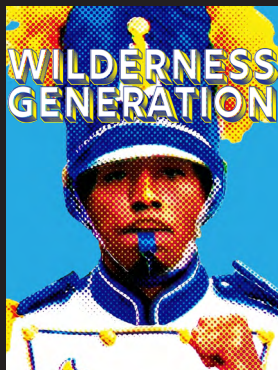
Additional theater credits include *Wish You Were Here* (Yale Repertory Theatre and Remy Bumpo Theatre Company) and *Selling Kabul* (Northlight Theatre). Television credits include *The Bear* (FX), *The Big Leap* (FOX), and *Chicago Med* (NBC). She was a recipient of the Bob Curry Fellowship at The Second City Chicago, where her sketch comedy credits include Urban Twist, Black History Month Show, and the Bob Curry Fellowship Showcase. On social media @shadeev (Instagram).

ARI DERAMBAKSH (Rana) is an actress based between NYC and LA. She recently appeared Off Broadway in *The Bookstore* (59E59 Theaters). Additional theater credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Guthrie Theater), *Pride and Prejudice* (Cleveland Play House), *English* (The Old Globe and Berkeley Repertory Theatre) and *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare's Globe). She has also worked with The Kennedy Center, New Jersey Repertory Company, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Fault Line Theatre, The Playwrights Realm, Amphibian Stage, and others. Ari makes her feature film debut in *109 Billion Followers* opposite J.K. Simmons and her TV debut in *The Savant* on AppleTV. She voices Blue Sapphire in the animated series *Rainbow Bubblegem*. Ari received her BFA in Acting from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University and trained at Shakespeare's Globe Theater in London. arideram.com. On social media at @arideram.

EGE YALCINBAS (New Friend; u/s Nazanin, Rana, and Shideh) is an actor and singer-songwriter. Her recent theatre credits include *Pressure* at ExPats Theatre and *Hair* at Vagabond Players. Ege also releases original music under her recording artist moniker aegea: linktr.ee/aegeamezzo. On social media @aegeamezzo.

THE 2026/2027 SEASON IS JUST GETTING STARTED

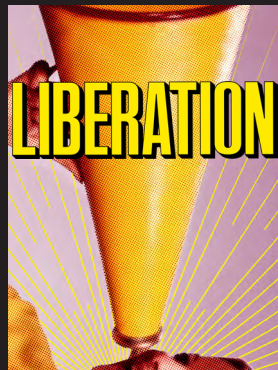
If you like *Wish You Were Here*, you're going to love the rest of our season. Don't miss out on a moment of it — **subscribe today!**



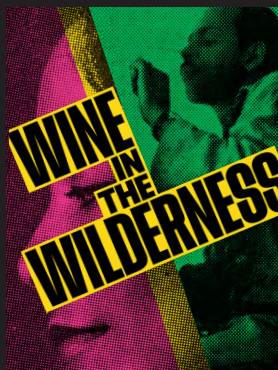
BY JAMES IJAMES
DIRECTED BY TAIBI MAGAR
BEGINS NOVEMBER 18, 2026



BY JOSHUA HARMON
DIRECTED BY JESS CHAYES
BEGINS JANUARY 13, 2027



BY BESS WOHL
DIRECTED BY WHITNEY WHITE
BEGINS MARCH 24, 2027



BY ALICE CHILDRESS
DIRECTED BY PSALMAYENE 24
BEGINS MAY 12, 2027



BY JAMES GRAHAM
DIRECTED BY DAVID MUSE
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PRODUCTION

OMID AKBARI (Set Designer) is an Iranian-born scenic designer and costume concept artist based in NYC. He holds an MFA in Theater Design from the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. His recent credits include *Primary Trust* at Weston Theater Company; *English* at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts; *Gem of the Ocean* and *Unbecoming Tragedy: A Ritual Journey Toward Destiny* at Long Wharf Theatre; *A Moment of Silence* at McCarter Theatre Center; *Hamlet*, *Mother Play: A Play in Five Evictions*, and *Three Tall Persian Women* at Shakespeare and Company; *Iraq, But Funny* at Lookingglass Theatre Company; *The Life You Gave Me* at Boise Contemporary Theater; *The Seven* at Juilliard; and *Wish You Were Here* at Yale Repertory Theatre. He was the associate creative director of MIGUEL-CAOS World Tour. www.omidakbari.com

SHAHRAZAD MAZAHARI (Costume Designer) is a costume designer whose work spans theatre, opera, and dance. Recent costume design credits include *Sleuth* (Guthrie Theater), *Safety Not Guaranteed* and *In Clay* (Signature Theatre DC), *My Favorite Sociopath* and *iVOS!* (Contemporary American Theater Festival), and *English* (Alley Theatre, Goodman Theatre, and Guthrie Theater). Her other regional work includes productions at Trinity Rep, South Coast Repertory, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. shahrazadmazaheri.com On social media @scheherezade.mzr.

NIC VINCENT (Lighting Designer) is a Brooklyn-based lighting designer specializing in theatre, dance, and opera. He has designed award-winning productions Off Broadway and regionally across North America. He is drawn to work that inspires hope. Recent Off Broadway credits include designs at Lincoln Center Theater, Roundabout Theatre Company, Atlantic Theater Company, Apollo Theater, Carnegie Hall, Theatre Row, 59E59 Theaters, Mabou Mines, The Flea Theater, New Ohio Theatre, New York Live Arts, and Rattlestick

Theater. Regional credits include designs at The Guthrie Theater, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Geva Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, People's Light, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Portland Opera, and Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera. His other work includes *Sasha Velour's NightGowns* (Quibi). He holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama and is a member of USA 829 and ADC 659. nicvincent.com. On social media @nicvincent.

KENNY NEAL (Sound Designer) is a Helen Hayes Award-winning sound designer, composer, and arranger. His recent DC theatre credits include *Downstate* and *English* (Studio Theatre); *The Last Match* (1st Stage); *Precarious* and *Private* (Mosaic Theater Company); *Strategic Love Play* and *Job* (Signature Theatre); *Sojourners* and *The Seafarer* (Round House Theatre); *A Nice Indian Boy* and *Dance Nation* (Olney Theatre Center); *Becoming Dr. Ruth* (Theater J); *Lie Low* (Solas Nua); *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Moors* (Faction of Fools); *Pramkicker* and *Mom Baby God* (Taffety Punk Theatre Company); and *Dracula: A Feminist Revenge Fantasy*, *Really*, and *She Kills Monsters* (Rorschach Theatre). Upcoming work includes *Betrayal* at 1st Stage. He is currently a resident artist at Adventure Theatre MTC.

DOAA OUF (Projection Designer) is a NYC-based multidisciplinary artist from Cairo, Egypt, working at the intersection of projection design, directing, and producing for theater. Her work has been seen on and Off Broadway, regionally and internationally. Her recent credits include *Cats: The Jellicle Ball* on Broadway; Alicia Keys's *Hell's Kitchen* National Tour; *America, Who Hurt You?* at Theatre for a New Audience; *Steve Burns: Alive* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival; *A Walk on the Moon* at Roundabout Theatre Company; and Disney's Adventure Cruise Line. She holds a Projection Design MFA from Yale University. doaaouf.com

ADRIEN-ALICE HANSEL (Dramaturg) is the Literary Director at Studio, where she oversees new work development, supports season planning, and has served as the dramaturg on roughly 70 plays, including world premieres of *Problems Between Sisters*, *Good Bones*, *John Proctor is the Villain*, *I Hate it Here*, *Red Speedo*, and *Lungs*, among others, and productions of *Purlie Victorious*; *The Heart Sellers*; *Summer, 1976*; *The Colored Museum*; *Fun Home*; *English*; *Curve of Departure*; *Wig Out*; and *The New Electric Ballroom*. Her recent freelance work includes projects for Solas Nua, Musical Theatre Factory, and Young Artists of America. Prior to joining Studio, she spent eight seasons as a member of and then running the Literary Department at the Actors Theatre of Louisville and its Humana Festival of New American Plays. Adrien-Alice holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama.

JOHN KEITH HALL (Production Stage Manager)'s previous Studio credits include *Purlie Victorious*; *Octet*; *Downstate*; *Summer, 1976*; *Exception to the Rule*; *The Colored Museum*; *At the Wedding*; *Fun Home*; *Bad Jews*; *Choir Boy*; *Water by the Spoonful*; *Tribes*; *Torch Song Trilogy*; *4000 Miles*; *In the Red and Brown Water*; *The History Boys*; and *The Road to Mecca*. Other DC area credits include productions at Theater J, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Olney Theatre Center, Signature Theatre, and The Kennedy Center. His regional credits include more than 40 productions as Resident Stage Manager at the Barter Theatre as well as Shadowlands Stage, Virginia Musical Theatre, and Contemporary American Theatre Festival.

KATJA ZAROLINSKI, CSA (Casting) is serving at the Studio Theatre NYC Casting Director for the 2026/2027 season. Katja is a New York-based casting director handling productions for theater, film and television. Previous casting work includes Broadway, off Broadway and regional productions at Alley Theatre, Arena Stage, Asolo Repertory

Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Barrington Stage Company, Cape Playhouse, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, City Theatre Company, Contemporary American Theater Festival, Crossroads Theatre Company, Everyman Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Goodspeed Musicals, Guthrie Theater, Irish Repertory Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, Mosaic Theatre, Olney Theatre Center, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Pittsburgh CLO, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Pittsburgh Public Theater, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Seattle Rep, Shakespeare & Company, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Signature Theatre (DC), South Coast Repertory, TheaterWorks Hartford, Virginia Stage Company, Virginia Theatre Festival, and many more.

PRODUCTION STAFF

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
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ASSOCIATE COSTUME DESIGNER
SASHA SKLAR

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER
SAGE GREEN

ASSOCIATE PROJECTION DESIGNER
CLARA ASHE-MOORE PAGÁN

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
CONNOR SMITH

SCENIC CHARGE
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LILY BULMAN

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AMY KELLETT

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
**PARRIS BROWN, MIRANDA
KORIETH**

LANGUAGE CONSULTANT
SHADEE VOSSOUGH

CULTURAL CONSULTANT
SHAHRZAD MAZAHARI

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY READER /
PRAYER CONSULTANT
MARJAN MOOSAVI

PROGRAM GRAPHIC DESIGNER
BILL GEENEN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The production wishes to thank Yale Repertory Theatre, Babak Barmar, and Arezou Daneshvar.

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The Iranian-American Community Center (IACC) is a registered, non-profit organization with a 501 (c)(3) designation from the IRS. IACC's vision is to share and preserve the Iranian culture in the Washington, DC metropolitan area through the creation of a community and a center that serves as a hub for educational activities, cultural events, and community services.



The Persian Studies Program at the University of Maryland, College Park

The Persian program at UMD offers a B.A. and a minor for undergraduate students and an M.P.S. in Persian for graduate students, and hosts programs designed to get students to a high level of proficiency in the Persian language as well as attain a broader understanding of Persian culture, history, art and literature.



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* = In memory of

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This list represents contributions of \$500 or more made to the annual fund as of August 31, 2026. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this listing. For more information, please contact the Development Department at 202.919.3712.



ABOUT STUDIO

Our mission is to produce exceptional contemporary theatre in deliberately intimate spaces, fostering a more thoughtful, more empathetic, and more connected community, in Washington, DC and beyond.

Over nearly 50 years and more than 350 productions, Studio has grown from a company that produced in a single rented theatre to one that owns a multi-venue complex stretching half a city block, but we have stayed committed to core distinguishing characteristics: intimacy, excellence in acting and design, and seasons that feature many of the most significant playwrights of our time.

AT STUDIO, WE:

- Make remarkable theatre
- Identify and nurture visionary artists and plays
- Cultivate future generations of theatre professionals
- Dismantle barriers that exclude people from joyful participation in our art form
- Embed ourselves in our community, connecting the work on our stages to people's lives and the concerns of the broader DC community



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FELLOWS-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

The Studio Fellows-in-Residence program prepares future artists and administrators for a successful career in the arts through a rigorous, hands-on training experience over the course of a full theatrical season.

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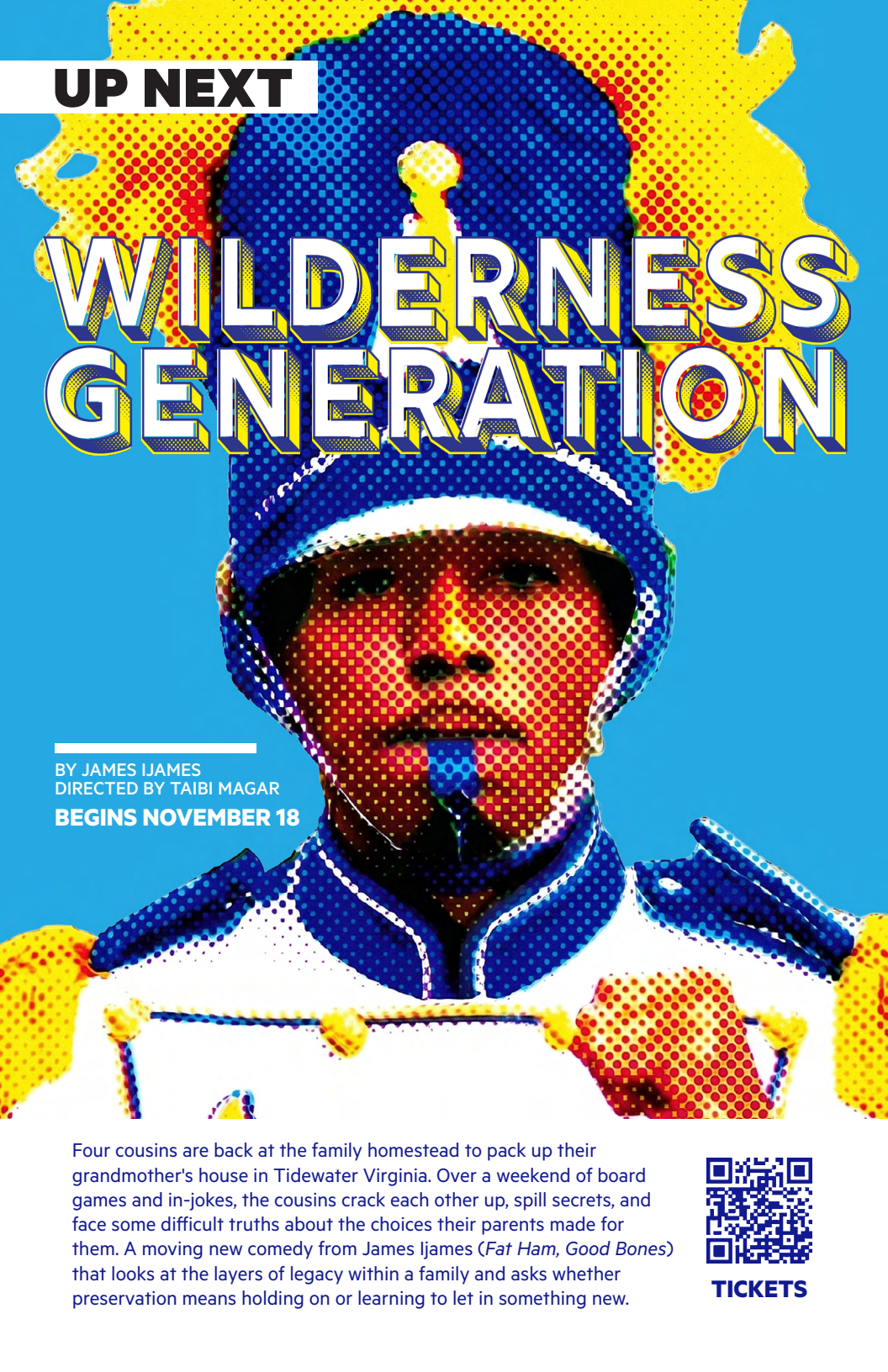
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UP NEXT

WILDERNESS GENERATION

BY JAMES IJAMES
DIRECTED BY TAIBI MAGAR

BEGINS NOVEMBER 18

Four cousins are back at the family homestead to pack up their grandmother's house in Tidewater Virginia. Over a weekend of board games and in-jokes, the cousins crack each other up, spill secrets, and face some difficult truths about the choices their parents made for them. A moving new comedy from James Ijames (*Fat Ham*, *Good Bones*) that looks at the layers of legacy within a family and asks whether preservation means holding on or learning to let in something new.



TICKETS