

2023-24 NEWSLETTER

Overview

The 2023-24 academic year kicked off with the welcoming of a new class of playwrights for a rigorous, artistically fulfilling semester. This fall, our first-year students studied with David Adjmi, whose hit Broadway show *Stereophonic* was nominated for 13 Tony awards this year—the most nominations for a play in history. *Stereophonic* took home five wins, including the Tony award for Best Play. We are so thrilled for him. We took our MFA students to see the show at Playwrights Horizons this fall, and had an exclusive post-show chat with Adjmi about the making of the play. Our second-year students studied with Anne Washburn (*Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*), whose interactive performance piece *Murder Room* was featured in the Prelude Festival this fall and at Soho Rep this spring. Washburn took the students to a private viewing of the piece.

In our spring semester, our first-year students studied with Chisa Hutchinson (Helen Merrill Award, Lanford Wilson Award), and our second-year students studied with Maria Striar, the Artistic Director of the Obie award-winning *Clubbed Thumb*. We concluded the year with our 2024 Hunter MFA Playwrights Festival, a two-week festival of readings of new plays by our MFA Playwriting candidates.

Next year, we are thrilled to welcome 2024 Pulitzer Prize Winner Eboni Booth (*Primary Trust*) to our faculty, and welcome back Pulitzer Finalist Lisa D'Amour (*Detroit*).



2023-24 MFA Playwrights with MFA Program Director Christine Scarfuto and Instructor David Adjmi at a post-performance talk of *Stereophonic* at Playwrights Horizons.



David Adjmi at the 77th Tony Awards (Getty Images).

STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS

Our Hunter MFA Playwriting students and alumni have had a truly banner year. The New York theater season saw world premieres by T. Adamson (*Usus*, Clubbed Thumb), John Caswell (Obie Award-winning *Wet Brain*, Playwrights Horizons; *Scene Partners*, Vineyard Theatre), Ryan Drake (*you don't have to do anything*, HERE Arts Center), Ian Robles (*Lio*, Teatro Circulo), Diana Ly (*Sex and the Abbey*, The Brick), and Lauren Holmes (*The Employees*, Theatre Lab). Outside New York, Minna Lee's play *My Home on the Moon* had its regional premiere at San Francisco Playhouse.

Jesse Jae Hoon won the 2024 Terence McNally Award, Minna Lee won the 2024 Lanford Wilson Award for Early Career Writers, and Justice Hehir's play *The Dowagers* was a finalist for the 2024 Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Phillip Christian Smith was inducted into New Dramatists in September 2023 for a seven-year residency.

Our students and alums have seen a multitude of new play development opportunities. Guelan Luarca co-wrote and directed a new Filipino adaptation of *The Orestia* with Chay Yew (*Cambodian Rock Band*, *Oedipus El Rey*) which had a workshop at the Getty Villa in LA in October 2023. Jesse Jae Hoon completed his first year in the Public Theater's Emerging Writers Group and will have a reading of his play *12 Chairs* at the O'Neill Playwrights Conference in July 2024. Levi Shrader and Jen Diamond had workshops in the Adirondack Theatre Festival. Lauren Holmes' *Zeus IV* was developed as part of LaGuardia Performing Arts Center's Rough Draft Festival. Liqing Xu just completed their second year of the Many Voices Fellowship at the Playwrights' Center. Phillip Christian Smith's commission *Standardized Patient* was workshopped at Cleveland Play House's New Ground Theater Festival. Minna Lee and Jesse Jae Hoon both were awarded residencies at MacDowell Artists' Colony.

MASTER CLASSES

In addition to their coursework, our students participated in a number of thrilling master classes this year. These intensive workshops taught by acclaimed theater artists are meant to provide students with fresh perspectives and approaches to playwriting, theater-making, and the artistic process. In the fall, students took master classes with Hansol Jung (*Wolf Play*, *Wild Goose Dreams*) on the nature of dramatic structure, Emma Horwitz (*Mary Gets Hers*) on formatting dramatic texts, and Lloyd Suh (*The Chinese Lady*, *Far Country*) on personal writing practices. In the Spring, we were pleased to welcome esteemed theater-makers like Mfoniso Udofia (*Sojourners*, *runboyrun*, *A League of Their Own*), Haruna Lee (*Suicide Forest*), and 2020 Guggenheim fellow Tina Satter (*Dana H*, *Is This a Room*) for another semester of artistically enriching workshops.

HUNTER MFA PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL

The capstone project of the MFA Playwriting program is a week-long workshop of a new play with professional artists, culminating in a public, industry-attended presentation. Our 2024 Hunter MFA Playwrights Festival was our most highly-attended yet. We were overjoyed to have an outstanding group of directors and actors to collaborate with our writers, including: Obie Award-winning directors Knud Adams (*English, Primary Trust*) and Taylor Reynolds (*Plano, Tambo & Bones*) along with actors such as Frank Wood (Tony Award Winner), Constance Shulman (SAG Award Winner), and Susan Blommaert (*The Blacklist*).

Congrats to our students, alumni, and instructors on a thrilling year!

The Rita and Burton Goldberg Hunter MFA Playwriting Program Presents

HUNTER MFA PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL MAY 6 - 10

FREDERICK LOEWE THEATER
119 E 68 STREET

READINGS OF NEW FULL-LENGTH WORKS BY:

Davis Alianiello
Jen Diamond
Minna Lee
Guelan Varela-Luarca
Sam Walsh



The cast of Corridors by Guelan Luarca, directed by Aneesh Kuttarkar in the 2024 Hunter MFA Play Festival. . Photo by Lia Chang.

GET IN TOUCH

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