



**Media Contact: Kevin Lohmann**  
klohmann@sdrep.org | 619.231.3586 x 613  
For Immediate Release

## San Diego Repertory Theatre Announces 'Here U.S. Now' Play Commission Program

**SAN DIEGO, CA – June 25, 2020** –San Diego Repertory Theatre (San Diego REP) announced today the details of a brand new play commission series, called **Here U.S. Now**. The new program seeks to further diversify the voices represented on San Diego REP's stages by commissioning new plays from writers that identify as part of marginalized groups previously underrepresented in The REP's seasons. The inaugural group of playwrights includes **Boni B. Alvarez, Idris Goodwin, Jason Grasl, K. Quinn Marchman, Giovanni Ortega** and **Kit Yan**.

"We created Here U.S. Now to initiate and develop work that addresses our mission of producing intimate, provocative, inclusive theatre that nourishes progressive political and social values and that speaks directly to the multiple voices of our region," says San Diego REP Artistic Director **Sam Woodhouse**. "After identifying several voices of our community that have not been directly served by our theatre, we sought selected playwrights that represent some of these underserved voices not yet seen or not often represented on our stages, including Filipino American, Queer/Transgender, Native American, and Black writers."

Of the five plays under commission, one full-length piece is written to be an interactive/choose-your-own-adventure piece to be produced online. The other four full-length plays are to be developed for future seasons with the San Diego REP stages in mind. Two of these four are set in San Diego. The commissioned plays include the following:

***Beyond the Crossroads***, by Idris Goodwin and K. Quinn Marchman, is an online exploration of African American folklore that casts the audience as members of a band as they follow the story of legendary bluesman Robert Johnson who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for otherworldly guitar playing skills. *Beyond the Crossroads* invites audiences to discover what they're willing to give up in exchange for their wildest dreams. Idris Goodwin has developed plays through The Eugene O'Neill Conference, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. His critically acclaimed plays like *And In This Corner Cassius Clay*, *How We Got On* and *Hype Man: a break beat play* are widely produced across the country at professional theatres, college campuses and non-traditional spaces alike. K. Quinn Marchman is the Education Director and co-founder of the Black Actors Guild. He has recently been featured in performances including Dominique Morisseau's *Skeleton Crew* at Curious Theatre and *Shakespeare in the Parking Lot* with Denver Center for the Performing Arts. He has published poems, *Holla* and *F\*\*k Yes! Souffle* in Suspect Press and S. Broadway Ghost Society, respectively.

***The Butterfly of Chula Vista***, by Giovanni Ortega follows Libertad Molina, a Mexi-Pino (Mexican-Filipino American) as he embraces his many layers by performing drag at GG Island Grindz Bar & Grill in Chula Vista. This witty and fast-paced screwball comedy has a lot of heart as it touches on powerful themes about familial duty, identity and acceptance. Giovanni Ortega is currently an Assistant Professor in Pomona College's Department of Theatre for the Claremont Colleges. His work, such as *Criers for Hire* and *ALLOS, the Story of Carlos Bulosan* has been performed globally

including in Sydney and Singapore. He was a resident scholar for Playwriting Australia's National Play Festival.

***Duty Free***, by Boni B. Alvarez explores the experiences of various immigrants seeking entry into the United States such as Filipina journalist Merlina Rojas who was recently named an 'enemy of the republic' and is seeking refuge in America. She meets others across time in the same US Customs detention room at LAX airport. This play seeks to shed light on the Filipino experience and how everyone co-exists with other groups within the American landscape. Boni B. Alvarez is a Los Angeles-based actor-playwright. His plays have been produced at Center Theatre Group's Kirk Douglas Theatre, Echo Theater Company, Theatre Rhinoceros, and Playwrights' Arena. He is currently in Skylight Theatre's Skylab, the Geffen Playhouse Writers' Room and a Resident Playwright of New Dramatists.

***Mr. Transman***, by Kit Yan is an investigation into the world of alternative pageantry, following five trans folk who compete for the title of Mr. Transman, based loosely on Yan's real life experiences. This piece will ask the questions, "What makes a body? What is beautiful? Who gets to feel free?" Yan's plays smash racism, patriarchy and systemic oppression through queer joy. Kit Yan is a Yellow American NY based artist raised in the Kingdom of Hawaii. Kit is a 2019 Vivace award winner, & former fellow at the Dramatists Guild Foundation, MacDowell, & the Playwright's Center. Their work has been supported by 5th Avenue Theater, Playwrights Horizons, American Repertory Theater, Mixed Blood, Diversionary, and OSF. Recent works include *Interstate* (NAMT 2019, 2018 NYMF best lyrics) & *MISS STEP* two new trans musicals.

***The Normal Force***, by Jason Grasl, is about a PhD student at UCSD who is also a member of a Native American tribe that risks extinction in 3 generations time. He is on the precipice of a scientific breakthrough, but from outside the university is confronted with fundamentalist protests, and from the inside is met with quid pro quo demands about supporting artificial intelligence to help proliferate his tribe's DNA. Jason Grasl is an actor/playwright/director of Blackfeet descent who is an ensemble member with Native Voices at the Autry in Los Angeles. As a playwright, his plays include *The Blame of Love*, *Emergency Management*, *The Wheels On the Bus Come Off*, and *Lying With Badgers*.

Hear U.S. Now is funded in part by the Leon and Margo Embry Fund for New American Plays.

### **About San Diego Repertory Theatre**

San Diego Repertory Theatre (San Diego REP) produces intimate, provocative and inclusive theatre. Founded in 1976, San Diego Repertory Theatre is downtown San Diego's resident theatre, promoting an interconnected community through vivid works that nourish progressive political and social values and celebrates the multiple voices of our region. The company produces and hosts over 550 events and performances year-round on its three stages at the Lyceum Theatre. Since moving to the Lyceum, The REP has produced 45 main stage productions by Latino playwrights, and more than 40 world premieres. In addition to a 1998 Tony Award® Nomination for *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*, the company has received more than 200 awards for artistic excellence from the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle, Patté Theatre Awards, NAACP, Backstage West, Dramalogue and StageSceneLA. In 2005, the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle presented The REP with the Craig Noel Award "For 30 Years of Artistic Dedication to Downtown and Diversity." San Diego Repertory Theatre feeds the curious soul. To learn more about San Diego Repertory Theatre, to purchase tickets, or make a donation, visit [www.sdrep.org](http://www.sdrep.org). Join us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (@SanDiegoREP).