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A Place for Global Theatre Artists and Storytellers to Convene and Develop New Work

**Sundance Institute and MASS MoCA Host Theatre Artists from U.S. and Middle East
to Advance New Plays and Musicals at Lab**

Los Angeles, CA — Four stories of family, gender, female empowerment and migration comprise the projects supported by Sundance Institute's Theatre Program at its two-week Lab at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA), taking place December 4-18. Dedicated to the creation and development of new musical theatre work, the Lab's projects are cast individually, rehearsed daily and benefit from concentrated, uninterrupted time and resources.

Theater makers representing a range of cultures come together to nurture and develop their projects, which draw inspiration from culturally specific storytelling techniques (*Club Diamond*) and modern geopolitics (*36 Abbas Street, Haifa*) as well as from films (*Teeth*, based on the 2007 independent horror film; *Ma Vie En Rose*, from the creators of *Spring Awakening* and based on the 1997 film). Work supported at Theatre Lab at MASS MoCA can be a springboard to the global stage: *Hatuey*, an opera in half-Spanish, half-Yiddish, developed at the Lab last year and is set to premiere in Cuba in March 2017, and last season's *Bella, An American Tall Tale*, by Kirsten Childs opens at Playwright Horizons this spring, following its recent world premiere at Dallas Theater Center.

"The projects that come through our Labs represent rare visions and share a risk-taking sensibility," said Philip Himberg, Artistic Director of Sundance Institute's Theatre Program. "These bold, timely works deal with some of the most provocative topics in today's cultural discourse, and the lab provides a space to intensely interrogate, refine and heighten storytelling and impact."

The projects selected for the Theatre Lab at MASS MoCA are:

Club Diamond

Created and written by Saori Tsukada and Nikki Appino
Composed/Music Direction by Tim Fain

A young woman travels alone from Tokyo to New York City to be a star. This narrative unfolds using old-fashioned storytelling techniques from the East and the West including a silent film, Benshi (live narration) and Kami-shibai (paper-play). *Club Diamond* is a solo work created by Japanese theater artist Saori Tsukada, and American theatre artist and filmmaker Nikki Appino, in collaboration with composer/violinist Tim Fain.



Saori Tsukada is described as a “charismatic mover with astounding precision,” harnessing her ability in theater, dance, in between and beyond. Born in America and raised in Japan, she has collaborated with numerous artists including John Moran, Yoshiko Chuma and Aya Ogawa. Tsukada has been nominated twice for Best Actress at Dublin Fringe Festival.

Nikki Appino is a theatre and filmmaker who trained at NYU's Experimental Theatre Wing. She founded a nonprofit arts company in Seattle in the 90's, is a regional theater director, and generates original works for stage and screen. Awards include the NEA/TCG Directing Fellowship. She runs Appino Productions and TheGlassFactory.

Teeth

Book by Michael R. Jackson and Anna K. Jacobs

Music by Anna K. Jacobs

Words by Michael R. Jackson

Directed by Marlo Hunter

Based on the film *Teeth* by Mitchell Lichtenstein

Adapted from the 2007 Sundance Film Festival Award-winning indie horror film by Mitchell Lichtenstein, *Teeth* tells the story of Dawn O'Keefe, an evangelical Christian teen with a secret: she has teeth in her vagina. When the men in Dawn's life try to exploit her, she must confront the teeth and decide which part of herself to save, and which to sacrifice.

Marlo Hunter's credits as a director/choreographer include *Unlock'd* (The Duke – Prospect; Callaway Award), *My Life Is a Musical* (Bay Street), and *Date of a Lifetime* (NJ Rep). Choreographer: *Lips Together...* (Second Stage). Director, Co-Conceiver (w/Sasha Eden): *Theatrical Culinary Project* with Chef Carla Hall, playwrights Jeff Augustin, Elizabeth Irwin, Daniel Pearle & Julian Sheppard. Upcoming: Director, *Costs of Living* (Village).

Michael R. Jackson holds a BFA and MFA in playwriting and Musical Theatre Writing from the NYU Tisch School of the Arts. He wrote book and lyrics for the musical *Only Children* with composer Rachel Peters, book, music, and lyrics for the musical *A Strange Loop*, and book and lyrics for the musical adaptation of the 2007 horror film *Teeth* with co-bookwriter and composer Anna Jacobs.

Anna K. Jacobs is a Sydney-born composer and lyricist. Her shows include *POP!* (Yale Rep, Pittsburgh City Theatre, Studio Theatre, etc.), *Harmony, Kansas* (Diversionary Theatre), *Stella and the Moon Man* (STC/Theatre of Image), *Teeth* (Ars Nova Uncharted), *Echo* (Musical Theatre Factory), and the short musicals *Cage Match* and *Magic 8 Ball* (Prospect Theatre Company).

Artists-in-Residence

36 Abbas Street, Haifa

Written and performed by Raeda Taha

Directed by Junaid Sarieddeen

A story of two Palestinian families: the Rafis, Palestinians who stayed in Palestine as hostages to fate, becoming citizens of the Jewish state of Israel, and the Abu Ghaidas, forced to leave and wander all corners of the world in search of a country they can call their own.

Raeda Taha is currently the chairperson for the Sakakini Cultural Center in Ramallah/Palestine and on the Administrative Committee of Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation Beirut/Lebanon; she was the Press Secretary of Chairman Yasser Arafat from 1987 to 1994. She has published short stories in *Anthology of Women Writers* and has written a book, *Ali*. She has been the lead in *Petra Rocks*, *Return to Haifa* and *80 Steps*. In 2015, she wrote, produced and performed a one woman show *Where Can I Find Someone Like You Ali?*, directed by Lina Abyad. She has a B.A. in Speech Communication and Journalism from George Mason University in Virginia.

Junaid Sareddeen is a theatre director, actor and dramaturg at the Zoukak Theatre Company in Beirut, Lebanon.

Ma Vie En Rose

Book and Lyrics by Steven Sater
Music by Duncan Sheik

What does it mean to be a seven-year-old trans girl in a backwater world which has never heard the word trans? Before the reality shows, before even the internet, in a rural Belgian village circa 1995, Ludo announces to his (mortified) parents that he is in fact a she – and, as such, intends to marry Dad's boss' son. A stage-musical version of the award-winning film, from the creators of *Spring Awakening*.

Steven Sater is a Tony and Grammy Award-winning American poet, playwright, lyricist, television writer, and screenwriter. Past credits include *Spring Awakening* (Tony, Grammy, Olivier Awards) and the Tony-nominated Broadway revival with *Deaf West*; *The Nightingale* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Alice By Heart* (National Theatre of London: Connections); *Prometheus Bound* (with Serj Tankian, A.R.T); *Some Lovers* (with Burt Bacharach, The Old Globe); *New York Animals* (Bedlam); *Arms On Fire* (Steppenwolf New Play Prize) and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (London's Lyric Hammersmith).

Duncan Sheik is a Tony- and Grammy Award-winning performer / composer whose theatre credits include *Spring Awakening* (2006); Tony Awards for "Best Orchestrations" and "Best Original Score," and 2008 Grammy Award for "Best Musical Show Album," *American Psycho* (2016); *Because of Winn Dixie* (Delaware Theatre Company 2015) and *Whisper House* (Old Globe Theatre 2011). Currently in development: *Alice by Heart*, *Nero (Another Golden Rome)*, *The Nightingale* and *Noir*. Recorded works include *American Psycho* (Original London Cast Recording) (2016), *Legerdemain* (2015), *Covers 80s* (Sneaky Records, 2011), *Whisper House* (Sony, 2009), *Spring Awakening* (Original Broadway Cast Recording) (2006), *White Limousine* (Rounder, 2006), *Daylight* (Atlantic, 2002), *Phantom Moon* (Nonesuch, 2001), *Humming* (Atlantic Records, 1998), and *Duncan Sheik* (Grammy Nomination "Best Male Vocal," RIAA Certified Gold) (Atlantic Records 1996).

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**Sundance Institute**

Founded in 1981 by Robert Redford, Sundance Institute is a nonprofit organization that provides and preserves the space for artists in film, theatre, and new media to create and thrive. The Institute's signature Labs, granting, and mentorship programs, dedicated to developing new work, take place throughout the year in the U.S. and internationally. The Sundance Film Festival and other public programs connect audiences to artists in igniting new ideas, discovering original voices, and building a community dedicated to independent storytelling. Sundance Institute has supported such projects as *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Sin Nombre*, *The Invisible War*, *The Square*, *Dirty Wars*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* and *Fun Home*. Join [Sundance Institute](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

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