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**Announcing the 2025 Finalists
for Rorschach Theatre's annual
Magic in Rough Spaces New Play Lab**

**The final three plays will be announced May 15, 2025
and public readings of those finalists will be on June 13, 14, & 15, 2025.**

Local playwrights and submissions from across the country were read by over 40 readers to narrow down over 100 submissions



LOST GIRLS by Paige Conway

On the precipice of adulthood, Edith decides to testify against her attacker. But when the trial is turned and twisted, help arrives in the most surreal form: The Lost Girls, a band of women pirates from centuries ago whose rage has brought them back to fight the battles women can't seem to win.

Paige Conway is a Director, Producer, AEA Stage Manager, Playwright and Deviser from Flint, Michigan, currently based in Cleveland. Her play *G-COMPLEX* is being produced at the Women in Theatre Festival at Duluth Playhouse this summer. Her script *Tag* has been developed with drafted; A New Play Workshop and the Multi-Gen Project, and her script *Lost Girls* has been developed with Athena Project's Read & Rant program. Paige currently serves as the Associate Producer at Cleveland Public Theatre where she has recently directed several world premieres, including *The Body Play* by Madison Wetzell and co-directed *not-for-profit (or the equity, diversity, and inclusion play)* by francisca da silveira.



THE SINGLE RAINDROP by Zachariah Ezer

When virtual reality comes to the Tell-Fara assisted living facility, Harry Moore searches for a place he can no longer find. Is memory failing him—or is the town's racist past to blame?

Zachariah Ezer is a playwright and an Assistant Professor of Performing Arts at Washington University in St. Louis, whose work animates theoretical quandaries through theatrical forms. His plays include *The Freedom Industry* (Playwrights Horizons' New Works Lab, The Playwrights Center, New York Stage & Film), *Address the Body!* (The University of Texas at Austin's UTNT Festival, Kitchen Dog Theater's New Works Festival, Echo Theater Company's National Young

Playwrights-in-Residence), *Legitime* (Fault Line Theatre's Irons in the Fire), and *Black Women in Tech* (The Fire This Time Festival, PBS), among others. He is currently a Dramatists Guild Foundation Catalyst Fellow and a member of The St. Louis Shakespeare Festival's Confluence Writers Project. He has received commissions from Manhattan Theatre Club/The Sloan Foundation, Theater J, and American Conservatory Theatre. He has attended residencies at The New Harmony Project, Ryder Farm, and Aunt Karen's Farm. His work has been published by Concord Theatricals/Samuel French, Smith & Kraus, American Blues Theater, and New World Theatre.



SCRIBE, OR THE SISTERS MILTON, OR ELEGY FOR THE UNWRITTEN by L M Feldman

This serio-comic play imagines the poet Milton's relationship with his 3 kept-barely-literate daughters, while he was blind & outcast & composing Paradise Lost and they were transcribing & homemaking & coming of age.

L M Feldman is a queer, feminist, GNC playwright, professor, and circus artist. They make work that is brave, kinetic, epic, and intimate. L has been nominated for the Herb Alpert Award, Wasserstein Prize, Steinberg Award, Blackburn Prize, and New York Innovative Theatre Award. They're ongoingly grateful to have been an alum of the Yale School of Drama, an Orbiter 3 member, a New Georges Affiliated Artist, a Shakespeare's New Contemporaries winner, a Playwrights' Center Core Writer, and

currently a Venturous Playwright Fellow. Their body of work can be found at laurenfeldman.com or newplayexchange.org.



BORN ALL WRONG by Ayibatari Owei

In this Southern Gothic, an estranged daughter returns home after three years, only to find that the weird now torments her family. Death takes on a human form and clings onto the estranged daughter and her mother.

Ayibatari Owei is an Illinois-born, Maryland-raised early-career playwright. She received her BA in Theatre at Smith College, where she won multiple awards, including The Denis Johnston Playwriting Award. Her play, *La Mer*, was selected for Abingdon Theatre Company's Virtual Festival of Short Plays in 2024. On a regular day, Ayibatari can be found cracking jokes and singing along to ABBA.



THE LEOPARD WOMEN by Andrew Rincon

After two sisters have a fight around their mother's death; each sister starts to have supernatural visions. Amanda sees Death, and Lucia interacts with a creature part woman, part leopard.

Andrew Rincón (he/she/they) is a Queer Colombian-American playwright, writer and educator. Their work centers Queerness, reimagines myths, and plays with humor and poetry (in Spanish, English and Eh Spanglish). Their work/voice has been developed with companies such as; The Latinx Playwrights Circle, INTAR, The Austin Latino New

Play Festival, The Amoralists Theatre Company, Pork Filled Productions (Seattle), Out Front Productions (Atlanta). Andrew was a member of INKtank Lab for Playwrights of Color (2017), 2017 Fornés Playwriting Workshop (Chicago). He is the winner of the 2018 Chesley/Bumbalo Grant for writers of Gay and Lesbian Theatre and the New Light Theatre Project's New Light New Voices Award; and has been a Dramatist Guild Foundation Fellow, a MacDowell Fellow, and a Skidmore College's Visiting Playwright in Residence. Select Full Length Plays include *El Mito or The Myth of my Pain*, *The Lonely*, *The Leopard Women*, *Tempt Me*. Their play *I Wanna Fuck like Romeo and Juliet* had it's world premiere in NYC at 59e59 Theatres (Fall 2022) and is published by Concord Theatricals. They are currently pursuing an MFA in playwriting at Yale School of Drama.

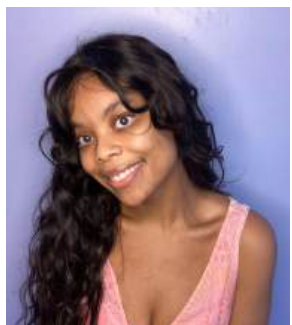


IT WILL ALL MAKE SENSE IN THE MORNING by Erica Smith

When they were children, Alastair took Sparrow's nightmares away and buried them under a tree. Now they're back. Sparrow wants him to take them away again, but he barely remembers doing so... and he's got his own problems.

Erica Smith is a Washington, DC-based playwright and actor. She is a founding member of The Coil Project, serving as its Playwright in Residence since its inception, and co-Artistic Director from 2020-2022. Her work has been seen at Silver Spring Stage, the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, Cape Cod Community College, and the

Greenbelt Arts Center, among others. Most recently, her one-act *A VERY DIFFERENT KIND OF TRUTH* premiered at Teatro LATEA in New York. You can hear her work and her voice every other Sunday on the Coil Project Variety Hour on Takoma Park Radio.



MEET ME IN THE NUNNERY by Amber Smithers

Meet Me in the Nunnery is an exploration of how hook up culture and social media affect young people. In the play, Hamlet and Ophelia explore what love is for them. While learning about love they also are battling their automatic negative thoughts. Will their thoughts guide or destroy their love? Meet Me in the Nunnery to find out.

Amber Smithers (She/her) is a playwright, actor, and teacher. She is currently playing Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* at Chesapeake Shakespeare Company's Spring 2025 matinee series. During the Fall she was *Witch 3* in *Macbeth* at Chesapeake Shakespeare Company. She has also performed with Olney Theatre Center in their

National Players Tour at Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*. She has been a guest artist and teaching artist at A. Mario Loiederman Middle School in partnership with Olney Theatre Center. During that time she co-directed and cultivated work that was presented to Jason Reynolds, the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. She has worked with several local theatre companies as an actor, playwright, and teacher. In college she was nominated for Irene Ryan in 2020. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Theatre from the University of Maryland, College Park.



WHERE THE DEAD WOMEN GO TO DANCE by Stephen Spotswood

When Kim uses an old family recipe to bring her best friend, Ellen, back to life, the pair are forced to reevaluate their friendship and what makes life worth living.

Stephen Spotswood is an award-winning playwright, journalist, and the creator of the *Pentecost & Parker* mystery series. He is the winner of the 2017 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Original New Play, winner of the 2021 Nero Award for best American mystery, a two-time finalist for the Lambda Literary Award for Mystery, and an Edgar Award finalist. As a journalist, he has spent much of the last two decades writing about the struggles of wounded veterans, and his dramatic work has been widely produced across the United States. He makes his home in Washington, DC with his wife, young adult author Jessica Spotswood.



GHOST FOREST by Mekala Sridhar

Ghost Forest exposes personal and environmental consequences of a severed relationship between humans and land, following Sylvy's journey of confronting climate catastrophe and the seeming impossibilities and possibilities of change.

Mekala Sridhar is a DC-based playwright, director, and producer. Past writing credits include *Ghost Forest* (workshop) at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, *Women Like A River* at BorderLight Festival, *when the bubble bursts* at La Jolla Playhouse's WOW Festival, and *A Different Nostalgia* at Dixon Place. Mekala's artmaking is grounded in creating radically inclusive, collaborative work, with a central focus on transforming the institutions she engages with into more equitable, community-centered spaces. Mekala holds a BA in Theatre, Literature, and Psychology from Sarah Lawrence College and received additional training from Moscow Art Theatre School and Accademia dell'Arte. www.mekalasridhar.com



VHS by Gage Tarlton

Fifty years in the future, Christopher and Tilly are rebels, living in a world where memories have been taken from the public in order to keep past events a secret and all forms of art have been outlawed to prevent creative thinking.

Gage Tarlton is a playwright from rural North Carolina, currently living in Brooklyn, NY. His play *Pretty Perfect Lives* had its world premiere at The Flea Theater in summer 2024. His other works have been developed with Arterial Projects, The Queer Ensemble, La MaMa ETC, Victory Gardens Theater, The Kennedy Center, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Barter Theatre, and Queen City New Play Initiative. Most recently, he was a finalist for Cycle 2 of Rattlestick Theater's Terrence McNally Incubator Fellowship, in partnership with Tom Kirdahy Productions and the Terrence McNally Foundation. Additionally, he has been a finalist for the UCross + The Blank Theatre's Future of Playwriting Prize, a Kennedy Center Playwriting Fellow, a finalist and three-time semifinalist for The O'Neill's National Playwrights Conference, a finalist for the Neukom Institute's Literary Arts Award for Playwriting, a semifinalist for the New Dramatists' Princess Grace Award Playwriting Fellowship, amongst other achievements. He received a B.A. in Dramatic Arts from UNC-Chapel Hill and is a member of the Dramatists Guild. He is represented by Farrah Cukor at United Talent Agency.



ATRIUM by Hope Villanueva

In a future where a pandemic ravaged the world, the wealthy built themselves a sterile bubble called The Atrium. When a young woman from The Atrium finds connection with an enigmatic “touch worker”, she must choose between sterile isolation and exposure of love before it’s too late.

Hope Villanueva is an AEA stage manager by profession, but her writing explores the humanity of characters in their most challenging moments. She believes that art is intended to make ourselves better as a result of self-reflection. Her work has been presented by Theatre Alliance’s HotHouse, Honolulu Theatre for Youth, Next Act! New Play Summit at Capitol Repertory Theatre, Baltimore Playwrights’ Festival, The Black and Latino Playwrights’ Conference, The Kennedy Center Page to Stage Festival, The Discovery New Play Festival, The Kitchen Dog New Play Festival. The Women’s Voices Festival, INKubator On Air and WTF Occupy the Space Festival, Rapid Lemon, NextStop Theatre Company, and The Wayward Artist. Her plays have been selected as O’Neill Conference Semi-Finalist (2022, 2024) and Finalist (2020). Recently, *Atrium* had a reading at Latinx Playwright’s Circle in NYC. *Vanishing Girl* (with William Yanesh, book and lyrics), was hosted for multiple readings at NYC’s Latiné Musical Theatre Lab and a developmental workshop at Flying V in Washington, DC in 2023. *BUZZ* was selected for the 2023 Valdez Theatre Conference and 2023 AGE Legacy Playwright Grant. Ms. Villanueva is the literary manager at Bay Street Theatre, is a 2025 Kennedy Center Local Artist Residency recipient, and a 2024 Dramatists Guild Foundation National Fellow. She holds an MA in Writing for Stage and Screen (Lesley University) and a MA in Education (Loyola University).



THE AFRICAN SINGULARITY by Louis Williams III

Three young adults discover an alternate, parallel reality in which African Colonization was a catastrophic failure. Feeling compelled by otherworldly forces and personal hope, they transition into this new world to discover who beckoned them there and why.

Louis Williams, III is a Baltimore-bred Playwright and burgeoning Artistic Director. He is a Pan-African storyteller who wields his pen in respect to Black communities around the globe in order to weave narratives about the African diaspora that are simultaneously sophisticated, challenging and optimistic. Louis is a proud Resident Company Member of WombWork Production’s Nu World Art Ensemble and a proud student of Baltimore’s Black Grassroots Think-Tank, Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle. He graduated with his Bachelors from Coppin State University’s Urban Arts Program in 2021 and currently works as the Deck Chief at Everyman Theatre. Louis is also a former board member of The Baltimore City Children and Youth Fund as well as a member of the 2024 cohort of the Black Theatre Coalition/Broadway Across America Fellowship. In addition to the ongoing development of *The African Singularity*, he is also the author of two 10-minute plays; *False Prophets* (winner of the 2019 S. Randolph Edmonds Playwriting Competition) and *For Your Eyes Only* (2019). Louis anticipates the day he is able to begin a production company that focuses on producing narratives that illuminate the often shadowed stories that comprise the Global African Diaspora.



COON - A RACCOON PLAY by Henery Wyand

An experimental exploration of black femininity and ritual. Set in the middle of the woods, a gang of raccoons create a community of love under the pressure of vicious 'coon hunters. They are guided by the very dirt and holes of the home they created. How do these rituals of love create a space of serenity and peace in an environment that is scary to a lot of people, the woods?

Henery Wyand is a Writer, Helen Hayes Award Nominated Director and Award Winning Drag Artist. Recent Directing Credits include: *CHARCH* by Seshat Yonshea Walker (Capital Fringer, Kennedy Center), *Blue Door* (Perisphere Theater), *Alice in Wonderland* (Adirondack Theater Festival). Assistant Directing: *Plaint Girls* (Nu Sass and Theatre Prometheus), *Mrs. Warren Profession* (Off- Broadway), *Calling All Kates*, *The Eighteenth of Percival Von Schmootz*, *Sequence*, *Beau* (ATF). As a Drag Artist, Henery has opened for Chappell Roan and DoeChii. Henery hold a BA in Drama from Vassar and is an alumnus of National Theatre Institute.