



61st Season • 557th Production
JULIANNE ARGYROS STAGE / APRIL 27 - MAY 18, 2025

South Coast Repertory

David Ivers
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Suzanne Appel
MANAGING DIRECTOR

David Emmes & Martin Benson
FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

present

THE STAIRCASE

by Noa Gardner

Rachel Hauck
SCENIC DESIGN

Sara Ryung Clement
COSTUME DESIGN

Josh Epstein
LIGHTING DESIGN

Noel Nichols,
UptownWorks
SOUND DESIGN

Mehanaokala Hind
DRAMATURG/MUSIC DIRECTOR

Joanne DeNaut, CSA
CASTING

Darlene Miyakawa*
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Directed by
Gaye Taylor Upchurch

Harmon & Lea Kong
LEAD HONORARY PRODUCERS

Samuel & Tammy Tang
LEAD HONORARY PRODUCERS

The Playwrights Circle

Anonymous • Sophie & Larry Cripe • Sandy Segerstrom Daniels
Richard Hess • Susan K. Hori • Joel & Judy Slutzky
HONORARY PRODUCERS

The Staircase was commissioned by South Coast Repertory with support from the Elizabeth George Foundation and developed at the 2023 Pacific Playwrights Festival as part of The Lab@SCR.

Recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award.

This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Mother | <i>Ehulani Hope Kāne*</i> |
| Son | <i>Wil Kabele*</i> |
| Sweetheart | <i>Nara Cardenas*</i> |
| Father | <i>Ben Cain*</i> |
| Musician | <i>Blaze Kainui Whiting*</i> |

SETTING: *The bones of a house. Hawai'i.*

LENGTH : *Approximately 90 minutes with no intermission.*

PRODUCTION STAFF






| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Assistant Stage Manager | <i>Juliet Park</i> |
| Production Assistant | <i>Erika Chamroeun Clark</i> |
| Assistant Director | <i>Gia Battista Figueroa</i> |
| Assistant Scenic Designer | <i>Marie Laster</i> |
| Costume Design Assistant | <i>Hannah Creighton</i> |
| Assistant Lighting Designer | <i>Erica Ammerman</i> |
| Associate Sound Designer | <i>Amelia Anello</i> |
| Light Board Operator | <i>Adam Manning</i> |
| Sound Board Operator | <i>Spencer Pepke</i> |
| Deck Crew | <i>Mason Irwin</i> |

***This production of The Staircase is dedicated to
Kathleen “Kati” Kuroda (1947-2025).***

** Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

*Cellular phones, beepers and watch alarms should be turned off or set to non-audible mode during the performance.
Please refrain from unwrapping candy or making other noises that may disturb surrounding patrons.*

*Photos may be taken before and after the show, and during intermission, but not during the performance itself.
Smoking, including the use of vaping, is not permitted anywhere in the theatre.*

  @SouthCoastRepertory    @SouthCoastRep

Four Questions

Playwright Noa Gardner and Director of The Lab@SCR Andy Knight

Andy Knight: When did you start writing plays?

Noa Gardner: I first started writing plays in college. I was an English literature major [at Loyola Marymount University], and I knew I liked writing, but I didn't know what form it would take. In my senior year, they offered a playwriting course. The first semester was 10-minute playwriting, and the semester after that was about full-lengths. In those classes, we read a ton of plays, and I liked the craft that went into playwriting, and I loved watching plays. I didn't get a ton of that in high school growing up in Hawai'i.

People often ask me why I write in this form. The type of theatre that I've studied is a Western craft. But Native Hawaiians, we have our own form of storytelling, and a lot of it is through chanting and hula. In hula, there's plot, there's metaphor, costuming, storytelling. There are all the elements you might find in Western theatre. So, I'm trying to combine both forms together to make something new.

As a playwright, where do you look for inspiration—and what inspired you to write *The Staircase*?

Over the years, I've realized that a lot of my plays have older Hawaiian women in them. It comes from losing my grandmother at a formative age, and so I'm seeking to capture her voice and style. It feels like a natural place to speak from. It's also a person I don't really see honored on a theatrical stage. So, when it comes to inspiration, I start with characters first: who are they, and where do I want them to be by the end? And then I work backwards.

I can't start writing until I feel a catch in my throat. Because then, I know I've hit something emotionally potent that I can start to unpack. The theme of caretaking in *The Staircase* comes from a fear of my parents passing. The play is broaching that subject matter: what do you do with the time that you have with someone who is close to going, and at any moment could finally go?

When I think of *The Staircase*, I think about the idea of "home." The play is, of course, set in a home and follows the everyday homelife of the

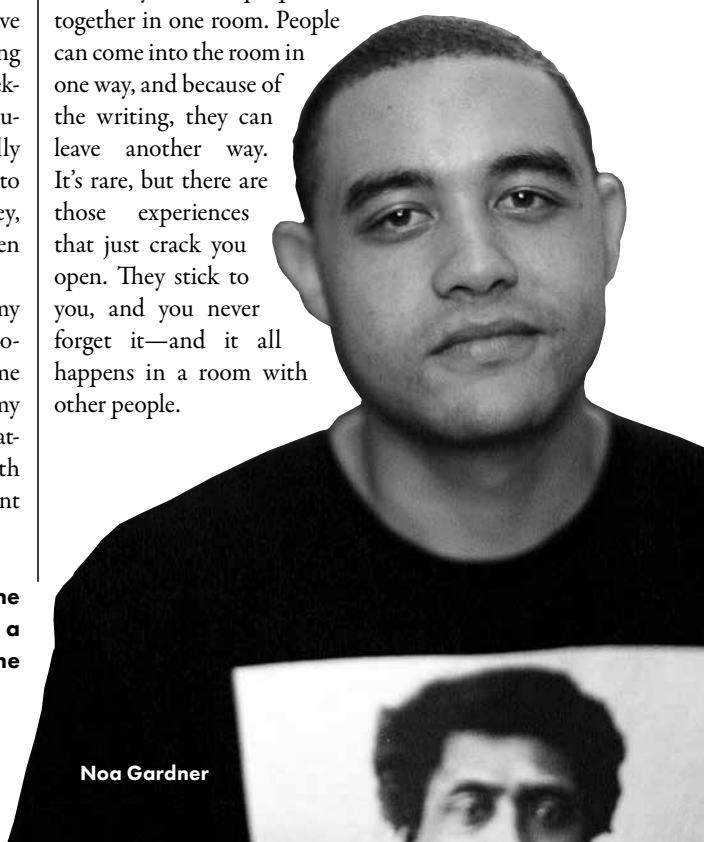
characters, but it also wrestles with bigger questions about making a home for oneself and the significance of homeland. Will you talk a little bit about this?

I think part of it has to do with how Hawaiians are a minority in our own homeland. We account for only around 20% of the population. It's a surreal thing. For my family and my ancestors, it's the only place we've ever known. There's a huge connection to the land. For us, the land isn't a commodity but a part of your DNA. You can trace it in our creation stories—this idea of the land being sacred because it is you and you are it.

We are being pushed out of our own homes in Hawai'i—and you see that idea showing up in the play with the Sweetheart character, who's being pushed out for economic reasons, despite how much she wants to be there. And so, to me, the idea of having a home, because we've been made to be so poor in our own homeland, is a precious, precious thing.

As an artist, what keeps you coming back to the theatre?

Its ability to shift people who are together in one room. People can come into the room in one way, and because of the writing, they can leave another way. It's rare, but there are those experiences that just crack you open. They stick to you, and you never forget it—and it all happens in a room with other people.



Noa Gardner

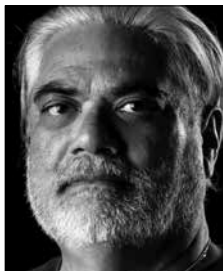
Artist Biographies



BEN CAIN

Father

is grateful to have been a part of the workshops for this play over the past two years and is very happy to have been asked to join the SCR family for the run of this incredible piece. He is from Flint, MI, and is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University. His theatre credits include *A Raisin in the Sun* (A Noise Within), *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (Mark Taper Forum), *King Hedley II* (August Wilson African American Cultural Center) and *The Exonerated* (The Actors' Gang). Film and television credits include "FBI: Most Wanted" (CBS), "Bel-Air" (Peacock), "Cruel Summer" (Freeform), "Buried in Barstow" (Lifetime), "American Rust" season 2 (Amazon), "Beacon 23" season 2 (MGM+) and "That's Funny" (Amazon and Apple). IG: @iambencain



WIL KAHELE

Son

has been a vibrant presence in Honolulu's theatre and film scene for more than three decades. His journey began with local television commercials and independent films, eventually leading to memorable performances at venues like Diamond Head Theatre, Manoa Valley Theatre, and Kumu Kahua Theatre. At Kumu Kahua, he expanded his creative horizons by directing several productions and venturing into playwriting. Notably, he portrayed Michael Mahekona in Kumu Kahua Theatre's 2024 production of *The Kāmau Trilogy* by Alani Apio, a series of plays exploring themes of intergenerational trauma and cultural identity. This appearance at South Coast Repertory marks his debut with the company. (Photo by Brandon Miyagi.)



NARA CARDENAS

Sweetheart

is making her SCR debut. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies from Yale College, and then returned home to perform as a company actor at Honolulu Theatre for Youth. Memorable roles there included Lily in *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse*, Sara Kate in *Afternoon of the Elves*, Desdemona in Y York's *Othello* and Rell in *Queen of Makaha: Rell Sunn* by Bryan Wake. She participated in the New Visions, New Voices workshop/festival at The Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. as Bobi in *Nothing is the Same* by Y York and as part of the ensemble in *Anon(ymous)* by Naomi Iizuka. In recent years, Cardenas worked with WitzEnd Productions on the new musical *The Epic Tale of Hiiaka*, developing the role of Wahineomao. She is the narrator for the Audible book *Heads by Harry* by Lois Ann Yamanaka.



EHULANI HOPE KĀNE

Mother

is a Kanaka Maoli artist, educator and activist with more than 50 years of experience in the performing arts. A mother and grandmother, she has performed and taught across Hawai'i and the West Coast, including roles in *Ulalena on Maui*, *The Lili'u Project* at Leeward Community College and the Bay Area Playwright's Festival in San Francisco. Her theatrical work includes portraying Queen Lili'uokalani and the goddess Pele. She has collaborated on voice and film projects with organizations such as PBS Kids, Kumau Productions, Quazifilms and Disney. Her teaching experience spans over a decade at the University of Hawai'i's Molokai campus, where she was an instructor for Theatre Arts. Kāne's diverse portfolio includes recent roles in *Lovey Lee* (2024) and *Moana Live Action* (2024), as well as short films like *Hawaiian Soul* (2019) and *Mauka to Makai* (2018). She believes that art and beauty are central to the well-being of the human spirit and contin-

ues to approach her work with humility and grace, honoring her craft with creativity, imagination and a joyful reverence. Kāne is delighted to be working with the collective that is *The Staircase* here at South Coast Repertory.



KAINUI BLAZE WHITING
Musician

(they/them) is thrilled to be back on the Argyros Stage. Since their last appearance in SCR's annual *A Christmas Carol* (a truly life-changing experience!),

they have appeared in various productions, including the Emmy Award-winning *It's Your 50th Christmas*, *Charlie Brown*. They are currently studying cultural anthropology of language and dance. And as haumana at Hālau Hula Lani Ola, they are studying traditional hula and Hawaiian cultural arts. Whiting wishes fond mahalo to all who have supported them on this journey to *The Staircase*—including Kumu Mehana Hind and most especially to Kumu Hula Puanani Jung. Whiting dedicates this performance to Masters Kumu Hula Puanani Alama and Leilani Alama.

PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR AND DESIGNERS

NOA GARDNER (*Playwright*). I grew up on 22nd Ave in Kaimuki with my mom and dad and three sisters. My mom is from Maui, but grew up in Hilo, went to Hilo High. My dad is from Compton, California, grew up on Kalsman Street, but went to Gardena High School. When I graduated from Kamehameha in 2012, I went to Loyola Marymount University—not for any particular reason, just thought I'd go there because my sister had gone there. I had a professor named Kelly Younger who taught a Ten-Minute Playwriting course in the Fall and a Full-Length Playwriting course in the Spring. I took both classes. Liked both of them. He pulled me aside after class one day. Told me I should look into graduate schools, said he would help me apply. So I did. I got into the MFA Dramatic Writing program at USC, where I studied under Velina Hasu Houston, Oliver J. Mayer, Paula Cizmar, Luis Alfaro and Boni Alvarez. All of them helped me to figure out how to write and encouraged me, through my plays, to speak to the deep interior lives of Hawaiian people through the only way we know how—through

culture, language, story, song and myth. Thank you all for coming. I am extremely proud to present my first production here at South Coast Repertory.

GAYE TAYLOR UPCHURCH (*Director*) is happy to be back at SCR with Noa's play. She has directed several world premieres including Sanaz Toossi's *Wish You Were Here* (Playwrights Horizons); Danny Tejera's *Toros* (Second Stage Theater); Clare Lizzimore's *Animal* (Atlantic Theater Company and Studio Theatre); Lauren Gunderson's *Half-Life of Marie Curie* (Audible at Minetta Lane Theatre); Anna Ziegler's *The Last Match* (The Old Globe and Roundabout Theatre); Melissa Ross's *Of Good Stock* (South Coast Repertory); Laura Marks's *Bethany* (Women's Project Theater). Other Off-Broadway includes Simon Stephens' *Harper Regan* and *Bluebird* (Atlantic Theater Company); and Lucy Thurber's *Stay* (Rattlestick Theater). Regional: *Member of the Wedding* (Williamstown Theatre Festival); Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's *Romeo & Juliet*, *An Iliad* (toured to West Point) and *As You Like It* (International Falstaff Award for Best Production, toured to The Folger Theatre in DC); and the musical *Songbird* (Two River Theater). Upchurch has developed new work at NY Stage & Film, Page 73, New Dramatists and others and is a Drama League alum and a graduate of University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

RACHEL HAUCK (*Scenic Design*) is very happy to be returning to SCR where previously she designed the scenery for *The Mad Woman In The Volvo*, *Mr. Marmalade*, *The Clean House* and *Sidney Bechet Killed A Man*. Recent design work includes the Broadway productions of *Swept Away*, *Hadestown*, *Good Night Oscar*, *How I Learned To Drive*, *What the Constitution Means to Me* and *Latin History for Morons*. She also recently designed *CATS: The Jellie Ball*, for the Perelman Performing Arts Center, *Galileo: A Rock Musical* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre, *Is It Thursday Yet?* for La Jolla Playhouse and PAC, and Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare's *The Song of Rome* for the Spoleto Festival. Hauck is a graduate from University High School in Irvine and UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television. She is the recipient of Princess Grace and Lily Awards, Drama Desk, Lortel, and Helen Hayes nominations, UCLA's Distinguished Alumni Award, an OBIE Award for Sustained Excellence, a Jeff Award, a Tony nomination for *Good Night Oscar*, and a Tony Award for the design of *Hadestown*.

SARA RYUNG CLEMENT (*Costume Design*) returns to SCR, where her past projects include costumes for *Coleman '72*, *A Shot Rang Out*; *Cambodian Rock Band*; *Little Black Shadows*; *A Doll's House, Part 2*; *4000 Miles*; *Completeness*; and *Becky Shaw*; sets and costumes for *How the World Began*; and the set design for *Absurd Person Singular*. This spring, her design work includes the world premieres of *Fake It Until You Make It* by Larissa FastHorse (set design for Mark Taper Forum and Arena Stage) and *The Reservoir* by Jake Brasch (costumes for Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Alliance Theatre, and the Geffen Playhouse), and the repertory production of *Julius Caesar* (costumes for Oregon Shakespeare Festival in association with upstart crew collective.) Her work has been seen Off-Broadway at Second Stage Uptown, Manhattan Theatre Club, and Ma-Yi Theater Company, and regionally at the Guthrie Theater, Pasadena Playhouse, Boston Lyric Opera, Folger Theatre, Seattle Repertory, Alley Theatre, East West Players, Dallas Theater Center, and others. Recently, Clement joined the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities faculty as an assistant professor (set design). She earned a MFA at Yale School of Drama and an AB from Princeton University. sararyungclement.com

JOSH EPSTEIN (*Lighting Design*) returns to SCR, where his credits include *Galilee, 34*; *The Canadians*; and *M. Butterfly*. Other notable local productions include *Noises Off*, *The Inheritance*, *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (Geffen Playhouse), *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Little Shop of Horrors* (Pasadena Playhouse) and *November* (Mark Taper Forum). Additionally, his work has been seen in theatres across the country, including the Guthrie Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre, Arena Stage, Goodman Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, Cincinnati Playhouse, Baltimore Center Stage, and Alliance Theatre. In addition, Epstein is an ensemble member at the IAMA Theatre Company and is on the faculty at Chapman University. He is an LA Ovation and Knight of Illumination Award winner and a Helen Hayes Award nominee. He was a recipient of the NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Designers and served as an Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference Artistic Council member for many years. Epstein received his MFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and three daughters. joshepsteindesign.com

NOEL NICHOLS, UPTOWNWORKS (*Sound Design*) is a dynamic team of designers that creates collaboratively for theatre, film, podcasts, music produc-

tion and other media. Select sound design highlights include *avaaz* (South Coast Repertory); *Tiny Father* (Geffen Playhouse); *The Sandwich Ministry* (Sky-light Theatre); *Antikoni* (Native Voices); *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* (Denver Center for the Performing Arts); *Becoming Eve* (New York Theatre Workshop); *Which Way To The Stage* (Signature Theatre DC); *the ripple, the wave...* (Berkeley Repertory/Goodman Theatre); *The Scenarios and Problems Between Sisters* (Studio Theatre DC); *Blues Clues & You!* (Round Room Live); *Queen* (Long Wharf Theatre/A.R.T.NY); *Choir Boy* and *Today is my Birthday* (Yale Repertory); *Fires in the Mirror* (Baltimore Center Stage); and *First Down* (59E59). This design was led by Noel Nichols (noelnicholsdesign.com) with co-design by Bailey Trierweiler (btsounddesign.com) and Daniela Hart (uptownworksny.com). Hart, Nichols and Trierweiler received their MFAs in Sound Design from the Yale School of Drama.

MEHANAOKALA HIND (*Dramaturg/Music Director*) is a Kumu Hula (hula master) skilled in hula (dance) and oli (chant). She descends from the hula lineage of Kumu Hula Leina'ala Kalama Heine and earned the rank of Kumu Hula in 2009 when she completed the 'ūniki rites set forth by her Kumu. She has been trained in mele oli (Hawaiian chant forms) from some of Hawai'i's master chanters and earned a M.A. degree in Hawaiian Studies from the University of Hawai'i. Hind was the Creative Director for the hula drama *Keaomelemele*, which was the featured theater showcase at the 2009 World Conference on Hula. Hind brings a breadth and depth of relationships with Native Hawaiian communities, leaders, schools and organizations that is hard to match. She is the Senior Advisor to the CEO at the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement.

DARLENE MIYAKAWA (*Production Stage Manager*) has enjoyed working in both theater and opera, focusing on new works and adaptations. At SCR: *Wish You Were Here*; *Galilee, 34*; *A Raisin in the Sun* (replacement SM); *Coleman '72*; *Sheepdog*; and *Ella Enchanted*. Recent regional theatre credits include Arizona Theatre Company, Barrington Stage, East West Players, Geffen Playhouse, Getty Villa, Geva Theatre Center, Playwrights' Arena and The Old Globe. Past Opera and Symphony credits include California Symphony, Fort Worth Opera, LA Opera, LA Philharmonic, Long Beach Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Maine, OPERA San Antonio, Opera San Jose, Opera Santa Barbara, Piedmont Opera and Tri-Cities Opera.

DAVID IVERS (*Artistic Director*) is responsible for the overall artistic operation of the theatre. The 2019-20 season was the first he programmed for SCR and during that season, he directed *She Loves Me*. In addition, he directed the 2024 production of *Joan*, the 2021 Pacific Playwrights Festival reading of *Coleman '72* by Charlie Oh and the 2022 reading of Spenser Davis' *A Million Tiny Pieces*. He spent August of last season directing Guthrie Theater's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. He was last seen onstage at SCR as John in Richard Greenberg's world premiere of *A Shot Rang Out* and as part of his SCR tenure, created the theatre's Outside SCR program in partnership with Mission San Juan Capistrano. Prior to his appointment as Artistic Director, he directed the SCR-Berkeley Repertory Theatre co-production of *One Man, Two Guvnors*. Before arriving to SCR in his current capacity, Ivers was artistic director for Arizona Theatre Company and, before that, served more than 20 years as an actor and director at Utah Shakespeare Festival, with the last six as artistic director. He was a resident artist at Denver Center for the Performing Arts for a decade, acting in and/or directing more than 40 plays, and has helmed productions at many of the nation's leading regional theatres, including the Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and South Coast Repertory. Ivers' early career included serving as associate artistic director of Portland Repertory Theatre and appearing in productions at some of the nation's most prestigious theatres, including Portland Center Stage and the Oregon, Alabama and Idaho Shakespeare festivals. He has taught at the University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, Southern Utah University and Southern Oregon University. He earned his BA from Southern Oregon University and his MFA from the University of Minnesota.

SUZANNE APPEL (*Managing Director*). For more than two decades, Suzanne Appel has pursued a personal mission to

HARMON & LEA KONG (*Lead Honorary Producers*) are thrilled to add their support to *The Staircase*, serving as Honorary Producers of a mainstage production for the third time. Through their tremendous generosity, they provided leadership support as Season Producers of Outside SCR for four consecutive years through Harmon's company Apriem Advisors, served as Honorary Producers on five Theatre for Young Audience productions (including this season's *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*) and are subscribers to First Nights. Lea and Harmon are passionate supporters of bold and creative initiatives that exemplify the magic of theatre. In addition to Lea's leadership of serving on the Board of Trustees since 2019, Lea and Harmon will together serve as Gala Co-Chairs for SCR's reimaged Gala that will take place entirely onsite at the theatre this fall.

SAMUEL & TAMMY TANG (*Lead Honorary Producers*) have a history of support with SCR that goes back to 2014 when they first served as Honorary Producers of *tokyo fish story*. Since then, they have had an impressive range of support with *The Staircase* marking the seventh production the couple has underwritten, in addition to serving as Honorary Producers of the Pacific Playwrights Festival for seven years and as members of the Playwrights Circle last year. They have been First Night subscribers for more than a decade and, through Sam's company Montauk TriGuard, members of the Corporate Circle. Both Tammy and Sam have played active leadership roles at SCR. Sam served on the Board of Trustees for nine years, including two years as Board President. Together, they co-chaired SCR's 2021 Gala and the following year Tammy served as sole chair of the 2022 Gala, *Play On!*. Tammy joined the Board earlier this season. Both Tammy and Sam heartily endorse SCR's efforts to engage culturally diverse artists and believe passionately in the power of live theatre.

THE PLAYWRIGHTS CIRCLE (*Honorary Producer*) consists of avid playgoers who collectively help underwrite a world premiere production each spring. Its individual members include long-time subscribers, major annual fund donors, endowment supporters and trustees. Since its inception in 2002, The Playwrights Circle has underwritten works by writers including Eleanor Burgess (*Galilee*, 34), Charlie Oh (*Coleman '72*), Christine Quintana (*Clean/Espejos*), Kemp Powers (*Little Black Shadows*), Lucas Hnath (*A Doll's House, Part 2*), Rajiv Joseph (*Mr. Wolf*), Beau Willimon (*The Parisian Woman*), Lauren Gunderson (*Silent Sky*), Richard Greenberg (*A Naked Girl on the Appian Way* and *Our Mother's Brief Affair*), and Julia Cho (*The Language Archive*). SCR is especially grateful to The Playwrights Circle for its leadership and dedication to helping bring new plays to Orange County audiences—and to the American theatre.

Anonymous • Sophie & Larry Cripe • Sandy Segerstrom Daniels
Richard Hess • Susan K. Hori • Joel & Judy Slutzky

bring people together through transformative experiences led by form-challenging artists. Working in partnership with Artistic Director David Ivers and reporting to the Board of Trustees, Appel is responsible for providing strategic leadership for SCR's long-term sustainability and growth. She oversees SCR's business operations, including fund-raising, marketing and community relations. Her accomplishments as Managing Director of Off-Broadway's Vineyard Theatre (2017-2024) include expanding the revenue-generating capacity of the organization, bringing on seven new board members, negotiating a two-production, industry-first producing partnership with Audible (David Cale's *Harry Clarke* and Ngozi Anyanwu's *Good Grief*), and transferring four Tony-nominated productions to Broadway. She is perhaps most proud of working with Artistic Director Sarah Stern to keep all Vineyard Theatre full-time staff employed during the COVID pandemic and developing a 2022-26 plan raising all arts worker wages. Appel joined The Vineyard after serving as Director of External Affairs for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Prior to her role at Hubbard Street, she served as Managing Director at Cutting Ball Theater in San Francisco, where she nearly doubled the organization's operating budget and built a two-plus-month operating reserve in four years. She was awarded the Alfred Drake Award from Brooklyn College, an honor given to an accomplished theatre professional who has made significant contributions to the American theatre. Her previous positions include roles with Dance Theater Workshop, Yale Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Wesleyan University. Her volunteer work includes serving on the Board for Arts Orange County and South Coast Metro Alliance. Previously, she served as Chair of the Wesleyan Fund (2020-24). She is a graduate of Wesleyan University, Yale School of Drama and Yale School of Management (MFA/MBA).

MARTIN BENSON (*Founding Artistic Director*), (Mar. 15, 1937-Nov. 30, 2024) co-founder of SCR, directed nearly one-fifth of SCR's productions, including the 2020 production of *Outside Mullingar*. In 2008, he and David Emmes received the Margo Jones Award for their lifetime commitment to theatre excellence and fostering the art and craft of American playwriting. They also accepted SCR's 1988 Tony

Award for Outstanding Resident Professional Theatre and won the 1995 Theatre LA Ovation Award for Lifetime Achievement. Benson received the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Distinguished Achievement in Directing an unparalleled seven times for George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*, *Misalliance* and *Heartbreak House*; John Millington Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*; Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*; Sally Nemeth's *Holy Days*; and the world premiere of Margaret Edson's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Wit*, which he also directed at Seattle Repertory Theatre and Houston's Alley Theatre. He directed American classics such as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and distinguished himself in staging contemporary work, including the critically acclaimed California premiere of William Nicholson's *Shadowlands*. He directed revivals of Beth Henley's *Abundance* and Horton Foote's *The Trip to Bountiful*; and Samuel D. Hunter's *The Whale and Rest* (world premiere); *The Whipping Man* by Matthew Lopez; and *The Roommate* by Jen Silverman (West Coast premiere). Benson received his BA in Theatre from San Francisco State University.

DAVID EMMES (*Founding Artistic Director*) is co-founder of South Coast Repertory. He received the Margo Jones Award for his lifetime commitment to theatre excellence and to fostering the art of American playwriting. In addition, he has received numerous awards for productions he has directed during his SCR career. He directed the world premieres of Amy Freed's *Safe in Hell*, *The Beard of Avon* and *Freedomland*; Thomas Babe's *Great Day in the Morning*; Keith Reddin's *Rum and Coke* and *But Not for Me*; and Neal Bell's *Cold Sweat*; the American premieres of Terry Johnson's *Unsuitable for Adults*; and Joe Penhall's *Dumb Show*; and the Southland premiere of *Top Girls* (at SCR and the Westwood Playhouse). Other productions he has directed include *Red*, *New England*, *Arcadia*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Woman in Mind* and *You Never Can Tell*, which he restaged for the Singapore Festival of Arts. He has served as a theatre panelist and onsite evaluator for the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as a panelist for the California Arts Council. After attending Orange Coast College, he received his BA and MA from San Francisco State University and his PhD from USC.



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



The Scenic, Costume, Lighting and Sound Designers in LORT theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, IATSE.



The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.



The theatre is a member of Arts Orange County, the official local arts agency.