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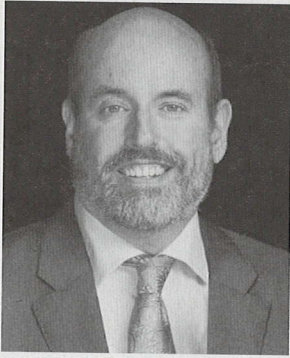
# KRISTINA WONG, SWEATSHOP OVERLORD

SEPTEMBER 20 - OCTOBER 16, 2022

PRODUCTION SPONSOR

Brian and Silvija Devine

La Jolla Playhouse's 2022/2023 subscription season is dedicated to Audrey S. Geisel.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

In mid-March 2020, when the pandemic shutdown first started – back when being on something called Zoom was still a novelty – the Playhouse’s artistic department assembled for our first virtual meeting. We were a somber group, confronting the same awful question facing every theatre artist: what do you do when you’re not allowed to do the thing you do?

Happily, the Playhouse’s answer arrived sometime during that Zoom meeting. Thanks to our Without Walls (WOW) series of immersive and site-responsive experiences, we’d worked with many artists used to creating theatre in unusual and unexpected places. Could we pivot our WOW programming to a virtual world? Could we still find unique and organic ways to connect in the midst of the biggest disconnect of our lifetimes?

Over the next year and a half, we commissioned a dozen new works and shared fourteen Digital WOW shows – from international artists like Gob Squad, nationally-renowned companies like 600 Highwaymen and Culture Clash, and a slew of talented San Diegans such as David Israel Reynoso, Blindspot Collective and Animal Cracker Conspiracy. We aired monthly Coffees with the Playhouse to keep the Playhouse community engaged with each other.

No artist I know, however, pivoted as inventively and productively as Kristina Wong. Sidelined from performing her new solo show, *Kristina Wong for Public Office*, she turned her horror and frustration with the government’s ineffective pandemic response into a supremely impressive moment of community building. She assembled a posse of hundreds of “aunties” to pitch in and make homemade masks for underserved (or outright forgotten) groups.

As an answer to the question “what do you do when you’re not allowed to do the thing you do,” Kristina’s is the best I’ve encountered. As you’ll see in *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord*, she confronted systemic inequality, kept people safe, rallied a community – and created a beautiful, funny and moving new show about all of it.

### CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY

THE RICH FAMILY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
OF LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

La Jolla Playhouse acknowledges the land on which our theatres sit as the unceded territory of the **KUMEYAAY NATION**. Today, the Kumeyaay people continue to maintain their political sovereignty and cultural traditions as vital members of the San Diego community. Their contributions to our region are tremendous and we thank them for their stewardship.

The Rich Family

A  
SENIOR

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS

Christopher Ashley  
*The Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse*

Debby Buchholz  
*Managing Director of La Jolla Playhouse*

# KRISTINA WONG, SWEATSHOP OVERLORD

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY  
KRISTINA WONG\*

DIRECTED BY  
CHAY YEW

SCENIC DESIGN	JUNGHYUN GEORGIA LEE
COSTUME DESIGN	LINDA CHO
LIGHTING DESIGN	AMITH CHANDRASHAKER
SOUND DESIGN	MIKHAIL FIKSEL
PROJECTION DESIGN	CAITE HEVNER
STAGE MANAGER	JESS SLOCUM*
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	TOPAZ COOKS*
SENIOR PRODUCTION MANAGER	BENJAMIN SEIBERT
PRODUCTION MANAGER	BECCA DUHAIME
GENERAL MANAGER	RYAN MEISHEID
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	ERIC KEEN-LOUIE

*Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord* had its world stage premiere at New York Theatre Workshop,  
Jim Nicola, Artistic Director; Jeremy Blocker, Managing Director, 2021

## THE CAST

Kristina Wong\*

*Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord* runs 90 minutes and is performed without an intermission.

## ADDITIONAL STAFF

Associate Director.....	Miranda Cornell	Associate Projection Designer .....	Luz Gaitan
Associate Lighting Designer.....	Eric Norbury	Assistant Scenic Designers .....	Kim Juhee, Ant Ma
Associate Sound Designer.....	Adam Salberg	People and Culture Consultants.....	Cornerstone Consulting HR

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Shirley L. Ng • New York Theatre Workshop

Cover Photo Credit: Kristina Wong in *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord*, photo by Tom Fowler



\* Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. The theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association.



This theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 122.



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



La Jolla Playhouse is a member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for the nonprofit professional theatre.



This theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.



UC San Diego M.F.A. Candidates in residence at La Jolla Playhouse.

## The Green Room

Join us before the show on the first Friday of the run to hear directly from writers, directors and designers about their process from the page to opening night.

Friday, September 23 at 7:00 pm

## ACCESS Performance

On select performances, La Jolla Playhouse provides American Sign Language interpretation for audience members who are d/Deaf or hard-of-hearing and audio description for patrons who are blind or have low vision.

Saturday, October 8 at 2:00 pm

## Talkback Tuesdays

### Sewing Circle with Auntie Squad Members:

Join us for a special post-show discussion featuring the real-life aunties from within the play.

Tuesday, September 27 and Tuesday, October 4  
after the 7:30pm performances

## Discovery Sunday

Join special guest speakers post-performance as they engage audience members in a moderated discussion exploring the themes in the play.

Sunday, October 9 after the 2:00 pm  
performance



**KRISTINA**  
is a perform  
elected rep  
Following  
York Theat  
*Overlord* w  
Wong was

Drama (2022). *Sweatshop*  
awards sweep this year in  
Lucille Lortel Award and t  
other works have been pr  
UK, Hong Kong and Afric  
shows on Comedy Centra  
Wong's work is included in  
*Women of Color*. Wong w  
*Sewing Squad Guide to M*  
*Justice*, published by Univ  
had Artist Residencies at M  
Ojai Playwrights Festival. V  
grants from Creative Capit  
Innovation, National Perfo  
Fellowship from the Los An  
nine Los Angeles Artist-in-  
Group's Sherwood Award,  
is currently developing a ne  
*Flew Over the Cuckoo's Ne*  
*Wong Street Journal*, and  
career highlights include th  
Players, "Local Hero of the  
Pacific Honoree from Fuse  
issue from *LA Weekly*.

### CHAY YEW, Director

directed La Jolla Playhouse's  
*Rock Band*. His credits inclu  
Public, Playwrights Horizons  
Rattlestick, Ensemble Stud  
Asian American Theatre Co  
American Conservatory Thea  
Oregon Shakespeare Festiva  
Center, Humana Festival, Ke  
Long Wharf Theatre, Hartfo  
Playhouse, Huntington Thea  
Mammoth, Victory Gardens,  
Northlight Theatre, Curious  
Playmakers Rep, Round Hou  
Geva Theatre, Empty Space,  
Repertory Theatre. Opera: Ta  
Angeles Philharmonic. Award  
awards.



**KRISTINA WONG\***, *Writer/Performer*

is a performance artist, actor, comedian, writer and elected representative in Koreatown Los Angeles. Following its highly acclaimed premiere at New York Theater Workshop, *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord* was a *New York Times* "Critic's Pick." Wong was then named a Pulitzer Prize finalist in Drama (2022). *Sweatshop Overlord* also garnered a veritable awards sweep this year including the Drama Desk Award, the Lucille Lortel Award and the Outer Critics Circle Award. Wong's other works have been presented across North America, the UK, Hong Kong and Africa. She has been a guest on late night shows on Comedy Central, NBC and FX. As a published writer, Wong's work is included in Routledge's *Contemporary Plays by Women of Color*. Wong wrote the introduction for *The Auntie Sewing Squad Guide to Mask Making, Radical Care and Racial Justice*, published by University of California Press. She also had Artist Residencies at MacDowell, Hermitage, Montalvo and Ojai Playwrights Festival. Wong's work has been awarded with grants from Creative Capital, The MAP Fund, Center for Cultural Innovation, National Performance Network, a COLA Master Artist Fellowship from the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, nine Los Angeles Artist-in-Residence awards, Center Theatre Group's Sherwood Award, and the Art Matters Foundation. She is currently developing a new work during her three year Artist-in-Residence at ASU Gammage. Other major projects include *Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Going Green the Wong Way*, *The Wong Street Journal*, and *Kristina Wong for Public Office*. Other career highlights include the Visionary Award from East West Players, "Local Hero of the Year" nominee from KCET/PBS, Asian Pacific Honoree from Fuse TV and the Best Of Arts Los Angeles issue from *LA Weekly*.

**CHAY YEW**, *Director*

directed La Jolla Playhouse's acclaimed production of *Cambodian Rock Band*. His credits include Off-Broadway productions at The Public, Playwrights Horizons, NYTW, Signature Theatre Company, Rattlestick, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Playwrights Realm, National Asian American Theatre Company, Ma-Yi Theatre. Regional: American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Rep, South Coast Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Goodman Theatre, Denver Theater Center, Humana Festival, Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, Long Wharf Theatre, Hartford Stage, Seattle Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Huntington Theatre, Portland Center Stage, Woolly Mammoth, Victory Gardens, East West Players, Writers Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Curious Theatre, Mosaic Theatre Company, Playmakers Rep, Round House, Teatro Vista, Laguna Playhouse, Geva Theatre, Empty Space, Cornerstone Theater, Singapore Repertory Theatre. Opera: Tanglewood Music Center, Los Angeles Philharmonic. Awards: Obie, Craig Noel, Drama-Logue awards.

**JUNGHYUN GEORGIA LEE**, *Scenic Design*

is a Korean-born, New York-based scenic and costume designer. She has designed for New York Theatre Workshop (*Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord*; Drama Desk Award nomination), The Public Theater (*The Chinese Lady*), Ma-Yi, Soho Rep, the Play Company, Alley Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage, Huntington Theatre Company, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, PlayMakers Rep and the Acting Company. She earned her M.F.A. at the Yale School of Drama.

**LINDA CHO**, *Costume Design*

La Jolla Playhouse: *Bhagin' It: A Bangin' New Musical*, *The Orphan of Zhao*, *Wild Goose Dreams*, *Limelight*. Broadway: *POTUS, Take Me Out, The Great Society, The Lifespan of a Fact, Anastasia* (Tony nomination), *A Gentlemen's Guide to Love and Murder* (Tony Award), *The Velocity of Autumn*. Off-Broadway: *Twilight, Cambodian Rock Band* (Signature Theatre), *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord, Endlings* (NYTW). Regional: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (ACT), *Noir* (Alley Theatre). Opera: *Samson et Dalila* (Met Opera). Other awards: TDF's Irene Sharaff Young Master Award, Ruth Morley Design Award. Other: Advisory Committee Member of American Theatre Wing. Education: M.F.A. from Yale School of Drama. [lindacho.com](http://lindacho.com).

**AMITH CHANDRASHAKER**, *Lighting Design*

La Jolla Playhouse: *Bhagin' It: A Bangin' New Musical*. Amith's work has been seen at The Public Theater, Second Stage, Theatre for a New Audience, Manhattan Theatre Club, Playwrights Horizons, Signature Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Ars Nova, Soho Rep, Berkeley Rep, The Atlantic, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Omaha, Opera Colorado and The Atlanta Opera. New Dance works by Alexander Ekman, Liz Gerring, Benoit Swan-Pouffer, Sidra Bell and Rennie Harris. Recipient of the Drama Desk and Henry Hewes awards. Assistant Professor of Lighting Design at The University of Maryland's School for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies.

**MIKHAIL FIKSEL**, *Sound Design*

is a designer, composer, musician and DJ based in Chicago and NYC. La Jolla Playhouse: *Cambodian Rock Band, Seize the King, Tiger Style!*. Other recent credits: The Public Theater, Playwrights Horizons, The Civilians, The Goodman, Chicago Shakespeare, Steppenwolf, Albany Park Theatre Project, Third Rail Projects, Manhattan Theatre Club, The Geffen Playhouse, The Old Globe, Kennedy Center, Center Theatre Group, Dallas Theater Center, South Coast Repertory, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Victory Gardens, Writers Theatre and several audio plays with Make-Believe Association. He is a recipient of two Lucille Lortel Awards, multiple Joseph Jefferson Awards, the Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award, and is a proud member of TSDCA and USA.

# THE COMPANY

## CAITE HEVNER, Projection Design

Broadway: *In Transit*; Derren Brown: *SECRET*; Harry Connick Jr., *A Celebration of Cole Porter*. Select New York: *Sweatshop Overlord*, NYTW; *Between the Lines*, Tony Kiser Theatre; *Twenty Sided Tavern*, DR2; *Bella Bella*, MTC; *Collective Rage*, MCC; *Ugly Lies the Bone*, Roundabout Underground; *Fidelio*, Heartbeat Opera; *Parade* and *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, Manhattan Concert Productions/Lincoln Center. Select Regional: Alley, Arena, Alliance, Baltimore Center Stage, Dallas Theater Center, Guthrie, Kennedy Center's Broadway Center Stage, Long Wharf, McCarter, MUNY, Pasadena Playhouse, Seattle 5th Avenue, TUTS, Woolly Mammoth. Video Coordinator for BC/EFA's *Broadway Bares* since 2018. Co-Chair of USA829's Respectful Workplace Committee. [www.caitedesign.com](http://www.caitedesign.com) Instagram: @caitehevner

## JESS SLOCUM\*, Production Stage Manager

La Jolla Playhouse: *Indecent*, *Side Show*, *Ruined*, *The Third Story*, *Memphis*, *Most Wanted*. Regional: *Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *Dial M for Murder*, *El Borracho*, *Hurricane Diane*, *Noura*, *As You Like It*, *They Promised Her the Moon*, *Familiar*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *tokyo fish story*, *In Your Arms*, *Bright Star*, *Othello*, *Water by the Spoonful*, *Pygmalion*, *A Room with a View*, *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, dozens more (The Old Globe); *Noura* (Shakespeare Theatre Company). Education: Vanderbilt University.

## TOPAZ COOKS\*, Assistant Stage Manager

La Jolla Playhouse: *to the yellow house*. Regional: *Cymbeline*, *Intimate Apparel* (Utah Shakespeare Festival); *Akeelah and the Bee* (Children's Theatre Company); *Romeo and Juliet* (The Old Globe); *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Clarence Brown Theater); *Miracle on 34th Street*, *Memphis*, *Something Rotten!* (Moonlight Stage Productions). M.F.A. from UC San Diego.



## CHRISTOPHER

Director of La Jolla Playhouse since 2007. Directed premieres of *Company*, *Memphis*, *Escalator*

*Dram of Drummhicit*, *Restoration*, *as His Girl Friday*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Dream*, *Freaky Friday* and *Xanadu*. La Jolla Playhouse's *Without Walls* (MTC) Series and the Resident Theatre Series directed *Come From Away* for Netflix. Other screen credits include *Lucky Stiff*, and the American *Blown Sideways Through Life* (Tony Awards), *Diana: The Musical* (Tony Award nomination), *Xanadu* (Tony Award nomination), *All Shook Up* (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle Award nomination), Toronto, Ontario. Other national tours include *Xanadu*, *All Shook Up* and *Summer Musical*. New York stage credits include *Jeffrey* (Lucille Lortel and Obba Babalundun Award), *Ever Told*, *Valhalla* (Lucille Lortel Award), *Only, Wonder of the World*, *The Night Hank Williams Die* (Lucille Lortel Award), among others. Honors include Princess Grace Award, the Distinguished Alumni Award and an NEA/TCG Director Fellowship.



## DES McANUFF

served as La Jolla Playhouse from 1983 through April 2007. Under his leadership, he garnered more than 100 Tony Awards for Company

Playhouse to Broadway credits include *Summer Musical*; *Doctor Zhivago*; *Jersey Boys* (four Tony Awards); *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (five Tony nominations); *Townshend on The Who's Tommy* (Tony Award for Best Director) and *Big River* (Tony Award for Best Musical). He also directed the play *Farnsworth Invention* and *Yoshiko*, which he co-wrote. Opera credits include *Cousin Bette* (director, Tony Award) and *Quills* (executive producer). He was Artistic Director at Canada's Stratford Festival from 2006 to 2012. In 2012, he was awarded the Governor General's National Arts Center Award.

## PATRON SERVICES

### ACCESSIBILITY



Designated wheelchair-accessible seating is available and accessible parking is provided by UC San Diego in the South Parking Structure (formerly known as Osler). Wheelchair seat locations are available for wheelchair users and a companion. Additionally, a golf cart is available to assist patrons with accessibility needs to and from the drop-off location. You may pull into the Passenger/Ride Share Drop-Off area and a greeter will assist you. The Playhouse offers assisted listening devices free of charge at the Patron Information Booth for any patron who would like amplified sound (subject to availability). Please provide a credit card or ID for temporary deposit.

Listening Devices Provided in Part by  
**LAS PATRONAS**  
Partnering with the San Diego Community since 1946

**CHILDREN** under the age of 6 are not permitted in the theatre during performances unless otherwise posted. Unaccompanied minors ages 12 and under are not permitted in the theatre. Out of respect for fellow audience members and the performers, babes in arms are not permitted in the theatre during performances.

### CONCESSIONS AND DINING



Start your night off right with bar and concessions service from James' Place: serving beer, wine, sodas and individually-wrapped snacks. Additionally, James' Place provides dining service starting at 5:00pm before evening performances.

### COVID-19 SAFETY

The Playhouse continues to follow guidelines and strategies provided by San Diego County, California Department of Public Health, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for all in-person activities. Please go to [LaJollaPlayhouse.org/plan-your-visit/covid-safety](http://LaJollaPlayhouse.org/plan-your-visit/covid-safety) for our latest policy updates.

### LATE SEATING

Should you arrive late for any performance or need to leave your seat during the performance, you may be asked to wait in the lobby until an appropriate moment. To minimize any disturbance to actors or other patrons, you may stand or be seated in the first available location by House Management even if not your assigned location. Please be advised that some performances may not allow for late seating or return to your assigned seat.

### PARKING AND SHUTTLES

For the latest parking and shuttle information, please go to [LaJollaPlayhouse.org/plan-your-visit/parking](http://LaJollaPlayhouse.org/plan-your-visit/parking)

**PATRON SERVICES** is located in the lobby or courtyard of each theatre. A volunteer is available to distribute assisted listening devices and answer questions.

### PHOTOGRAPHY/RECORDING DEVICES

Photography and video or audio recording of performances is strictly prohibited.

**PLEASE SILENCE** or turn off all electronic devices, including cell phones and watches, before the performance.

### SAFETY IN THE THEATRE DISTRICT

La Jolla Playhouse is constantly working with UC San Diego Police Department and Transportation and Parking Services to maintain a safe and secure environment in the parking lots. Patrons are welcome to use the UC San Diego escort service by contacting UC San Diego Community Service Officers (CSOs) at (858) 534-9255 (WALK). Further questions regarding security, please contact UC San Diego Police at (858) 534-4357 (HELP).

## PLAYHOUSE LEADERSHIP

**Manager**  
*How, Ruined, The Third Story, Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas, El Borracho, Hurricane Diane, Her the Moon, Familiar, Lapin Agile, Love's Labour's Lost, Bright Star, Othello, Water with a View, Robin and the Hood*; Noura (Shakespeare Theatre Company). M.F.A. from

**Manager**  
*Use. Regional: Cymbeline, A Midsummer Night's Dream (Festival); Akeelah and the Angel, Romeo and Juliet (The Old Globe), Dog in the Night-Time, 34th Street, Memphis, The Color Purple (Productions). M.F.A. from*

**SHUTTLES**  
 Shuttle service and shuttle service go to **LaJollaPlayhouse**.  
**Bus/paratransit/parking**

**ACCESS** is located in the lobby of the theatre. A volunteer is available to provide assistive listening devices and other accommodations.

**RECORDING DEVICES**  
 Video or audio recording of performances is strictly prohibited.

**PLEASE** turn off all electronic devices, including cell phones and watches, during performances.

**THEATRE DISTRICT**  
 We are constantly working with UC San Diego Department and Transportation to maintain a safe and secure parking lots. Patrons are welcome to request a shuttle or Diego escort service by contacting Community Service Officers (CSOs) at (619) 594-1111 (ext. 2111). Further questions regarding parking contact UC San Diego Police at (858) 534-3111.



**CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY**, *The Rich Family* Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse

has served as La Jolla Playhouse's Artistic Director since 2007. During his tenure, he directed the world premieres of *Come From Away*, *Diana: The Musical*, *Memphis*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *The Squirrels*, *A Dram of Drummhicit*, *Restoration* and *Chasing the Song*, as well as *His Girl Friday*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Freaky Friday* and *Xanadu*. He also spearheaded the Playhouse's Without Walls (WOW) initiative, the DNA New Work Series and the Resident Theatre program. Mr. Ashley recently directed *Come From Away* for AppleTV+ and *Diana: The Musical* for Netflix. Other screen credits include the feature films *Jeffrey* and *Lucky Stiff*, and the American Playhouse production of *Blown Sideways Through Life* for PBS. Mr. Ashley's Broadway credits include *Come From Away* (Tony and Outer Critics Circle Awards), *Diana: The Musical*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Memphis* (Tony Award nomination), *Xanadu*, *Leap of Faith* (Drama Desk Award nomination), *All Shook Up* and *The Rocky Horror Show* (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle Award nominations). He also helmed productions of *Come From Away* in London (Olivier Award nomination), Toronto, Australia and on national tour. Other national tours include *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Memphis*, *Xanadu*, *All Shook Up* and *Seussical: The Musical*. Additional New York stage credits include *Blown Sideways Through Life*, *Jeffrey* (Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards), *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, *Valhalla* (Lucille Lortel Award nomination), *Regrets Only*, *Wonder of the World*, *Communicating Doors*, *Bunny Bunny*, *The Night Hank Williams Died* and *Fires in the Mirror* (Lucille Lortel Award), among others. Mr. Ashley is the recipient of the Princess Grace Award, the Drama League Director Fellowship and an NEA/TCG Director Fellowship.



**DES McANUFF**, *Director Emeritus*

served as La Jolla Playhouse's Artistic Director from 1983 through 1994, and from 2001 through April 2007. Under his leadership, the Playhouse garnered more than 300 awards, including the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. His Playhouse to Broadway credits include: *SUMMER: The Donna Summer Musical*; *Doctor Zhivago*; *Jesus Christ Superstar*; *Jersey Boys* (four Tony Awards); *Billy Crystal's 700 Sundays* (Tony Award); *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (five Tony nominations); director and co-author with Pete Townshend on *The Who's Tommy* (Tony and Olivier Awards for Best Director) and *Big River* (seven Tony Awards), among others. He also directed the premieres of Aaron Sorkin's *The Farnsworth Invention* and *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots*, which he co-wrote. Opera credits: *Faust* (The Met, ENO). Film credits: *Cousin Bette* (director), *Iron Giant* (producer, BAFTA Award) and *Quills* (executive producer). Recipient of the Drama League's 2006 Julia Hansen Award, Mr. McAnuff served as Artistic Director at Canada's Stratford Festival from 2007 through 2012. In 2012, he was awarded Canada's esteemed Governor General's National Arts Center Award and the Order of Canada.



**DEBBY BUCHHOLZ**, *Managing Director* of La Jolla Playhouse

joined the Playhouse in 2002, serving first as General Manager before becoming Managing Director. She is a Vice President of the League of Resident Theaters (LORT) and a member of its Executive Committee.

She is a recipient of a San Diego Women Who Mean Business Award from The San Diego Business Journal. Prior to joining La Jolla Playhouse, she served as Counsel to The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. She was a faculty member of the Smithsonian Institution's program on Legal Problems of Museum Administration. Prior to The Kennedy Center, she served as a corporate attorney in New York City and Washington, D.C. She is a graduate of UC San Diego and Harvard Law School. Ms. Buchholz and her husband, noted author and White House economic policy advisor Todd Buchholz, live in Solana Beach and are the proud parents of Victoria, Katherine and Alexia.



**ERIC KEEN-LOUIE**, *Executive Producer*

(he/him) joined the Playhouse in 2018 as Producing Director, before becoming Executive Producer in 2021. He previously worked at The Old Globe (Associate Producer and Associate Artistic Director) and The Public Theater (Assistant to the Associate

Producer and Director of Special Projects). He assisted Broadway producer Margo Lion on *Hairspray* and *Caroline, or Change*. He is a graduate of Columbia University where he received his M.F.A. in Theatre Management & Producing as a Dean's Fellow and New York University where he earned a B.A. in Dramatic Literature. He serves as Secretary on the National Alliance of Musical Theatre's Board of Directors. He shares his commute to La Jolla with his husband Anthony Keen-Louie, an administrator in student affairs at UC San Diego. He is a proud third-generation Chinese-American.

### LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE

is a place where artists and audiences come together to create what's new and next in the American theatre, from Tony Award-winning productions, to imaginative programs for young audiences, to interactive experiences outside our theatre walls. Founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer, the Playhouse is currently led by Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Managing Director Debby Buchholz. Internationally-renowned for the development of new plays and musicals, the Playhouse has mounted 105 world premieres, commissioned 60 new works, and sent 33 productions to Broadway – including the currently-running musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

THE  
Auntie Sewing Squad  
Guide to  
MASK MAKING,  
RADICAL CARE,  
and RACIAL  
JUSTICE



The following is Kristina Wong's forward to the book *The Auntie Sewing Squad Guide to Mask Making, Radical Care, and Racial Justice*, edited by Mai-Linh K. Hong, Chrissy Yee Lau and Preeti Sharma — available at any online bookseller.

When I first started the Auntie Sewing Squad, the thinking was, When factory-made masks become readily available on the market, we will retire. What I didn't realize then was that tens of thousands of people in America can't access even cheap factory-made masks. Communities long forgotten by the federal government before the pandemic were now getting hit extra hard.

Never did I imagine that I would pull my mother and her friends out of retirement to order them around in my remote "sweatshop." Never did I imagine that I would be politicizing the term *sweatshop* to point to the failure of the federal government in preparing us for this crisis. Never did I imagine how politically polarizing the act of wearing a mask would become. Never did I imagine how political the act of sewing two pieces of fabric together for a total stranger could be. Never did I imagine how many Aunties from all over North America would rage stitch with us.

And never did I plan for the group to make a book.

Before I became the Factory Overlord of the Auntie Sewing Squad—family, cult, labor camp, amateur medical supply company, shadow government aid agency—I was a performance artist who was scheduled to embark on a national tour of *Kristina Wong for Public Office*—a show

about how I ran for and won a seat on my neighborhood council. In the "before times," I sewed my set pieces and props. Never did I imagine that I would be using my half-assed home ec skills—previously used to stitch fabric ruffles into giant labia shapes—to make life-saving medical equipment. With used bedsheets and conference lanyards, at that.

"I'm becoming the overlord of a Chinese sweatshop," I declared when the first volunteers to step forward were mostly Chinese and Asian American women. It wasn't hard to see the irony of college-educated Asian American women, whose parents and grandparents did invisible, backbreaking garment labor to pay their debt to the American Dream, now performing that same work, like some kind of ancestral destiny.

This time they were doing it for no pay, and with far less appreciation from others of the time and skill that sewing requires as we've become a country (Amazon-)primed for instant satisfaction without consideration for the workers who make our things. And even after much American manufacturing moved to China, here we were, diasporic Asians trying to put together an ad hoc assembly line from our home sewing machines. Oh America, the land of opportunity!

No craft store, not and Craft Stores, w of sewing cloth fac COVID-19. Every v elastic and fabric, a out of stock for we and my desert isla Los Angeles, wavin seamstress on Fac find elastic. Aunti off their bras, sawi bedsheets, knitting T-shirt was safe, no precious to sacrific equipment.

In the early days of shit has gone on lo it into different era my home ten time meeting masked s my address on the offered to help sev shops out of their immediately mailin other cities, even if the spools.

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No craft store, not even (f\*\*\*king) Joann Fabric and Craft Stores, was prepared for the 2020 trend of sewing cloth face masks to stop the spread of COVID-19. Every vendor in the country ran out of elastic and fabric, and factory-made masks were out of stock for weeks. I was like Robinson Crusoe, and my desert island was my home in Koreatown Los Angeles, waving down every hobbyist seamstress on Facebook for leads on where to find elastic. Aunties were chopping the straps off their bras, sawing the elastic off their fitted bedsheets, knitting I-cord from scraps of yarn. No T-shirt was safe, no half-finished quilt project too precious to sacrifice for DIY personal protective equipment.

In the early days of the pandemic (because this shit has gone on long enough for me to separate it into different eras), I was running in and out of my home ten times a day with fistfuls of elastic, meeting masked strangers to whom I had given my address on the internet because they had offered to help sew. I was buying dressmaking shops out of their stores of elastic for cash and immediately mailing spools away to strangers in other cities, even if the postage cost as much as the spools.

Some of these strangers became Aunties in our group; others, I had to trust, were going to make good on their promises to sew masks for essential workers out there, not just resell them on Etsy.

In a moment of desperation, Auntie Karen offered her son's well-washed underwear to us for its elastic and cotton fabric. We declined, but we did consider it.

As dozens of new Aunties flooded into our group, I shifted away from my sewing machine to become an overseer, orienting new Aunties to the group. The playwright Amy Tofte, a casual rideshare acquaintance turned pandemic BFF, stepped up to get us more organized. We created a team of "Super Aunties" to identify the communities that were in real need, the ones that couldn't wave down our help on the internet because they don't even have internet. A few months in, the world found itself in a quadruple

pandemic—health, racial, political, and economic. And the Aunties found ourselves with all the things that big organizations have—a logo, a financial sponsor, big donors, major press—but no salaries, no health benefits, no company retreat, and no end in sight.

I lean heavily into gallows humor because laughter is how I survive most things. The running joke is that I, the Overlord, will cut off the fingers and eat the babies of Aunties who don't sew masks. We joke that we're a cult and that this book you're reading will be the Dianetics of sewing literature. The humor has preserved our sanity—or at least has helped us find hope in this very strange moment in history.

The great irony of this mask-making empire was that before the first Los Angeles lockdown, I refused to wear a mask. As an Asian American, I was already walking around with a mask I couldn't take off—the mask that said to the world, "Hey, blame me for the coronavirus." Adding a mask on top of my existing mask would bring attention that, even as a performance artist, I was not looking for.

But building ASS (which I didn't realize was our acronym until a week after I made the Facebook group) has been a radical experiment in generosity, intersectional alliances, and a paradigm outside capitalism. I never set out to lead a remote sweatshop empire during the apocalypse, but that's where unprecedented times take us. Like finding out that an old pillowcase can yield five face masks, we discover all sorts of things about ourselves that we didn't know were possible.

If you've ever wanted to exploit unpaid manual labor, coerce children to help you, and be lauded as a hero, you have come to the right place... or at least, landed in a moment of American history where it's become clear that we have no leadership, no supply chain, no infrastructure, and definitely no quarter-inch flat braided elastic.

If this is the end, we go down sewing. ■