People's Light

By Sam Shepard
Directed by Mei Ann Teo

Welcome to People's Light, established 1974.

Located at the nexus of small town and big city, we present stories drawn from ancient times through tomorrow that have direct relevance to our communities. In addition to producing classics and contemporary plays, we are nationally recognized as an incubator for new work. Throughout our almost 50-year history, over a third of our productions have been world or regional premieres.

In a spirit of gratitude, we acknowledge that People's Light stands on the unceded ancestral land of the Lenni Lenape. We recognize their continuing connection to the land, waters, and culture of this region, and we invite you to join us in learning more about the original caretakers of this place.

Photo by Bryan Sheffield

OUR MISSION AND VALUES

People's Light, a cultural and civic center with theatre at its core, invites and creates opportunities for diverse communities to discover and celebrate our shared humanity.

CREATIVITY
We seek new ways and ideas to challenge our vision and deepen our impact in an ever-changing world.

ARTISTRY
We strive for excellence with passion. Skill, imagination, and trust allow us to risk.

CURIOSITY
We foster opportunities for self-discovery, a sense of connection with others, and life-long learning.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY
We embrace a shared accountability to strengthen our communities and contribute to the vitality of our society and culture.

INCLUSION
We commit to diversity, equity, and collaboration within all levels of our interpersonal, artistic, and civic engagement. A warm welcome, hospitality, and a generous spirit provide the foundation of our work.

CONNECTION
We create meaningful and enduring relationships to cultivate trust and embolden discovery.

STEWARDSHIP
We respect our resources. We live within our financial means, and honor the people with whom we work, the buildings and grounds we inhabit, and the communities we serve.

Learn more at peopleslight.org or bit.ly/AboutPL-EDI.

Welcome to True West.

People's Light has always been a place that prizes longstanding relationships and collaborations. Whether it's with members of our staff, our company of artists, trustees and donors, community partners, or you in our audience, we continually treasure the possibility of reunion, the joy of an ongoing conversation, and the immense value of trust. I have had the fortune to know Sanjit De Silva for nearly two decades. As with three of the actors who were just in our production of *Lettie*, Sanjit is a graduate of the MFA acting program at NYU — a community of alumni I happily married into in 2000. As an actor, writer, and director, Sanjit has a vibrancy, rigor, humor, and care that is unparalleled. He embodies all that makes theatre artists so vital to our world. We collaborated on various occasions in New York City, including a project that is one of the primary inspirations for our New Play Frontiers Commission & Residency Program (NPF) here at People's Light. NPF birthed our recent world premieres of *Project Dawn, Mud Row, Bayard Rustin Inside Ashland*, and *Mushroom*.

A few years after I came to Malvern, Sanjit joined the cast of our acclaimed production of *The Cherry Orchard*. He fell in love with the area. This led him and his wife, Deepa Purohit, a remarkable multi-faceted theatre artist in her own right, to participate in NPF and co-write *Crushed Earth*, a new play you'll hear more about this fall. One day in 2019, while huddling in an NYC bar in the Lower East Side, talking about our wishes and dreams for the American Theatre, I asked Sanjit what's

on his passion play list; what might lure him back to Conestoga Road. His answer: *True West*. This launched a conversation about mythology and Hollywood, the wilderness, deserts, and the howling demons inside of so many of us, spurred by family trauma, social trauma, cultural mistreatment, and the longing to find some kind of peace. We also laughed about toast, typewriters, cowboys, and the start of the 1980s. Simply put, this production occurred because of Sanjit and the incredible group of artists he has helped us assemble. We are thrilled for you to join us as we continue to chew on this story, these characters, and how they speak to us today. Let us know what you hear. And may all of our conversations extend well beyond today.

Zak Berkman, Producing Artistic Director

The Crushed Earth creative team. L to R: Sanjit, Katy Pfeffer, Zak, Deepa, Joshua Kobak

PRESENTS PL

Zak Berkman, *Producing Artistic Director* Erica Ezold, *Managing Director*

Erin Sheffield*, *General Manager*

LEONARD C. HAAS STAGE
AUGUST 2, 2023 – AUGUST 27, 2023

True West

By **SAM SHEPARD**
Directed by **MEI ANN TEO**

Director of Production
CHARLES T. BRASTOW*

Scenic Designer
YOU-SHIN CHEN

Costume Designer
SARA RYUNG CLEMENT

Lighting Designer
WEN-LING LIAO

Sound Designer
HAO BAI

Projection Designer
JEANETTE OI-SUK YEW

Fight Director
ADAM DANOFF

Dialect Coach
STEVEN ENG*

Surround Programs Co-Producer
LIANA IRVINE

Assistant Director
SOFÍA ANASTASIA

Projection Assistant
MAX VAN

Associate Production Manager
MOLLY NORRIS*

Stage Manager
MATTHEW LUPPINO*

Assistant Stage Manager
JESS MCPHILLIPS*

THEATRE ARTISANS

Technical Director
JOSEPH FRANZ

Assistant Technical Director
DYLAN JAMISON

Lighting Supervisor
GREGORY SCOTT MILLER

Lead Electrician
BEATRICE CHENKIN

Scenic Charge Artist
BRIT BANNON

Props Manager
SARAH PIERCE

Assistant Props Manager
CEDAR SAGE ELWOOD

Sound Engineer
BRENT HOYER

Shop Foreman
ERIC LANG

Carpenter
ABIGAIL RICHARD

Costume Shop Manager
SARAH OCHOCKI

Cutter/Draper
MEAGAN THURMOND

Wardrobe Manager
BECCA KRAUSS

Special thanks to Sanjit De Silva who conceived of this production, contributed to every aspect of its making, and stayed with it amidst the challenges and obstacles of these recent years.

SDC The Director is a member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.

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

THE CAST

Austin ..... **Sanjit De Silva***
Lee ..... **Ron Domingo***
Saul ..... **Greg Watanabe***
Mom ..... **Ching Valdes-Aran***

Time: 1980s
Place: Southern California

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

People's Light 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.

IN APPRECIATION

Individual Sponsors: People's Light thanks **John & Sarah Schmader** for their extraordinary commitment to this production.

Homewood Suites by Hilton Philadelphia-Great Valley
12 E. Swedesford Road, Malvern, PA 19355

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"The world has created no living thing that it does not intend to destroy."
—Cormac McCarthy

I'm obsessed with where plays begin. *True West* begins when Sam Shepard sits down to write in his mother's house in California. Brotherless, he conjures this story — this ferocious fever dream. Austin, a screenwriter writing by candlelight in his mother's house, is etching out a story too, when who arrives but brother Lee who lives out in the desert, just like Dad (whose story is another fever nightmare of all his teeth falling out.) Shepard said that language is "a veil hiding demons and angels … [who reside in the] territories within us that are totally unknown" and it's said that this is his most autobiographical play — pitting the writer side against his self-dramatization as a cowboy.

Our *True West* explodes these territories through the resonances of our cultivated and assimilated Asian American lives — also a prismatic prison of the normative American dream. The ferocity of immigrant ambition, the terror of erasure, the horror of having one's story be disposable, to be pitted against one another for the sake of success, the dysfunction within the closest of families and the fracture of the self — all these themes run through our AAPI blood. And what does it mean for us to have been here? In silent struggle? What does that do to the struggle in us across time? Through time lapse video and surrealist design, our production seeks to go back to the beginning impulse, ride the rocky pendulum of assimilation and de-assimilation inside the self and through one's family, inherit and live in this mythic battle of biblical proportions to ask: Who has made this prison? Is it of my own making? How do I get free? And in the process — must I destroy myself?

Mei Ann Teo
***True West* Director**

I've always had a profound fascination with *True West* and Sam Shepard.

I first encountered the play in college when I was assigned a scene from it to play Austin. But it wasn't until I saw the late great Philip Seymour Hoffman play the role on Broadway that I really started to understand the play and all it had to offer. So when Zak Berkman asked me in 2019 about a bucket list play I'd like to do, I immediately said I'd love to do *True West* with an AAPI cast.

Since the 1800s, Asian Americans have been a part of the very foundations of the building of the American West. And I thought it would be poignant to see this play that is set in California, performed with those bodies, our bodies; to see what it would do to the play and what the play would do to us. I hoped it would give AAPI actors who've never been given the chance to do *True West* the opportunity to say: I, too, am part of this story. Of course, we want to give audiences the experience of a production that illuminates the thrilling chaos that Sam Shepard conjures up between these two brothers, who are ultimately a metaphor for the many selves we hold within us as we struggle to answer that eternal question:
WHO AM I?

Sanjit De Silva
Austin in *True West* and People's Light New Play Frontiers Playwright

TRUE WEST:
Expansions of Realities

Liana Irvine, *True West* Surround Programs Co-Producer

"When we telling this story, I want people to just sit back and just look, and see like, this is really happenin'. And they do this [Black people ride horses in Philadelphia]... And this is life."—Jamil Prattis "Parris" (Concrete Cowboy, 01:39:50min).

Welcome to *True West*'s brotherly reunion where skewed perception of one another's achievements and desperate attempts to individuate from each other make the walls of their Mother's home engulf us. Their lives come together in this play: Austin who finds safety in the suburban-complex-maze of a wife, kids, and car; and Lee who wanders through the brutal deserts perusing others' belongings for his taking. Just like all families who've immigrated to the United States, these brothers are searching for security within its "amber waves of grain" and surviving the acculturation[1] stress of becoming American. Some people learn to hide themselves by modeling what they see; others resist losing their cultural identities while these 50 States demand for us to "be one nation"; and some come to realize the vapidness underneath the American Dream. In their own ways, they're in the wild west – meandering with "how to be American," finding the treacherousness within their actions, and navigating this landscape founded by exploitation and erasure of bodies of color.

As these brothers are face-to-face, we see them find a shared hope of being Hollywood screenwriters. This iconic entity is the sculpture of the Ole' West; the geographical nexus of three deserts; and the predictable cause of sunburn on pale shoulders in convertibles. As they write the treatment for their "True West" Hollywood Movie, they conjure a story of masculine revenge, wide open skies, and horse-powered chases. However, they don't add a plot point about

the realities of corralling cattle and working in fine dust. Because Hollywood, with its John Wayne, dominates the screen and embeds itself into the American psyche, other realities of cowboys aren't conceivable until introduced to them.

In 2020, *Concrete Cowboy* (dir. Ricky Staub) showcased the Fletcher Street Riders, and how Cowboys of Philadelphia have been and will continue to be their own kinds of Western Cowboys. Today, this Asian American production steers Sam Shepard's *True West* to highlight the contentions from the idolatry of the American Dream. Both of these concepts: Black Cowboys in West Philly and Asian artists in a Shepard play, may have never crossed your mind, our playwright's, or our actors' – yet we're all here to take in this story.

When you hear "cowboy," do you picture John Wayne with a gun on his hip or Jays in stirrups strolling across 53rd?

Recommended Reading for Young Readers: *Prairie Lotus,* Linda Sue Park

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[1]***[ə-kŭl"chə-rā'shən]*** *The modification of the culture of a group or individual as a result of contact with a different culture. For more information, please read Acculturative Stress and Mental Health: Implications for Immigrant-Origin Youth by Sirin, Sin, Clingain, et. al from the PubMed: National Library of Medicine.*

Sam Shepard *Playwright*

Shepard's first New York plays, *Cowboys* and *The Rock Garden*, were produced by Theatre Genesis in 1964. For several seasons, he worked with Off-Off-Broadway theatre groups including La MaMa and Caffe Cino. Eleven of his plays won Obie Awards, including *Chicago, The Tooth of the Crime*, and *Curse of the Starving Class*. Other award-winning plays include *Fool for Love, True West, A Lie of the Mind*, and *Buried Child*, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize in 1979. In 1986, Shepard was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and he received the Gold Medal for Drama from the Academy in 1992. He was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame two years later. As a writer and director, he filmed *Far North* and *Silent Tongue*. As an actor, he appeared in numerous films, including *The Right Stuff, Days of Heaven* and *Resurrection*. His final works of prose, *The One Inside* and *Spy of the First Person*, were published in 2017, the year of his death.

Mei Ann Teo *Director*

(They/them) People's Light debut. Theatre Includes: Jillian Walker's world premiere *SKiNFoLK: An American Show* at the Bushwick Starr, Madeline Sayet's *Where We Belong* at Shakespeare's Globe, the film at Woolly Mammoth and the National Tour; North American premiere of Amy Berryman's *Walden* at Theatreworks Hartford (Best Production and Director - Connecticut Critics Award), English US premiere of Stefano Massini's *7 Minutes* at Waterwell, Bryonn Bain's *Lyrics from Lockdown* at NBT, Festival De Liege, and Singapore Fest; and *Dim Sum Warriors the Musical* by Colin Goh and Yen Yen Woo, composed by Pulitzer Prize winner Du Yun for national China twenty-five city tour. They are an Artistic Leader at Ping Chong and Co. Awards: League of Professional Theatre Women's Josephine Abady Award, Lily Fan Director Lilly Award. Training: MFA Theatre Directing (Columbia University). Website: meiannteo.com, @teo.meiann

You-Shin Chen *Scenic Designer*

(She/her) People's Light debut. USA-based Taiwanese scenic designer. As a theatre collaborator, she is committed to diversity and humanity. You-Shin centers humans, both the characters and the viewers, and their experiences in her process of creating a three-dimensional space. Her design works have been seen across the continental US and Europe. Theatre Includes: Favorite credits include *How To Defend Yourself* (NYTW); *Wolf Play* (SohoRep & MCC, Lucille Lortel: outstanding scenic design); *Red Velvet* (STC, DC); *Mlima's Tale* (St. Louis Rep); *Mrs. Murray's Menagerie* (ArsNova, Lucille Lortel: outstanding scenic design); Troy Anthony's *The Revival: It Is Our Duty* (The Shed, NYC); *Walden* (TheaterWorks Hartford, Connecticut Critics Circle: outstanding set design). Collaborator with the feath3r theory. Assistant professor at Muhlenberg College. Local USA829, IASTE. Website: www.youshinchen.com

Sara Ryung Clement *Costume Designer*

(She/her) People's Light debut. Theatre Includes: Off-Broadway: *Golden Shield* (Manhattan Theatre Club), *Somebody's Daughter* (Second Stage Uptown), *Fruiting Bodies* (Ma-Yi). Regional: World premieres of Lucas Hnath's *A Doll's House Part 2* and Lauren Yee's *Cambodian Rock Band* (South Coast Repertory). Other regional

credits include the Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Center Theatre Group, Alley Theatre, Denver Center, Geffen Playhouse, Asolo Repertory, Folger Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, Seattle Rep, and others. Set design faculty at UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. Training: MFA (Yale School of Drama), AB (Princeton University). Website: sararyungclement.com

Wen-Ling Liao *Lighting Designer*

(She/her) People's Light debut. Theatre Includes: Off Broadway: *The Boy Who Danced on Air* (Abingdon Theater Company). Selected recent regional credits: *Little Shop of Horrors* (TheatreWorks Silicon Valley), *A Christmas Carol* (Denver Performing Arts Center), *The Headlands, Gloria* and *Vietgone* (A.C.T.), *AW, Wilderness!* (Hartford Stage), *Quixote Nuevo, House of Joy* and *Winter's Tale* (California Shakespeare Company), 44th Humana Festival including *Are you there? Nicole Clark is Having a Baby* and *Flex* (Actors Theater of Louisville), *The Catastrophist* and *The Wickhams Christmas at Pemberley* (Marin Theater Company), *White Pearl* with Studio Theater. Training: MFA (University of California, San Diego), BA (National Taiwan University). Website: Wenlingliao.com

Hao Bai *Sound Designer*

People's Light debut. Hao Bai is a multidisciplinary designer in lighting, sound, video projection, and world-building for live and virtual performances. Theatre Includes: International: Asia Culture Center (South Korea), WuZhen Festival (China). USA: Woolly Mammoth Theater, TheatreWorks Hartford, BCS, Harvard, CAC, Stanford, Jone Hall. New York: Public Theatre, NYU Skirball, NYU Tisch, Bushwick Starr, La MaMa, JACK, The Flea, 59E59, A.R.T/New York Theatres, The Performing Garage etc. Recent: Virtual: *Final Boarding Call* (Ma-Yi Theater+WP Theater); *Nocturne in 1200s* (Ping Chong). Lighting: *Waterboy and the Mighty World* (Bushwick Starr & The Public Theatre); *Lazarus* (Ping Chong); Projection: *Electronic City* (NYIT Awards). Sound: *Walden* (TheatreWorks–CT Critics Circle Award). Lighting & Sound: *7Mins* (HERE). Lighting/Sound/Projection: *Arden* (The Flea). Production Design: *and the grass grows* (Harvard); *Where We Belong* (multiple national tours). Website: https://www.haobaidesign.com/

Jeanette Oi-Suk Yew *Projection Designer*

(She/her) People's Light debut. Theatre Includes: Broadway: *Macbeth*. Off-Broadway: *Elyria* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Sucide Forest* (MA-YI Theater Company), *Relevance* (MCC, Lortel nomination), *Ludic Proxy* (PlayCo.) *Informed Consent* (Primary Stages), *Paris Commune* (BAM), *How Much is Enough* (St. Ann's Warehouse); Theatre Regional: *The Lehman Trilogy* (The Huntington & the Rep of St. Louis), *Top Girls* (The Huntington), *ONCE* (Arden Theatre Company), *In the Wake* (Profile Theatre); Other: *Nevermore Park: Home of Flyboy* (immersive environment inspired by artist Hebru Brantley), *9000 Paper Balloons* (digital performance & live at Japan Society), *The Crossing* (dance, digital performance, The Kitchen at Queenslab), *SWELL* (digital opera, HERE Arts Center). Associate Arts Professor NYU's Tisch Drama. NEA/TCG Career Development Program recipient. Instagram: @jeanette_yew Website: www.jeanetteyew.com

Adam Danoff *Fight Director*

(He/him) People's Light debut. Theatre Includes: Recently, fights for *Camelot* and *Bakersfield Mist* (Montgomery Theater), *Sweat* and *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* (Steel River Playhouse); as well as Sound Design for *Mistakes Were Made, Steel Magnolias*, and *Prisoner of Second Avenue* (Act II Playhouse). Film/Television Includes: Fights/stunts and Sound Recording/Design for *Alice and the Vampire Queen* (2023), *Alpha Rift* (2021), and *Bloodrunners* (2014).

Steven Eng *Dialect Coach*

(He/him) People's Light: *Hold These Truths*. Theatre Includes: *The King and I* (London West End), *Pacific Overtures* (Lortel nomination, Classic Stage Company), Public Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival, New York Philharmonic, Ensemble Studio Theatre, ShakespeareNYC, Prospect Theater Company, A.C.T., Queens Theatre, 5th Avenue Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, Paper Mill Playhouse, Alliance Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, TUTS, Dallas Theater Center, MSTDA, and many more, as well as in Germany, Austria, and Cambodia. Film/Television Includes: *Shanghai, Premium Rush, Blue Bloods*. He is a co-founder of the nonprofit National Asian Artists Project in NY, a freelance director, and is on the faculty of New York University. Training: MFA George Washington University, BFA Southern Methodist University. Website: www.StevenEng.us

Liana Irvine *Surround Programs Co-Producer*

(She/they) People's Light: *Grand Horizons* (Dramaturg), *Hold These Truths* (Assistant Dramaturg), *Bayard Rustin Inside Ashland* (Associate Producer of Surround Programming). Liana Irvine is joyful, methodical, and faithful as a dramaturg, producer, and collaborator for new/reimagined work. With intimacy and empathetic interrogation, Liana explores how dramatic ecosystems entangle in theatrical worlds and audiences' perceptions. Select dramaturgy credits include: *Thrive, or What You Will* (American Shakespeare Company), *The Chinese Lady* (InterAct Theatre Company), Writers Intensives (The Workshop Theatre); and current roles as Philadelphia Asian Performing Artists' Associate Producer and Outreach Coordinator.

Sofía Anastasia *Assistant Director*

People's Light debut. Sofía has been professionally involved with Beacon Theatre Productions, the Musical Theatre Factory, Ninth Planet, InterAct Theatre Company, Revamp Collective, the Ko Festival of Performance, Seedling Productions, Wise Fool New Mexico, and as a member of GLITTERVOM, an autonomous theatre collective. Sofía's poetry has been published in GLITTERVOM, the Reader, and S/tick Magazine.

Max Van *Projection Assistant*

(He/him) People's Light debut. Born and raised in Viêt Nam, Max had dreams of becoming a businessman by day and a secret spy by night. Little did he know, his love for storytelling would lead him to theatrical designs and collaboration. Max is a designer-in-training at NYU Tisch, concentrating in sound, scenic, and projection design. Theatre Includes: *Shockwave Delay* (La Mama), *Flops and Fiascoes* (The Civilians), *Bonefruit* (Soho Playhouse/Playwrights Horizon), *Metamorphoses*

(Calhoun School), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (NYU Tisch), *Poverty Archive: Box 1* (NYU Tisch), BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn! Thank you *True West* collaborators for the welcome! Website: maxvandsgn.myportfolio.com

Sanjit De Silva *Austin*

(He/him) NPF Playwright. People's Light: *The Cherry Orchard*. Theatre Includes: Broadway: *WarHorse* (Tony-Award Best Play, Lincoln Center Theater). Off-Broadway: *Elyria* (Atlantic Theater, Dir. Awoye Timpo), *Richard III* (NYSF/Public Theater, Dir. Robert O'Hara), *Merchant of Venice* (TFANA/Shakespeare Theatre, Dir. Arin Arbus), *An Ordinary Muslim* (NYTW, Dir. Jo Bonney), *Troilus and Cressida* (NYSF/Public Theater, Dir. Daniel Sullivan), *Dry Powder* (World Premiere, Public Theater, Dir. Thomas Kail, Lucille Lortel and Outer Critic's Circle Award Nominations for Best Featured Actor), *Awake and Sing* (NAATCO), *The Little Foxes* (NYTW, Dir. Ivo Von Hove) Film/Television Includes: *Afterparty, The Girl is in Trouble, The Company Men*, and the critically-acclaimed *Arranged; Inventing Anna, New Amsterdam, Evil, Tell Me A Story, Blindspot, Madam Secretary, Blacklist, Elementary, High Maintenance, Homeland, Blue Bloods, The Good Wife* and of course *Law & Order*. Training: MFA (NYU Graduate Acting). Website: www.silvadollarfilms.com

Ron Domingo *Lee*

(He/him) People's Light debut. Theatre Includes: Plays in New York and elsewhere. Ron has been a professional actor for several years and is based in NYC. Special thanks: SD, MAT & ZB. Website: www.rondomingo.com

Greg Watanabe *Saul*

(He/him) People's Light: *A Single Shard*. Theatre Includes: Broadway: *Allegiance*. Off-Broadway: *Ballad Of Yachiyo* (Public Theater), *Golden Child* (Signature Theater). Regional: *Cambodian Rock Band* (Victory Gardens, City Theatre, Merrimack Rep., Theater Mu/Jungle Theater), *Romeo and Juliet* (OSF), *The Summer Moon* (A Contemporary Theater, South Coast Rep), *Extraordinary Chambers* (The Geffen Playhouse), *The Happy Ones* (South Coast Rep), and *Hold These Truths* (Virginia Stage Company). Recently he appeared in *Our Town*, and *The Great Leap* at Asolo Rep. Film/Television Includes: *Madam Secretary, Criminal Minds, Curb Your Enthusiasm, Reno 911.*

Ching Valdes-Aran *Mom*

(She/her) People's Light debut. Ching Valdes-Aran is an award winning actor who is also a director and painter. Theatre Includes: For the past 2+ years she has been touring internationally and nationally in Geoff Sobelle's *Home*. Broadway: Shakespeare on Broadway, NYSF, Belasco; *The Wild Party* (Virginia Theatre). Off Broadway: BAM, CSC, Delacorte, HERE, La Mama, Ma-Yi, Mabou Mines, NAATCO, NYTW, Public Theater, TEAM, Foundry, TNC, Women's Project. Regional: ATL, Arena Stage, A.C.T., Bristol Riverside, Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Syracuse Stage, Yale Rep, Wilma Theatre. Film/Television Includes: *Missing Link* (Golden Globe, 6 Oscar nominations); *From What is Before* (Best Picture, Gawad

Uriah Award; Palm de Oro, Locarno Int'l Festival), *Sex & The City, Across The Universe, Kiss of the Damned, Blacklist, L&O CI*, others. Awards: OBIE, 2021 Ruthie, Fox Foundation Fellow, New Dramatist's, Charles Bowden Award, ACC Fellow, Spencer Cherashore Award, Ma-Yi Theatre Award, MAP, U.S. Congressional Award in Arts, Oniros Best Supporting Short Film Award (Final Polish).

Charles T. Brastow *Director of Production*

(He/him) Company Member since 1987. People's Light: Director of Production since 2008, previously Resident Stage Manager for 15 years and Sound Designer for over 125 Productions. Theatre Includes: Arena Stage, Arden Theatre, Primary Stages, Delaware Theatre Company, Philadelphia Shakespeare Company, PlayPenn, Nickelodeon. Training: Clarion University of Pennsylvania; MA in History (West Chester University of Pennsylvania).

Matthew Luppino *Stage Manager*

(He/him) People's Light: *Hold These Truths.* Broadway: *Bandstand, The Illusionists: Turn of the Century*. Off-Broadway/NYC: The Public Theatre, The Pearl Theatre Company, Elizabeth Swados's *The Nomad* (The Flea). Select Regional: McCarter Theatre Center, Walnut Street Theatre, Montana Repertory Theatre, Geva Theatre Center, Eagle Theatre, Hangar Theatre, Barrington Stage Company, and 4 seasons with Shakespeare and Company. Matthew is a proud alum of The College of New Jersey and member of Actors' Equity Association.

Jess McPhillips *Assistant Stage Manager*

(They/them) People's Light: *Alice in Wonderland: A Musical Panto, Grand Horizons*. Theatre Includes: Arden Theatre Company: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, Radio Golf, Into The Woods, Backing Track, A Streetcar Named Desire, Cabaret, A Year with Frog and Toad*; Act II Playhouse: *Souvenir, Looking Over the President's Shoulder, Cafe Puttanesca, Same Time Next Year, Biloxi Blues, Tuesdays with Morrie*; 1812 Productions: *Hope and Gravity, This Is The Week That Is*. Jess is thrilled to return to People's Light for their first production as a member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA)!

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Zak Berkman *Producing Artistic Director*

(He/him) Zak joined People's Light as Associate Artistic Director in 2011, became Producing Director in 2013, and was promoted to Producing Artistic Director in 2022. He is a multifaceted artist—writer, composer, director, and dramaturg —with nearly 30 years of experience producing theatre and developing new plays and musicals, including the World and U.S. Premieres of *Mud Row* by Dominique Morisseau, *Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole* by Colman Domingo and Patricia McGregor, *Project Dawn* by Karen Hartman, *Barcelona* by Bess Wohl, *No Child...* by Nilaja Sun, *Palace of The End* by Judith Thompson, *Hannah and Martin* by Kate Fodor, and *Mushroom* by Eisa Davis, as well as the highly acclaimed New York Premiere of Sarah Ruhl's *Passion Play*. Prior to People's Light, Zak was Associate to Broadway producer Margo Lion,

and the Founding Executive Director of Artistic Programming with Epic Theatre Ensemble, a multi-award winning Off-Broadway theatre company. Zak's plays include *The Harassment of Iris Malloy, Beauty on the Vine*, and *A Breath Short of Breathing*. He was the adaptor/composer for a new music-filled version of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* that People's Light premiered in 2021, as well as the co-author/composer of *Such Things As Vampires*, which received a Barrymore Award for original music. A former soap writer for NBC's *Days of Our Lives*, Zak also wrote two episodes of People's Light's COVID-era digital series *America 2am*. Zak has published articles on Howlround.com and spoken at numerous conferences about the New Play Frontiers Residency & Commission Program at People's Light as well as other subjects. He is married to Teri Lamm. They have two sons, Eliot and Theo.

Erica Ezold *Managing Director*

(She/her) Erica joined People's Light in 2018 as Director of Finance, became Director of Finance & Operations in 2020 and was promoted to Managing Director in 2023. She is passionate about producing and managing new theatrical work. Erica grew up in the Philadelphia suburbs, moved to New York City for college, and spent the subsequent fifteen years producing independently, working for large non-profit institutions, and working in commercial theatre management. Favorite productions from this time include *The Two Character Play* (Off-Broadway, 2013), *West Side Story* (Broadway, 2009), *August: Osage County* (Broadway, 2008) and *Spalding Gray: Stories Left to Tell* (Off-Broadway, 2007). Upon her return to the Philadelphia region in 2014, Erica served as General Manager for Pig Iron Theatre Company where she supported the company's innovative theatre makers, as well as the next generation of devisers attending Pig Iron's master's program. Erica holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drama from New York University and a Master of Business Administration from Baruch College. She is on the adjunct faculty at University of the Arts teaching Theatre Management, and is a member of the Forum of Executive Women in Philadelphia. She lives in Havertown with her husband Matt and two sons, Calvin and Wesley.

Erin Sheffield *General Manager*

(She/her) Erin first came to work at People's Light in 2004, beginning as an actor and teaching artist. After twenty years with the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival as Education Director, Playwright, Director, Choreographer, Casting Director, and Actor and five years in Los Angeles teaching, Erin decided to move into arts administration. In 2016, Erin returned to People's Light as the Executive Associate managing contracts, human resources, company management, and casting. Erin also worked for Morgan Stanley with the Securitized Product Group in New York, gaining her financial and administrative bench strength. Erin holds a Bachelor of Arts in Acting and Directing from DeSales University, where she also taught. Her Master of Fine Arts in Acting is from Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Play House. Erin lives in Malvern with her husband Bryan and their children, Alden and Johnny Grace.

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For the safety and comfort of our community

As an audience member, you're an important part of the People's Light community! Please join us in creating an environment of shared respect that reflects our mission and values. Through artistic and civic practices, People's Light aims to provide a wide and thoughtful welcome to our audiences, artists, staff, students, volunteers, and guests of all backgrounds and identities. We work to uphold a safe environment wherein all people are treated with dignity.

It is our expectation that all patrons and those affiliated with People's Light will align with this code of conduct and we reserve the right to relocate or remove any person from our theatre who disregards our commitment. If you are made to feel unsafe in our spaces, please speak to a People's Light staff member.

SMOKING AND VAPING are not permitted in our theatres.

WEAPONS - All guns, weapons, or knives of any type, concealed or unconcealed, are prohibited at People's Light. Anyone who fails to comply with this policy will be asked to immediately leave the property.

MASKS to Masks are no longer required at performances, but are strongly encouraged at Relaxed Performances to protect the immunocompromised members of our community.

THE USE OF CAMERAS, PHONES, OR OTHER RECORDING DEVICES is strictly prohibited in the theatre, and we and your fellow audience members appreciate if your wristwatch alarms are silenced.

ACCESSIBILITY - Our theatres are fully wheelchair-accessible. Assistive listening devices and large print programs are available upon request. Smart Caption Glasses (SCG) are available at select performances, and any ticketholder may reserve SCG online for free ahead of your visit. We offer one Relaxed Performance for every production, and select performances feature ASL interpretation, audio description, or open captioning. Visit peopleslight.org/visit/accessibility for more info.

RESTROOMS - Gender diversity is welcome here, and patrons may use whichever restroom they are most comfortable in. Caregivers of all genders may enter any restroom to provide assistance.

LATECOMERS - People's Light respectfully reminds you that in order not to disturb patrons already seated, latecomers will be seated in the first available seats when there is an appropriate pause in the performance.

IN CASE OF FIRE - Walk in a calm and orderly manner to the nearest exit.

FIRST AID - For first aid assistance, please find the House Manager or nearest usher.

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A game of dominoes takes a chilling turn in ***Bonez***. A cold and callous man recovers his heart in ***A Christmas Carol***. A Long Island boy turned horse jockey goes on the ride of his life in ***SMALL***. A woman confronts the legacy of her family's fight for swimming pool desegregation in ***the ripple, the wave that carried me home***.

Announcing the first series in our 2023/2024 Season! Subscriptions are currently available, and single tickets go on sale **August 7**. Pick up an order form in the upstairs lobby or visit **peopleslight.org** for more information.

Bonez
BY STEVE H. BROADNAX III
SEPTEMBER 22–OCTOBER 15

A Christmas Carol
ADAPTED BY ZAK BERKMAN
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the ripple, the wave that carried me home
BY CHRISTINA ANDERSON
FEBRUARY 21–MARCH 24

2324

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