

# *Diversionsary Theatre's Inaugural Spark Festival*



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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WHO: Diversionsary Theatre, the Nation's 3rd Oldest LGBT Theatre.

WHAT: A brand new Playwrighting Festival featuring a program of new plays never before seen in San Diego.

WHEN: Thursday, May 18- Sunday, May 21, 2017.

WHERE: Diversionsary Theatre Mainstage & Black Box Spaces at 4545 Park Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92123.

## TICKETS:

- Admission to one reading - **\$15**
- Admission to one Master Class - **\$25**
- Admission to all four readings (Readings Package) - **\$40**
- Admission to all four readings & both Master Classes (Readings & Classes Package) - **\$75**
- Admission to all four readings, both Master Classes, & the World Premiere of Ballast on Saturday, May 20 at 8pm (Premium Package) - **\$100**

From May 18-21, **Spark** will present four one-night-only readings of fascinating contemporary works never before seen in San Diego by exceptional, energizing, and established playwrights. Diversionary's World Premiere production of [Ballast](#) by Georgette Kelly is the anchor and centerpiece of **Spark**. Talkbacks, Master Classes with playwrights in attendance, and receptions give you the opportunity to mingle and celebrate with actors, directors, and playwrights throughout the weekend. Creative sparks will be flying!

## About the Plays

May 18<sup>th</sup> at 7pm

*Le Switch*

Written by Philip Dawkins

Directed by Meg DeBoard

Marriage equality has finally reached the U.S. and commitment-shy David finds himself unsure how to react to the nation's honeymoon phase. When his best friend's bachelor party takes him to Montreal, he is unexpectedly swept off his feet by a beautiful young florist. In the months that follow, David and his non-traditional family (his sister, grieving activist roommate, and best friend) must decide for themselves what it really means to be committed, married, and queer. Of his inclusion in Spark, Dawkins remarks:

**"I'm particularly thrilled to be included in the Spark, Diversionary's inaugural new play festival because it's an opportunity for me to be working with Diversionary--a company I've long had a theatrical crush on, San Diego -- a beautiful city where I've not yet had the pleasure of working, and Matt Morrow, a colleague and friend who I'm excited to work with on a more one-on-one level. The Spark offers an excellent chance for me to dive right into all three with a play that I'm very excited to share with the West Coast."**

May 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm

*The Nether*

Written by Jennifer Haley

Directed by Matt M. Morrow

*The Nether* is a virtual wonderland that provides total sensory immersion. Just log in, choose an identity and indulge your every desire. But when a young detective uncovers a disturbing brand of entertainment, she triggers an interrogation into the darkest corners of the imagination. Director Morrow says of *The Nether*,

**"Haley's harrowing new work takes a thrilling and daring look at the future of the internet and how we present ourselves in virtual realms. This play is not for the faint of heart!"**

May 20<sup>th</sup> at 4pm

*The Harvest*

Written by Samuel D. Hunter

Directed by Anthony Methvin

In the basement of a small evangelical church in southeastern Idaho, a group of young missionaries is preparing to go to the Middle East. One of them – a young man who has recently lost his father – has bought a one-way ticket. But his plans are complicated when his estranged sister returns home and makes it her mission to keep him there. *Diversionsary's* Artistic Associate Anthony Methvin remarks,

**"Samuel D. Hunter has an uncanny ability to shine a light into the corners of America that we often ignore. He finds the poetry, beauty, humor, and tragedy in the lives of extraordinary people who seem ordinary only because they have been unexamined. Few playwrights are able to capture the subtleties of humanity in the way that Hunter does."**

May 21 at 2pm

Swimming Circles

Written by Philip Humberg

Directed by Will Detlefsen

In high school in the late 1960's Martin and Karen were an inseparable duo, though as Martin grew to understand his emerging gay self, their relationship fell away. Why then, 25 years later, does Karen offer herself up as biological mom so that Martin and his partner, Peter can raise their own child? As Martin begins to fantasize his would-be daughter in a parallel universe, AIDS takes root in his community, and his once-trusted world begins to shift. Traversing decades and dimensions, *Swimming Circles* is a heartfelt take on what it means to look inward and grow up in a time that dramatically changed what it means to be gay. Humberg says that he is,

**"Thrilled and honored to be joining *Diversionsary Theatre's* charter new play festival, *Spark*, this May. The opportunity to hear one's new story in front of a real audience is what allows a writer to break through, re-conceive and 'land' the tale that is in one's heart."**

## About the Playwrights

**Philip Dawkins** is a Chicago playwright and educator. His plays include *The Happiest Place on Earth* (Side Show Theatre/Greenhouse Theater Center); *Le Switch* (About Face Theatre, The Jungle), *Charm* (Northlight Theatre), *Miss Marx: Or The Involuntary Side Effect of Living* (Strawdog Theatre), *The Homosexuals* (About Face Theater), *Dr. Seuss's The Sneetches*, the Musical with composer David Mallamud (Children's Theater Company, Minneapolis), and many plays for young audiences and young performers. His play *Charm*, will receive its NY premiere at MCC this fall, 2017 under the direction of Will Davis. He teaches playwriting at Northwest University, Loyola University Chicago, and through the Victory Gardens ACCESS Program.



**Jennifer Haley** is a playwright whose work delves into ethics in virtual reality and the impact of technology on our human relationships, identity, and desire. She won the 2012 Susan Smith Blackburn Prize for her play, *The Nether*, produced in Los Angeles, off-Broadway, on London's West End, across the US and internationally in Scandinavia, Germany, Turkey, Slovenia and Spain. Other plays include *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom*, a horror story about

suburban video game addiction, and *Froggy*, a noir thriller with interactive media design. Jennifer has worked with Center Theatre Group, Royal Court Theatre, Headlong, MCC, Sonia Friedman Productions, Woolly Mammoth, the Humana Festival of New Plays, The Banff Centre, Sundance Theatre Lab, O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, Lark Play Development Center, PlayPenn, and Page 73. She is a member of New Dramatists in New York City and lives in Los Angeles, where she founded the Playwrights Union.



**Samuel D. Hunter's** plays include *The Whale* (Drama Desk Award, Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Play, GLAAD Media Award, Drama League and Outer Critics Circle nominations for Best Play), *A Bright New Boise* (Obie Award, Drama Desk nomination for Best Play), *The Few*, *A Great Wilderness*, *Rest*, *Pocatello*, and most recently, *Lewiston* and *Clarkston*. Among other honors, he is the recipient of a 2014 MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellowship and an

honorary doctorate from the University of Idaho. His plays have been produced in New York at Playwrights Horizons, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Clubbed Thumb and Page 73, and around the country at such theaters as Seattle Rep, South Coast Rep, Victory Gardens, Williamstown Theater Festival, The Old Globe, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Denver Center Theatre Company, Marin Theater Company, and elsewhere. A native of northern Idaho, Sam lives in NYC. He holds degrees in playwriting from NYU, The Iowa Playwrights Workshop, and Juilliard.



**Philip Himberg** has been Artistic Director of the Sundance Institute Theatre Program since 1997. The Institute's developmental theatre labs have supported hundreds of artists, new plays and musicals that have gone on to production and acclaim. *Fun Home*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *Indecent*, *Well*, *Grey Gardens*, *Circle Mirror Transformation* are just a few of the titles developed at Sundance Labs. As a playwright, Philip's most recent play *Paper Dolls* received its world premiere at the Tricycle Theatre in London and will have its US premiere at the Mosaic Theatre in DC next season. Philip co-wrote and directed *Carry It On*, a solo show for Maureen McGovern. His directing credits include the world premiere of Terrence McNally's *Some Men* at the Philadelphia

Theatre Company among many others. He is a former Tony Award Nominator, Past President of the Board of TCG, has taught at NYU Tisch, and currently teaches at the Yale Drama School.



# About the Directors

**Will Detlefsen** is thrilled to be working at *Diversionsary Theatre* for the first time. Will most recently directed the world premiere of Will Snider's *Strange Men* at UC San Diego's Wagner New Play Festival. Select credits at UCSD include Tennessee Williams' *Vieux Carré* and Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*. Later this month Will will direct the west coast premiere of Chris Thorpe's *Confirmation* and Stephanie Del Rosso's *Machinalia* at the *Ubuntu Theater Project* in Oakland, CA. His New York credits include the world premieres of T. Adamson's *House & Variations* and Toni Schlessinger's *The Mystery of Pearl Street*, both at *Dixon Place*, and the revivals of Sarah Kane's *Blasted* and Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party*. Detlefsen's assisting credits include Alex Timbers, Gabor Tompa, Terry Kinney, Rachel Chavkin, and Young Jean Lee. BFA: New York University; Directing MFA: UC San Diego.

**Meg DeBoard** most recently directed *Into the Woods* at *Salomon Theatre* and *A Wrinkle in Time* for *Junior Theatre*. She lived in London for two years, studying with acclaimed directors Stephen Unwin of *The Rose Theatre* and Melly Still from *The National Theatre*. Since moving to San Diego about a year ago, she has worked on *Hollywood!* and *Blueprints to Freedom*, both at *La Jolla Playhouse*, and *When the Rain Stops Falling* at *Cygnnet Theatre*, all as assistant director. She also recently directed a staged reading of *Death of a Late Summer Songbird* for *Cygnnet Theatre's Finish Line Commission*. Directing credits include: *And Then They Came For Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank*, *Lulu*, *Seussical*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Hawai'i Premiere), *Into the Woods*, *Urinetown*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Annie*, and *The Little Mermaid*. She has an MFA in Theatre Directing from *The University of Essex* in England.

**Anthony Methvin** is the Producing Director for *Backyard Renaissance* where he co-directed their production of *Abundance*, directed the *Backyard Unleashed* readings of *Assistance* and *Bachelorette*, and both directed and adapted *Showgirls: Live and Unleashed*. At *Diversionsary Theatre*, where he is Artistic Associate, he directed the *Open Mondays* reading of *Wolves*. He was Assistant Director on *Buyer & Cellar* and *Sense & Sensibility* (*The Old Globe*), *Dogfight* (*Cygnnet Theatre*), *Baby with the Bathwater* (*Diversionsary Theatre*), and *Spring Awakening* (*Palomar College*). Local performances include *Doug in Gutenberg! The Musical!* and *Lord John in The Elephant Man* (*Backyard Renaissance*), *Roger in A New Brain*, *Reed in Boys and Girls*, and *Kent in Harmony, Kansas* (*Diversionsary Theatre*). Other favorite roles include *Leo Frank* (*Parade*) and *Prior* (*Angels in America: Millennium Approaches and Perestroika*). His play, *Bleed Like Me*, has been developed locally and at *FSU*, where he graduated with a BFA in Acting. You can follow him on Instagram @anthonymethvin.

**Matt M. Morrow**, *Diversionsary's* Executive Artistic Director, has almost 20 years of experience developing, producing and directing new works, having started his career assisting Ira Weitzman, Associate Producer of *New Musicals* at *Playwrights Horizons*. Under his leadership, *Diversionsary* won the 2016 *Don Braunagel Award for Outstanding Work by a Small Theatre*. Matt is directing the upcoming *World Premiere* of *Georgette Kelly's Ballast* at *Diversionsary*, and has directed the *West Coast premieres* of works by *Jordan Harrison*, *Christopher Shinn* and *Bathesheba Doran*. Prior to joining *Diversionsary*, Matt was the Associate Artistic Director of *City Theatre* in *Pittsburgh* where he directed the *World Premiere* of *South Side Stories*,

and the regional debuts of Charles Ives *Take Me Home* and *Tigers Be Still*. Matt has developed new work with *The Sundance Theatre Lab*, the *Banff Centre*, *Page 73*, *ACT*, and *CTG* among others.

## Spark Schedule

Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>

6pm- Reception (Fritz's Lounge)\*

7pm- *Le Switch* (Black Box) with talkback following

Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>

7pm- *The Nether* (Black Box) with talkback following

Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

12pm-1:30pm- Master Class with Philip Dawkins (Mainstage)

4pm- *The Harvest* (Black Box) with talkback following

8pm- *Ballast* (Mainstage)

9.30pm- Reception (Fritz's Lounge)\*

Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

12pm-1:30pm- Master Class with Jennifer Haley (Mainstage)

2pm- *Swimming Circles* (Black Box) with talkback following

*\*Receptions included in ticket price*