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**ROUND HOUSE THEATRE CONTINUES SEASON  
WITH A SOCIO-POLITICAL FABLE & REGIONAL PREMIERE**

# **THE GREAT LEAP**

November 10 – December 5 in reopened Round House Theatre

Streaming on demand beginning November 26

Bethesda, Md. (October 19, 2021) – Round House Theatre continues its 2021-2022 Season with ***The Great Leap***, written by one of the most produced playwrights in the country, **Lauren Yee**, and directed by **Jennifer Chang**. *The Great Leap* runs November 10 – December 5, 2021, and streams on demand beginning November 26. Press night is Monday, November 15, 2021.

**Please see below for complete program details and ticket information.**

It's 1989, the University of San Francisco basketball team is headed to China for a "friendship" game, and plucky high school star Manford pesters aging coach Saul enough to talk his way onto the team. Landing in Beijing just before the Tiananmen Square uprising, Manford, Saul, and their Chinese translator/coach Wen Chang are forced to explore their different approaches to basketball and life and to reconcile their own converging histories.

Inspired by her father's short-lived basketball career, playwright Lauren Yee applies her signature technique of colliding the personal with the historical, creating a "stunning" (*LA Times*), unforgettable fable and reminding us that the best stories—even if they aren't real—can still be true. Director **Jennifer Chang** is honored to bring this thrilling socio-political fable to life on the Round House Theatre stage. "This is an exciting experience for me and incredibly personal," says Chang. "These characters are people that I know that I want to see on stage. It is a story about what happens when an ordinary person meets an extraordinary moment. The journey is also about what it means to parent and create family."

*The Great Leap* exemplifies Round House's continued dedication to producing works that tell vital stories. "We are excited to take what we learned from our season re-opener and provide our audiences with a momentous theatrical experience, whether they stream from the comfort of their homes or watch a live performance," says **Round House Theatre Artistic Director Ryan Rilette**. "I have loved Lauren Yee's work for a very long time, and I can't wait to finally see it on the Round House stage."

The cast includes **Grant Chang** (*Marian Jean* at New York Theatre Workshop and *The Great Leap* at Pasadena Playhouse), **Eric Hissom** (*Arcadia* at Folger Theatre [Helen Hayes award] and *Vanya* at Arena Stage), **Lois Shih** (*Romeo and Juliet* at Colorado Shakespeare Festival and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* at Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company), and **Randy Nguyen Ta** (previously seen at The Sǒng Collective and Yangtze Rep Theatre).

The cast is joined by a brilliant creative team that includes Scenic Designer **Tony Cisek**, Costume Designer **Helen Huang**, Lighting Designer **Minjoo Kim**, Sound Designer **Roc Lee**, Vocal and Dialect Coach **Joy Lanceta Coronel**, Dramaturg and Round House Theatre Associate Artist for New Plays **Naysan Mojgani**, and Resident Stage Manager **Che Wernsman**.

Tickets may be purchased by calling 240.644.1100 or ordering online at [RoundHouseTheatre.org](http://RoundHouseTheatre.org). Round House Theatre is located at 4545 East-West Highway, one

block from Wisconsin Avenue and the Bethesda station on Metro's Red Line.

#### ARTIST INFORMATION

**Lauren Yee's (Playwright)** *Cambodian Rock Band*, with music by Dengue Fever, premiered at South Coast Rep, with subsequent productions at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, City Theatre, Merrimack Rep, and Signature Theatre and an upcoming national tour. Her play *The Great Leap* has been produced at the Denver Center, Steppenwolf, Seattle Repertory, Atlantic Theatre, the Guthrie Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Arts Club, and InterAct Theatre. TV credits include *Pachinko* (Apple) and *Soundtrack* (Netflix). Current commissions include Arena Stage, Geffen Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Portland Center Stage, Second Stage, and South Coast Rep. She is a Residency 5 playwright at Signature Theatre, New Dramatists members, Ma-Yi Writers' Lab member, and Playwrights Realm alumni playwright. Honors include the Doris Duke Artists Award, Whiting Award, Steinberg/ATCA Award, American Academy of Arts and Letters literature award, Horton Foote Prize, Kesselring Prize, Primus Prize, a Hodder Fellowship at Princeton, and the #1 and #2 plays on the 2017 Kilroys List. She holds a BA degree from Yale University and MFA degree from University of California San Diego. [www.laurenyee.com](http://www.laurenyee.com)

**Jennifer Chang (Director)** is a director, actor, writer, and producer who won the 2019 Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award in Direction for the LA Premiere of *Vietgone* by Qui Nguyen at East West Players. Most recently, she directed *Undo The Sea* by Inda Craig-Galván for Primary Stages, and produced and directed *Chalk Lines*, five commissioned short immersive audio plays (serving Los Angeles districts 8, 9, and 10 along the Expo Line, predominantly Black and Latinx communities) written by Luis Alfaro, Colette Robert, Kimrie Lewis, Giovanni Adams, and Joe G. Maldonado. Her work with the company has been honored with an Ovation Award, an LA Weekly Award, and the Stage Scene LA Award. Select directing credits include *Where The Mountain Meets The Moon* by Min Kahng at South Coast Rep, *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo* by Jiehae Park at The Fountain Theatre/EWP, *Death and Cockroaches* by Eric Reyes Loo at Chalk Rep, *Animals Out of Paper* by Rajiv Joseph at East West Players (LA Times Critics Pick), *Edith Can Shoot Things and Hit Them* by A Rey Pamatmat for Artists at Play (GLAAD Media Award, Stage

Scene LA Award Best Director, Ovation Award Nominated) and *Our American Story* and *Residence Elsewhere* (commissioned for the 75th Anniversary of Executive Order 9066) at the Japanese American National Museum. New Play/Musical Development credits include Theatre Mu, New Harmony Project, O'Neill Playwrights Conference, Ashland New Plays Festival, Center Theatre Group, Boston Court, Geffen Playhouse, Chance Theater, Echo Theatre Company, Circle X Theatre Company, EST-LA, Black and Latino Playwrights Conference, Playwrights Arena, Chalk Rep, and East West Players. She was a 2018 Drama League New York Directing Fellow, directing the world premiere of Mara Nelson-Greenberg's *The Clitorish* at the New Ohio Theatre in NYC and was the Assistant Director of the Broadway World Premiere of Theresa Rebeck's *Bernhard/Hamlet*. She is a founding member of Chalk Repertory Theatre, a site-responsive theatre company dedicated to exploring classical and new work, where she currently serves as Co-Artistic Producing Director. In 2020, she received the APAFT Award for Outstanding Direction. She is an Alumnus of Directors Lab West, is currently on faculty at UCSD's Department of Theatre and Dance, and serves as Head of Undergraduate Acting. She teaches acting and directing as well as professional and business development. She is a member of Drama League Director's Council, Stage Directors, and Choreographer's Society (SDC), Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFTRA), and Actor's Equity Association (AEA). She holds an MFA from University of California San Diego and a BFA from New York University Tisch School of the Arts. Upcoming shows include *On Gold Mountain* by Lisa See and Nathan Wang with LA Opera at The Huntington Library Chinese Gardens. [www.changinator.com](http://www.changinator.com)

#### CAST INFORMATION (ALPHABETICAL)

**Grant Chang (Wen Chang)** is most known for his recurring role as Grant in *Mr. Robot*. Other theatre credits include *Marian Jean* at New York Theatre Workshop, *The Nanjing Race* at Abingdon Theatre Company, *A Shot Away* at Red Fern Theatre, and *Mame* with Sandy Duncan at Barrington Stage Company. Television credits include *Mr. Robot*, *Deception*, *The Knick*, *House of Cards*, *Daredevil*, and *Law and Order*. Film credits include *Off Jackson Avenue*, *The Cut Runs Deep*, and *Finding You*. In 2019, Grant won the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle award for Best Performance in the co-production of East West Players and Pasadena Playhouse's *The Great*

*Leap*. A native New Yorker, he minored in educational theatre at New York University and studied acting at HB Studio. Represented by Vanguard Management Group.

Instagram: @hipcatg

**Eric Hissom (Saul)** is very happy to return to the Round House stage, where his credits include *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* and *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Other DC credits include *Arcadia* at Folger Theatre (Helen Hayes award); *Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike* at Arena Stage; *The Diary of Anne Frank* at Olney Theatre Center; *Born Yesterday* at Ford's Theatre; *The Vibrator Play* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company; *Body of an American* at Theater J; *The Effect* at Studio Theatre, and many others. Regional credits include work at Seattle Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Syracuse Stage, and many others. He performed in the national tour of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, and has done a smattering of TV and film, including the feature *Out of Time*.

**Lois Shih (Connie)** is beyond thrilled to be making her debut at Round House Theatre with *The Great Leap*. Regional credits include *Romeo and Juliet* at Colorado Shakespeare Festival, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *The Wolves* at Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company. This past summer, Lois was part of virtual new play workshops/readings at The Public Theater, Chautauqua Theatre Company, Hedgepig Ensemble Theatre, Ma-Yi Theater Company, and IAMA Theatre Company. She is currently in her final year as an MFA Acting Candidate at UC San Diego. [www.loisshih.com](http://www.loisshih.com)

**Randy Nguyen Ta (Manford)** is thrilled to begin his residency at Round House Theatre with *The Great Leap*. Randy's past work includes shows with The Sǒng Collective, Yangtze Rep Theatre, and Upright Citizens Brigade. He studied at Michael Howard Studios in NYC and attended Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts for his BFA in Acting. Instagram: @randallta

## PRODUCTION INFORMATION

## **The Great Leap**

By Lauren Yee

Directed by Jennifer Chang

### **CAST LIST:**

Grant Chang as Wen Chang\*

Eric Hissom as Saul

Lois Shih as Connie\*

Randy Nguyen Ta as Manford\*

\* - *Round House Theatre debut*

### **WHERE:**

Round House Theatre, 4545 East-West Highway in Bethesda (one block from Wisconsin Ave. and Metro's Bethesda station). For directions, parking, and public transportation info, visit [RoundHouseTheatre.org/Visit-Us/](http://RoundHouseTheatre.org/Visit-Us/).

### **ABOUT THE PLAY:**

It's 1989, the University of San Francisco basketball team is headed to China for a "friendship" game, and plucky high school star Manford pesters aging coach Saul enough to talk his way onto the team. Landing in Beijing just before the Tiananmen Square uprising, Manford, Saul, and their Chinese translator/coach Wen Chang are forced to explore their different approaches to basketball and life and to reconcile their own converging histories. Inspired by her father's short-lived basketball career, playwright Lauren Yee applies her signature technique of colliding the personal with the historical, creating a "stunning" (*LA Times*), unforgettable fable and reminding us that the best stories—even if they aren't real—can still be true.

### **DATES AND TIMES:**

*The Great Leap* runs from November 10 to December 5, 2021. Performances are Tuesday through Thursday at 7:30 pm, Friday and Saturdays at 8:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:00 pm. The performance will stream on demand for virtual viewing beginning on November 26, with tickets available for purchase through December 5.

Socially distanced seating will be available for Wednesday and Thursday performances, with at least two open seats between parties on both levels of the theatre. Socially distanced seating will also be available in the balcony of the theatre for *all* performances during the run.

#### TICKETS:

Tickets can be purchased by calling 240.644.1100, ordering online at RoundHouseTheatre.org, or visiting the box office. Available ticket discounts include:

- Free Play – free tickets for students ages 13 through college: Round House Theatre’s Free Play initiative ties into our greater strategy to develop theatre audiences of tomorrow by providing rich, meaningful arts experiences today. For more information, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/FreePlay or email [Education@RoundHouseTheatre.org](mailto:Education@RoundHouseTheatre.org)
- On the House – community ticket access program: Round House’s next step to remove barriers that can make it difficult for some members of our community to experience our work is On the House, which provides complimentary group tickets to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and community-serving organizations with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor. For more information, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/On-Stage/On-The-House or email [Community@RoundHouseTheatre.org](mailto:Community@RoundHouseTheatre.org).
- Pay-What-You-Can performances: Wednesday, November 10 at 7:30 pm, and Saturday, November 13 at 2 pm. PWYC tickets go on sale online or by phone only (no walk-up sales) beginning one week before the first performance of each show. The patron decides the admission price. Limit of two tickets per order. PWYC tickets are subject to availability.
- Blue Star Theatre Program: Active-duty military personnel, veterans, and their immediate family qualify for a \$10 discount off the single ticket price. Learn more at RoundHouseTheatre.org/On-Stage/Tickets.

- 2-For-1 Tuesday: For our Tuesday, November 23 and 30 performances, all seats are buy one, get one free. 2-for-1 Tuesday tickets are available online or by phone (9240.644.1100) with promo code TWOFORONE beginning one week before the first performance of each show. Discounts may not be combined. Not valid on previously purchased tickets.
- Group Sales: Groups of 10 or more can save 10% off the single ticket price and are exempt from single ticket fees. These tickets must be reserved and purchased in advance by calling 240.644.1100 or emailing [GroupSales@RoundHouseTheatre.org](mailto:GroupSales@RoundHouseTheatre.org).

#### ROUND HOUSE THEATRE VACCINE AND MASK REQUIREMENTS

Patrons must present a photo ID and show proof that they meet the CDC definition of being fully vaccinated\* at the time of entry to into the theatre. Patrons may display proof of vaccination with a physical or digital copy of their vaccination card. (Round House is currently investigating additional digital options for providing proof of vaccination and will communicate any updates with patrons).

Masks will also be required for all guests, regardless of vaccination status, except while eating or drinking in the lobby café area.

Guests who are exempt from vaccination (including children under 12, people with certain medical conditions preventing vaccination, or those with closely held religious beliefs that prevent vaccination) must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within 48 hours of the performance start time.

NOTE: This policy is in effect through December 2021, although we will review current circumstances and CDC and local government recommendations in October to determine whether the mandate may be lifted or extended.



*\*"Fully vaccinated" means that either 14 days have passed since receiving the second dose of FDA or WHO authorized double-dose vaccines or that 14 days have passed since receiving the sole dose of FDA or WHO authorized single-dose vaccines.*

#### ABOUT ROUND HOUSE THEATRE

Round House Theatre is one of the leading professional theatres in the Washington, DC area, producing a season of new plays, modern classics, and musicals for more than 40,000 patrons each year at our theatre in Bethesda. Round House has been nominated for 197 Helen Hayes Awards and has won 37, including four Outstanding Resident Play Awards and the Charles MacArthur Award for Original New Play in 2016. Round House's lifelong learning and education programs serve more than 5,000 students each year at its Education Center in Silver Spring, in schools throughout Montgomery County, and at our Bethesda theatre. Cornerstone programs include Free Play, which provides free tickets for students age 13-college, the Teen Performance Company, which culminates in the student-produced Sarah Metzger Memorial Play, Summer Camp for students in grades K-12, and a full slate of classes for adults and youth.

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