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**TEEN PERFORMANCE COMPANY
CELEBRATES
20TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE SARAH METZGER MEMORIAL
PLAY**

WITH

***TIKTOK (A PERIOD PIECE)* BY STEFANI KUO**

February 25 – 27 in Round House Theatre

Bethesda, Md. (January 31, 2022) – Round House Theatre’s Teen Performance Company (TPC), a free pre-professional program for up-and-coming theatre artists, celebrates the 20th anniversary of its beloved Sarah Metzger Memorial Play.

Established by the Metzger family and friends to celebrate the memory of Sarah Metzger, an inspiring and active member of the theatre community who was killed in an automobile accident during her freshman year of college, the “Sarah Play” is the culminating performance of the Teen Performance Company each year. Following a year of training, master classes with artists working in the field, and behind-the-scenes access to Round House productions, the TPC members direct, design, stage manage, and perform a full production on the Round House

stage. This year, the TPC will present the world premiere of Stefani Kuo's *TikTok (a period piece)*, commissioned by Round House.

In 2003, the first Sarah Metzger Memorial Play, *The Diviners*, directed by David Hasty and Alissa Wigdor, opens the Black Box in Silver Spring. In 2014, Artistic Director Ryan Rilette made a commitment to commission plays that not only feature age-appropriate characters, but address the issues important to our teens. In 2016, Round House Theatre enhanced commissioning commitments through the decision to only produce world premieres for the Teen Performance Company, adding master classes and special events, and moving the Sarah Play to Round House's main stage in Bethesda. Last season (2020-2021), inspired by the other virtual work happening at Round House, the Teen Performance Company scripted and filmed an original production, *Hindsight Is...*, which explored the year from their unique perspectives.

Over its history, the Teen Performance Company has included 373 students representing 59 local high schools and has worked with more than 57 artists and teachers as mentors.

"The Teen Performance Company and Sarah Metzger Memorial Play really epitomize what Round House Theatre and its education programs are about—encouraging young artists to develop their own voices as theatrical artists, while at the same time teaching important life skills," said Director of Education Danisha Crosby. "The structure of the program, including working with professional artists who mentor the students, allows the students to have a truly unique experience."

"I just found the mentorship really astonishing," said former TPC student Kari Barclay, who is now Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre at Oberlin College. "As a high school student, you get to witness all different stages of a professional production."

"The Sarah Play hit me at a really particular time in my life where I had a little bit of experience directing," explained former TPC student Joan Sergay. "I still think about some of the things my

mentors told me as they watched some of my rehearsals and gave me feedback.” Sergay currently directs third year undergraduate students at New York University, where she still leans on the skills learned from the Sarah Play at Round House.

Please see below for complete program and ticket information for the 2022 Sarah Play, along with the history behind the Teen Performance Company’s Annual Sarah Metzger Memorial Play.

The 20th Annual Sarah Metzger Memorial Play: *TikTok (a period piece)* by Stefani Kuo

Tik Tok (a period piece) explores the lives of eight teenage social media influencers living and working together in their collaborative “Vibe Villa,” where creativity—and chaos—abide. Through their growing social media followings, the teens are thrust into TikTok stardom and left to manage their fame, friendships, and finances while exploring their own identities outside of the popular social media platform. Their struggles illustrate the universal desire to present the most well-curated versions of ourselves to the world, while cautioning that chasing golden hour isn’t as effortless as it appears on our screens.

About Sarah Metzger

The Sarah Play honors the memory of Sarah Emily Metzger, an active member of the theatre community in her school and at Round House, who was killed in an automobile accident during her freshman year of college. One of the Round House family’s lasting memories of Sarah is that, while still a high school student, she mounted and directed a full-scale theatre production. Sarah worked to raise funds, secure facilities and a production staff, market and promote her production, and direct a full-length play. “From the first day I met her, I knew this one was special. She had a light that burned so brightly it illuminated everything around her,” said Sarah’s former intern supervisor Kathy Feininger. “When I learned that she produced a show by herself—at the age of 17 or 18 years of age—that she raised funds, booked the space, hired the talent—and mounted a highly regarded production—I was not one bit surprised...Sarah was

that impressive.”

After her passing, Sarah’s family worked with Round House to create the Sarah Metzger Memorial Fund as a tribute to the inspiring young woman. Through the generosity of many contributors, the fund provides the financial resources each season for similarly passionate and motivated high school students to create a fully realized production with a professional theatre company.

About the Teen Performance Company

The Round House Theatre Teen Performance Company is a pre-professional program for the next generation of theatre artists. Selected students gain behind-the-scenes access to Round House productions and attend special events and master classes with artists working in the field. Each company member is exposed to all the elements that are required to bring a professional production to the stage. The program culminates in the Sarah Metzger Memorial Play which is directed, designed, stage managed, and performed by the Teen Performance Company. The 2021-2022 TPC students are working closely with professional artists and practitioners as mentors, including **Sarah Beth Hall (Scenic Design Mentor)**, **Ivania Stack (Costume Design Mentor)**, **Taylor S. Payne (Costume Design Mentor)**, **Peter Leibold VI (Lighting Design Mentor)**, **Matthew M. Nielson (Sound Design Mentor)**, **Sean Preston (Projections Mentor)**, **Mollie Singer (Props Design Mentor)**, **Ian Coleman (Cast Mentor)**, **Naysan Mojgani (Dramaturg Mentor)** and **Che Wernsman (Stage Management Mentor)**. This program is entirely underwritten by donors and is free to students.

Tickets may be purchased by calling 240.644.1100 or ordering online at 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.

PLAYWRIGHT INFORMATION

Stefani Kuo, 郭佳怡 (Playwright) is a poet, playwright, performer, and native of Hong Kong and

Taiwan. She received her BA from Yale and is an MFA Playwriting Candidate at the Yale School of Drama. Fluent in Cantonese, Mandarin, French, and English, she is interested in crafting multicultural, multilingual narratives for an international audience. She has been an awardee of the Jerome Fellowship at PWC, Dramatist Guild Fellowship, finalist for the National Playwrights Conference, Jerome fellowship at Lanesboro Arts Centre, Many Voices Fellowship at PWC, the Working Farm with SPACE on Ryder Farm, Van Lier New Voices Fellowship, NAP Series, DVRF Playwrights' Program, BRIC Lab, semi-finalist for the Page 73 Playwriting Fellowship, Princess Grace Fellowship, Ground Floor at Berkeley Rep, Local Lab 11, Scratchpad Series at Playwrights Realm. Her play, *Architecture of Rain*, premiered at the Iseman Theatre at Yale, which received a reading in the DVRF Roundtable and Checkmark Theatre Company series. She has received commissions from the Rubin Museum, Round House Theatre Teen Performance Company, and Yangtze Repertory Theater Company. Her play, *delicacy of a puffin heart*, was produced with the 2018 Corkscrew Theatre Festival and The Parsnip Ship. Her play on the Hong Kong protests, *Final Boarding Call*, was the winner of the 2021 Lead Ryan Fund for Emerging Women Writers' Prize, a semi-finalist for Barrington Stage' Company's Burman New Play Award and the O'Neill's National Playwrights Conference. It was presented as a virtual reading, co-produced by WP and Ma-Yi Theater Company, in March 2021, and was workshopped as a part of the 2020 Bay Area Playwrights Festival at Playwrights Foundation and the 2020 Irons in the Fire Series with Faultline Theater Company. *The Conservation of Parity*, her play on the work of Dr. Wu Chien-Shiung, the only Chinese woman to work on the Manhattan Project, was workshopped and co-presented by the Kitchen and Ma-Yi Theater Company in March 2021. It was a finalist for Egg and Spoon's 2021 Incubation series, and semi-finalist for Local Lab Theater Company's 2021 Developmental Series. She most recently presented a reading of her play, *Little Stubby Wings, Like She Could've Glued Them On*, with Bedlam Theater Company in October 2021. She was a member of Interstate-73, Page 73's Writers Group, in 2019. Her work in creative non-fiction, poetry, and translation has appeared in *The New York Times*, *China Hands*, *Yale Literary Magazine*, and more. Her poetry has been displayed as an installation piece, as part of Berlin Art Week 2017, at the Centre of Substructured Loss. She is represented by Jacob Epstein at

Lighthouse Management. StefaniKuo.com; For more on Hong Kong: Parachute.Substack.com

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

TikTok (a period piece)

By Stefani Kuo

Directed by Sonora Cohen-Rider

TPC CAST LIST:

Jed Sadqi as Nick Savage

Quin Parker as Frankie Savage

Eva Lee as Christine Lu

Atiah Ca Ozturk as Saba Osman

Allyson Siro as Betty Bop

Shaelyn Edwards Eck as Elli Martin

Darren Jenkins-Johnston as Jarred Litke

TPC CREATIVE TEAM LIST:

Director: Sonora Cohen-Rider

Co-Costume Designers: Giorgia Toti & Eliza Vassalo

Scenic Designer: Mars Johnson

Lighting Designer: Sage Cohen-Rider

Sound Designer: Fiona Smith

Projections Designer: Benjamin Pallansch

Properties Designer: Iris Maas

Stage Manager: Jay Israel

Assistant Stage Managers: Maggie Megosh & Luke Memmo

Dramaturg: Giorgia Toti

Run Crew: Sara Torres & Iris Maas

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/.

ABOUT THE PLAY:

Take a look inside the lives of eight teenage social media influencers living and working together in their collaborative "Vibe Villa," where creativity—and chaos—abide. Through their growing social media followings, the teens are thrust into TikTok stardom and left to manage

their fame, friendships, and finances while exploring their own identities outside of the popular social media platform. Their struggles illustrate the universal desire to present the most well-curated versions of ourselves to the world, while cautioning that chasing golden hour isn't as effortless as it appears on our screens.

DATES AND TIMES:

TikTok (a period piece) runs from February 25 to 27, 2022. Performances are Friday through Saturday at 8 pm, and Sunday at 2 pm.

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
- 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.
- 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.

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 5, 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 March 2022. We will continue to review current circumstances and CDC and local government recommendations in February 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 EDUCATION

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. Round House Theatre Education inspires creativity, exercises imaginations, and promotes artistic risk-taking, while developing critical thinking,

cooperation, and confidence. We believe every child is an artist and encourage them to explore all aspects of theatre—acting, movement, design, and play creation—and the unique ways to tell stories through theatre. All our students experience the joy of creating and sharing theatre.

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