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Media contact: Dennis Markam

Media phone: 925.283.6673

Email: Press@TownHallTheatre.com

Dennis.Markam@TownHallTheatre.com

***FAERIES* GETS NEW LIFE IN TOWN HALL THEATRE STAGED READING**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – An original piece written for the San Francisco Olympians Festival in 2021 will receive an in-person staged reading at Lafayette’s Town Hall Theatre on March 14 – just before St. Patrick’s Day. Playwrights Colette Gunn-Graffy and Jasmine Woods explore themes of belonging in their play *Faeries, or Out the Other Side*.

In a pub in rural Ireland four tourists from various countries take shelter from the rain. Among them is Áine, a young queer Irish American who has traveled to their birth country to track down the biological parents they never knew. Along with the other travelers, Áine finds themself drawn to Dagda, the handsome Irish barman, who affirms Áine’s desire to identify with their roots. Áine’s fairy tattoo sparks a conversation about enchanted creatures that starts out frivolous but grows darker as each travelers’ stories betray hidden loneliness, and a sudden revelation leaves Áine torn between two equally devastating choices.

Although the namesake of *Faeries, or Out the Other Side* is mythical, the play’s true subject matter is real and timely. The play is about our desperate need to belong — whether to a tribe, a heritage, a community, or even a romantic partnership — and how a lack of connection leaves us morally and spiritually vulnerable. As one character drily observes, some people “just want to believe” in something.

“These characters, no matter where they come from and what they have experienced, all share the very human need to belong,” says the play’s director Claire Ganem. “But what truly drew me to them is in the aftermath of finding that belonging. Once you find your community, how do you stop yourself from being complacent when faced with the injustices caused by those around you?” Ganem will also be directing *Antigone, Presented by the Girls of St. Catherine's* by Madhuri Shekar for Town Hall Theatre’s Main Stage in June 2022.

Curator of Artistic Programming Daniel J. Eslick thinks this offering will fascinate and connect with audiences. “What draws me to this script,” Eslick says, “is how it structures mythology – something that can feel distanced from our modern society – into a narrative that hits close to home. The script has added more upon the established mythology, and I love having that dialogue between modern and historical on the Town Hall stage.”

This one-night only special event will feature a talkback after the reading with the cast and creative team of *Faeries*.

**Content Advisory for this Production**

*Faeries, or Out the Other Side* contains adult language, mentions of sexual assault, and depictions of alcohol consumption.

**ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS**

**Colette Gunn-Graffy** is a Bay Area writer, teacher, actor, and theater practitioner. Originally trained as an actor, Colette fell in love with playwriting while in London, England, where she lived for seven years, working as a tutor and workshop facilitator. Her writing has been workshopped and produced in London, San Francisco, and Alameda. Although grounded in the present moment, her plays are heavily influenced by the archetypal characters that she encountered in the fairy tales and mythologies she devoured as a child; mermaids, fairies, angels, and holy un-virgins are only a few of the characters she has used to reflect light into the darker corners of our modern life. A graduate of Yale University and the University of East Anglia (in the United Kingdom), Colette holds degrees in Theater Studies and Creative Writing. She is also the Chair of the English department at Saint Joseph Notre Dame High School in Alameda.  
  
**Jasmine Woods** is a writer and actor in theater, film, and comedy. Her one-act plays have been produced in San Francisco and New York, including *Voices of Juárez, Before It Even Starts, IX,* and *Lasting.* Jasmine has performed in film, television, and theater productions in Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Vancouver. Acting projects include *Stigma, He's Just Not That Into You, Cold Case,* and live performances at the Whitney Biennial, Hammer Museum, Vancouver Art Gallery, and The Marsh. She is currently in pre-production for her next film project as writer and actor. Jasmine is a graduate of Yale University, where she studied theater, film, and psychology. She will soon be licensed to practice as a clinical psychologist in California.

**ABOUT THE DIRECTOR**

**Claire Ganem** is a director, performer, and educator, who has a passion for bringing new works to the stage. She is a current company member and ambassador at Playground SF. In addition to Playground, her work has been featured at Magic Theatre, Cutting Ball Theater, Pianofight, and Santa Cruz Shakespeare. Upcoming: *Antigone, presented by the Girls of St. Catherine's* at Town Hall Theatre (June 2022) and *Mirror Face* at 3Girls Theatre Company in June 2022. She is a proud graduate of UC Santa Cruz and Nazareth College of Rochester, NY.

**About Town Hall Theatre Company**

Established in 1944 as the Dramateurs, Town Hall Theatre is the oldest continuously active theatre in Contra Costa County. Town Hall Theatre was awarded Best Theatre Troupe 2016 by Diablo Magazine, Best of The East Bay, and is the past recipient of numerous Shellie Awards, and Theatre Bay Area Awards. THT is also home to an extensive children’s educational program, twice voted the Best Children’s Theatre Company by Bay Area Parent Magazine. In December of 2021 Town Hall Theatre Company became the owners of the historical Town Hall Theatre which had been maintained by the Lafayette Improvement Association since its construction in 1914.

**CALENDAR Information for *Faeries, or Out the Other Side***

**WHO: TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY**

**WHAT: *Faeries, or Out the Other Side***

by Colette Gunn-Graffy and Jasmine Woods

directed by Claire Ganem

**CAST:** To be announced

**DATES:** Monday, March 14, 2022 at 7:30PM

**WHERE:** Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School St., Lafayette, CA 94549

**TICKETS:** $15 pre-sale, $20 at-door

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