



CONTACT: Jonathan White / [530-219-9797](tel:530-219-9797) or jonathanwhitepr@gmail.com

SAN JOSE STAGE COMPANY presents
West Coast Premiere

PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

By Anthony Clarvoe
Directed by Benny Sato Ambush
January 31 – February 25, 2024

SAN JOSE, CA (January 9, 2024): The **San Jose Stage Company** (Randall King, Artistic Director, and Cathleen King, Executive Director) is thrilled to announce the complete cast and creative team for the West Coast Premiere of [*People Where They Are*](#) by Anthony Clarvoe. The production will run from January 31 – February 25, 2024 at San Jose Stage Company (490 South 1st Street, San Jose, CA, 95113), with the press opening scheduled for 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 3, 2024. ***People Where They Are*** will be directed by Benny Sato Ambush. Ticket prices range from \$34 to \$74 and can be purchased online at www.thestage.org or through the box office at **(408) 283-7142**.

Drawing on the volatile conditions of the mid-century South, rife with segregation and other civil rights inequities, cultural oppression, and exploitative workplace practices, Anthony Clarvoe's ***People Where They Are*** weaves a compelling narrative rooted in real events at the Highland Folk Center. Six ordinary people gather to share their lived experiences, confronting their relationships and their place in the path of our country's checkered history. What they face reveals disturbing parallels to our currently divided state.

"Brilliant theater. ... confront(ing) the demons of our past..."

— Alan Sherrod, ARTS Knoxville

"The Stage is profoundly grateful and honored to showcase the West Coast Premiere of Anthony Clarvoe's ***People Where They Are***," said Randall King, Artistic Director. "***People Where They Are*** was originally commissioned, developed, and produced by Clarence Brown Theatre, Knoxville, TN, at the University of Tennessee with The Highlander Research and Educational Center of New Market, Tennessee providing research assistance. During this time, The Highlander Center was fire bombed (March 29, 2019). As The Nation stated at the time, 'The arson attack on the Highlander Center, a longtime leader in racial and social-justice work, is not merely a hate crime—it's an act of war.' Clarvoe consistently demonstrates a keen understanding of our collective social consciousness. In 1995, San Jose Stage Company presented the West Coast Premiere of his enduringly relevant work, ***The Living***, which garnered acclaim from both critics and audiences, cited as 'Standout' Play of 1995—San Jose Mercury News and named as one of ten 'Top Stage Plays' of 1995—San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner. We are equally honored to welcome back director Benny Sato Ambush to the Bay Area, guiding this powerful and visceral production."

"Making materially real the 'we' in 'We The People' is unfinished work in the American experiment," said Director Benny Sato Ambush. "America is not just an idea; it is a roiling, raging, evolving family argument. Since the 1930s, the once clandestine Highlander Folk School has been a center for training change leaders committed to manifesting the transformationally inclusive and equitable pluralism promised in the

language of the Founding Fathers' enabling legislations: The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The lens of the recent past in Anthony Clarvoe's **People Where They Are** sheds light on our current moment of reckoning: what kind of country will we choose to become, and who gets to enjoy her bounty? The play is a road map of the complicated, often fraught, but essential DOING in close-quarter interpersonal human engagement necessary to bring about a brave new world. Democracy is loud and messy, demanding an all-hands-on-deck call to action 'of the people, by the people, for the people.' ALL the people. This will be my third occasion directing an Anthony Clarvoe play over the past three decades and my first public artistic presence in the Bay Area since my departure in 1998 that concluded a 16-year chapter on both sides of the Bay Bridge begun in 1982. I thank my colleagues at San Jose Stage and Anthony for bringing me back 'home.'"

The cast for **People Where They Are** will feature Cathleen Riddley* as "Mrs. Clark," Brady Morales-Woolery* as "Mr. Carawan," Rebecca Pingree as "May," Estrella Esparza-Johnson* as "Emma," Michael Champlin as "Ned," and Terrance Austin Smith* as "John."

In addition to Benny Sato Ambush+, the creative and production team includes Anthony Clarvoe (playwright), MaryBeth Cavanaugh+, (Choreographer) , Awele Makeba (Assistant to the Director and Consulting Dramaturg), Giulio Perrone (Scenic Design), Bethany Deal (Costume Design), Maurice Vercoutere (Lighting Design), Steve Schoenbech (Sound Design), Jenn Trampenau (Props Coordinator), Kimberly Mohne-Hill and Kristin Hill (Dialect Coaching), Bill Vujevich (Scenic Painting) and Iliana Karbowski*, (Stage Manager).

**Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.*

+Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, the union professional stage directors and choreographers .

ABOUT ANTHONY CLARVOE

Anthony is an award-winning playwright and San Francisco native who recently, very happily, returned home to the Bay Area. His plays include **Pick Up Ax**, **The Living**, **Let's Play Two**, **The Brothers Karamazov**, **Ambition Facing West**, **Ctrl+Alt+Delete** and **The Art Of Sacrifice**; they are published by Broadway Play Publishing, Inc. While living and working in the Bay Area he received the Will Glickman, Bay Area Drama Critics' Circle and Dramalogue Awards and an American Theatre Critics Awards Citation for **Pick Up Ax**, as well as the Stavis Award from the National Theatre Council as the promising playwright of the year. Since then he's been roaming the country, writing plays and raising a family. He has received twenty commissions from South Coast Repertory, the Mark Taper Forum, Playwrights' Horizons, and others; fellowships from the Guggenheim, McKnight, Jerome, and Irvine Foundations, National Endowment for the Arts, TCG/Pew Charitable Trusts and Kennedy Center/Fund for New American Plays; the Berrilla Kerr Award in recognition of his contributions to the American theater; and critics' awards from LA to New England. His play **Show and Tell** recently played to rave reviews in San Francisco in a production by the newly formed Symmetry Theatre Company. His most recent play, **Our Practical Heaven**, was one of the winners of the 2011 Global Age Project at the Aurora Theatre, where it is now in development. In 2012, his next play, **GIZMO**, will appear at Pennsylvania Center Theatre and in Cutting Ball's Risk Is This festival.

ABOUT BENNY SATO AMBUSH

Artistic Director - Venice, FL's Venice Theatre, America's 2nd largest community theatre. Veteran professional SDC stage director, educator, published commentator, and consultant. He has artistically helmed Richmond, VA's TheatreVirginia (LORT C), Oakland, CA's Oakland Ensemble Theatre (SPT), and Providence, RI's Rites and Reason Theatre Company (Academic). Previously: Associate Artistic Director, American Conservatory Theater; Associate Artistic Director - Anna Deavere Smith's Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue at Harvard University; Director - Institute for Teledramatic Arts & Technology at

California State University, Monterey Bay; Senior Distinguished Producing Director in Residence - Boston's Emerson Stage at Emerson College; Co-Artistic Director - San Francisco Bay Area Playwrights Festival. Numerous professional regional theatre directing credits nationally. Taught acting and directing nationwide in MFA, BFA, and BA training programs. AB - Brown University; MFA - University of California, San Diego. Board Membership: College of Fellows of the American Theatre, Seven Devils New Play Foundry, National Theatre Conference, Founding Steering Committee Member - National Alliance of Acting Teachers.

ABOUT SAN JOSE STAGE COMPANY

Through powerful, provocative and profound theatre, San Jose Stage Company (The Stage) seeks to expand community, forge creative partnerships and challenge individuals in order to illuminate the human condition.

San Jose Stage Company is recognized as the South Bay's leading professional theatre company, having earned a reputation for artistic excellence through imaginative and edgy theatrical experiences that spark ideas and dialogue with the audience. The Stage is dedicated to the presentation and development of new works, with a concentration on American literature scripted by modern playwrights that speak to the conditions, hopes and fears of humanity. With the farthest seat in the house no more than 15 feet from the three-quarter thrust stage, the connection between actor and audience is profoundly visceral.

The Stage is a multi-award-winning theatre company, including the 2018 Paine Knickerbocker Award for continued contributions to Bay Area theatre from the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle. The Stage has produced over 200 productions, including 20 world premieres and 50 new works and is ranked as the 2nd largest professional theatre and 8th largest performance arts organization in Silicon Valley (Silicon Valley Business Journal).

Attracting over 30,000 patrons to downtown and employing more than 150 local artists annually, San Jose Stage Company continues to be a vital force in the region's economic and creative landscape.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets to San Jose Stage Company's [2023-2024](#) Season may be purchased online at www.thestage.org.

COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR IN-PERSON PERFORMANCES

To continue our safe return to in-person performances at The Stage, we have updated our Covid-19 Safety Policies in accordance with guidelines provided by the State of California and Santa Clara County:

- Vaccination checks will no longer be required of patrons before entering the theatre.
- Masking is strongly encouraged but no longer required for all patrons and staff while inside the theatre and lobby area.
- San Jose Stage Company remains a fully vaccinated company, i.e., artists, staff, and crew are vaccinated.
- Concessions will be permitted in the theatre and lobby area.
- We have upgraded our air filters and increased air flow in the theatre.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be provided throughout the theatre and lobby area.
- Performers will not be masked.

- All tickets will be e-tickets for touchless check-in.
- Digital playbills will be available by QR code and website link. Physical playbills can be provided upon request.
- Patrons will not be allowed to wait for performers in the lobby after the show, but are welcome to wait in the courtyard.
- The theatre, backstage, and lobby areas will be sanitized after each performance.

The Stage is constantly monitoring state and county guidelines and these policies may change and evolve over time. We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining safety at The Stage. These policies and procedures are in place to keep our doors open for live performances. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our policies, please contact us via email at boxoffice@thestage.org