



For press requests, please contact Yuri Kwon,  
[yuri@solproject.org](mailto:yuri@solproject.org) or 917-514-5515

## THE SOL PROJECT, NEW THEATER INITIATIVE, LAUNCHES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NEW GEORGES, RATTLESTICK PLAYWRIGHTS THEATER, THE PUBLIC THEATER + MORE

**FOUNDED TO RAISE THE VISIBILITY OF LATINA/O PLAYWRIGHTS,  
PROJECT KICKS OFF WITH WORLD PREMIERE OF HILLARY BETTIS'S *ALLIGATOR*,  
DIRECTED BY ELENA ARAOZ, NOVEMBER 2016**

**HONORARY BOARD INCLUDES DAPHNE RUBIN-VEGA, RAÚL CASTILLO, JUNOT  
DIAZ, SANDRA MARQUEZ, JOHN ORTIZ, ROSALBA ROLÓN & MORE**

**New York, NY – May 24, 2016 – The Sol Project** is a New York-based theater initiative, founded by Artistic Director **Jacob G. Padrón** with a collective of actors, directors and producers, to help raise the visibility of Latina/o playwrights in the American Theater. Over the course of several years, the project will utilize a synergistic network of Off-Broadway companies and regional theaters to develop and produce works by a cohort of 12 emerging and established writers. This launch comes with the announcement of the project's first production and inaugural theater partnership – the world premiere of **Hilary Bettis's *Alligator***, directed by **Elena Araoz**, with **New Georges** at the ART/New York Theatres, in **November 2016**.

**Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, The Public Theater, Labyrinth Theater Company, Atlantic Theater Company** and **Women's Project Theater** join New Georges as the first six of 12 trailblazing theater companies that have signed on to present a Sol Project playwright as part of their respective main stage seasons. "This endeavor represents a fulfillment of the American Theater's promise to be a space for *all* American stories. I am deeply moved by the commitment of these institutions to help lift up our Latina/o playwrights and put them in dialogue with the most respected theater-makers, creating the **new** American canon, for a new American Theater. A spirit of generosity animates our work as we share our cultures and communities through our stories," says Padrón. Once each work receives a premiere in New York, regional partners will commit to the continuing life of each play with subsequent productions.

Padrón conceived the Sol Project after the 2013 Latina/o Theater Commons National Convening, where he realized that if there was to be true representation of Latin stories on America's stages, more had to change on a local level for Latina/o playwrights. Considering the influence New York's vibrant theater scene has on many regional theaters, he formed the initiative to activate and unite the Latino theater community in New York, with the ultimate goal of seeding change nationwide. "Creating more opportunities for our writers and inciting a shift of this scale is not possible without our pillars, dedicated Latina/o theater companies like Pregones and INTAR, who have been supporting these artists for years; they truly paved the way for us," says Padrón.

**Susan Bernfield, Producing Artistic Director of New Georges**, said, "The Sol Project model is so smart, and designed for maximum impact, on our field and on our art form. Climbing aboard Jacob's vision of a more all-embracing American theater was a no-brainer for us, and working with him for the past year, watching him bring so much energy and passion to launching this vital initiative, has been a privilege," Padrón adds, "I have the deepest gratitude for our first partner company, New Georges, for taking the leap with me."

Bettis's *Alligator* is a play about twin orphans from the Florida Everglades. The play weaves together sex and enemies, blood and whiskey, hope and murder. Bettis merges the raw, visceral energy of a grungy rock club into the story, asking the question: How do we truly love one another in the face of our deepest, darkest monsters?

The production of *Alligator* at New Georges will coincide with the **2016 Latina/o Theatre Commons NYC Convening on December 1-4**, hosted this year by The Public Theater, which will also serve as the third producing partner. "We are proud to be part of the initial cohort of Sol Project partners," said **The Public Theater's Artistic Director Oskar Eustis**. "The Sol Project is an inspiring and exciting example of theater artists creatively organizing to change the field, and the world. Here's to more!"

The productions will engage not only writers, but also directors and designers from the Latina/o community and other communities of color. Through these productions, the project will create national, regional and local dialogues between and within theaters and general public based on the Latino community's experiences and stories, impacting the artistic community and broader society.

"It takes a village to make any piece of theater. The Sol Project, with its innovative structure and committed partner theaters, has created an expanded village that gives a platform to Latina/o voices that have not been heard as loudly as they deserve. I look forward to getting to know the other work that the partner theaters will be producing and imagine that this initiative will inspire other communities to create similar models," said **Daniella Topol, Artistic Director of Rattlestick Theater Company**.

The inaugural members of The Sol Project's Honorary Board are: Tony and Drama Desk Award-nominated singer and actress, **Daphne Rubin-Vega**; Pulitzer Prize-winning author, **Junot Diaz**; rising stage and screen star, **Raúl Castillo**, who co-starred in *Looking*; Jeff Award-winning actress and first Latina to be invited to the ensemble of Steppenwolf Theatre Company, **Sandra Marquez**; prolific stage and screen actor, **John Ortiz**, who co-starred in the Oscar-winning *Silver Linings Playbook*; Artistic Director of Pregones Theater, **Rosalba Rolón**; Obie-winning actress, **Diane Rodriguez**, who was recently appointed to the National Council of the Arts by President Obama; and more to be announced.

The Sol Project can be found online at [www.solproject.org](http://www.solproject.org) and on social media at [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

### **First Production – Creative Team**

**Hilary Bettis** (Playwright) writes for the theater, television and film. Her work includes: *Dolly Arkansas*, *Blood & Dust*, *The Ghosts of Lote Bravo*, *The History of American Pornography*, *Alligator*, *Dakota Atoll*, *Mexico* and *American Girls*. A two-time recipient of the Lecomte du Nouy Prize from Lincoln Center, she is a 2015 graduate of the Lila Acheson Wallace Playwright Fellowship at The Juilliard School. Bettis has received fellowships and residencies at the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, York Theatre Workshop, SPACE at Ryder Farm, La Jolla Playhouse, New York Foundation for the Arts, Playwrights' Week at The Lark, Audrey Residency at New Georges, The Kennedy Center/NNPN MFA Workshop and more. As a screenwriter, Bettis has written and produced short films, *B'Hurst* and *The Iron Warehouse*, which have screened worldwide. She also works as a staff writer for the TV series *The Americans*.

**Elena Aroaz** (Director) is a stage director for theater and opera. This season, in NYC, she directs Octavio Solís's *Prospect* (Boundless Theatre Company), Dipika Guha's *Mechanics of Love*, and will devise *She-She-She* with Virginia Grise and Hook & Eye for Ice Factory Festival, New Ohio Theatre. She will direct Naomi Wallace's *The Retreating World* (Great Plains Theatre Conference) and *Two Arms and a Noise* (Bucharest International Theatre Platform), which she wrote and directed as a NYTW fellow. She was named The Drama League's inaugural Beatrice Terry Resident, where she wrote *Plastic Drastic*, an eco-aware musical adaptation of *The Odyssey*, and directed for the Rose Theatre. Other productions: *Architecture of Becoming* (Women's Project), two Carl Djerassi plays (Off-Broadway), Li Tong's *The Power* (Beijing), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Prague Shakespeare), Mac Wellman's *Wu and Horrocks* (Sleeping Weazel, ArtsEmerson), Natalia Naman's *Lawnpeople* (Cherry Lane Mentor

Project), *La Traviata* (NYCO, BAM), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Opera North), *Falstaff* (Brooklyn Philharmonic, BAM), *Latin Lovers* (Glimmerglass Opera). Araoz is a founding member and serves on the artistic collective of The Sol Project.

### **About The Sol Project**

**The Sol Project** is a New York City-based initiative catalyzing change via a national movement to provide productions by Latina/o playwrights, bringing the stories and culture of their community to the fore of the American Theater. Inspired by the playwrights' collective 13P, Artistic Director **Jacob G. Padrón** devised a model for a highly visible platform for Latina/o playwrights, first in New York City and then nationwide. At heart, it is a simple idea: 12 playwrights, both emerging and established, are partnered with Off-Broadway companies throughout New York City who produce their plays. Regional partners then commit to the continued life of each play once it has premiered in New York, with second, third and fourth productions. A conversation is created among the companies, and our plays sit side by side with those of other writers in the mainstream of the American Theater.

Founded by a collective of producers and directors, led by Padrón, the Sol Project builds visibility by activating a synergistic network of off-Broadway companies and regional theaters, all committed to producing Latina/o stories and artists. By placing Latina/o plays in conversation with other works in the seasons of major theater companies, the project is slated to not only make a difference in the lives of gifted Latina/o playwrights; it contributes a bold, kaleidoscopic body of work to what will become the new American canon. The Sol Project's artistic collective is comprised of its founding members **Claudia Acosta, Elena Araoz, Adriana Gaviria, David Mendizabal, Padrón** and **Laurie Woolery**.

### **About The Sol Project - Artistic Collective**

**Jacob G. Padrón** is the Founder and Artistic Director of The Sol Project. He is currently on the artistic staff of The Public Theater as the Senior Line Producer where he works on new plays, musicals and Shakespeare in the Park. Prior to his post at The Public, Padrón was the Producer at Steppenwolf Theatre Company where he oversaw artistic programming in the Garage, Steppenwolf's second stage dedicated to new work, new artists, and new audiences. From 2008 – 2011, he was an Associate Producer under Bill Rauch at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival where he was instrumental in producing all shows in the 11-play repertory. In addition, he was a part of the producing team that transferred OSF productions to Seattle Rep, Berkeley Rep, Arena Stage and BAM (*Throne of Blood*, Next Wave Festival). He also produced Suzan-Lori Parks' *365 Days/365 Plays* for Center Theater Group. Padrón was recently named "one to watch" by *American Theatre Magazine* and an inaugural recipient of the TCG SPARK Leadership Fellowship. A graduate of Loyola Marymount University (BA) and Yale School of Drama (MFA), Padrón dedicates this initiative to his first artistic home, El Teatro Campesino in San Juan Bautista, CA.

**Claudia Acosta** is a bilingual actor, producer, director, writer and teaching artist. Her Off-Broadway credits include *The Architecture of Becoming* (Women's Project), *Dance for a Dollar* (INTAR), *Don Cristobal Billy Club Man* (HERE Arts Center); and regionally: *Guadalupe* (Chautauqua Theater Company), *Electricidad* (Rose Marine Theater), *Hotel Juarez* (Teatro Dallas). Acosta created and co-produced the first-ever Rose Marine Latino Film Festival in Fort Worth, TX and produced a short documentary with Oscar-winning director Nigel Noble. Acosta has been a teaching artist for Lincoln Center Education since 2008. She will perform *Two Arms and a Noise*, a one-woman piece developed at NYTW, in the 2016 Bucharest International Theater Platform.

**Adriana Gaviria** is an actor of theater, television and film as well as a voice-over artist. She has performed regionally at Yale Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Arizona Theatre Company, Marin Theatre Company, Chicago Shakespeare Theater and more. In New York: Immigrants' Theatre Project at the Public Theater, the Lark, FringeNYC, Pregones, Repertorio Español, Working Theater at the Abingdon and more. She is on the Steering Committee Member for the Latina/o Theatre Commons (LTC) and a recipient of the Los Angeles Theatre Center (LATC)/Andrew W. Mellon

Foundation Artistic Leaders Fellowship. Gaviria graduated Florida International University (BFA) and Yale School of Drama (MFA).

**David Mendizábal** is a director, designer, and one of the Producing Artistic Leaders of the Movement Theatre Company in Harlem. Directing credits include: *Locusts Have No King* by J. Julian Christopher (INTAR), *Look Upon Our Lowliness* by Harrison David Rivers and *Bintou* by Koffi Kwahulé, trans. Chantal Bilodeau (TMTTC), *The Gospel According to F#ggots* by Aurin Squire (BAX), *ASHÉ* by Ricardo Pérez González (UP). He is on the Steering Committee of the Latina/o Theatre Commons, and co-founder of La Co-Operativa.

**Laurie Woolery** is a director, playwright, community organizer and producer who has worked at across the country: Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory, Goodman Theatre, Cornerstone Theater Company, South Coast Repertory, Mark Taper Forum, Denver Center, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Theatre Center, Inge Center for the Arts, Plaza de la Raza/RedCAT, Deaf-West Theatre, Sundance Playwrights Lab plus Sundance Children's Theater. Woolery is the Associate Director of Public Works at The Public Theater. She is a proud member of The Sol Project, recipient of the Fuller Road Fellowship for Female Directors of Color and serves on the Board of the Latino Producers Action Network.

### **About the Theater Companies**

**New Georges**, founded in 1992, is one of New York City's premiere downtown theaters, a strategically small company with a national reputation as a home, a hub and a playground for some of the most adventurous theater artists (who are women) working today. Through productions of boundary-pushing new plays, several varieties of play development programs, and our indispensable workspace, The Room, we support the largest ongoing working community of women theater artists in New York City and have launched an unprecedented generation of women playwrights and directors. Notable productions include Kate Benson's 2015 Obie Award-winning *A Beautiful Day in November on the Banks of the Greatest of the Great Lakes*, directed by Lee Sunday Evans; Marielle Heller's *The Diary of a Teenage Girl*, directed by Sarah Cameron Sunde and Rachel Eckerling; Eisa Davis' *Angela's Mixtape*, directed by Liesl Tommy; Jenny Schwartz's *God's Ear*, directed by Anne Kauffman; Heidi Schreck's *Creature*, directed by Leigh Silverman; Sheila Callaghan's *Dead City*, directed by Daniella Topol; and Lisa D'Amour's *Anna Bella Eema*, directed by Katie Pearl.

**Rattlestick Playwrights Theater**, founded in 1994, has produced many of the nation's most ambitious and visionary playwrights and their works. We demonstrate a commitment to the artist by guaranteeing them a second production — regardless of the reception of the first. Recent Rattlestick productions include: Martyna Majok's *Ironbound* (Nominated for Outer Critics, starring Marin Ireland – Nominee for Drama Desk and Drama League), Lucy Thurber (*The Hilltown Plays*, a quintet of plays produced simultaneously at five theaters in the West Village, Obie Award), Sheila Callaghan (*Everything You Touch, That Pretty Pretty*), Adam Rapp (*The Hallway Trilogy*), Craig Wright (*The Pavilion*, Drama Desk Nomination), Jesse Eisenberg (*The Revisionist*, starring Vanesse Redgrave, Drama Desk Nominee), Samuel D. Hunter (*The Few*), and Annie Baker (*The Aliens*, Obie Award). We have also produced works by some of our nation's most important playwrights, including José Rivera (*Massacre Sing To Your Children*), Craig Lucas (*Ode To Joy*), Charles Fuller (*One Night*) and Dael Orlandersmith (*Horsedreams*). In 2007, Rattlestick received the Ross Wetzsteon Obie Award for its body of work.

**The Public Theater**, under the leadership of Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, is the only theater in New York that produces Shakespeare, the classics, musicals, contemporary and experimental pieces in equal measure. Celebrating his 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season at The Public, Eustis has created new community-based initiatives designed to engage audiences like Public Lab, Public Studio, Public Forum, Public Works, and a remount of the Mobile Unit. The Public continues the work of its visionary founder, Joe Papp, by acting as an advocate for the theater as an essential cultural force, and leading and framing dialogue on some of the most important issues of our day. Creating theater for one of the largest and most diverse audience bases in New York City for nearly 60 years, today the Company engages audiences in a variety of venues—including its landmark downtown home at Astor

Place, which houses five theaters and Joe's Pub; the Delacorte Theater in Central Park, home to free Shakespeare in the Park; and the Mobile Unit, which tours Shakespearean productions for underserved audiences throughout New York City's five boroughs. The Public's wide range of programming includes free Shakespeare in the Park, the bedrock of the Company's dedication to making theater accessible to all; Public Works, an expanding initiative that is designed to cultivate new connections and new models of engagement with artists, audiences and the community each year; and audience and artist development initiatives that range from Emerging Writers Group and to the Public Forum series. The Public is located on property owned by the City of New York and receives annual support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; and in October 2012 the landmark building downtown at Astor Place was revitalized to physically manifest the Company's core mission of sparking new dialogues and increasing accessibility for artists and audiences, by dramatically opening up the building to the street and community, and transforming the lobby into a public piazza for artists, students, and audiences. The Public is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning *Fun Home* and Lin-Manuel Miranda's acclaimed American musical *Hamilton*, and Danaï Gurira's *Eclipsed* featuring Lupita Nyong'o. The Public has received 47 Tony Awards, 167 Obie Awards, 52 Drama Desk Awards, 54 Lortel Awards, 31 Outer Critics Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics Awards, and five Pulitzer Prizes.

[Labyrinth Theater Company](#), led by Artistic Director Mimi O'Donnell and Executive Director Danny Feldman, is a home for diverse artists who have changed the face of American theater through groundbreaking productions of provocative new plays. Founded in 1992 by a group of actors who wanted to push their artistic limits and tell new, more inclusive stories that expanded the boundaries of mainstream theater, Labyrinth has grown into an award-winning, nationally renowned company of actors, directors, playwrights and designers from a wide array of cultural perspectives. Over the past 20 years, Labyrinth has developed hundreds of original works and premiered 60 new American plays here in New York including *Jack Goes Boating*, *Jesus Hopped The A Train*, *Our Lady of 121st Street*, *Sunset Baby*, *Nice Girl*, *Empanada Loca* and the Company's multi-Tony nominated Broadway debut, *The Motherf\*\*ker With The Hat*.

[Atlantic Theater Company](#), led by Artistic Director Neil Pepe, Artistic Director and Managing Director Jeffery Lawson, is the award winning Off-Broadway theater that produces great plays simply and truthfully, utilizing an artistic ensemble. Atlantic believes that the story of a play and the intent of its playwright are at the core of the creative process. The plays in the Atlantic repertory, from both new and established playwrights, are boldly interpreted by today's finest theater artists and resonate with contemporary audiences. Now in its 30th Anniversary Season, Atlantic has produced more than 150 plays including Tony Award® winning productions of *Spring Awakening* and *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Martin McDonagh); New York Drama Critics Circle winner for Best New Play, *The Night Alive* (Conor McPherson); world premieres of *I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard* (Halley Feiffer); *Between Riverside and Crazy* (Stephen Adly Guirgis); world premieres of *Almost an Evening*, *Offices*, *Happy Hour* and *Women or Nothing* (Ethan Coen); the musical revival of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera* directed by Martha Clarke; *Our New Girl* (Nancy Harris) *Bluebird* and *Harper Regan* (Simon Stephens); *What Rhymes With America* (Melissa James Gibson); *3 Kinds of Exile* (John Guare); *Storefront Church* (John Patrick Shanley); *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* and *The Cripple of Inishmaan* (Martin McDonagh); *Body Awareness* (Annie Baker); *Romance*, *American Buffalo* and *Edmond* (David Mamet); *Through a Glass Darkly* (Ingmar Bergman, adapted by Jenny Worton); *Farragut North* (Beau Willimon); *Blue/Orange* (Joe Penhall); *Port Authority* and *Dublin Carol* (Conor McPherson); *Writer's Block* (Woody Allen); *The Cider House Rules* (adapted by Peter Parnell); *Good Television* (Rod McLachlan); *Celebration & The Room*, *The Collection & A Kind of Alaska* and *The Hothouse* (Harold Pinter); *Dying For It*, *Gabriel* (Maira Buffini); *Oohrah!* (Bekah Brunstetter); *Mojo*, *Parlour Song* (Jez Butterworth); *Boys' Life* and *The Lights* (Howard Korder); *Distant Fires* (Kevin Heelan); *The Lying Lesson*, *Missing Persons* (Craig Lucas); *Skeleton Crew* (Dominique Morisseau) and *Hold On To Me Darling* (Kenneth Lonergan).

Atlantic has garnered 12 Tony Awards, 19 Lucille Lortel Awards, 16 Obie Awards, 7 Drama Desk Awards, 6 Outer Critics Circle Awards, 3 Drama League Awards, 3 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Atlantic also operates The Atlantic Theater Company Acting

School, which has an undergraduate program in conjunction with New York University, as well as a two-year professional acting program and a six-week intensive workshop every summer. Atlantic for Kids and the Educational Outreach Program partners with schools and teachers throughout the greater metropolitan area coordinating in-school visits of teaching artists and post-theater talkbacks.

**Women's Project Theater** is the nation's oldest and largest theater company dedicated to developing, producing and promoting the work of female theater artists at every stage in their careers. WP Theater supports female-identified theater artists and the world-class, groundbreaking work they create, and provides a platform where their voices can be heard and celebrated on the American stage. Founded in 1978 by visionary producer, Julia Miles, WP has been the launching pad for many of our nation's most important theater artists. Eve Ensler, María Irene Fornés, Katori Hall, Pam MacKinnon, Lynn Nottage and Leigh Silverman, among many, many others, all found early artistic homes here. Throughout its 37-year history, WP has produced over 600 main stage productions and developmental projects, and published 11 anthologies of plays. No other producing institution in the country can claim this kind of ongoing history of advocacy and support for women in the theater, and we look ahead to the next generation of artists who will also begin their careers here. WP Theater accomplishes its mission through several fundamental programs: the WP Lab, a two-year mentorship and new play development program for women playwrights, directors, and producers; the Playwright In Residence commissioning program; the Developmental series; and the Main Stage series, which features a full season of Off-Broadway productions written and directed by extraordinary theater artists.

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