

'Teeth' Adaptation and 'Stereophonic' in Playwrights Horizons New Season

The company's 2023-24 lineup includes works by Michael R. Jackson, Anna K. Jacobs, David Adjmi and Will Butler of Arcade Fire.



By Rachel Sherman

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Playwrights Horizons will present three large-scale productions and three solo works as part of its eclectic lineup for its 2023-24 season, with a range of genres and price points, the company announced on Tuesday.

"These last few years are still asking us to pivot and be creative in ways we didn't know we'd be asked to be," said Adam Greenfield, the artistic director for Playwrights Horizons, who added that the company has had to scale back on producing new and commissioned works because of budgetary constraints.

"Our job is to put as much new writing as possible in front of people," he said. "We're trying to figure out how to do more with less."

"Teeth," based on the horror comedy film about an evangelical teenage girl with toothed genitalia — which the critic Stephen Holden called a "twisted sex-education film," "quasi-feminist fable" and an "outrageous stunt" — will make its stage premiere in February.

The musical production, which has been in the works since before the pandemic, and which Greenfield called "an examination of ancient misogyny," is written by Michael R. Jackson ("A Strange Loop") and Anna K. Jacobs, and will be choreographed by Raja Feather Kelly and directed by Sarah Benson, who will soon be leaving her leadership role at Soho Rep.

"It's bigger than any room that can try to contain it," Greenfield said. "It's incredibly fun and incredibly irreverent and brilliantly stupid and stupidly brilliant."

The season will kick off in October with the world premiere of David Adjmi's "Stereophonic," with original music by the Arcade Fire's Will Butler, about a band whose members keep clashing while creating a new album. Set over two recording sessions, with fragments of the in-progress songs teased throughout, the show is "a valentine and a cautionary tale to the act of creation itself," Greenfield said.

The 2023-24 season will also feature three solo works written and performed by the playwrights. Milo Cramer's "School Pictures," which premiered at the Wilma Theater in Philadelphia in November, is a musical journal of song-poems that present a portrait of the New York City education system. Alexandra Tatarsky's "Sad Boys in Harpy Land," which recently ran at the Abrons Art Center, is a clown cabaret about a young woman who thinks she is a small German boy who thinks he is a tree. The comedian Ikechukwu Ufomadu will perform his stand-up act, "Amusements," a mix of storytelling, music and multimedia, which will also make an appearance at Edinburgh Festival Fringe this summer.

Presented in repertory, the solo performances will begin previews in November; tickets will be offered at a discounted rate.

Rounding out the season is Abe Koogler's "Staff Meal," a comedic play, directed by Morgan Green, about a wait staff working to keep service running smoothly at a mysterious New York City restaurant while the world falls apart. Previews begin next April.

Playwrights Horizons will also present a slate of programming with the Movement Theater Company, a troupe dedicated to developing and producing new work by artists of color. The residency begins in May 2024.

"I think people are craving variety," Greenfield said. "This new season speaks to that cultural shift."

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