

February 10, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASEPress contact for the NNR: Keith Sherman & Associates: (212) 764-7900, keith@ksa-pr.com**ANNOUNCING**

New Normal Rep

 A New Theater Company For A New Era
 est. 2020







**LAUNCHES A FOUR PLAY SEASON OF INCLUSIVE & REFLECTIVE WORKS
WITH PLAYWRIGHTS, DIRECTORS & ACTORS INCLUDING**

**JULIA BLAUVELT JACK CANFORA NILO CRUZ JILL EIKENBERRY
MARSHA MASON NIKKOLE SALTER JIMMY SMITS AND MORE**

NEWNORMALREP.ORG

Journalists, to access NNR logo art and photos of participating artists, visit NewNormalRep.org/press
 To arrange for press access or interviews with participating artists, contact Keith Sherman & Associates, keith@ksa-pr.com

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[NNR - New Normal Rep](https://NewNormalRep.org) (Jack Canfora, Artistic Director; Sally Kilingenstein-Martell, Executive Producer), a new streaming theater company dedicated to producing reflective and inclusive plays, announces its inaugural four play season featuring works by playwrights **Julia Blauvelt** (*Airline Disaster*, *Youthful Journeys of the World*), **Jack Canfora** (*Fellow Travelers*, *Jericho*, *Poetic License*), Pulitzer Prize-winning and Tony-nominated playwright **Nilo Cruz** (*Anna in the Tropics*, *Two Sisters and a Piano*), and Obie winner and Pulitzer nominee **Nikkole Salter** (*In the Continuum*, *Carnaval*).

All productions will be streamed on demand at NewNormalRep.org.

Jericho, the first play, which streams March 4 - April 4, will be directed by four-time Academy Award nominee **Marsha Mason** (*The Goodbye Girl*, *Chapter Two*); and feature Golden Globe and Obie Award winner, and Emmy-nominee **Jill Eikenberry** (*Uncommon Women and Others*, "LA Law").

The second play, **Two Sisters and a Piano**, written and directed by **Nilo Cruz**, streams April 21 – May 23 and will star Emmy Award and Golden Globe Award-winner **Jimmy Smits** (*Anna in the Tropics*, "The West Wing," "LA Law"). Additional details will be announced in the coming weeks.

[NNR, New Normal Rep](https://NewNormalRep.org) exists not in spite of the pandemic, but because of it. Dedicated to presenting new and lesser known plays, via the internet, [NNR](https://NewNormalRep.org) will present works with divergent perspectives that explore the historical, cultural, and psychological forces that have helped to shape our 21st Century lives.

[NNR](https://NewNormalRep.org) commits to anti-racism training as well as partnership with BIPOC organizations to ensure that diversity is present in the curation of our seasons and the assembling of our companies.

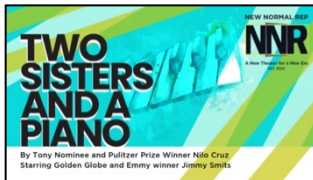
Above all, [NNR](#) is dedicated to producing deeply entertaining, engaging and illuminating work. [NNR](#) streaming productions strive to be as unZoom-like as possible. While actors will prerecord their performances from their respective homes, green screen technology and state of the art editing will be utilized to realize quality productions.

[NNR](#) announces details of its first two plays:



JERICHO
by Jack Canfora
directed by Marsha Mason
with C.K. Allen, Jill Eikenberry, Eleanor Handley, Jason O’Connell,
Michael Satow & Carol Todd
Streaming March 4 – April 4

Several years after tragedy impacted their lives, a family comes together once again for Thanksgiving dinner. While family members struggle to come to terms with residual anger, grief and guilt, Jack Canfora’s thought-provoking play explores how people cope with personal and collective catastrophe. Displaying surprising humor and biting wit, this Jericho, Long Island clan exposes their desperate strategies for resolution and redemption. *Jericho* is a play about September 11. It is also a traumatic-Thanksgiving-dinner-with-the-family play and a play about being Jewish. Canfora wrote *Jericho* in the first decade of the 2000s as an inquiry into America’s burgeoning tribalism. More than a decade later, *Jericho*’s themes of division remain timely in this humorous work that resolves into a meditation on the pains and satisfactions of living after a tragedy. *Jericho* premiered in 2013 at 59E59 Theatres.



TWO SISTERS AND A PIANO
written & directed by Nilo Cruz
starring Jimmy Smits
Streaming April 21 - May 23

Set in 1991, during the Pan American Games in Havana and while the Russians are pulling out of Cuba, this play portrays two sisters, Maria Celia, a novelist, and Sofia, a pianist, serving time under house arrest. Passion infiltrates politics when a lieutenant assigned to their case becomes infatuated with Maria Celia, whose literature he has been reading. *Two Sisters and a Piano* premiered in 1999.

Details about the third and fourth plays by Nikkole Salter and Julia Blauvelt, along with online social events, Q&As and more, will be announced in the coming weeks.

“This is a significant moment. We opt to work, to create theatre. We are thrilled about the creation of New Normal Rep and this dynamic inaugural season,” says Jack Canfora, Artistic Director. It began with casual conversations at the beginning of the pandemic and expanded into something substantive, NNR is a theatre company for our world today. We strive to illuminate and warm, to offer eclectic stories from diverse voices that will intrigue and unite us, and so much more.”

“As theater people, we always knew that our craft had value,” says Jill Eikenberry, founding artist, NNR. “But since the plague has descended on us and the possibility of theater has been taken away, we have come to understand more deeply our need to tell stories and the audiences need to hear them.”

“Online theater is a new medium with unique challenges, but we also believe it presents unique opportunities,” says Sally Klingenstein-Martell, Executive Producer, NNR. “For too many years, high quality theater has felt out of reach financially and culturally to too many people. New Normal Rep can, in a small way, aims to help in bridging this disconnect by providing affordable, diverse, high quality theater to a literally limitless audience.”

The New Normal Rep Board of Directors includes: Jeffrey Bean, Jack Canfora, Jill Eikenberry, Melanye Duschene Finister, Eleanor Handley, Melissa Joyner, Sally Klingenstein-Martell, Maria Gabriella Landers, John Schaeffler, Carol Todd

Tickets for upcoming NNR productions are \$25, \$10 for students and theater professionals, and can now be purchased at www.NewNormalRep.org. Four-play subscriptions are available for \$100, and include free access to special programming including live play-readings, special Q&A discussions and virtual happy hours

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



JULIA BLAUVELT (*Playwright, F.I.R.E.*) is finishing up her second year as an MFA candidate at NYU Tisch Rita and Burton Goldberg Department of Dramatic Writing, where she is the recipient of the Oliver Stone Screenwriting Scholarship, the Dalio Family Foundation Scholarship, and a Tisch School of the Arts Graduate Scholarship. With a background in devised theatre, notable projects include creating and performing in Richard Schechner's *Imagining O* (New York Times' Critics Pick 2014) and *Three* (directed by Stephen Spinella, Winner of the 2016 Emerging Female Artist Grant through New York Society Library). Other writing projects include readings and workshops at HERE Arts Center, Culture Project, Dixon Place, United Solo Festival, and the Benchmark Theatre in Denver, CO. Her play *F.I.R.E.* was a semi-finalist for the 2020 New American Voices Festival at The Landing Theatre Company.



JACK CANFORA (*Artistic Director, NNR / Playwright, Jericho*) is the winner of the 2016 Webby Award for Best Writing Online TV & Film for the pilot of a web series he co-wrote and co-created with Andrew Rein, *The Small Time*, www.thesmallsitetimeseries.com. His Off Broadway plays include *Poetic License*, (59E59 Theaters), featuring Geraint Wyn-Davies, which was hailed by the *Associated Press* as "White-hot entertainment," and *Jericho*, (59E59 Theaters, a *New York Times*' "Critics' Pick"), featuring Jill Eikenberry. Among his numerous regional productions are *Place Setting* (New Jersey Repertory), which was a finalist, along with plays by Teresa Rebeck, Elaine May and Edward

Albee for Best Play, 2007, *Newark Star Ledger*, *Tennessee Williams: A Life* (w/ Harris Yulin) (Guild Hall), featuring Eli Wallach, Harris Yulin and Mercedes Ruehl and *Jericho*, (NNPN Rolling World Premiere: New Jersey Repertory Company, Phoenix Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, UpstART theater, Colorado) His play *Fellow Travelers* was produced in 2018 at the Bay Street Theatre, directed by Michael Wilson and was optioned by the Shubert Organization for a Broadway production. In addition, Jack is the recipient of two Edgerton Playwriting Awards, for *Jericho* (2010) and *The Source* (2018), the latter of which played regionally in 2019. He has two children smarter than he is and lives in New York with his dog, Daisy, who's better tempered than he is.



Cuban-American playwright **NILO CRUZ** (*Playwright & Director, Two Sisters and a Piano*) gained national prominence in 2003 when he won the Pulitzer Prize for drama for his play *Anna in the Tropics*, for which he also received a Tony Award nomination. The immigrant experience is a common theme in many of Cruz's plays and he has become known for his ability to successfully weave strains of magic realism and other literary traditions into his works. In addition to the Pulitzer, he has received numerous awards, including those from the Kennedy Center Fund, American Theatre Critics and the Humana Festival for New American Plays; as well as grants from the National

Endowment of the Arts and the Rockefeller Foundation, among others. His plays include *Dancing on Her Knees*; *A Park in Our House*; *Two Sisters and a Piano*; *A Bicycle Country*; *Hortensia and the Museum of Dreams*; *Lorca in a Green Dress*; *Beauty of the Father*; *Hurricane*; and *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*, as well as translations of *Doña Rosita the Spinster*; *The House of Bernarda Alba*; *Life Is a Dream*; and *¡Ay, Carmela!* His work has been seen at numerous theaters around the country including, among others, South Coast Rep, the Mark Taper Forum, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Washington D.C.'s Studio Theatre and New York's Public Theater; and around the world in Canada, England, France, Australia, Germany, Belarus, Costa Rica, Colombia, Japan and Spain. As a lyricist, he is a frequent collaborator with composer Gabriela Lena Frank. He has written the libretti for *The Conquest Requiem* and *The Santos Oratorio* for Ms. Frank and the text of orchestral songs, *La Centinela y la paloma*. Cruz also adapted Ann Patchett's 2001 novel *Bel Canto* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, with Peruvian composer Jimmy López and recently premiered the oratorio *Dreamers* by López at Cal Performance in Berkeley, California. Cruz, who received an M.F.A. from Brown University and an honorary doctorate degree from Whittier College, has twice previously served as a playwright-in-residence: In 2000, for the McCarter Theatre, in Princeton, N.J., and in 2001 for the New Theatre in Coral Gables, Florida, which commissioned *Anna in the Tropics*. Cruz has also taught drama at Yale, Brown and the University of Iowa. During the 2019/20 academic year, he was the Hearst Theater Lab Initiative Distinguished Visiting Playwright-in-Residence at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. He is a member of the New Dramatists.



MARSHA MASON (*Director, Jericho*) has received 4 Academy Awards nominations for her roles in the films *The Goodbye Girl*, *Cinderella Liberty*, *Only When I Laugh* and *Chapter Two*. She has been the recipient of 2 Golden Globe Awards for her film roles and an Emmy Award nomination for her role on "Frasier". Her credits include "The Middle", "The Good Wife", "Madam Secretary" and "Grace & Frankie" Broadway roles include *Impressionism* with Jeremy Irons, *Steel Magnolias*, *The Night of the Iguana*, *The Good Doctor*, *King Richard III* and *Cactus Flower*. Off-Broadway she co-starred in the world premiere of Terrence McNally's *Fire and Air* at Classic Stage. Regionally she has starred in *All's Well That Ends Well* at Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, DC, *A Doll's House* at ACT in San Francisco, *Arms and the Man* at Old Globe Theatre in San Diego and *Watch on the Rhine* at Arena Stage in Washington, DC. She has directed *Chapter Two* and *Steel Magnolias* at the Bucks County Playhouse, the first female *An Act of God* with Paige Davis at the Arizona Theatre Company and the world premiere of Tennessee Williams' *Talisman Roses* starring Amanda Plummer at the Tennessee Williams Festival in Provincetown, Mass. Marsha was Associate Director with Jack O'Brien for the Roundabout Theater's production of *All My Sons* on Broadway. Last summer, Marsha starred in the Irish Rep Theatre's acclaimed production of *Little Gem* (2020 Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play) and she most recently directed a reading of *The Man Who Came to Dinner* with Brooke Shields and Walter Bobbie at the Bucks County Playhouse and WP Theater in NYC. She also starred with Richard Dreyfuss in a streaming reading of "Letters to Noel Coward" as a benefit for Bay Street Theater in Sag Harbor as well as with Brian Cox in a reading of *Dear Liar* to benefit Bucks County Playhouse. Marsha lives in Connecticut with her dog Tootsie.



NIKKOLE SALTER (*Playwright, Lines in the Dust*) is an award winning actress, playwright, educator and arts advocate. For her work she has received the Obie, a, Outer Critics Circle Award, a Global Tolerance Award from the Friends of the United Nations a Selfdes-Kanin fellowship from the Theatre Hall of Fame, and most recently a Lily Award for her contributions to the betterment of the theatre field. Her writing has been produced on 3 continents in 5 countries, and been published in 12 international publications and has been featured on the WNET program "Theatre Close-Up." She is a graduate of Howard University and NYU. www.nikkolesalter.com