



Palm Springs
Art Museum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**“THE SECRET GARDEN” PREMIERES AT PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM IN
IMMERSIVE MUSICAL PRODUCTION**

Reimagined staging of beloved Marsha Norman-Lucy Simon Broadway musical presented within museum’s galleries and gardens – a first for the cultural institution – with six performances only beginning March 22

PALM SPRINGS, CA (February 27, 2024) **Musical Theatre University** and **Palm Springs Art Museum**, in association with **Neon Noir** (Jesse Singer, founder), present an immersive and atmospheric musical production of *The Secret Garden* — six performances only — from March 22-31, 2024 at Palm Springs Art Museum (101 Museum Drive).

The Secret Garden will be a truly unique theatrical exploration presented after hours within Palm Springs Art Museum’s galleries and gardens. Directed by **David Green**, founder and executive director of Musical Theatre University (MTU) – Coachella Valley’s pre-professional conservatory for students in grades 8-12 – *The Secret Garden* features a cast of 20 students from the Palm Springs Unified School District, selected by MTU via conservatory audition.

Producers Jesse Singer, David Green, and Jack Peirce say, “*The Secret Garden* is a creative partnership between two esteemed Coachella Valley institutions with a singular goal: to showcase how theater artists, educators, and museum curators can innovate together to lead and share transformative, live experiences in their local communities.

“We are delighted to take audiences on our multi-sensory musical journey throughout the museum’s galleries and garden spaces for an intimate ‘night at the museum’ experience — a first for Palm Springs Art Museum and Musical Theatre University.”

Celebrated chef **Gabriel Woo** will curate a bespoke menu and specialty drinks inspired by settings and elements of *The Secret Garden*, offered during the show’s two intermissions (included in the price of all tickets). Additionally, as part of the VIP experience ticket, Palm Springs Art Museum will host an intimate

pre-show cocktail reception in the Meyerman Sculpture Garden — 75 minutes before each performance.

CREATIVE TEAM

With a Tony Award-winning book by Pulitzer Prize winner Marsha Norman, lyrics by Norman, and music by Grammy Award-winner Lucy Simon, the immersive production is led by David Green. The creative team includes vocal direction by Constance Gordy, musical direction by Bob Marino, additional choreography by Jose de la Cuesta, technical direction by Anthony Flores, costume design by Joyce Jenkin, and sound design by Anthony Flores/Freq Audio.

CAST

The cast of *The Secret Garden* features Sofia Lanza (as Lily Craven), Torie Mendoza (as Mary Lennox), Kevin McMahon* (as Archibald Craven), Alisha Bates (as Martha), Brent Schindele* (as Dr. Neville Craven), Ben Van Dijk (as Dickon), Elijanna Kennedy (as Rose Lennox), Elijah Sweeney Bousquet (as Captain Albert Lennox), Brayden Gravidahl (as Colin Craven), Fabrizio Ibanez (as Ben Weatherstaff), Elizabeth Eldar (as Mrs. Medlock), Maverick Carpio (as Major Holmes), Alondra Meza (as Ayah), McKenzey Kenan (as Mrs. Winthrop), Payton Hoy (as Alice), Ruben Regalado (as Lieutenant Shaw), Percy Goodwin-Knight (as Lieutenant Wright), Madeline Klein (as Claire). The ensemble features Addison Clark, Sasha Kaye, Danica Rodriguez, Lyla Stanley, and Chanel Ward.

*Members of Actors' Equity Association (AEA) participating in *The Secret Garden* are current faculty of Musical Theatre University as Artists In Residence, and their participation is a required teaching assignment, with special permission granted by AEA.

PERFORMANCE & TICKET INFORMATION

The Secret Garden performs six shows only on March 22; March 26-27; and March 29-31, with a maximum capacity of 100 per show to allow guests to move about the museum and enjoy the immersive experience.

Doors open at 5:45 PM for VIP ticketing and 6:45 PM for general admission; all six nightly performances begin at 7 PM. Total running time is two and a half hours (incl. one 10-minute and one 25-minute intermission). Recommended for ages 10+. For more information on VIP or general admission tickets and pre-show experience, visit psmuseum.org/events/secret-garden.

About "THE SECRET GARDEN"

Frances Hodgson Burnett's Victorian classic, *The Secret Garden*, blossoms anew in this enchanting musical by Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winner Marsha Norman and Grammy Award winner Lucy Simon. When young Mary Lennox loses her parents to a cholera outbreak in India, she is sent to live with her hermit uncle, Archibald Craven, and his bedridden son, Colin. In the haunting house upon the hill, Mary discovers her Aunt Lily's hidden, overgrown garden and is determined to revive its beauty.

Surrounded by spirits from the past, Mary begins to peel away the layers of sadness that cover the house and the garden, showing the power that “one small girl” can have when she “wants things to grow.”

About MUSICAL THEATRE UNIVERSITY

Musical Theatre University (MTU), led by founder and executive director David Green, is a pre-professional, comprehensive conservatory training ground for young people with aspirations for professional theatre careers, specifically on Broadway. Students in grades 8-12 are selected by audition from all parts of the Coachella Valley and neighboring communities. MTU is sponsored and presented by The Palm Springs Unified School District, with no participation costs for students or families. The MTU faculty comprises working professional artist-teachers who are veterans of Broadway, film, and television. Concurrent with daily conservatory instruction, MTU produces three mainstage musicals each season where the students are joined onstage by Broadway veterans who serve as mentor teachers throughout the rehearsal and performance process. Mr. Green’s celebrated alumni from his multi-conservatory teaching career include Tony Award winners Stephanie J. Block and Lindsay Mendez; Tony Award nominees Susan Egan and Matthew Morrison; Krysta Rodriguez, Grace McLean, Anneliese van der Pol, and Pedro Pascal, to name a few. This theatrical season marks the Broadway debut of Leana Rae Concepcion in the highly acclaimed revival of *Merrily We Roll Along*, MTU’s first desert-campus alumni graduate to achieve this distinction.

About PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM

Palm Springs Art Museum is the largest cultural institution in the Coachella Valley. The flagship building in downtown Palm Springs features compelling art exhibitions, a vast permanent collection, and the Annenberg Theater, all in a 150,000-square-foot, architecturally significant building. Five blocks away, the Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion, features exhibitions and programming that explore the rich topics of architecture and design. For more information about Palm Springs Art Museum exhibitions, programs, and events, please visit psmuseum.org or call (760) 322-4800.

About THE PRODUCING TEAM

Jesse Singer (Producer) is the Founder of Neon Noir, specializing in live entertainment and immersive experiences. Jesse is a Managing Partner of The Empyrean Club, a new theatre, nightlife venue, and social club opening next year in Park Slope, Brooklyn. He recently produced *The Shark Is Broken* on Broadway. While at Act 4 Entertainment, Jesse developed and produced the world premiere stage musical adaption of Bret Easton Ellis’s *American Psycho* in London (The Almeida Theatre) and the US premiere on Broadway; he also produced the play *American Son* (Broadway), and the documentary *The People Speak* based on Howard Zinn’s national bestseller, "A People’s History of the United States." He is consulting for Crossroads Capital, a value-centric investment fund. Jesse began his career at Creative Artists Agency and Jerry Bruckheimer Films. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College.

David Green (Producer; Founder/Executive Director of Musical Theatre University) has staged and directed over 500 productions for both educational and professional theatre; written, produced, and directed 10 television holiday specials for PBS and Coachella Valley ABC and NBC affiliates; and directed and/or written material for such legendary performers as Debbie Reynolds, Carol Channing, Liberace, Betty Garrett, John Raitt, Julie Wilson, Rex Smith, JoAnn Worley and more. He was named one of the top theatre educators in America by The Broadway League and Carnegie Mellon University at the 2017 Tony Awards.

Jack Peirce (Producer) serves as Deputy Director & CFO of Palm Springs Art Museum. He began his career advising on corporate finance and mergers and acquisitions. He pivoted to the not-for-profit sector, working for his alma mater, the University of Illinois, then Canine Companions, a national provider of service dogs to persons with disabilities. Since 2021, he has led the museum's theatrical strategy and operations, including the highly successful Cabaret 88 series.

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