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Contact:

Abby Stigler

Communications Manager, Junior Players

214-526-4076 x246

abby@juniorplayers.org

Tina Parker

Co-Artistic Director, Kitchen Dog Theater

214-953-2258

tina@kitchendogtheater.org

PUP (Playwrights Under Progress) Fest 20th Anniversary to Premiere Virtually

DALLAS, TX - Junior Players and Kitchen Dog Theater are excited to announce that Playwrights Under Progress (PUP) Fest, the culminating event of their annual partnership with the **Dallas Independent School District** known as the **Dallas Playwriting Arts Collective (D-PAC)**, will return to your screen this year for its 20th anniversary. Six scripts written by local high school playwrights have been selected for this year's production and will be presented as virtual staged readings during a single performance via the Zoom platform, as part of Kitchen Dog Theater's annual New Works Festival.

This year's scripts include: **[blank]** by **Spencer Swift** (Seagoville HS), **Sunset** by **Matthew Butter** (Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center), **Adventures of Kit the Talking Cat** by **Allison Sisavath** (Moises E. Molina HS), **Playing House** by **Lia Castaneda** (Booker T. Washington HSPVA), **Leave a Message** by **Hannah Moore** (Booker T. Washington HSPVA), and **Changes** by **Tyler "T" Lang** (Anna HS). These six scripts were selected from a field of 66 submissions from a variety of high schools from all over the Metroplex.

PUP Fest allows high school playwrights the opportunity to be mentored by some of Dallas' most renowned playwrights. Each script that is chosen is paired with a cast of teen actors and directed by local professional actors and directors. This year, PUP Fest mentors are local playwrights **Erin Ryan Burdette** and **Haley Nelson**. Serving as PUP Fest 2021 directors are **Kristin Colaneri**, **Ivan Jasso**, **Christopher Lew**, **Karen Ruth**, **Camika Spencer**, and **Jamal Sterling**.

Performances will take place over the Zoom Webinar platform on **Saturday, June 26, 2021 at 1:00pm**. The performance is **free** and open to the public. To join the virtual performances, **audience members must RSVP in advance at juniorplayers.org/tickets or kitchendogtheater.org/pup-fest-2021**. Patrons will then be emailed their virtual access link prior to the performance. More information can be found by visiting www.kitchendogtheater.org or www.juniorplayers.org.

PUP Fest 2021 is supported, in part, by Milfred and Patricia Hammerbacher, City of Dallas: Office of Arts and Culture, National Endowment for the Arts, TACA, Holloway Family Foundation, Simmons Sisters Fund, Diane and Hal Brierley Foundation, George Family Foundation - Next Generation Fund, Moody Fund for the Arts, Texas Commission on the Arts, John & Bonnie Strauss Foundation, Fichtenbaum Charitable Trust, The Hersh Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District, Del Shores Foundation, Harold Simmons Foundation, March

Family Foundation, National New Play Network, The Shubert Foundation, SullivanPerkins, Texas Instruments Foundation, and individual donors.

About PUP Fest: Junior Players and Kitchen Dog Theater started Playwrights Under Progress (PUP) Fest in 2002 as a new piece of Kitchen Dog Theater's New Works Festival. An annual anticipated event, PUP Fest is also a component of the Dallas Playwriting Arts Collective (D-PAC), a partnership between Junior Players, Kitchen Dog Theater, and the Dallas Independent School District to provide innovative programs and opportunities for high school playwrights. Now in its fifth year, the D-PAC partnership will enable Junior Players and Kitchen Dog to serve an additional 1,000 DISD students through ongoing playwriting master classes throughout the school year. PUP Fest was recognized in September 2003 with a Special Award from the Dallas-Fort Worth Theater Critics Forum.

About Junior Players: Junior Players was founded in 1955 and is the oldest non-profit children's theater organization in Dallas. Over its existence, Junior Players has striven to meet the changing needs of the community. From 1955 to 1989, Junior Players presented traditional children's theater productions performed entirely by children and teenagers. In 1989, the Board of Directors changed the focus of Junior Players activities, deciding that, Junior Players can best serve the youth of Dallas by providing free programming accessible to all the children of North Texas. Junior Players, therefore, exclusively provides free arts education programs in local recreation and cultural centers, housing projects, elementary and middle schools, and through social service agencies serving youth at risk.

About Kitchen Dog Theater: For 30 seasons, Kitchen Dog Theater (KDT) has provided a place where questions of justice, morality, and human freedom can be explored, whether they are found in the classics, contemporary works, or new plays. KDT provides a vibrant home base for Dallas theater artists by maintaining a 33-member Artistic Company of the area's best theater artists. Over the years, Kitchen Dog has received over 400+ awards, including D Magazine's "Best Theater Company" for 2019. KDT is proud to be one of only two theaters in Texas to receive National Endowment for the Arts "Art Works" Awards in the previous six consecutive years. A mission-driven company, Kitchen Dog is also staunch champion of new work and is a founding member of the acclaimed National New Play Network, producing timely, provocative plays that may have otherwise never been seen in Dallas.

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