



NEW VILLAGE ARTS

MEDIA ALERT

New Village Arts Announces the San Diego Premiere of

The Half-Life of Marie Curie

Written by Lauren Gunderson

Directed by Kym Pappas

Previews January 24th - 31st, 2025

Running January 24th - February 23rd, 2025

Opening Night Saturday, February 1st, 2025

For immediate release: December 20th, 2024

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Carlsbad, CA – New Village Arts (NVA), North County’s cultural hub, is thrilled to announce our first production of 2025: the San Diego premiere of THE HALF-LIFE OF MARIE CURIE to be performed on the Ray Charles Stage in the Conrad Prebys Theatre at the Dea Hurston New Village Arts Center. THE HALF-LIFE OF MARIE CURIE was written by Lauren Gunderson and will be directed by Kym Pappas. The production will run January 24th through February 23rd, 2025, with previews taking place January 24th through 31st with an Opening Night Reception on February 1st, 2025.

In 1911, Marie Curie won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for her discovery of the elements radium and polonium. By 1912, she was the object of ruthless gossip over an alleged affair, all but erasing her achievements from public memory. Weakened and demoralized by the press, Marie agrees to join her friend and colleague Hertha Ayrton, an electromechanical engineer and suffragette, and recover from the scandal at Hertha's seaside retreat on the British coast. This one act, 70-minute play revels in the power of female friendship as it explores the relationship



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between these two brilliant women, both of whom are mothers, widows, and fearless champions of scientific inquiry.

Director Kym Pappas brings her visionary storytelling and passion for intimate, character-driven narratives to *THE HALF-LIFE OF MARIE CURIE*. Pappas returns to the Ray Charles Stage after the incredible directorial success of *FUN HOME* (2024). Kym has also been seen onstage in multiple productions at NVA including Jez Butterworth's *THE FERRYMAN* (2022) and her outstanding performance as Sister Aloysius in *DOUBT: A PARABLE* (2023). A celebrated figure in the local theatre community, Pappas has a reputation for crafting thought-provoking and emotionally resonant productions that leave a lasting impact on audiences. Her unique perspective and keen attention to detail make her the perfect choice to helm this powerful story of friendship, resilience, and scientific discovery.

"Lauren Gunderson's "The Half-Life of Marie Curie" brings us into the hearts and minds of two of the most brilliant women in science to have ever lived. I believe this biographical narrative, although set in a different time and place, speaks to our collective fight, as women, for equality and the freedom of body and will. Ultimately, at its heart, it is a love story about the power of female friendship - told through the lens of two powerful, exceptional, albeit flawed women - and how we get each other through, how we save each other, time and time again." -Kym Pappas.

The creative team for *THE HALF-LIFE OF MARIE CURIE* is a powerhouse of talent, bringing this compelling story to life with exceptional artistry and collaboration. The design team includes Christopher Scott Murillo as Scenic Designer, with Carter Vickers serving as Assistant Scenic Designer, crafting a world that reflects both the elegance and intensity of the play. Claire Peterson will design the costumes, capturing the period's authenticity while emphasizing the individuality of the characters. Curtis Mueller brings depth and mood with his Lighting Design, while Harper Justus enhances the production's emotional resonance through Sound Design. Supporting the creative process are Nathan Waits as Stage Manager, McKenna Foote as Assistant Stage Manager & Props Designer, Rosemarie Sison as production assistant, and Kim Strassburger as Dramaturg, ensuring the story remains rich, detailed, and impactful. Together, this team weaves an unforgettable theatrical experience.

The cast of *THE HALF-LIFE OF MARIE CURIE* features a stellar lineup of talent, led by Rachael VanWormer as the trailblazing scientist Marie Curie and San Diego theatre royalty, Leigh Scarritt



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as Hertha Ayrton, the fierce and compassionate engineer and suffragette. Scarritt recently musical directed our summer production of THE COLOR PURPLE in 2024, and we are thrilled to welcome her NVA stage debut. We are also excited to welcome VanWormer back after many years; a few of her past NVA performances include WAVING GOODBYE, BE AGGRESSIVE, and THIS IS OUR YOUTH. Jonni Garro will act as the female swing for both roles.

“This will be my third Lauren Gunderson play, and I am thrilled to be back in ‘Gunderland.’ What I love about Lauren Gunderson’s characters is that they are people first and foremost, with all the charm, flaws, blindspots, inconsistencies, brilliance, and cruelties that every individual is capable of carrying within them. While her plays amplify and uplift notable women (and occasionally men), she does not turn them into ‘flawless heroines.’ Her plays allow us to recognize ourselves in the world-renowned Genius, Scientist, Musician, Artist, Author just as readily as we recognize ourselves in the parent, the child, the sibling, the lover, the selfish, the mercurial, the human. By celebrating the Human Complexity of these characters, their achievements ring all the more remarkable.” - Rachael VanWormer.

“What I love most about this clever, insightful, moving script is the lifelong impact of women friends. The ride-or-die friends, who meet you wherever you are; and walk through the beauty or the heartache until balance is restored. I have these friendships in my life. I hope my friends know that they do too!” - Leigh Scarritt.

THE HALF-LIFE OF MARIE CURIE explores the remarkable bond between the two women as they navigate the complexities of fame, loss, and the pursuit of scientific discovery. With this play, Gunderson, the most produced playwright in the United States, uses her signature wit and emotional depth, celebrating the resiliency of women who dare to defy expectations and change the world. Don’t miss this extraordinary story of two women who changed the world—and each other.

New Village Arts Season 23 sponsors include Prebys Foundation, Jazzercise, Peace Thru Arts, US Bank, County of San Diego, City of Carlsbad Cultural Arts Office, Phillips + Co Real Estate, and Visit Carlsbad. *Sponsorship opportunities are available upon request.*



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CREATIVES of *The Half-Life of Marie Curie*

Kym Pappas	Director
Nathan Waits	Production Stage Manager
Christopher Scott Murillo	Scenic Designer
Carter Vickers	Assistant Scenic Designer
Claire Peterson	Costume Designer
Curtis Mueller	Lighting Designer
Harper Justus	Sound Designer
Kenna Foote	Assistant Stage Manager & Props Designer
Rosemarie Sison	Production Assistant
Kim Strassburger	Dramaturg

CAST of *The Half-Life of Marie Curie*

Rachael VanWormer	Marie Curie
Leigh Scarritt	Hertha Ayrton
Jonni Garro	Female Swing

THE HALF LIFE OF MARIE CURIE

Written by Lauren Gunderson

Directed by Kym Pappas

Previews: January 24-31, 2025

Opening Night: February 1, 2025

January 24 - February 23, 2025

SAN DIEGO PREMIERE



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New Village Arts 23rd Season 2024-2025

8-TRACK: THE SOUNDS OF THE '70S

Created by Rick Seeber

Directed by Gerilyn Brault

Music Direction by EY Washington

Choreography by Joy Newbegin

Previews: August 16-23, 2024

Opening Night: August 24, 2024

August 16 - September 15, 2024

SAN DIEGO PREMIERE

THE THANKSGIVING PLAY

Written by Larissa FastHorse

Directed by Daniel Jáquez

Featuring Samantha Ginn as Logan

Previews: October 4-11, 2024

Opening Night: October 12, 2024

October 4 - November 3, 2024

SAN DIEGO PREMIERE

MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET: A LIVE MUSICAL RADIO PLAY

Adapted by Lance Arthur Smith

Original Songs and Arrangements by Jon Lorenz

Directed by Faith Carrion and Kay McNellen

Previews: November 22-29, 2024

Opening Night: November 30, 2024

November 22 - December 24, 2024



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SAN DIEGO PREMIERE

Sandra Delgado's LA HAVANA MADRID

Written by Sandra Delgado

Directed by Juliana Frey-Méndez

Previews: March 21-28, 2025

Opening Night: March 29, 2025

March 21 - April 27, 2025

SAN DIEGO PREMIERE

Performance Days and Times

Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday Matinees at 2:00pm

Thursday, Friday and Saturday Evenings at 7:30pm

Tickets and Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the season range from \$135 to \$297.

Single Tickets are on sale now.

Single tickets range from \$35 to \$60 for plays and \$40 to \$70 for musicals.

About New Village Arts

Celebrating 23 years of award-winning professional theatre and thriving education and outreach programs, New Village Arts (NVA) has truly become the cultural hub of North County San Diego. NVA attracts more than 30,000 patrons each year to experience professional theatre, music and art events in the heart of Carlsbad Village. In addition to full seasons of plays and musicals featuring some of the best artistic talent in Southern California, NVA hosts talkback discussions and other supplementary events designed to create conversation and cultivate community. New this year, the White Family Next Stage in the Dea Hurston New Village Arts Center presents a



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series of music, comedy, and spoken word events throughout the year. NVA offers robust theatre programs in partnership with local schools and strongly believes that theatre and arts experiences should be accessible to all people, becoming a recognized leader in equity, diversity, and inclusion in San Diego. NVA has been fortunate to receive support from the City of Carlsbad and other local businesses, who recognize the importance of a resident professional theatre company as a crucial component of an inclusive and creative community. In turn NVA prioritizes serving its community by presenting works that respect its diversity, engaging every citizen with relevant and inspiring stories.

New Village Arts is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization listed under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS.

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