

MEDIA RELEASE

Portland Center Stage Commissions New Musical, Bringing Together William Carlos Angulo (Director/Choreographer), Isaac Gómez (Book), and Michelle J. Rodriguez (Music/Lyrics)



PCS COMMISSIONS: *HOMBRES*

The artists were in residency last week for their first developmental workshop of *Hombres*. [Download Photos](#)

October 19, 2021 — PORTLAND, OR. Portland Center Stage has commissioned three celebrated, innovative artists to co-create a new musical through a devised, collaborative process. William Carlos Angulo, who choreographed PCS's acclaimed production of *In the Heights*, will be the director and choreographer. Angulo will be joined by two artists who are

new to PCS: Isaac Gómez will pen the book and Michelle J. Rodriguez (Micha) will compose the music and lyrics.

The new musical, currently titled *Hombres*, will explore the many facets of Latinx identity and machismo culture, with the artists bringing their own lived experiences — in particular the beauty and complexity of their relationships to their fathers.

Hombres will mark the first PCS commission of a full-fledged musical, and also the first time the company has supported a long-term project that will be developed through a devised creative process centered on improvisation techniques that will be heavily infused with music and dance.



The team is excited to root their work in the Pacific Northwest community, including building relationships with local schools and community organizations throughout the development process, by leading musical theater writing and devising workshops in community centers and local schools.

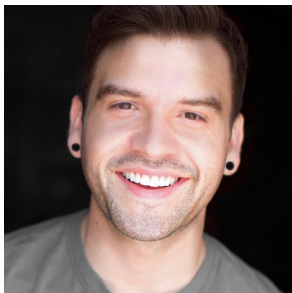
“I’m over the moon to support this powerhouse team as they examine tenderness within masculinity. Michelle, Isaac, and William create from a place of deep joy and abundance in their devising process, and we are honored to support *Hombres* on its development path,” said Artistic Director Marissa Wolf.

Speaking to the devised process, Angulo said, “PCS has quickly become a beloved artistic home for me. That is due entirely to Marissa and the staff, who work to create a space in which artists like me can examine and interrogate not only what we create, but how we create it.”

Gómez added, “It’s an incredible honor to be working alongside William and Micha on a project that has such deep resonance for all three of us. To be welcomed by PCS in an artist-driven process is incredibly healing after the year we’ve all just endured.”

Rodriguez touched on the themes and musical influences in *Hombres*: “What are the effects of machismo and what does being tender with yourself and with others sound like and look like? The way I get to the root of those questions is through music, and with this piece, we’re charting a path towards the world we want to live in with text, with music, with dance.”

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



William Carlos Angulo

Co-Creator, Director, Choreographer

William Carlos Angulo is a director, choreographer, playwright, and arts educator based in New York. He has collaborated with Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, The Public Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Ars Nova, The MUNY, Manhattan Theatre Club, Goodman Theatre, Portland Center Stage, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Cincinnati Playhouse in The Park, Marriott Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Court Theatre, Paramount Theatre, Timeline Theatre Company, Teatro Vista, and more. Angulo won a Jeff Award for his original choreography for

Paramount Theatre's revival of *West Side Story*, and he was honored with an ALTA Award for his choreography in *La Havana Madrid* at Steppenwolf 1700 and The Goodman Theatre. His documentary-style play about Jerome Robbins and Leonard Bernstein premiered at Court Theatre in 2018 and was directed by Charles Newell. His theatricalized iteration of Frank Ocean's *Blonde* album received a developmental lab through Dance Lab New York (formerly known as Broadway Dance Lab). Angulo has served as a teaching artist and guest choreographer at Indiana University, Millikin University, Northwestern University, The Juilliard School, and more. He was a founding teaching artist and developed the curriculum for the first-ever musical theater training programs at Goodman Theatre's Center for Education and The Arts Academy of Banja Luka, in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the United States Fulbright Program. He holds a B.F.A. in musical theater and drama from Indiana University and trained on scholarship at Hubbard Street Dance Center and Ballet Chicago. He is a proud member of AEA and SDC and is represented by The Gersh Agency.



Isaac Gómez

Co-Creator, Book

Isaac Gómez is an award-winning Chicago and Los Angeles-based playwright and screenwriter, originally from El Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. He proudly identifies as “border Mexican” and as *ni’wa* — the third gender identity marker of the *rarámuri* Mexican Indigenous community of which they are a direct descendant. Artistically, Gómez is currently under commission with LCT3, Steppenwolf Theater Company, South Coast Repertory, DCPA Theatre Company, and IAMA Theatre Company. Their plays have been produced and/or developed by Audible Theater, Steppenwolf Theater Company, Primary Stages, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Goodman Theatre, the Alley Theatre, and many others. She is the recipient of the 2018 Dramatists Guild Lanford Wilson Award, the 2017 Jeffrey Melnick New Playwright Award at Primary Stages, and an inaugural 3Arts “Make A Wave” grantee. Gómez is also a Certified Facilitator and Expert in Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process, and will be featured in her upcoming book on adapting her feedback process for our current time. Gómez’s television

credits include the Netflix Original Series *Narcos: Mexico*, the first writers' room for *Kings of America* on Netflix, and most recently the upcoming Apple TV+ Limited Series *The Last Thing He Told Me*, starring Julia Roberts. They currently have a television series in development with Stacey Sher and FX. On the feature side, he is currently under development with a full-length feature at Focus Features. She enjoys good bowls of menudo on Sundays (con bolillos not tortillas, porfis) and can slay a game of Millennial Loteria. He is represented by The Gersh Agency, ReDefine Entertainment, and Granderson Des Rochers, LLP.



Michelle J. Rodriguez

Co-Creator, Music, Lyrics

Michelle J. Rodriguez (Micha) is an artist who performs and writes in the worlds of music and theater. Raised in the Pacific Northwest and Kentucky by Puerto Rican parents, Rodriguez's work explores kids-of-immigrants stories, divine femininity, intuition, joy as resistance, healing, and spaces in-between. Her music project MICHA became a finalist for NPR's 2018 Tiny Desk Contest with her song "Nena Nena Nena," praised for a "bilingual set spanning laid-back southern soul and Latin pop flare" (NPR). Rodriguez is a Van Lier Fellow at Ars Nova, a member of their 2020-21 Makers Lab, and has received support from New York Theater Workshop, The Public Theater, SPACE on Ryder Farm, The Sol Project, Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts, Salonathon, and the University of Chicago. Musicals include the bluegrass and folktale inspired *East o', West o'!* (Ars Nova/ANTFEST). Known for her concert works, she has presented *VISIONS* at Joe's Pub, *J. Lo at the Dance Call* at Ars Nova, and given concerts at Signature Theater, Rattlestick Theater, and presented a concert of *East o', West o'!* at Steppenwolf. Rodriguez made her Public Theater debut in 2019 composing the music for The Mobile Unit's production of *The Tempest*, directed by Laurie Woolery, and subsequently toured *MICHA MÚSICA: In Transit* in collaboration with The Mobile Unit and Joe's Pub. Theater performance credits include *The Conversationalists* by Jerome Ellis and James Harrison Monaco (Bushwick Starr; "gorgeously sung" –*The New York Times*), *The Fly Honey Show* (The Inconvenience), *La Havana Madrid* (lead role u/s, Teatro Vista/Steppenwolf/Goodman Theatre; ALTA Award for Music Direction for

Goodman run), Ava in *East o', West o'!* (Ars Nova), and early iterations of *Hundred Days* by The Bengsons.

PCS REMIX: COMMISSIONS

New plays are electric! They are a statement of our time, our evolution, our humanity. *Hombres* is part of the [PCS Commissions](#) program, which was launched in 2020 to lift up some of the most exciting voices in American theater while stages were dark, in order to generate a wellspring of theatrical offerings to draw from in the years ahead. Four commissions have already been announced, bringing new plays from celebrated writers Brittany K. Allen, Christina Anderson, Christopher Chen, and Anya Pearson.

The PCS Commissions program builds on PCS's long-standing dedication to supporting new works for the stage. PCS has a robust history of commissioning, developing, and producing new plays, through programs such as the JAW New Play Festival and the NW Stories series. During the development process, PCS will offer the community ample opportunities to engage with these innovative playwrights. PCS's play commissioning program is supported in part by The Standard, Linda and Scott Andrews, Ray and Bobbi Davis, The Harold & Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation/Jordan Schnitzer, Helen Stern, and AHA Inc.

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE

[Portland Center Stage](#) was established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and became independent in 1994. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Marissa Wolf and Managing Director Cynthia Fuhrman, the company produces a mix of classic, contemporary, and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high-quality education and community programs. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 28 world premieres, many of which were developed at its JAW New Play Festival. Portland Center Stage's home is The Armory, a historic building originally constructed in 1891. After a major renovation, The Armory opened in 2006 as the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, the first performing arts venue in the country, and the first building in Portland to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

Portland Center Stage is committed to identifying and interrupting instances of racism and all forms of oppression, through the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA). Learn more at pcs.org/idea.

Portland Center Stage's 2021-2022 season is funded in part by Season Superstars the Regional Arts and Culture Council and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation; Season Sponsors the Oregon Arts Commission, a state agency funded by the state of Oregon and the National Endowment for the Arts, and US Bank; and Producing Sponsors Ellyn Bye, Ray and Bobbi Davis, Jess Dishman, and Ronni LaCroute.

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