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## THT announces first in its 'New Voices' series - 'The Children's Farm'

Submitted by Lisa Anne Morrison



Director Ciera Eis Photos provided

Playwright Sean Dunnington's piece, "The Children's Farm," will be brought to the stage by Director Ciera Eis. This lightly produced, two-weekend performance model will be the first in Town Hall's "New Voices" series. New Voices will produce two brand new, never produced-on-stage plays by playwrights living in the seven Bay Area counties. New Voices will heavily feature plays written by traditionally under-represented and under-produced artists.

In "The Children's Farm" Sam runs away to California to live with her cousins Joey and Lauren (and their sock puppets) after being outed, tormented, and exiled. While there, Sam wraps herself in a fantastic world of wonder and love where she can truly be herself. She calls this place "The Funny Farm," a riff off of Joey and Lauren's nickname for therapy. Traversing a decade and a half of role-playing and therapy, this drama weighs forced family, roots, and finding freedom on the farm.

"In retrospect, a lot of my earlier plays were fueled by shame," says Dunnington. "The queer character just wanted the homophobe to understand who they really were. They wanted acceptance, but even more so, they wanted to assimilate. I'm not interested in that kind of narrative anymore. 'The Children's Farm' is an ode to a queer childhood with my sisters. It's an internal look at what it means to find belonging in myself, in my own

queerness, rather than from a straight gaze."

For their first outing in the New Voices series, Town Hall Theatre welcomes Ciera Eis and her tremendous knowledge and experience as she directs "The Children's Farm." Eis is passionate about directing and developing socio-political new work, emerging playwrights and artists, and experimenting with space and form in theatre. She is especially drawn to directing heightened comedy, queer-femme narratives and plays dealing with mental health and catharsis in trauma.

"As a queer woman who grew up in a rural and very religious town in California," says Eis, "'The Children's Farm' is an honest interpretation of a child's journey of self-discovery and family belonging. Dunnington has done a great job of making this play an incredibly imaginative and deeply fun dive into the world of a child through the beauty of queerness, acceptance, therapy, and resilience."

The New Voices series is a first for Town Hall Theatre. The series was created to give a wider-array of playwrights a chance to expose new and in-process works to an audience that may not otherwise be exposed to their stories. Productions in the series will include a facilitated talkback at each performance allowing the playwrights the chance to receive feedback from audiences in a constructive manner, while also giving audiences an insight into the theatre maker's process.

The second entry in the first New Voices series will be "amé monos // let us love each other" by D. Linda Maria Giron which will be produced in Spring 2022.

"The Children's Farm" will perform on Oct. 8, 9 and 15, 16. Tickets are \$25 and the Oct. 16 performance will be Pay What You'd Like. "The Children's Farm" contains adult language and viewer discretion is advised. Tickets and information can be found at [TownHallTheatre.com](http://TownHallTheatre.com).

THT COVID precautions

Town Hall Theatre is prioritizing the health and safety of our artists, staff, and audiences above all else. We are keeping close watch on the number of COVID cases and hospitalizations and if we feel we cannot safely produce any of our works, we will move to a hybrid in-person and digital model or postpone to a later date.

Town Hall Theatre has joined Theatre Bay Area's coalition on COVID protocols (<https://www.theatrebayarea.org/page/bayareasafe>). Town Hall Theatre reserves the right to refuse service to anyone, and anyone violating this policy will be asked to leave the premises immediately. Masks are required at all times and proof of vaccination or recent negative COVID test is required. Town Hall's full COVID policy can be found at <https://www.townhalltheatre.com/covid19>.



Playwright Sean Dunnington Photos provided

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